

Effectiveness of policy measures to increase the employment participation of young people

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Research project: Youth employment: Challenges and solutions for higher participation of young people in the labour market

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Executive summary

Introduction

Youth unemployment rates in Europe are dramatically high; in 2011 around 5.5 million young people were unemployed throughout the European Union. This equalled an unemployment rate of 21.4%, a rate that continues to rise, having hit the 22% mark in the first half of 2012. While the situation is extremely diverse across Member States, many European countries have seen their unemployment rates double or triple since the onset of the recession. Today, Europe employs 3.4 million fewer young people than in 2007, which makes youth unemployment one of the greatest challenges faced by the continent today.

Consequently, many European Member States have taken action to promote higher employment participation for this age group. They have implemented youth employment policies that facilitate and support young people's pathways through education to employment and tackle such diverse issues as early school leaving, school-to-work transitions and employability. But how effective are such policies? What are their strengths and their weaknesses and what characteristics make an effective policy in the field of youth unemployment?

This report reviews existing evidence on the effectiveness of 25 policies tackling youth unemployment for a selected number of countries (AT, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, ES, SE, UK) and complements this information with expert interviews. It seeks to assess the extent to which the chosen measures have been successful, looking at their outputs, outcomes and wider impact.

In times of an ever-increasing demand for accountable public policies and tight government budgets, it is essential to make policy evaluation an inherent part of the policymaking process. This study provides a valuable input to the debate on how to tackle the great challenge of rising youth unemployment in Europe.

Policy context

The European Commission initially reacted to the challenge of rising youth unemployment by focusing its efforts on the 'Youth on the Move' EU 2020 flagship initiative, which aims at 'unleashing all young people's potential' through quality education and training, successful labour market integration and greater mobility. Simultaneously, the Europe 2020 integrated guidelines for economic and employment policies, launched in April 2010, emphasised that Member States and social partners should set up 'schemes to help recent graduates find initial employment or further education and training opportunities, including apprenticeships, and intervene rapidly when young people become unemployed'. In 2011, the proposal for a Youth Opportunities Initiative emphasised the relevance of learning from countries that were performing well.

In 2012, the employment package 'Towards a job-rich recovery' confirmed the importance of reducing youth unemployment. It also suggested making greater use of the European Social Funds for the next programme period (2014–2020) to tackle the issue, for example through youth guarantees.

Many Member States have implemented policies that intervene at some point on a young person's pathway to employment: some measures seek to prevent early school leaving, while others aim to reintegrate early school leavers. Other policies seek to facilitate a smoother transition from school to work, while some interventions strive to increase the employability of young people. Other policies aim to remove persistent barriers faced by young people in general or those with special needs.

Key findings

This study finds that Member States have implemented a set of diverse measures to combat youth unemployment. This highlights the fact that young people are not a homogeneous group and do need tailored policy interventions that address specific needs and specific stages of a young person's life. Strengths and weaknesses were identified for different types of intervention along the pathway to employment.

It was found that there is a general lack of rigorous evaluations of such policies in most EU countries, although 'evaluation cultures' differ greatly between Member States. About half of the reviewed measures did not set themselves quantitative output targets, such as the number of programme participants. Only three of the measures outlined measurable targets regarding their intended outcome, such as the proportion of participants reintegrated in the labour market. This made it hard to assess success and effectiveness, especially from a comparative meta-perspective.

Nevertheless, combining evidence from existing evaluations, policy documents and administrative data with input from stakeholder interviews, this evaluative study reports that the analysed youth employment measures have been relatively successful. Only three measures failed to engage the intended number of schools and participants. Another finding is that policies are generally able to engage the intended target group; only two out of 19 measures for which information was available did not fully do so. Going beyond output targets, it was found that where sufficient data was available, most policies reached their outcome objectives. Only a small minority of policy measures did not produce the intended outcomes for the participants or only did so partially.

Little evidence was available concerning the global impact of the implemented measures, for example the impact of a policy on rates of youth unemployment or social exclusion. Given the small scale of most measures and the influence of other factors, such as the macroeconomic context, an assessment of the global impact of the analysed policies cannot be provided.

Policy pointers

The study provides 10 insights for designing effective policies to tackle youth unemployment, based on the analysis of 25 policy measures in nine Member States.

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.

As public finances continue to experience downward pressures and youth unemployment continues to rise, this study has found that more emphasis should be placed on developing and implementing systematic evaluations. This is essential in order to gain knowledge about the effectiveness of policy measures, and is crucial both from a Member State perspective and at EU level. Through comparing and analysing robust evaluations from a meta-perspective, Member States and the EU will be able to identify best practices, improve employability and labour market participation of young people and ultimately unleash every young person's potential.

Introduction

Youth unemployment is one of the greatest challenges facing Europe. In 2011, it reached a record level of 5.5 million, although with considerable variation across the Member States. At over 22%, the rate of youth unemployment is more than twice as high as the general rate of unemployment (European Commission, 2012a). Unemployment among young people is typically higher than for adults; as young people make their way from formal education and training to the world of work some period of transition is to be expected. Nevertheless, a slow or difficult transition to the labour market can have a lasting, scarring effect on the individual over their lifetime. It is therefore important to support young people to improve their employability, in order to make this transition as smooth as possible.

In addition to high levels of unemployment, the current economic climate has led to constrained public resources across Europe, as governments seek to reduce public debt. This means that the funds available for policy delivery are increasingly limited and that where investments are made, they must be seen to provide value for money. These financial pressures lead to an increased emphasis on evaluating what works, and at what cost. In relation to youth employment and employability measures, evaluations are therefore needed to establish, amongst other things, what types of measures are most effective in terms of helping young people to improve their employability and to find (sustainable) employment, bearing in mind different national contexts.

The extent to which an evaluation ‘culture’ has developed in the individual EU Member States varies; levels of commitment, resources, capacity and institutional cultures differ. With specific reference to youth activation measures, it seems there is a general lack of rigorous evaluation in most EU countries. While some countries gather beneficiary tracking data, this is not synonymous with rigorous evaluation evidence – a distinction that is sometimes not fully understood. Decentralisation of implementation can also lead to evaluation challenges as local level evaluations are either not available or not comparable at national level (Duell and Vogler-Ludwig, 2011). Cost-effectiveness studies are also rare.

This report aims to contribute to the knowledge base in relation to the effectiveness of youth employment measures in Europe. It is part of a series of outputs produced under the Eurofound project ‘Youth employment: Challenges and solutions for higher participation of young people in the labour market’. It presents the results of an ‘evaluative study’ of 25 measures that aim to increase the employability and promote a higher employment participation of young people in Europe. Nine countries were included in the study: Austria, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK (England).

Specifically, this report seeks to assess the extent to which the chosen measures have been successful at meeting their operational targets and achieving their intended outcomes. This includes an assessment of the different policy approaches required to tackle the diversity of challenges faced by different groups of young people. The report also examines the broader impact of the chosen youth employment measures and looks at key strengths and weaknesses of different approaches as well as associated costs. It ends with a summary of the lessons learnt and outlines some of the key characteristics of effective youth employment measures, based on the evidence gathered from the implementation of the measures in the nine selected countries. Overall, the findings are expected to support the efforts of policymakers, practitioners, social partners and researchers across Europe in the conception, planning and implementation of policies designed to improve the labour market situation of young people.

The report comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a short overview of the chosen methodological approach. It is followed by an introduction to the type and nature of measures evaluated, which includes an illustration of how the chosen measures intervene at different points along a young person’s pathway towards employment. A chapter on outputs, outcomes and impact focuses in particular on the assessment of the extent to which the different measures have met their operational and outcome related targets, and at what cost. A chapter on effectiveness and lessons learned draws conclusions on what works in the implementation of youth employment measures and also provides an overview of some

of the common weaknesses in youth employment measures. The final chapter draws conclusions based on the evidence presented in this report.

The report is accompanied by three Annexes: Annex 1 is a topic guide for interviews with policy and programme managers; Annex 2 is a topic guide for interviews with ‘critical friends’; and Annex 3 is a template for the country research files.

Evaluating the effectiveness of youth employment policy measures: the methodological approach

Evaluations are used to explore and answer a very wide range of questions about when and how different policies and programmes ‘work’. This includes exploring their effectiveness, as well as their relevance, efficiency and added value. As such they form an important part of the policy cycle. The results of evaluations can be used to monitor and inform the implementation process of individual measures; for example they can inform changes in the methods of implementation or targeting. On a broader scale, they can be used alongside research findings to inform evidence-based policymaking. This helps ensure that public expenditure is targeted towards those policies that offer the greatest chance of success and value for money.

The term ‘evaluative study’ has been chosen to describe this study due to the fact that its findings are not based on a ‘primary evaluation’ of measures; rather, they result from a review of existing evaluations and other policy or programme documentation such as beneficiary data, as well as interviews with key stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery of the selected measures. This approach allowed researchers to maximise the amount of evidence that could be gathered, in the context of available resources, timeframe and the number of policies subject to this evaluation.

The next section presents a short overview of this research process, and is followed by a summary of the strengths and weaknesses associated with the chosen process.

Research process

The research process consisted of three distinctive stages, which are briefly explained in the following sections. They are:

- A preparatory stage, including background research, identification of potential case study policies and countries, and definition of selection criteria for the case study selection;
- The evaluation of individual measures;
- Analysis and report writing.

Preparatory stage

The main purpose of the preparatory stage was to define selection criteria and identify a long list of potential case study countries and policies, mainly through background research. As it was not possible to extend the study to cover the whole EU, the focus of the research was limited to nine countries.

The nine countries were selected in relation to a number of criteria, as outlined in Table 1 below. The aim was to ensure a balanced selection in terms of country characteristics (e.g. geographical distribution, size) and contextual factors such as rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving (ESL), and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Table 1: Country characteristics and contextual factors that informed the selection of countries

Country characteristics	Labour market context	Education and training
Geographical location (north, south, east and west)	Youth unemployment rate (countries with high and low levels of youth unemployment)	Early school leaving rate – ESL (countries with high and low rates, countries with declining / stable / growing rates)
Country size (small, medium and large Member States)	Youth employment rate (countries with high and low levels of youth employment)	Educational attainment levels (low, medium and high skilled)
Date when joined EU	Youth activity rate (countries with high and low levels of youth activity)	
	NEET rate (countries with high and low NEET rates)	

In addition to the criteria shown above, the selection process took into account the range of youth employment or employability policy measures in place in each country. Particular attention was paid to the availability of evaluations and assessments of initiatives that were highlighted in the international literature as being promising. The study team reviewed numerous international studies of youth employment and ESL, on the basis of which a long list of 72 measures was drawn up. Identified policies represent a broad range of approaches, across five broad categories, as shown by Table 2 below.

Table 2: Five broad categories of measures

Measures to tackle ESL	Measures facilitating access to employment
Preventive measures	Measures to support school to work (STW) transitions
Reintegration measures	Measures to foster employability
	Measures to remove practical and logistical barriers and employer incentives

Table 3 below gives a brief overview of the characteristics and situation of each of the nine countries with regard to young people’s participation in the labour market, as well as in education and training. It also lists the measures that were selected for review in each country.

Table 3: Profile of countries selected for review

Country and key characteristics	Labour market context (2011)	Education and training context (2011)	Measures reviewed
Austria Western (central) European country Population: 8.3 million Joined EU in 1995	Youth employment rate: 54.9% Youth unemployment rate: 8.3% Activity rate of young people: 59.9%. NEET rate: 6.9%.	ESL rate: 8.3% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 23.1% had achieved lower secondary education, 60.5% upper secondary education and 16.4% tertiary-level education.	Production Schools; Supra-company Apprenticeships (ÜBA); Integrative Vocational Training (IBA).
Finland Northern European country Population: 5.3 million Joined EU in 1995	Youth employment rate: 40.4% Youth unemployment rate: 20.1% Activity rate of young people: 50.5% NEET rate: 8.4%	ESL rate: 9.8% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 23.6% had achieved lower secondary education, 44.8% upper secondary education and 31.6% tertiary-level education.	Career Start; Youth Guarantee; Chances Card.
France Western European country Population: 64.3 million Founding EU member	Youth employment: 29.9% Youth unemployment rate: 23.0% Activity rate of young people: 38.4% NEET rate: 12.0%	ESL rate: 12.0% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 31.9 % had achieved lower secondary education, 41.8% upper secondary education and 26.3% tertiary-level education.	Priority Education; CIVIS Contract; Alternance Education and training (<i>formation en alternance</i>).
Hungary Eastern European country Population: 10 million Joined EU in 2004	Youth employment: 18.3% Youth unemployment rate: 26.1% Activity rate of young people: 24.7% NEET rate: 13.3 %	ESL rate: 11.2% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 24.3% had achieved lower secondary education, 58.5% upper secondary education and 17.2% tertiary-level education.	Springboard; Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centres (TISZKs); START Programme.

Country and key characteristics	Labour market context (2011)	Education and training context (2011)	Measures reviewed
Ireland Western European country Population: 4.5 million Joined EU in 1973	Youth employment rate: 28.2% Youth unemployment rate: 29.4% Activity rate of young people: 39.9% NEET rate: 18.4%	ESL rate: 10.6% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 29.8% had achieved lower secondary education, 37.4% upper secondary education and 32.8% tertiary-level education.	Youthreach; FÁS Traineeships; Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS).
Italy Southern European country Population: 60 million Founding EU member	Youth employment rate: 19.4% Youth unemployment rate: 29.1% Activity rate of young people: 27.4% NEET rate: 19.8%	ESL rate: 18.2% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 46.2% had achieved lower secondary education, 40.8% upper secondary education and 13% had achieved tertiary-level education.	School Work Alternation; Higher-level Apprenticeships.
Spain Southern European country Population: 45.8 million Joined EU in 1986	Youth employment rate: 21.9% Youth unemployment rate: 46.4% Activity rate of young people: 40.9% NEET rate: 18.5%	ESL rate: 26.5% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 48.4% had achieved lower secondary education, 23.5% upper secondary education and 28.1% tertiary-level education.	Learning Communities; Initial Vocational Qualification Programmes (PCPI); Promoting self-employment & the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts for young people.
Sweden Northern European country Population: 9.2 million Joined EU in 1995	Youth employment rate: 40.5% Youth unemployment rate: 22.9% Activity rate of young people: 52.6% NEET rate (in 2010): 7.5%	ESL rate: 6.6% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 25.3% had achieved lower secondary education, 46.4% upper secondary education and 28.3% tertiary-level education (2010)	Navigator Centres; A job guarantee for young people; New start Jobs Initiative.
UK (England) Northern European country Population: 61.7 million Joined EU in 1973	Youth employment rate: 46.4% Youth unemployment rate: 21.1% Activity rate of young people: 58.8% NEET rate: 14.3%	ESL rate: 15% In 2010, among 15–24 year olds, 24.1% had achieved lower secondary education, 44.3% upper secondary education and 31.5% tertiary-level education.	Connexions; Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE).

Evaluation of individual measures

The research phase of individual measures included a review of existing monitoring data and evaluative research literature on the policies in question, and telephone interviews with up to seven key stakeholders in each country. This stage of the research was carried out by a team of country experts made up of independent labour market and education policy researchers. They took responsibility for reviewing all literature relevant to their countries and chosen policies, contacting programme or policy managers for any potential non-published data, arranging and undertaking interviews and preparing a country file that summarised all the key findings.

Interviewed stakeholders included managers or representatives of each measure and at least two ‘critical friends’ (external stakeholders such as independent labour market researchers, programme evaluators and social partners). The main goal of the interviews with programme managers was to gather factual information on targets, objectives and performance, as well as gauge their views on successes, weaknesses and lessons. The external stakeholders were invited to give a more critical review of the measures. In total, 52 interviews took place.

The completed nine country files outline the aims, objectives, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact of each measure. They also include an analysis of their effectiveness and lessons learned.

Analysis and report writing

The analysis involved a comparative review of what the 25 measures set out to achieve and the extent to which they were successful in achieving it. The country files were used for this phase, leading to the production of this report. This report thus presents an analysis and summary of around 350 pages of research findings prepared by the country experts on the 25 chosen measures.

Importantly, some of the measures did not set out their own clear targets or measurable objectives. This made it more difficult to assess their success and to write this report. In some cases, it was necessary for the country experts and authors of this report to rely on the available material and interview findings in order to retrospectively identify their aims, objectives and intended impact. This means (in the absence of a clear evidence base) that some of the country files included assessments made by the researchers themselves regarding the success of some measures in meeting their key objectives and targets.

This has an important implication for the content and style of this report. The findings are a combination of evidence from a range of sources, including existing research (often non-published), beneficiary and other tracking data obtained from policy or programme managers, opinions of those involved in the running of the measures and external stakeholders (critical friends), as well as assessments made by the country experts. For this reason and due to the concise nature of the report, it has not been possible to express all the opinions put forward by individual interviewed stakeholders or cite all of the reviewed reports in an explicit manner.

When available, evidence from existing national studies or evaluations was seen as the most important, and in some cases the most reliable, source of information. Research undertaken for most such studies – including the depth and breadth of stakeholder consultations – has been more extensive and therefore more comprehensive than the resources for this study allowed. Stakeholder opinions have often been blended with other research findings, though explicit references to specific or generic stakeholder views have been added, especially in the absence of other research evidence or when they have provided new insights.

Finally, the 25 measures covered by the study are extremely diverse in terms of their aims, objectives, and subsequent outputs, outcomes and impact. It is thus very difficult to compare the effectiveness of the measures. For this reason, the focus of this report is on identifying what can be learned from the policies in terms of what works and lessons learned.

Strengths and limitations of the chosen methodological approach

The ‘evaluative study’ approach, as described above, was adopted because it was not possible to undertake in-depth, primary research into each individual measure. It is important to note that there were gaps in the information collected – including variation in the awareness of some of the interviewed stakeholders on the performance of the chosen measures. Consequently the strength of the evidence base varied strongly from one policy to another, with direct implications on the way in which some of the findings have been presented. Many European countries have a relatively weak tradition of evaluation and some of the selected ones also had a decentralised governance structure, which posed additional challenges.

Within the framework of these challenges, the triangulation approach, which involved combining evidence from a range of sources (literature, programme managers and external stakeholders) was seen as the most appropriate and feasible method. Limiting the evaluation to nine countries (as opposed to covering the whole EU) also ensured that individual country researchers were able to focus on two or three policies from their country. They could take account of the broader literature and interview a number of relevant stakeholders in order to gather a more balanced set of views (rather than, for example, rely on the views of programme or policy managers alone).

Introduction to the type and nature of evaluated measures

In order to try to take account of the diversity of issues faced by young people and the different approaches required to tackle these, the 25 measures reviewed were selected to represent a range of approaches, across five broad categories. These categories, and the measures within them, intervene at different points along a young person's pathway towards employment, as illustrated in Figure 1 and explained below.

Figure 1: *The pathway to employment*

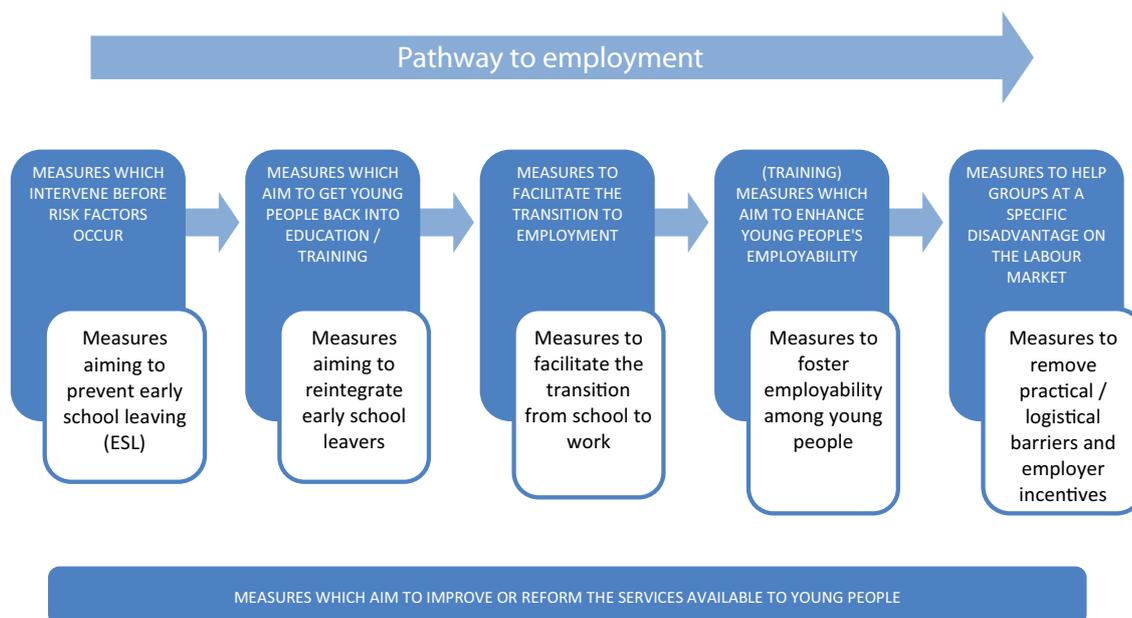


Figure 1 shows that some youth employment policies seek to intervene before risk factors occur while others intervene at later stages of the young person's pathway to employment. Policies in the early stages of the pathway have the particular goal of tackling the risk factors linked to potential disengagement from education and training. This is because young people with no or only low level qualifications have a higher chance of experiencing unemployment than their more highly skilled peers. To be more specific, measures to prevent ESL recognise that certain 'supports' can be provided within the school environment, at home or through holistic support measures, which can improve students' chances of staying in education or training. Measures to reintegrate early school leavers seek to provide timely support for those who have just made the decision to drop out by encouraging and enabling them to continue their previous studies or to find other, more suitable training alternatives. School to work (STW) transition policies intervene at a slightly later stage of the pathway as their primary goal is to ease young people's transition 'from learning to earning' and therefore to ensure that public investment in education and training is maximised.

Measures to foster employability and measures to remove practical and logistical barriers to employment are policy interventions that intervene closer to the labour market entry point. The former type of measure seeks to address gaps in transversal or job-specific skills and competences (as well as other labour market abilities and aptitudes), while the latter aims to address specific barriers faced by young people from vulnerable backgrounds.

In addition, a small number of the measures reviewed for this study take a more strategic approach, aiming to improve or reform the services available to young people, rather than, or as well as, introducing a specific intervention at a certain point on their pathway towards employment.

The following sections outline the rationale behind the measures within each of the five categories – the broad issues that they intend to address or the identified gaps in provision that they aim to fill. Many of these initiatives cross the boundaries of different categories of approaches. This meant it was not straightforward to decide where to locate a measure within the five categories along the continuum of the pathway towards integration.

Measures to prevent ESL

An education system that helps children and young people from all backgrounds realise their full potential is vital for continued prosperity and to reduce labour market exclusion among young people (OECD, 2010). As this is well established, education policies include both measures that prevent ESL and measures that re-integrate early ‘drop-outs’ into education or training. Research (e.g. Byrne and Smyth, 2010) has shown that ESL usually results from a cumulative process. Young people can become disengaged from learning from primary level onwards (Gracey and Kelly, 2010) and some children are already on an unequal footing at the start of primary education because they lag behind their peers, for example in terms of social or language skills. Early intervention is therefore critical to avoid the accumulation of problems that can increase the risk of the young person dropping out (Cedefop, 2010).

There is clearly a growing awareness that too many young people drop out of school or training for reasons that could have been avoided. For this reason, the aim of the ESL preventive measures reviewed for this study is to address risk factors before a young person makes the decision to drop out, which can increase their risk of experiencing unemployment at a young age.

There is no single or simple approach to preventing ESL and therefore preventive ESL policies adopt different strategies for building a critical foundation for school engagement and tackling the risks linked to the cumulative processes that can lead to disengagement. In many countries and contexts, the accumulation of disadvantaged students in specific schools has been identified as a cause for high ratios of ESL; thus some preventive ESL policies focus on providing additional supports (for example, in the form of teachers or training) for schools in specific geographical areas (such policies are often known as ‘area-based policies’) (Nevala and Hawley, 2011). This is the case for example with the Priority Education initiative in France. This national policy aims to reduce disparities between school results by helping pupils in the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas to succeed in education, in particular by providing greater pedagogical support. Participating schools receive 10–15% more financial support than other schools, which is used to take steps such as recruiting more teachers and teaching assistants, reducing the size of classes, and finance-related measures. It is based on two levels of intervention: previously these were the Success Networks (*Réseaux Ambition Réussite*, RAR) in the most disadvantaged areas (which this study is focused on) and the Academic Success Network (*Réseaux de Réussite Scolaire*, RSR) in areas where a lower level of support is needed. Since the start of the school year 2011–2012, priority education encompasses the RSR networks and the Schools and Colleges for Ambition, Innovation and Success programme (*écoles, collèges et lycées pour l’ambition, l’innovation et la réussite*, ECLAIR), which together aim to support pupils’ progression by making improvements in pedagogy, school organisation and human resources management.

Some other preventive ESL measures are built on the same principle of supporting schools in disadvantaged areas, but are less top-down in the way in which they are delivered and rely more on alternative pedagogies. One example is the Learning Communities programme which has been introduced in a number of regions of Spain, mostly in low income areas. There are now 103 schools (from nursery to second level schools, public and private) operating learning communities in Spain. Learning Communities are normally associated with pedagogic innovation, since the ‘old’ pedagogic methods may not have had an impact on ESL rates. Key characteristics of all Learning Communities are the involvement of whole school communities in fostering educational success and the promotion of high expectations among young people. In general, the Learning Communities approach begins with a period of consultation, during which

schools, students, parents and the wider community decide on goals. Once a plan is in place, the school tries to engage the wider community in offering voluntary support services to the school, including university students, older students, staff from local NGOs or other members of the local community. Activities include, for example, interactive group teaching, a ‘book club’ approach to reading and literacy, regular meetings between staff, students, parents and the wider school community.

While the vast majority of children and young people transfer successfully from one level of education to another, the transition between lower and upper secondary education can be particularly ‘dangerous’ (Cedefop, 2010; Nevala and Hawley, 2011); at this point, many young people drop out of education. Some are unable to get a study place they wanted, while others lack information, motivation or confidence to continue. A range of strategies have been introduced to tackle early school drop-out at this specific point in time, including student monitoring systems and guarantees of study places. Another approach is the introduction of a transition support programme, such as Career Start in Finland, which is a mainstream programme providing transition support for young people who have dropped out of school or who did not gain a place in an upper secondary school for vocational and educational training (VET). Its aim is to give young people an opportunity to consider an alternative career path, VET courses and employment options so as to enable and motivate them to continue their studies and to avoid social exclusion. Each participant designs their own development plan with support from their tutor and, where possible, activities are tailored to their individual needs and aspirations. The programme length therefore varies depending on the needs of the individual, from 20 to 40 study weeks. Activities include, for example, ‘trying out’ different vocational courses, developing study, vocational and life skills, and undertaking short periods of workplace training.

Many young people enjoy and thrive under academically driven, school-based education, while others enjoy a curriculum that is more practical and relevant to the labour market. Some schools and programmes have responded by ensuring that students can gain career-related skills and enjoy work-based learning opportunities without having to sacrifice the academic work that is necessary for many higher education opportunities. One such example is the School Work Alternation scheme in Italy. This is an alternative to the existing mainstream education system, in that it combines classroom-based learning with work placements to improve students’ employability. It was introduced to reduce the division between school and work and to strengthen the link between the training offered and the needs of companies. The measure gives students (aged 15–18 years) the opportunity to pursue their secondary studies by alternating between periods of work and study, thereby enabling them to hone transferable work skills and put the theoretical knowledge they have learnt at school into practice in a work environment. The measure also promotes the development of labour market-related skills in a school environment, for example through workplace simulations and practical help in writing a CV. Chambers of Commerce are a key partner, importantly helping to ensure the buy-in of the business sector.

These examples show that ESL preventive measures tend to include multiple components and that they can take many forms, target different groups of young people and vary significantly in their scale. However, there is a significant and increasing consensus that preventive interventions can be more cost effective than measures implemented at a later stage of the employment pathway. This is because they can tackle risk factors as they emerge at the start of the cumulative process of disengagement.

Nonetheless, reintegration measures can provide important second-chance opportunities for those who have left school early. In that way, they play an important part in efforts to reduce social exclusion among young people. Such policies are discussed in the following section.

Measures to reintegrate early school leavers

By 2020, 16 million more jobs in Europe will require high-level qualifications, while demand for low-skilled jobs will drop by 12 million (European Commission, 2010). The level of education a person has achieved thus has a strong influence on their chances of finding work and, generally, people with a higher level of education are less likely to be unemployed (Eurofound, 2011b). Young people who have dropped out of school early are therefore at a considerable disadvantage on the labour market and it is important to have measures in place to enable them to return to education in order to acquire the higher-level skills and qualifications that are demanded by employers.

The reintegration of early school leavers back into education and training (as well as the labour market) has long been seen as an important aspect of efforts to tackle the problem of ESL. Even with the growing focus on effective prevention programmes, there will always be some young people who, for different and often complex reasons, will drop out of the education system early. ESL reintegration measures therefore try to reduce the costs associated with early school drop-out rates by providing a second opportunity for young people to acquire a qualification. Nonetheless, even with this shared goal, methods and objectives vary among projects. This reflects the fact that within the overall ESL group, a range of subgroups have different reasons for dropping out, varying from personal and family related reasons to motivational, educational, peer, confidence and society related ones. They can also have different education or training needs and aspirations.

Many young people who drop out of school early find it difficult to work within the teaching formats and methods used in mainstream (academic) schooling. They need an alternative approach in line with their specific situation and needs. For example the pilot programme Springboard in Hungary aims to give a second chance to young people who left education as soon as it was legally possible or who did not successfully complete vocational school. The programme aims to create a motivating learning environment and to fill any skill gaps that may hinder students' performance when they (re)enter a vocational school. A preparatory phase therefore focused on establishing this alternative learning environment through teacher training, small classrooms, the design of teaching materials and the development of an innovative learning environment, including purpose-built classrooms and job shadowing opportunities.

Some young people simply need a second chance to acquire a qualification, perhaps delivered in an adult learning environment. Others may need to be offered a chance to study a course or qualification that provides an alternative to the more traditional school courses, such as one that adopts a more practical, project- or work-based learning format. In Spain for example, one measure to reduce ESL that was introduced under the 2006 Organic Law on Education Act is the Initial Qualification Programme (*Programas de Cualificación Profesional Inicial*, PCPI). The aim is to get young people back into education through a practical and professionally oriented course, tailored to their individual needs. The qualifications were introduced as a way of increasing participation in initial vocational education and training (IVET), facilitating the progression from IVET to higher levels of vocational education, and of updating and modernising existing vocational qualifications. The programmes take a practical approach – students must undertake a minimum of 150 hours of training in a workplace centre or undertake some productive work in companies. This is perceived to be more appealing to these students.

Other early school leavers, from more hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups, cannot be 'rushed' back to education or employment and need time to solve their personal issues first. If the root causes are not addressed, the integration efforts lead to a 'yo-yo' effect – young people taking up a job or study place but then dropping out and ending up unemployed again. Thus, programmes like Production Schools in Austria and Youthreach in Ireland focus on groups of learners with more complex needs, by taking a 'whole person' approach to supporting the young person's learning, career and wider needs. In Austria, Production Schools do not offer fully accredited training; instead they are designed to give a new orientation to young people who have so far failed to succeed in school or the labour market and who have not identified

a clear pathway for their future development. Most offer: vocational guidance and the opportunity to try out different practical or vocational skills; the opportunity of short work placements; the ability to catch up on educational content or prepare for the completion of school leaving certificates; and the offer of socio-pedagogical and psychological support in a supportive environment.

In a similar manner, Youthreach in Ireland takes an integrated approach to the needs of those unqualified young people who have left full-time education and who find it particularly difficult to gain a secure foothold in the employment market, or to take their place in society as young adults. The programme aims to provide early school leavers with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to participate fully in society and progress to further education, training and employment. Participants are provided with individualised education plans, career counselling assistance and arrangements for work programme placements and apprenticeships. The curriculum delivered to learners is flexible to individual and local needs, with a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, personal development, health promotion, sports and vocational subjects.

These examples of reintegration measures have shown that the early school leaver population is both diverse and dynamic. This means that effective response in this field involves measures that vary in the intensity of support provided to participants, depending on the needs of the specific target group of each individual reintegration programme. It is clear, however, that individualised, tailor-made pathways back into education and training are at the heart of most reintegration policies.

Once young people are equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications, the policy focus shifts towards ensuring that their transition from education and training to active, productive adulthood and employment is as smooth as possible. Policy responses to these questions are discussed in the section below.

Measures to facilitate the transition from school to work

STW transitions represent a critical stage in a young person's life and can have a significant impact on their long-term integration into the labour market. A young person's first job is an important stepping stone in their career and can have a profound influence on their progression on the career ladder. Research carried out in Sweden for instance has shown that there is a greater chance of being unemployed later in life for those young people who are unemployed immediately after leaving education (Hellmark, 2011). Thus the overall goal of STW transition measures is to ease the move to a first 'post-education' job, for example by: providing individualised career guidance; creating a personalised development plan defining how to find a job; equipping young people with transversal, soft, job-specific or broader vocational competences or resources to help them to enter the labour market (e.g. via self-employment); and in the case of some programmes led by public employment services (PES) actually guaranteeing or offering a job, study place (academic or vocational) or other activation measure.

The involvement of PES in the STW transition arena, by placing a greater focus on the earliest possible activation of unemployed young people, has been growing over the past decade. This not only involves the timely provision of activation measures (e.g. training, information provision, career guidance and training needs assessment) and other well targeted services; the PES also make contact with young people in need of their services within a clearly defined timescale (Scharle and Weber, 2011). This type of early action is typically packaged as a form of 'youth guarantee' which sets out the rights of young people to study, train, access a job or other active labour market measures.

In Finland for instance, the Youth Guarantee was initiated in 2005, but by now has become a flagship youth policy for the Finnish government. The guarantee 'obliges' the PES to offer, within a month of a young person registering as a jobseeker, a personalised needs assessment and an employment plan, plus the opportunity of taking part in activation

measures that can improve their chances on the labour market within three months of registration. A new ‘target’ was set in May 2010 for the PES to design an employment plan for each new young jobseeker within two weeks of registration. Further revisions of the guarantee are being discussed by a dedicated national tripartite working committee.

In Sweden, the job guarantee for young people, which was introduced in 2007, also sets a deadline for the PES to provide support to young unemployed people. Its aim is to minimise the amount of time they spend without a job, education or training opportunity. Young people who have been unemployed and registered with the PES for over three months have access to special labour market integration measures and activities and the programme offers ‘custom-made’ support to help raise participants’ understanding of and motivation during the job-search process. Similar youth guarantees are in place in countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands and Poland (Scharle and Weber, 2011). Recently, Members of the European Parliament suggested the introduction of a ‘European Youth Guarantee’ to ensure that young people are not without jobs for more than four months (European Parliament, 2012).

‘One-stop-shop’ services represent another way of ensuring a more coordinated approach to the school-to-work progression pathway. For example, Connexions in England and the pilot Navigator Centres in Sweden both focus on improving services available to young people by tackling the problem of fragmentation: a one-stop-shop service addresses all the needs of young people in one single location. The two measures have different target groups; Navigator Centres focus on the ‘hardest to reach’ young people, while Connexions was intended to be a universal service for all young people, while also tackling specific issues such as the NEET rate. The Connexions service (which has now been phased out) was part of a government strategy to reduce social exclusion among young people. The decision to set up the new service was based on research that showed existing support services for young people were inadequate, that young people still lacked the career and decision-making skills they needed, and that they did not feel they had sufficient information about opportunities to help prepare them for independent living. The service was set up on a phased basis but led to the development of 47 Connexions partnerships. They provided young people with impartial advice on options after the age of 16 as well as help, advice and counselling on life issues. This work was aided by online and phone-based services, implemented by Connexions Direct. The Swedish network of Navigator Centres was set up as a pilot measure in 2004 to provide one-stop-shops for the hardest-to-reach excluded young people, based on collaboration between municipalities, the non-profit sector, social and labour market authorities and employers. Their aim was to provide a hub where young people can get all the help they need on the ‘path out of exclusion’. The centres employ a holistic approach to helping young people with their personal, social, family, health and other problems before helping them to integrate back into education or training or to find employment. Currently, a network of 12 Navigator Centres continues to provide one-stop-shop services to young people. This involves no national-level monitoring or funding. Instead, the centres are funded by local authorities and other partners, though their working methods continue to be broadly supported by all the key labour market actors.

Another STW policy example (alongside Connexions and the Navigator Centres) that recognises the importance of providing personalised support to young people is the ‘integration into society contract’ (*Contrat d’insertion dans la vie sociale*, CIVIS) in France. It aims to guide low-qualified young people aged 16–25 years who are experiencing difficulties entering the labour market into stable employment. Measures include personalised follow-up with an adviser, as well as participation in training activities and work placements or internships. Young people sign a ‘CIVIS contract’, which sets out a number of objectives and tasks for them. Beneficiaries are expected to meet their individual adviser on a regular basis and engage in job search activities. The lowest qualified beneficiaries receive additional support. CIVIS is implemented by a network of ‘local missions’ and centres for information and guidance (*permanences d’accueil, d’information et d’orientation*, PAIO) which are local structures in charge of providing a range of services to young people, including guidance, information and counselling.

While many of the STW transition measures aim to support young people in their pathway from school to work in a practical, personalised manner, others are focused on streamlining services to young people. For example, Regional Integrated Vocational Training Centres (TISZKs) in Hungary were set up to address Hungary's fragmented initial vocational education and training (IVET) system by creating networks of different training centres to improve their quality and effectiveness. Funding (primarily from the EU) was given to participating schools to enable them to update their technological base. The long-term vision was to make the system of vocational training more cost-effective through horizontal integration of the training institutions and by getting rid of redundant capacities. In addition, in order to receive funding, the schools must adhere to a range of professional criteria, including offering regular teacher training and making sure that the vocational courses are in line with the recommendations of regional training committees (RFKB), which create an up-to-date list of vocations with high levels of labour market demand in the regions concerned.

Other approaches to enhancing the transition process include efforts to improve self-employment opportunities for young people and the quality of employment young people obtain, for example by increasing the share of young people in permanent, as opposed to temporary, employment. Spain, for instance, has promoted self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts for young people. The previous government introduced the modification of unemployment benefit capitalisation regime; this enables young unemployed people who want to start their own business to receive 80% of their total unemployment benefit entitlement in one single payment in order to help them with the business set-up costs. To qualify, they must prepare a detailed business plan and initiate their business activity within one month. Exemptions from social security contributions are offered for the self-employed and companies that hire young or long-term unemployed people on a part-time basis (50–75% of full-time working hours). This measure is also combined with incentives for employers to change temporary contracts into open-ended ones. The focus of these measures is on sustainability of employment for the young person; high temporality rates (the ratio of temporary versus permanent workers) have always been one of the main features of working conditions among young people in Spain. Indeed, the crisis brought about a 10% rise in the share of young people working in temporary jobs. This characteristic of the jobs market for young people has been linked to job instability and poorer training and progression opportunities. These factors can have an impact on future career prospects and life planning.

The examples mentioned above show that many education and training systems, and associated labour market services, fail to equip and prepare young people for the transition to the world of work. As a consequence, additional, integrated, timely services are needed to support young people in their efforts to find sustainable, high quality employment (or indeed, for many, any employment).

Aspects of today's labour market, such as high levels of unemployment and employers' reluctance to hire new staff due to economic uncertainties, mean that even young people who are relatively well prepared for the STW transition face difficulties in accessing employment. Many young people are also at a disadvantage in the labour market in comparison to older, more experienced candidates who are favoured by many employers due to their work experience and the transversal, soft and vocation-specific skills they have acquired through experience. Policies that seek to foster the development of such 'employability' skills among young people are examined in the section below.

Measures to foster employability among young people

Although there are currently high rates of unemployment among young people in many EU countries, some companies report that they struggle to fill vacancies due to a lack of skilled labour (Eurofound, 2011a). This skills mismatch arises partly from growing demand for high-level skills in the European economy. An increasing emphasis is being placed on transferable skills in the economy. This need also relates to the fact that individuals are unlikely to stay in the same job throughout their working lives and therefore need to foster employability and adaptability.

There is a drive to foster ‘employability’ among young people, with ‘employability’ referring to qualities, attitudes, skills and competences that enable them to increase their chances of getting a job, staying in a job, and progressing further in work. This goes beyond the individual’s skills and qualifications profile to encompass a range of issues that can impact on their chances of entering the labour market and of remaining and progressing in their employment; examples include transversal competences and career management skills (GHK, 2011). Improving young people’s employability is a key aspect of their successful integration into the labour market. Measures range from addressing gaps in basic skills, competences or qualifications (such as numeracy or computer literacy) to helping them to gain more specialised skills that are needed in certain sectors. They are often addressed through vocational training courses. It is also about enabling young people to obtain valuable work experience to increase their ‘attractiveness’ to employers, as well as giving them confidence in their own ability.

Many employability measures have set out to tackle the need for young people to acquire vocational skills, by introducing or increasing the number of opportunities to alternate classroom-based education and on-the-job training. This is the basis of this approach: providing a ‘hands-on’ pedagogy which many young people can relate to better than a more theoretical one (thereby reducing the risk of disengagement and disillusionment); and enabling young people to gain practical work experience which is valued by employers. For example, in Italy, new Higher-level Apprenticeships were piloted over the course of 2004–2008, and again from 2010 onwards, to provide an opportunity for higher education students to acquire a diploma or degree through training and paid employment. The first pilot was the first time that apprenticeships were linked to the educational system. It enabled around 1,000 young people (aged 18–29 years) to gain higher-level qualifications (both at secondary and tertiary level) while working; previously apprenticeships had been regarded as mainly labour contracts (ISFOL, 2011). Recently, the apprenticeship programme has been extended to doctoral degrees. The apprenticeship contract is a paid labour contract, and apprentices enjoy the protection afforded by normal contracts, such as pension contributions, holidays and social assistance. Many of the instruction methods introduced as part of these pilots are considered innovative in the Italian context as the system utilises more project work, real-life case study assignments and teaching by professionals from the sector.

In France, the recent policy focus has been on increasing the number of young people undertaking apprenticeships and other similar forms of training under existing work-based training schemes. To be more specific, the apprenticeship contracts are one of the main types of Alternance Education and Training schemes and are one of the pathways towards nationally recognised qualifications. Apprenticeship contracts enable young learners to spend 60–75% of their time undertaking on-the-job vocational training in host companies and the rest of the time attending courses in a training institution. In 2011, the French government set a national target to increase the number of young people in apprenticeship to 600,000 by 2015 (of a total of 800,000 in the Alternance Education and Training system). A number of measures have been implemented to help achieve this target, including the introduction of bonuses for companies with fewer than 250 employees for taking on additional apprentices. In addition, penalties apply to large companies who do not train a number of apprentices that is proportional to the size of their workforce.

Many other employability measures are more focused on shorter term vocationally orientated training courses and the development of softer employability skills, such as self-discipline and ability to concentrate and complete a task. In Ireland, for instance, two measures to foster employability focus on providing young unemployed people or labour market entrants with relevant skills for the labour market. The first one, the FÁS National Traineeships Programme, was set up in 1998 to provide appropriate pathways into occupations better catered for by alternating periods of on- and off-the-job training. The traineeships enable learners to develop occupational skills and combine formal training provided by the national employment authority (FÁS) and workplace coaching with an employer. They vary in length from 15 to 59 weeks. On their successful completion, learners receive a nationally recognised qualification. The second, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), works with the long-term unemployed and aims to prepare them for employment or learning opportunities leading to paid employment. The scheme helps participants to improve their general level of education, gain certification, develop their skills and prepare for employment, self-employment and

further education and training through a range of education-led, vocationally oriented and progression-focused second-chance learning opportunities. The courses are full-time and range from basic education and training to advanced vocational training.

Addressing a mismatch between demand and supply for vocational training is another priority. In Austria, for example, supra-company apprenticeships (ÜBA) were introduced to overcome significant gaps between the demand for and supply of apprenticeship places and to provide a ‘safety net’ for those unable to find an apprenticeship place with a specific company. They allow young people who are unable to find a traditional apprenticeship to complete a full apprenticeship based in a vocational training centre, but with work experience with different employers. There are two forms of ÜBA. ÜBA 1 allows young people unable to find a placement at company level to complete a full apprenticeship delivered by an accredited provider. ÜBA 2 places more emphasis on practical work experience and training (combined with time spent in training with a provider). Both types are generally preceded by a period of vocational guidance and coaching (known as *Berufsorientierung und Coaching*, BOCO) to ensure young people make informed career choices and select a realistic pathway for them. ÜBA then provides regular curricula in the dual system, combining classroom-based learning with fixed amounts of time spent in an employer setting. They also deliver individualised support to young people to address any barriers to integration.

These examples have illustrated that a number of factors can hinder young people’s chances of finding stable employment. These include skill mismatches, lack of work experience, weak employability skills, and a lack of demand for apprenticeships in some countries and lack of supply of apprenticeship places in others. They also show that many measures under this category support young people’s employability by helping them acquire specific vocational skills through work-based learning or through shorter, preparatory-orientated training programmes. They therefore intervene at a relatively late stage of young people’s pathway towards employment.

However, young people may also face logistical and practical barriers to the labour market, which might need to be tackled through specific, targeted incentives or resources. Such policy initiatives are explored in the next section.

Measures to remove barriers to employment

The most economically and socially disadvantaged young people often face practical and logistical barriers to their participation in the labour market. These can relate, for example, to a disability or learning difficulty, language issues or additional responsibilities such as caring for a child or other dependent. Young jobseekers may also need financial or logistical support in accessing job opportunities; examples include those based in a remote, rural location or for whom transport costs are too high. The removal of these barriers is an important step in supporting young people in their (re)integration into education, training or employment. It may involve the provision of incentives or other support either for the young people themselves, or for employers.

In some cases an alternative training offer is made to young people who need additional support in order to complete their vocational or other labour market focused training. Existing training programmes are also adapted to cater for young people with disabilities or learning difficulties. These may go hand-in-hand with incentives for employers to recruit from ‘hard-to-help’ groups. For example, in Austria, the Integrative Vocational Training (IBA) programme was introduced to offer young people facing particular learning and integration challenges the opportunity to complete accredited apprenticeship training over a longer period of time or to follow partially accredited curricula in a workplace setting. The target groups of the programme are young people with disabilities and young people who appear unlikely to be able to find or complete an apprenticeship on the open market. Following a pre-selection process and implementation of a guidance measure such as BOCO, young people requiring the more individualised assistance (and additional time or partial curriculum) offered by IBA are identified. Once selected, the PES and a vocational and

guidance counsellor assist in finding suitable in-company or supra-company placements for these young people to complete either an extended or truncated apprenticeship in the dual system with additional assistance. Both companies and providers offering apprenticeships in IBA have access to additional financial assistance.

Another example of a policy with the goal of increasing the number of work-based learning places through financial incentives is the AGE programme in England. This was originally intended as a 'one-off opportunity', aimed to encourage the creation of 5,000 apprenticeship places for young unemployed people aged 16 or 17 years. This was to be done by offering high quality training with a rate of completion comparable to general apprenticeships, inducting new employers, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), into offering apprenticeships, and attracting its target market of young unemployed people. The programme provided a grant to employers of £2,500 (€3,000), paid in two instalments. The current government has committed to running the programme again and a new AGE programme has now been launched, which will provide up to 40,000 apprenticeship grants of £1,500 (€1,866) to SMEs recruiting 16–24 year olds.

A key barrier to employment faced by many young people is lack of work experience or access to a 'first' job. For this reason, a key rationale behind most measures that offer employer incentives is that they will stimulate demand for youth employment and give young people a foothold on the labour market. This will enable them to acquire valuable experience to complement their educational achievements and skills, thus helping them in their future career. Some such incentives include direct wage subsidies to employers, while others allow for reduced social security contributions or tax payments.

The START Programme in Hungary, for example, is largely a wage subsidy scheme administered by the Hungarian tax authority, which targets young jobseekers, including those under 25 years without a higher education degree and who have not yet been employed apart from casual work during full-time study. By (temporarily) reducing the cost of employment through a reduction of tax liabilities, it makes hiring more affordable for firms, while offering young people practical work experience and the chance to boost their skills and self-confidence. The measure allows employers to reduce the contributions paid for two years (or one year from 2010 if the entrant has at least a BA degree). To demonstrate their eligibility, all entrants are entitled to a 'start-card' (a plastic card issued by the tax authority), which is valid for two years. Once an employer hires a programme participant, they are allowed to pay the reduced contribution immediately and deal with the verification of their claims to the tax authority at the end of the year.

A similar measure can be found in Finland. The Chances Card programme was created as a temporary measure, as a result of the financial crisis, to ease the employment situation of unemployed VET and higher education graduates aged 18–30 years by reducing the labour costs of employers recruiting young, qualified jobseekers. The programme built on the existing Finnish wage subsidy scheme and offered a number of additional concessions for employers over a period of 1.5 years. During the first eight months of the scheme (May 2010 onwards), a subsidy could be obtained for any permanent or temporary job as long as the unemployed young person met the relevant criteria. During the second year, the subsidy could be obtained for any permanent job or any job at a municipality or a non-profit body, but additional criteria were applied to temporary private sector jobs. The scheme also launched a parallel marketing drive, which included designing a 'card' that was handed out by PES advisers to young unemployed people. The young people would then take the card to employers to show that if they were employed by them, the employer would receive a subsidy from the government for up to 10 months. Although Chances Cards are still being handed out, and the legislation on wage subsidies is permanent, active campaigning and special criteria for young unemployed people have stopped.

The Swedish New Start job scheme is a similar programme to the wage subsidy schemes from Hungary and Finland, though it is seen as a 'right' for all eligible groups (rather than as a labour market programme as such) and young people are only one of the three target groups. In terms of young people, it supports access to employment for long-term

unemployed youth (aged 20–25 years) and young people who have been outside the labour market for reasons other than unemployment (e.g. due to personal, health or social problems). It was introduced in January 2007 with a goal of improving labour market integration opportunities, particularly for those who are most disengaged from the labour market by making it easier and cheaper to hire them. This is achieved by offering reduced social security contributions or payroll tax to participating employers.

The examples introduced under this category demonstrate that the advantage for employers of subsidised training and employment placements for young people is, of course, that they can recruit a young person at a lower cost and then train them up to the standard required to carry out the role in question. Employer subsidies and measures to remove practical barriers also benefit individual young people and society when they increase work-based learning and employment opportunities for young jobseekers, especially those who are vulnerable.

The measures discussed in this section also intervene at a later stage of young people's path towards employment, close to the labour market entry point. Consequently, interaction and collaboration with employers is an essential factor in the success of these measures.

Summary

The 25 measures covered by this study intervene at different points along the 'pathway towards employment'. This approach recognises that young people are not a homogeneous group and that they face a variety of difficulties and challenges in making their way from education to the labour market.

Four of the measures intervene at the start of the pathway and aim to prevent ESL. They either take a targeted approach, focusing on specific at-risk groups or specific geographical (disadvantaged) areas, or they take a broader approach, tackling the issue by providing an alternative to mainstream education.

Even where preventive measures are in place, there will always be some young people who drop out of education early. These early school leavers are at a disadvantage on the labour market, due to their lack of formal qualifications. For this reason, a further four measures reviewed for this study focus on getting young people back into education or training. Their individual approaches to reintegration vary according to the level of support needs of their target groups; some early school leavers have more complex needs than others, who may simply need a second chance to acquire a qualification.

Some young people complete their education but fall into unemployment during the transition from education to the world of work. This can have a scarring effect on their long-term careers. Seven of the measures selected for this study focus on supporting young people at this critical time, by enabling them to make informed career decisions or by supporting them to access employment opportunities. A number of the measures that fall under this category also aim to reform the services available to young people in order to support their transition to the labour market. For example, they tackle the fragmentation of existing services or improve the efficiency of supports offered to young people.

Some employers favour adult candidates over young people because they feel that young people are lacking in 'employability'; this might be due to a lack of specific vocational or professional skills, a lack of 'transversal' competences, or a lack of work experience. Five measures reviewed for this study therefore focus on helping young people to improve their employability, either by acquiring specific vocational skills through work-based learning, or by improving their general level of education and skills in preparation for employment.

Finally, five of the measures focus on removing the barriers faced by young people in entering the labour market. These can include very specific barriers such as a disability, or a barrier faced by many young people – a lack of work experience. Employer subsidies are one way in which these measures aim to provide them with a route into the labour market.

As well as providing different types of support along the ‘pathway to employment’, the measures presented here represent a diverse selection of approaches to tackling the problems faced by young people entering the labour market today. Not all of the measures reviewed for this study are pilot or recently introduced measures. However, many have sought to try out new approaches and are innovative, either in the approach they use, the target groups they support or the context in which they are delivered. Innovation is perhaps more notable amongst the measures working with harder-to-reach groups such as disenfranchised early school leavers. Those working with young people who are more ‘labour market ready’ seem to focus more on ‘tried and tested’ measures (such as employer subsidies).

Having said that, evidence also exists that more traditional forms of programmes use more innovative service delivery or marketing strategies. The Swedish New Start job scheme altered the existing wage subsidy provision to make it a right for every unemployed person (rather than an active labour market ‘programme’ as such). The Finnish Chances Card employer subsidy scheme, although based on an existing wage subsidy scheme, was turned into a specific ‘brand’ and product, with the aim of increasing and improving awareness of the scheme among young people, parents and employers.

Outputs, outcomes and impact

Introduction

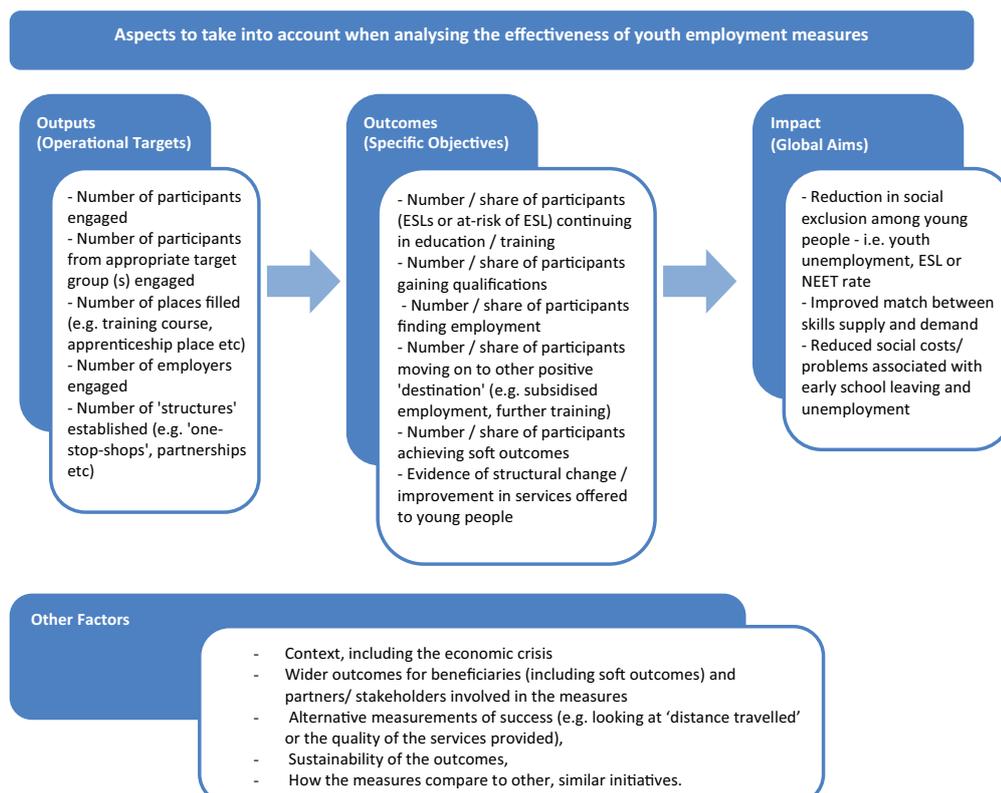
The aim of this chapter is to look at the 25 measures' targets towards identified outputs, outcomes and impacts and assess their performance against these targets. It includes an explanation of the terms 'outputs', 'outcomes' and 'impacts' in the context of youth employment measures, and describes the targets chosen for these measures. As this is an evaluative study, this chapter will discuss the performance of the chosen measures. The differences between the measures and their 'target-setting' practices will be explored.

The chapter will also look at a number of other factors that can and should be taken into account in evaluating the effectiveness of youth employment measures, including the recent economic crisis.

Figure 2 below presents a short overview of the outputs, outcomes and impacts that the chosen measures set out to achieve, as well as factors that could potentially influence outcomes. Usually a target is set for including a certain number of people in the measure (output), of which a certain share should achieve positive outcomes (outcomes), which then has an effect on the global aims of the measure (impact). Setting output and outcome targets, such as the number of young people engaged in the measure or the share of young people gaining qualifications through the measure, can work towards realising the ambitious global aims of the measure, such as reducing youth unemployment or ESL rates and reducing the societal costs of social exclusion among young people.

In addition, a range of other factors can be taken into account when forming an assessment of whether or not measures have achieved their intended outcomes. One particularly significant factor which has had an impact in recent years is the economic crisis. Other factors include: the wider outcomes for beneficiaries (including soft outcomes) and partners or stakeholders involved in the measures; alternative measurements of success (e.g. looking at 'distance travelled' or the quality of the services provided); the sustainability of the outcomes; and how the measures compare to other, similar, initiatives. These factors are discussed in the final part of this chapter.

Figure 2: *Factors to take into account when analysing the effectiveness of youth employment measures*



As the following sections illustrate, the task of evaluating the effectiveness of the policy actions under review has been made more complex by the fact that in many instances, specific quantitative targets were not set at the outset. Where targets have not been set, the analysis has (where possible) been based on the study team’s own identification of the aims and objectives of each measure, on the basis of the information gathered through the research. The analysis of the extent to which these aims and objectives have been met was limited by the information available. In some instances it was not possible to form a concrete conclusion due to the lack of data identified through the research. One broad conclusion of this research is therefore that more work is to be done to improve the evidence-base for future evaluations of the effectiveness of youth employment and employability measures across Europe.

Assessing the measures’ outputs

As already identified, ‘outputs’ related to youth employment measures typically refer to operational level targets such as the overall number of young people engaged, the number that came from a specific target group, or the number of places that were created for and filled by young people in apprenticeships or training courses, etc.

Assessing the success of measures in achieving their operational targets presents, on the face of it, the most straightforward aspect of an evaluation. It is simply a matter of identifying how many outputs (e.g. places on a training course) the measure was intended to generate, and whether or not it succeeded in meeting this target.

However, research for this study found that around half of the measures reviewed either did not set any quantitative operational targets, or only set guidelines for providers or agreed on general estimates, which were not regarded as operational targets as such by the programme coordinators or other stakeholders (see Table 4). Therefore, it is only possible to assess with any degree of certainty the measures that did set targets in relation to their operational objectives. Even for those measures where it has been possible to collect monitoring data, it is difficult to assess what these data tell us in terms of how successful the measure has been, if no targets were set.

Table 4: A summary of the availability of operational (output) targets

Availability of operational targets	Number of measures	Measures
Measurable operational targets	12	Career Start (FI), Production Schools (AT), Springboard (HU), Youthreach (IE), PCPI (ES), CIVIS contract (FR), FÁS traineeships (IE), ÜBA (AT), apprenticeships (as part of Alternance Education and Training) (FR), VTOS (IE), IBA (AT) and AGE (England)
Targets set at local level, without national oversight	3	School Work Alternation (IT), Learning Communities (ES), Navigator Centres (SE)
Guidelines for providers or estimates	2	Youth Guarantee (FI) and Job guarantee for young people (SE)
No measurable operational targets	8	Priority Education (FR), TISZKs (HU), Promoting self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts for young people (ES), Connexions (England), Higher-level apprenticeships (IT), Chances Card (FI), New Start Job Scheme (SE) and START (HU)

Table 5 below presents the operational targets and our assessment of whether, according to the data available, the measures have met their targets. As noted in the table, most of the available targets refer to the number of training or integration places to be provided for young people. It also shows that not all of the ‘targets’ we have identified were specifically set out as operational objectives. Some were estimates of the number of outputs that might be produced, while others were simply the number of places the measure could make available for young people in line with available resources. For example, while the AGE programme set out to create 5,000 apprenticeship places, the Youthreach programme (IE) has a capacity of around 6,000 places and VTOS (IE) has a fixed quota of 5,000 places, plus an

additional 700 which are given on demand. In measures where the ‘targets’ are based on available capacity, our assessment has therefore focused on whether all available places have been taken up by young people, as an indicator of whether the capacity of the measure is in line with the current level of demand.

In addition, as the table also shows, no targets were set at national level for three of the measures (Learning Communities (ES), School Work alternation (IT) and Navigator Centres (SE), although some were set at local or regional level by the organisations responsible for their implementation. With the two apprenticeship measures in Austria, targets are closely related to demand, which is estimated by the PES every year; it is the shortfall between apprenticeship placements available and placements sought. Targets are also mediated by the PES (or their contracted external providers) by determining the number of young people requiring modified apprenticeship programmes. Both targets are closely linked to the Austrian youth guarantee which requires young people to be offered an apprenticeship placement, employment or other suitable PES measure within three months of registering as unemployed.

Our analysis of the 17 measures that did have some form of target, guideline or estimate of the number of outputs to be produced, or a specific capacity to be filled, shows that almost all of the measures did meet or exceed these targets. For example, the initial aim of the Italian Chamber of Commerce was to engage 5,000 students per year in the School Work Alternation scheme, and in 2010, 19,594 students participated in measures promoted by them.

Only three measures did not quite meet their targets but in all instances the final outputs were not significantly below the original intended number. For example, Springboard (HU) was able to engage 15 schools, rather than the planned 19, and there were a total of 4,371 participants in FÁS traineeships (IE) in 2010, compared to a target of 4,422. The Youth Guarantee (FI) also fell short of the first, ambitious operational targets set for it (this is explained below in further detail).

These data also imply that there is a need and strong demand for youth employment measures in Europe. In fact, in relation to some measures it appears that demand actually exceeds supply. For example, while in 2006 only 180 young people took part in Production Schools (AT), by 2010 this figure had increased nine-fold to 1,500. This represents the full capacity of the current schools. More such establishments are being built and planned as demand is greater than the supply for this scheme’s target group (early school leavers). Anecdotal evidence from a number of other countries seems to suggest that demand for whole-person focused reintegration measures tends to exceed supply. The PCPI (ES) have also attracted an increasing number of young people over time – in fact enrolment in the PCPI has increased, although the number of students in the education system in general has decreased due to low birth rates.

In terms of differences between categories of measures in terms of ‘target-setting practices’, evidence from these youth employment measures suggests that ‘reintegration measures’ and ‘measures to foster employability’ may be more inclined than other measures to have operational targets. This is often due to the fact that such measures tend to only have a specific number of training or reintegration places available, due to funding restrictions. Many of the measures in these categories are also more established practices, while newer, more innovative pilot schemes seem to be less likely to have targets, especially during the pilot phase; instead, the results from the pilot phase may be used to set a target when the programme is mainstreamed, as is the case with the Career Start (FI).

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Table 5: Operational targets

Name of the measure	Operational targets	Were operational targets achieved?	Comments
ESL preventive			
Career Start (FI)	Yes	Data not yet available	No targets for the pilot phase, but an ambitious target has now been set for the future, as the programme was mainstreamed.
Priority Education (FR)	No	–	No targets set (the number and size of geographical areas covered, which relates to the schools involved, depends on objective criteria).
Learning Communities (ES)	Only at local level	Data not available	Individual schools as 'learning communities' (including teachers, parents, students and the wider community) decide on goals for their own school community.
School Work Alternation (IT)	Only at regional or organiser level	Yes	No targets set at national level; however, targets were set for measures coordinated by the Chambers of Commerce and they have been exceeded. The initial aim was to engage 5,000 students per year, and in 2010, 19,594 students participated in measures promoted by the Chambers. All of the indicators have registered an increase over the years, except in regard to the number of provinces involved.
ESL reintegration			
Production Schools (AT)	Yes	Yes	Targets are implicit in the capacity of current schools. Places at production schools are oversubscribed and further schools are being planned / constructed.
Springboard (HU)	Yes	Partially	Target was to engage 19 schools (one in each county), with an average class size of 12–16 pupils. Target for number of schools not achieved (15 schools applied), but target for class sizes achieved (average class size of 15).
Youthreach (IE)	Yes	Yes	Target is the number of places to be filled, which is around 6,000. Participation is in line with the number of places.
PCPI (ES)	Yes	Yes	Target was to increase the number of PCPIs to at least 80,000 for the academic year 2010–2011: 80,008 students enrolled in these programmes in 2010–2011.
STW transitions			
Youth Guarantee (FI)	Only a 'guideline'	Only partially	Original aim (a 'guideline' given to the PES) was to design a tailor-made employment plan for each new young jobseeker within a month of them registering as unemployed. In the initial years, plans were drawn up for around 61% of young unemployed people. In 2010, plans were made for 77% of new young jobseekers. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that there has been a considerable improvement in this regard. A new target was set in May 2010 for the PES to design an employment plan for each new young jobseeker within two weeks of registration.
CIVIS contract (FR)	Yes	Yes	The national objective for 2010 was for 200,000 new contracts to be signed. This was exceeded, with more than 213,000 CIVIS contracts signed. For 2011, the national objective was for 160,000 CIVIS contracts to be signed, including 50% by low qualified young people (DGEFP Circular No. 2011-03). 2011 data not available yet. It is also worth noting that the objectives of each local mission are agreed with the State and laid out in multiannual conventions on objectives (CPO).
TISZKs (HU)	No	–	–
Promoting self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts (ES)	No	–	–
Navigator Centres (SE)	Only at local level	Not available	Targets set at local level but not standardised or monitored nationally. Not possible to comment on whether local targets were met or to give a national picture.
Connexions (England)	No	Not available as objectives set but no quantifiable targets	Initial objective was to create a single, 'one-stop-shop' service that could meet the support needs of all young people, and to develop a comprehensive tracking system for young people aged 13–19 years. No quantitative targets were set. By 2004, over 400 one-stop shops and 1,400 community access points for young people had been opened or were planned, as well as the Connexions Direct service. A national information system extracting data from partnerships' databases was also set up.
A job guarantee for young people (SE)	Estimates	Yes	No systematic 'target setting' but when the guarantee was first introduced it was estimated that the measure would involve 30,000 young people in 2008. The estimated number of beneficiaries was met in 2008 (with 32,533 participants) and the number of beneficiaries has continued to increase, reaching 115,474 in 2010.

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Name of the measure	Operational targets	Were operational targets achieved?	Comments
Fostering employability			
FÁS National Traineeship Programme (IE)	Yes	Partially	Annual budgets for the FÁS training authority set through-put figures for the different training programmes to be provided, including traineeships. In 2010 the through-put target figure (i.e. the number of individuals to be engaged) for traineeships was 4,422. In 2010, 4,371 people completed traineeships (compared to around 2,700 in 2009). The target of 4,422 was therefore marginally underachieved (FÁS, 2011).
Higher-level apprenticeships (IT)	No	–	–
ÜBA (AT)	Yes	Yes	Targets are based on the gap between supply and demand for apprenticeship placements in any given year. Target has been met as the number of participants in ÜBA has increased significantly and exceeds the gap between apprenticeship vacancies and placements being sought in any given year.
Apprenticeships (as part of Alternance Education and Training) (FR)	Yes	Not available	The aim is to involve 600,000 persons in apprenticeship by 2015, as part of 800,000 persons in Alternance Education and Training. Not possible to assess as the target relates to the future. The number of apprentices has increased gradually, reaching 428,000 in 2008. A decline was registered in 2009, attributed to the economic context.
VTOS (IE)	Yes	Yes	Targets relate to the number of training places available. The official number of places is 5,000 but in effect the VECs have accommodated 5,700 places (extra places given on demand/appeal). A high level of demand has occurred for places since the financial crisis.
Removing barriers and employer incentives			
IBA (AT)	Yes	Yes	Targets are demand driven and linked to the training guarantee. IBA placements are recommended by PES staff and therefore placements were found for all young people for whom PES made such recommendations.
Chances Card (FI)	No	–	A target was set for a group of emergency labour market measures introduced to help young people during the crisis, but no specific target was set for the Chances Card. However, anecdotal evidence and unpublished monitoring data provided by the Ministry of Employment and Economy suggest that take-up of the card, and general interest and participation in the scheme exceeds participation in the mainstream subsidy scheme.
New-Start jobs (SE)	No	–	No specific targets for number of participants, but the government predicted 20,000 New-Start jobs would be ‘created’ in the first year alone (2007); see outcomes section for further information.
START (HU)	No	–	–
AGE (England)	Yes	Yes	The target was to create 5,000 apprenticeship places and this was met very quickly.

Moving on to look at the capacity of measures to engage their intended target groups, as shown in Table 6 the majority of measures have been successful in this regard. Only two out of the 19 measures for which relevant information was available were only ‘partially’ able to engage their target groups. Evidence for the other 17 measures indicates that they were able to reach the ‘right’ young people. According to some stakeholders, Connexions (England) struggled to provide a universal service while meeting the needs of vulnerable young people. AGE (England) is the second measure that has experienced challenges in finding the ‘right’ young people and employers. It targeted young unemployed people but according to its evaluation, only one in five participants considered themselves to be unemployed (Wiseman et al, 2011). (This figure may be misleading, however, as young people may not have stated that they were unemployed if for example they had only spent a short time without a job.) No measures were unable to reach out to their target groups at all.

Table 6: Target groups and reach

Name of the measure	Target groups	Did the measure engage its target group(s)?	
ESL preventive			
Career Start (FI)	Early school leavers; young people unsure about their career; and young people whose grades do not qualify them for chosen VET studies.	Yes	The programme has been successful at reaching the target group (Survey of the National Board of Education, quoted in an interview).
Priority Education (FR)	Pupils who face the greatest barriers to succeeding in education in specific socially and economically deprived areas.	N/A	Not possible to assess through identified data, as all pupils within a given priority education area are covered. This also means there is no guarantee that efforts are actually focused on pupils facing the most acute difficulties.
Learning Communities (ES)	Pupils and wider school communities in disadvantaged areas.	Yes	Learning Communities are largely based in deprived areas. They also engage community volunteers such as university students, NGOs, family members or other local residents.
School Work Alternation (IT)	Aims to give students aged 15 years and over the opportunity to alternate their second level study with periods of work (not specifically aimed at less academically able students).	Yes	The measure is delivered in secondary schools, secondary technical institutes and vocational institutes; thus it is reaching out to the intended target group.
ESL reintegration			
Production Schools (AT)	Young people – under the age of 20 – who have struggled (for different reasons) and/or remain without orientation after completing or leaving compulsory schooling.	Yes	A fifth of participants do not possess any final school leaving certificate, while the remainder have only gained an (often poor) basic school leaving certificate. Only 2% have completed an apprenticeship or further education.
Springboard (HU)	Early school leavers and young people who did not successfully complete vocational school.	Yes	Schools had a large degree of autonomy in student selection. Some preferred students with the worst possible record, while others had a broader criterion.
Youthreach (IE)	Priority Group 1: young people aged 15–20 years who have left school, are unemployed and have no or incomplete qualifications from Junior Cycle. Priority Group 2: lone parents, referrals from the rehabilitation board, trainees released from detention, young people with complex needs, Travellers, and drug court participants.	Yes	The Value for Money Review of Youthreach found that the programme was particularly effective in attracting the target cohort of learners (Department of Education and Science, 2008).
PCPI (ES)	Young people (15–21 years) who have not achieved a Basic Education Certificate and students who have entered the education system in post-compulsory schooling age (usually immigrants).	N/A	No data to assess this but the general perception is that these programmes are getting young people who were 'out of the system' back into education or work.
STW transitions			
Youth Guarantee (FI)	Unemployed persons under the age of 25. This will change from 2013 to also include unemployed VET and higher education graduates under the age of 30.	Yes	Reaching unemployed young people as the Guarantee is only available to young people who have registered as unemployed with the PES.
CIVIS contract (FR)	Young people (aged 16–25 years) with low levels of qualifications and/or experiencing difficulties in entering the labour market.	Yes	Relatively successful in reaching the most disadvantaged young people. By the end of September 2011, 60,000 new CIVIS contracts had been signed by low-qualified young people (75% of the objective for the year) (DARES, 2009).
TISZKs (HU)	TISZKs were to be formed by owners of participating schools (generally local governments). Vocational schools were the ultimate beneficiaries of the funding.	Yes	TISZKs were set up by local governments and city councils in the main. Other actors were also allowed to form their partnerships, such as schools managed by NGOs, churches or higher education institutions (HEIs): 701 vocational schools were participating by the end of 2011.
Promoting self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts for young people (ES)	Measure to boost self-employment is available to all unemployed people but specific allowances to young unemployed people (men under 30 years and women under 35 years). Measure to promote transition from temporary to open-ended contracts targets those aged under 30 years and long-term unemployed people (i.e. unemployed for 12 of the previous 18 months).	Yes	Precise data on beneficiary profiles was not identified. However, since access to the measure to promote self-employment is only possible for people claiming unemployment benefit, it is assumed that the measure reached out to the appropriate target group.

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Name of the measure	Target groups	Did the measure engage its target group(s)?	
STW transitions			
Navigator Centres (SE)	Navigator Centres can help all unemployed young people but their primary target groups are the hardest-to-help populations.	Yes	Anecdotal evidence suggests many beneficiaries have contact with social services and/or experience personal problems (e.g. depression, substance abuse, criminal record, lack motivation, ESL, or feeling 'lost').
Connexions (England)	Aimed to help all young people, but a target was set to bring down the NEET rate by 10% between November 2002 and November 2004, followed by a new target to contribute to achieving a national 2% reduction on the 2004 position.	Partially	National study concluded: 'not enough young people were able to benefit from careers advice, largely because of under-funding and confusion over the respective roles and responsibilities of schools and Connexions Partnerships' (DfES, 2005). Stakeholders also suggested that the focus was on hard-to-reach groups, which meant that young people with less complex needs were given less support.
A job guarantee for young people (SE)	All unemployed young people (aged 16–24) registered with the PES for over three months.	Yes	In 2010, 48% of young people registered as unemployed participated in the scheme (Arbetsförmedlingens, 2011)
Fostering employability			
FÁS National Traineeship Programme (IE)	New labour market entrants and unemployed persons aged 16 years and over (not aimed at specific disadvantaged groups).	Yes	Around 66% of participants had been unemployed prior to taking up their course and 41% of these were long-term unemployed (Conway and Fox, 2009).
Higher-level apprenticeships (IT)	Young people aged 18–29 years.	N/A	Not possible to assess with data identified. However, the pilot engaged 1,000 young people, and it is assumed that these fell within the appropriate age bracket.
ÜBA (AT)	Young people unable to find regular apprenticeship places make up the key priority group. Other target groups include 'older' young people, who have been searching for an apprenticeship placement for more than a year, low-skilled young people and young people facing particular social problems.	Yes	Yes, all participants had been unable to find a suitable placement in the open market.
Apprenticeships (as part of a dual education system) (FR)	Apprenticeships are accessible to all young people aged between 15 and 25 years (generally without prior qualifications). Not specifically aimed at young people experiencing difficulties.	N/A	The apprenticeship system provides training opportunities for young people without prior qualifications. In 2010, new apprentices were on average 18.4 years old.
VTOS (IE)	Primary target groups are the longer-term unemployed, the low-skilled and the disadvantaged.	Yes	Access only possible for unemployed persons who are 21 years or over and who are in receipt of specified social welfare payments for at least six months. The scheme was recently made accessible to those in receipt of statutory redundancy, with no six month unemployment requirement.
Removing barriers and employer incentives			
IBA (AT)	Young people with complex needs, including: those without compulsory or with poor school leaving certificate; those who following the completion of compulsory education required particular socio-pedagogical assistance; disabled young people; and those who appear unlikely to find or complete an apprenticeship on the open market.	Yes	Participants distributed as follows (some double counting as some fall into several target groups): (1) young people without compulsory or with a poor school leaving certificate, 16%; (2) those who following the completion of compulsory education required particular socio-pedagogical assistance, 62%; (3) disabled young people, 6%; and (4) those who appear unlikely to be able to find or complete an apprenticeship on the open market, 25%
Chances Card (FI)	Those aged 18–30 years who are unemployed VET or higher education graduates	Yes	Successful at reaching the target group: 90% of participants were VET graduates (Pitkanen et al 2012)
New-Start jobs (SE)	The programme is divided into several target groups, two of which concern young people: long-term unemployed youth (20–25 years); and young people aged 20–25 years who have been outside the labour market for other reasons than unemployment (i.e. sickness or rehabilitation).	N/A	Difficult to assess with data identified. In 2010, 13.2% of participants were women under 25 years and 19.1% were men under 25 years. A higher proportion of participants than in the other programmes are migrants.
START programme (HU)	Those young jobseekers under 25 years without a higher education qualification, or those under 30 years of age with a higher education qualification, who have not yet been in work apart from casual work during studies.	Yes	Eligibility is conditional on having no prior work experience; thus it is assumed that the measure did reach its target groups.

Name of the measure	Target groups	Did the measure engage its target group(s)?
Removing barriers and employer incentives		
AGE (England)	Two target groups. One is that of young unemployed aged 16 or 17 years; here ‘unemployed’ refers to those not taking part in training programmes. These participants did not have to be in receipt of benefits. The second target group was SMEs that had not previously employed an apprentice, or that were taking on an additional apprentice.	Partially Only one in five said they were unemployed. However the figures may be misleading, i.e. some may have been unemployed for a short period. Some apprentices were identified by employers, implying that there was already a connection between employers concerned and the candidates. The grant did however seem to encourage employers to recruit young rather than older apprentices. Around 54% of employers engaged were new to apprenticeship but many of them said they would have recruited anyway and/or would have recruited older apprentices if the grant had not been available. According to the programme evaluation, ‘...many of these would not actually have taken on apprentices at all if AGE had not been available and extensively marketed. Providers were strongly of the opinion that the grant had a powerful impact on employer recruitment’ (Wiseman et al, 2011).

The data indicate that while many measures do engage in operational ‘target-setting’ practices, it is clear that there is still room for improvement, in terms of identifying targets more clearly and in a more transparent manner in all programme and policy documentation. It often proves difficult to identify such targets, and awareness of them among external stakeholders tends to be rather weak. In this regard, assessment of success would also be more straightforward for all interested parties if the quantitative operational targets were more clearly linked to a fixed timetable. The AGE programme (England), FÁS traineeships (IE), Springboard (HU) and supra-company apprenticeships ÜBA (AT) can be mentioned here as examples of good practice in their efforts to set measurable targets for clear operational periods.

Operational target data also suggest that there are some differences in both the ‘ambition and feasibility levels’ of targets. This depends to a certain extent on the way in which the term ‘target’ is understood by the relevant stakeholders. Some measures clearly take into consideration the time needed at the start of a programme, especially if it is a national programme, to mainstream a new practice across the whole country. They acknowledge that it takes months, if not years, to set up new systems and train staff, and that consequently it can take some time before young people may be engaged in actual training or integration activities. This was recognised by the Italian Chamber of Commerce, which was aware that it would take time to build an effective School Work Alternation network. As a result, those developing the measure were cautious about setting initial output targets. In Finland, available data show that under the Youth Guarantee, employment plans were drawn up within the prescribed timeframe for between 60–80% of new young jobseekers, rather than 100% set out in national authorities’ guidelines. It would be unrealistic to expect the PES to prepare employment plans for 100% of unemployed young jobseekers within a specific timeframe during the first year or more of this measure’s operation; meeting the target requires changes in the operational activities of local job centres. In this regard, it was most important for national stakeholders to see improvements in the practices of local PES than to immediately achieve the 100% target. Setting a 100% target is ambitious but it certainly helps to raise awareness about the importance of the measure.

It was the view of many interviewed stakeholders that measures involving training or work placements in companies have a ‘natural tendency’ to favour the most able and skilled members of the target groups (employers tend to select the best candidates from the available candidate pool). This view applies in particular to generic youth wage subsidy schemes but also to mainstream apprenticeship opportunities, and reinforces the need to have additional support, incentives or programmes for the most vulnerable groups. Clear eligibility criteria can also help, as is evidenced by the START programme (HU), which is only available for young people with no work experience.

Finally, it is worth noting that the relative success of the selected measures in achieving their intended operational targets does not necessarily translate into intended outcomes for beneficiaries. The quality of youth employment measures is not

only determined by the number of beneficiaries supported. The quality and relevance of the ‘support’ (i.e. training, placement) provided and the progression opportunities into (sustainable) employment, further education or training it creates are also important. The next section therefore examines the extent to which the chosen measures have been successful at meeting their intended outcomes.

Assessing outcomes

This section looks at whether the selected youth employment measures have achieved their intended outcomes. It goes beyond their targets in terms of the number of young people to engage or interventions to deliver, to look at the extent to which they succeeded in generating their intended outcomes for beneficiaries, such as qualifications or job placements.

As was the case for the operational objectives of the measures, many (in this case the majority) of the measures did not set clear quantitative targets regarding their specific objectives, namely the outcomes that they wanted to achieve. In fact only three out of the 25 measures currently have clear quantitative targets for their intended outcomes (see Table 7 below). These are Youth Guarantee and the Career Start programmes in Finland and the CIVIS contract in France. A further two measures have (some) local targets, but no national ones (Learning Communities in Spain and Navigator Centres in Sweden). In these cases, the outcome targets refer either to a share of young people finding successful progression routes (this applies to the Youth Guarantee and Career Start programmes in Finland and the CIVIS contract in France) or improvements in the academic achievement of students and reduction of ESL (Learning Communities in Spain). The intended outcome targets of individual Navigator Centres vary, but tend to focus on finding successful outcomes for the most vulnerable young people – i.e. those who are clients of social services.

It is also important to note that the Connexions service (England) shared many quantitative targets on intended outcomes with other government departments. For example, the service was supposed to contribute to the work of the Home Office by ensuring that 90% of young offenders aged 13–18 years are in education, training and employment and, together with other measures, to reduce the under-18 pregnancy rate by 50% by 2010.

Table 7 also shows that although more than half of the measures do not have specific, quantifiable targets, their beneficiary outcomes are monitored systematically either through tracking data (e.g. job guarantee for young people in Sweden), evaluations (e.g. Youthreach in Ireland) or ad-hoc surveys of beneficiaries (e.g. higher-level apprenticeships in Italy). Policies focusing on youth service improvements, like TISZKs in Hungary, have monitored improvements, for example in the quality of teaching. In a number of cases, measurable operational targets were set, but they were not accompanied by targets on outcomes. For example, in the case of AGE in England, the goal was to engage 5,000 young people in apprenticeships, but no further targets were set, for example in relation to completion rate or employment outcomes.

Table 7: *Summary of youth employment measures for which targets were set*

Outcome targets	Number of measures	Comments
Measurable targets on intended outcomes	3	Career Start (FI), Youth Guarantee (FI), CIVIS contract (FR)
Cross-sectoral measurable targets shared with several other government departments or policies	1	Connexions (England)
Measurable targets set at local level, but no national oversight or targets	2	Learning Communities (ES), Navigator Centres (SE)
No measurable targets, but outcomes monitored	16	Priority Education (FR), Production Schools (AT), Springboard (HU), Youthreach (IE), PCPI (ES), Job guarantee for young people (SE), FÁS traineeships (IE), Higher-level apprenticeships (IT), TISZKs (HU), ŰBA (AT), VTOS (IE), IBA (AT), Chances Card (FI), New-start jobs (SE), START (HU), AGE (England)
No targets or clear measurable objectives	3	School Work Alternation (IT), Promoting self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts for young people (ES), apprenticeships (as part of Alternance Education and Training) (FR)

Results are mixed regarding the extent to which the three measures with quantitative targets were able to meet their targets. As shown in Table 8, so far the Finnish Youth Guarantee has met its targets set, but the results for the CIVIS contract are more complex, and the outcomes have been considerably (negatively) affected by the economic downturn. A target for the Youth Guarantee in Finland was introduced in 2011. The PES was to ensure that no more than 17% of young people aged under 25 were inactive or unemployed for more than three months. The PES met the 2011 target, though only just. Statistics from the Ministry of Labour for the first six months of 2011 show that a solution was found for 83.5% of young jobseekers within three months of registration. This compares positively with the result in 2010, when 20.8% of young people were unemployed or inactive for more than three months (however during this time the general employment situation in the country also improved, so the improvement cannot be attributed wholly to the Guarantee). The results also compare positively with the results for those aged 25–30 years, who are outside the Guarantee.

The CIVIS contract (FR) is intended to guide low-qualified young people (aged 16–25 years), who are experiencing difficulties entering the labour market, into stable employment. It seems from the available data that in the last few years the measure did not achieve its desired aim of employment for 50% participants and stable employment for 40% immediately after taking part in the programme. The deterioration of the economic context made it more difficult for advisers to identify suitable employment opportunities for CIVIS beneficiaries and the job insertion rate declined from 40% in 2007 to 24% in 2011.

Evidence of positive effects of the CIVIS has also been found. A 2007 evaluation of the CIVIS measure in the region of Rhône-Alpes found that the measure plays an important role in improving the overall situation of participants (DRTEFP, 2009). For example, the establishment of a structured pathway for insertion into employment helps young people to break their daily routine and shape future projects. The close contact with the CIVIS advisers is also seen to have a very positive effect.

Results are not yet available for the Career Start programme. During the pilot phase around 70% of beneficiaries ended up finding a study or training place, or a job, within one year after completing the programme (Jäppinen, 2010). On that basis, the Ministry of Education set a target for the ‘mainstream’ phase to ensure that 80% of beneficiaries take up studies in a VET school immediately after their time in the programme and that a further 10% take up further studies. The outcome target is therefore more ambitious than the outcomes achieved during the pilot phase, but no further funding has been made available. Providers see this as a difficult target to meet.

Table 8: Performance of youth employment measures in achieving intended outcomes

Measure	Target	Performance
Career Start (FI) <i>ESL preventive</i>	No quantitative targets for the pilot phase, but the Ministry of Education has set a target for the future which relates to the destinations of beneficiaries: 90% are expected to move on to further studies (80% to continue to a VET course and 10% to take up further studies)	<i>Data not yet available to assess whether the target has been met – overall, broad, tripartite support exists for this measure.</i> During the three year pilot phase, successful outcomes were found for around 70% of participants who had taken up a study or training place or found a job within one year of completing Career Start (Jäppinen, 2010). Thus the future target is more ambitious. In more generic terms, the measure is strongly supported by interviewed stakeholders, including social partners. It is seen as a policy for which there is considerable demand as drop-out rates from VET are higher than from general upper secondary schools, and the measure is seen to add value to existing support mechanisms, rather than duplicating the work of others.
Youth Guarantee (FI) <i>STW transitions</i>	A target was introduced in 2011, for the PES to ensure that a study place, job, subsidised job, short-term training place, apprenticeship or place in any other ‘support measure’ is found for at least 83% of registered young jobseekers within three months of registration. There are plans to introduce even stricter outcome targets, following recommendations of a national tripartite working group on the guarantee.	<i>Target has been met, with outcomes improving</i> Statistics from the Ministry of Labour for the first six months of 2011 show that a solution was found for 83.5% of young jobseekers within three months of registration. The rate for 25–30 year olds – who are outside the guarantee – was 30.5%. In broader terms, this measure is one of the national flagship youth policies and the Government and social partners are committed to improving it further, through a joint working group. The Guarantee is seen by interviewed stakeholders as ‘necessary and important’ as it is focused on early intervention. The earlier forms of the Guarantee (it was first introduced in 2005) were criticised by the stakeholders for not having targets or additional funding attached to them. The current model is seen as significantly more effective and further improvements are being planned on a tripartite basis.

Measure	Target	Performance
CIVIS contract, (FR) <i>STW transitions</i>	National targets for 2011 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At most 6% of CIVIS beneficiaries not receiving any proposal in terms of training/job offer/activity in the last three months or more; • 50% of beneficiaries ending their CIVIS in employment. More specifically, the objective is to get 40% of beneficiaries into stable employment (indefinite contracts, fixed-term contracts of more than six months, alternance contracts), including 20,000 young people in an alternance contract. 	<i>Mixed results</i> Final data for 2007–2010 and preliminary data for 2011 (up to September of that year) suggest that CIVIS has not achieved its desired aims. The number of participants finding stable employment has fallen progressively since 2007, reaching its lowest in 2011 (24.5%). In contrast, the number of participants in unstable employment rose slightly over the period 2007–2010, with a sharp increase in 2011 (14.4%). Data for the period April 2005–March 2009 suggest that access to stable employment required long periods of support for many participants: only 7% were in stable employment after six months, 20% 12 after months and 25% after 18 months (DARES, 2009). The measure has been praised by labour market stakeholders for the case worker approach in particular.

The results of the three above-mentioned programmes cannot be used to make conclusive remarks about the ability of youth employment measures to achieve positive outcomes. For this reason, it is also worth looking at intended outcomes for the remaining 22 measures, although the outcomes cannot be compared against quantitative targets.

An exercise was undertaken to try to identify the specific objectives of each measure and to assess whether these were achieved. For example, we identified the specific objective of the START programme (HU) as being ‘to encourage employers to hire young people, by reducing the associated costs’. We then looked at the available data on employment amongst young people with a START card, to assess the success of this measure. The results of this exercise are detailed in Table 9, which presents evidence from research, complemented by a short overview of opinions put forward by the interviewees.

This assessment process highlighted that where there is sufficient data to make an assessment, the majority of the measures did meet their objectives, either in full or to a significant extent. A very small minority of the measures appear not to have achieved their intended outcomes or only to have partially achieved them. It was not possible to make an assessment about the success of two measures, due to lack of evidence.

If we look at the successful measures first, it is obvious that several measures have achieved higher job-insertion rates than originally envisaged. For example, a 54% placement rate into employment achieved by FÁS traineeships (IE) is higher than the rates of other training measures implemented by FÁS, which feature an average integration rate of 31% (Conway and Fox, 2010). One of the key reasons is the labour market responsiveness of the traineeships, as they are designed and delivered in close collaboration with employers. In Italy, the fact that 70.9% of former apprentices from the pilot phase of the higher-level apprenticeships were still employed in the same company two to three years after the completion of their training shows that companies are satisfied with the programme and keen to capitalise on the investment that they have made in training the young person (ISFOL, 2011). In France, former apprentices enjoy relatively better labour market outcomes in comparison with other VET graduates (Bonnal et al, 2002).

The same finding applies to ‘broader’ (re)integration rates (integration into education, training or employment). For example, positive results can be found for Navigator Centres (SE), for which the national pilot phase exceeded anticipated outcomes. The reintegration rate achieved by individual centres varied from 45% to 71% (with an average of 47%), while the average success rate of municipal reintegration programmes stands at around 30–40% (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2008). The Springboard (HU) programme achieved drop-out rates that were less than half the average rate of ‘type 1’ vocational schools¹ (14% versus 30%). This is considered to be a significant achievement, given

¹ A ‘type 1’ vocational school focuses more narrowly on teaching vocations, in comparison to upper secondary vocational schools, which combine vocational training with preparing students for A-levels, and thus allows them to go on to higher education.

that practically all of the measure’s targeted students had a history of dropping out of school. This was achieved through new methods that suited the target group (e.g. use of individual development plans, small class size, etc).

One of the key reasons why many of the chosen measures have been so successful at meeting their intended outcomes is the ‘dedication’ to tailor the services to the specific needs of the target group. To illustrate this, many beneficiaries of the Production Schools (AT) come from troubled family situations, where parents are often unemployed as well, and lack confidence and the ability to structure their day around particular tasks. In response, the schools involved are now following a ‘joint ritual’ model and a clearly set out daily routine. This helps to stabilise the lives of young people and improve beneficiary outcomes in terms of progression.

It is also evident that meaningful involvement of employers in the design, delivery and review of measures is a shared factor among many successful measures (when judged on the basis of performance against intended outcomes). This applies, in particular but not exclusively, to ‘STW transition measures’, ‘measures to foster employability’ and ‘employer incentives’. As an example, the START programme (HU) is considered to be an improvement on existing subsidy schemes, because participation does not require any contractual agreement between the employer and the funding body. This allows the employer to take part with practically no administrative cost. This has had a considerable effect on the willingness and interest of employers to provide placements for unemployed young people.

Some of the main reasons for measures not meeting their intended outcomes include funding having been spread too thinly to achieve sufficient impact (e.g. Priority Education, FR) and training not meeting the needs or expectations of employers (e.g. PCPI, ES). Too broad, over-ambitious expectations were set for some measures (e.g. Connexions, England). Notably, measures not addressing the root causes of youth unemployment (i.e. lack of qualifications or training), and therefore placing the main focus on job insertion, have been criticised for offering short-term rather than long-term solutions to problems faced by many early school leavers; for example, a job guarantee for young people in Sweden.

Table 9: Performance of youth employment measures in achieving specific objectives

Name of the measure and overview of specific objectives	Overview of the success of the measures, on the basis of research, evaluation and monitoring data	A short overview of stakeholder opinions
ESL preventive		
<p>Priority Education (FR): To help pupils who face the greatest difficulties to succeed in education in specific socially and economically deprived areas, with a particular focus on the acquisition of core competences.</p>	<p><i>Mixed results</i></p> <p>A stocktaking report on the RAR network, the core of the Priority Education system until 2011 (Ministry of National Education, 2010), found that over the period of 2006–2007 to 2009–2010, progress against 21 indicators had been stable or positive for all of the indicators, except for the share of pupils who master basic competences in French and Maths at the end of lower secondary education. However the gaps in performance between RAR and the rest of the education system have been widening in relation to some indicators. The net impact of RAR was not clearly identified.</p>	<p>The views of interviewed stakeholders are mixed. The measure produces many positive outcomes, but it is the view of many that resources are spread too thinly to make sufficient impact. Calls have also been made to increase the extent to which the measure targets students with the most complex needs.</p>
<p>Learning Communities (ES): For most Learning Communities the outcome-related goals include reducing drop-out rates, improving the school atmosphere, reducing discrimination and enhancing community cohesion.</p>	<p><i>No ‘whole programme results’, but positive outcomes reported by all participating schools</i></p> <p>Learning Communities have not yet been formally evaluated; however all individual ‘communities’ have reported positive results, including significant improvements in academic performance and improved relations between members of the educational community (Elboj and Niemela, 2010; Garcia, Duque, and Mircea, 2010; and Prieto and Santa Cruz, 2010). For example, a longitudinal study of the La Paz Learning Community shows that the average reading competence went up from 1.4 to 2.9 (out of five) between 2006 and 2008 and absenteeism dropped from 30% in 2006–2007 to 10% in 2007–2008.</p>	<p>The measure was regarded in a very positive light by those stakeholders who were familiar with it (awareness of this measure is greater in some regions than in others, and not all stakeholders at national level knew of the programme). Interviewed stakeholders emphasised that actions are regarded as universal and transferable to any context, and that research has shown they improve results.</p>

Effectiveness of policy measures to increase the employment participation of young people

Name of the measure and overview of specific objectives	Overview of the success of the measures, on the basis of research, evaluation and monitoring data	A short overview of stakeholder opinions
ESL preventive		
<p>School Work Alternation (IT): To enable students over 15 years of age to complete their secondary studies by alternating periods of work with periods of study.</p>	<p><i>Assessment difficult due to lack of data</i></p> <p>Although targets were set for the number of young people to take part in measures promoted by the Chambers of Commerce, it does not appear that a target was set for the outcomes these young people should achieve (e.g. what proportion should acquire a qualification, level of reduction in ESL). No specific data is available on student outcomes.</p>	<p>Stakeholders stressed that there is anecdotal evidence from teachers that this measure has succeeded in re-motivating students, strengthening their 'employability' skills, and that it prevented ESL. Critics have stressed that the measure has been successful only in a small number of regions. Employers would prefer longer work placement periods and challenges have been faced in convincing some teachers to engage in the measure.</p>
ESL reintegration		
<p>Production Schools (AT): The overall aim is the (re)integration of young people into school or the labour market, and to reduce social exclusion.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>Around one third (30%) of beneficiaries enter employment (17% in the open labour market and 13% in employment supported by the PES) immediately after their time in the school. Around 30% are classified unemployed and a further 30% 'out of the labour force', which includes young people who have (re)entered the education system, as well as those who have exited education or the labour market entirely. The remainder enter other PES training measures. A year after participation integration rates increase significantly, with a total of 50% in employment, 15% unemployed and 10% participating in a qualification measure, with the remaining 25% being outside the labour force (Bergmann and Schelepa, 2011). Given the nature of the target group (young people with no or low qualifications, low motivation and often associated social or health problems), the integration rates are considered as 'very positive'.</p>	<p>Stakeholders saw the measure as filling a real gap in support for young people. They regarded the combined offer of personalised social and pedagogical support alongside training, learning and practical tasks and experience as a real strength. Another strength, relating to the 'stabilisation' of the position of many vulnerable young people, is the group support and day to day structure offered to them. Some flexibility in the length of placements could benefit the measure, as would a wider referral system and outreach work.</p>
<p>Springboard (HU): Possible outcomes for students include: continuing with the ninth grade of VET as stated in the initial plan (thus reducing ESL); enrolling in the tenth or eleventh grade of VET; enrolment into adult training; and going directly into employment.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>In the first year, 89% of the participants continued education after completing the programme, 7% found employment and only 4% were unemployed (OECD, 2011). A follow-up study then found that a year later, 67% of the students for whom follow-up data could be collected were still in education or training (Magyar Gallup Intézet Kft., 2011). In addition, drop-out rates were less than half of the average of 'type 1' vocational schools (14% versus 30%) and even improved in the second cohort (dropping to 11%). This is considered to be 'a significant achievement', given that practically all of this measure's target students had a history of dropping out of school.</p>	<p>This is widely regarded as a successful measure. Its positive results relate to use of new methods such as individual development plans, reduction of class size, long-term training of teaching staff and transformation of the learning environment.</p>
<p>Youthreach (IE): The main goal is to provide early school leavers with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to participate fully in society and progress to further education, training and employment.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>An evaluation found that 'practically all learners were experiencing success to some degree in the centres visited, whether from an academic, personal or social viewpoint' (Department of Education and Skills Inspectorate, 2010). The same evaluation also found that the destinations of participating learners the year before the evaluation were as follows: 46% were still active in the programme; 15% were in employment; 11% were unemployed; 4% were in a FÁS training centre, 6% were in further education and 18% were categorised as 'other'. An earlier study concluded that 61% go on to further education, training or employment. It is estimated that between 20% and 30% leave the programme early. Among those who do so, 32% leave for employment or to go to other further education or training (Forfás, 2010).</p>	<p>Youthreach has been praised for providing positive learning experiences for young people who have experienced failures in the past, for the positive and encouraging learning environment, for good relationships with teachers, for involving beneficiaries in improvement efforts, and for well-qualified, dedicated teachers from a variety of professional and vocational backgrounds. Progression from the centres to promising options was identified as a challenge.</p>
<p>PCPI (ES): To facilitate labour integration or education reintegration of young people who have dropped out of school.</p>	<p><i>Assessment difficult due to lack of data, but indications of positive outcomes</i></p> <p>Although a target was set for the number of places to be offered, no targets were set for the outcomes. There has not been a formal evaluation of PCPI. For example, one stakeholder interviewed for this study indicated that according to data collected from a number of centres, 60% of participants obtained a professional qualification, 20% obtained the Diploma of Secondary Education and the remainder did not continue in education or training.</p>	<p>Although the general perception among interviewed stakeholders is that PCPIs are having positive results because they are seen as getting ESLs and/or excluded young people back into education or work, the labour market relevance of the training has been questioned and it is considered as an area with room for improvement.</p>

Effectiveness of policy measures to increase the employment participation of young people

Name of the measure and overview of specific objectives	Overview of the success of the measures, on the basis of research, evaluation and monitoring data	A short overview of stakeholder opinions
STW transitions		
TISZKs (HU): Goal to (indirectly) improve the lives of young people by improving the technological base of the participating schools and to make the VET system more cost-effective.	<p><i>Mixed results</i></p> <p>Large-scale development has taken place in the infrastructure of the participating institutions, with a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Another positive development is the inclusion of soft skills such as communication or career orientation into the curriculum (Mártonfi, 2011). However, progress towards other objectives is not deemed as satisfactory, most importantly regarding the objective of making the training more cost-effective. Only one out of the 16 TISZKs has reported that its income from corporate training schemes and paid-for mid-career training programmes is approaching the operational costs, while in the 15 other cases self-sustainability is not a viable prospect (Agenda – Expanzió – MTA-KTI, 2010). Furthermore, one report indicates that costs per participant have increased since the implementation of the integration strategy (Munkácsy, 2009).</p>	<p>Rather mixed views emerged regarding results. Experts in the field argue that the measure has succeeded in bringing about an increase in the quality of education both in terms of practical and soft skills. Yet it has been argued that this was achieved at a high cost. This – together with problems arising from the short-sightedness of the legislation behind the reform – raises serious concerns among stakeholders about the sustainability of the achievements in the present economic environment.</p>
Measures to promote self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts (ES): Goals are to increase self-employment among unemployed youth and to improve the quality of employment found by unemployed youth	<p><i>Assessment difficult due to lack of data</i></p> <p>As the measures are fairly recent, it is difficult to carry out a comprehensive assessment. There is also a lack of available follow-up data which makes it difficult to explore the effects of the initiatives on the labour market.</p>	<p>Some stakeholders were ‘guarded’ with their views as they have limited information on the impact of this measure and find it is too early to draw firm conclusions. Overall, however, the results are found to be mixed. The principles of the measures are welcomed, though it is considered necessary to accompany them with other measures, such as better promotion of entrepreneurial culture.</p>
Navigator Centres (SE): To reintegrate vulnerable, hard-to-reach young people in society, and in education, training or employment. Each young person is assigned a case worker who helps them with all aspects of their lives.	<p><i>Positive outcomes, when compared to municipal-led reintegration programmes</i></p> <p>Up-to-date research evidence is limited due to the local nature of the centres (which have no national oversight). The 2008 evaluation of five Navigator Centres (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2008) after the pilot phase found that the results (in terms of successful outcomes for participants) exceeded the results expected of labour market integration programmes. The average success rate of municipal reintegration programmes stands at around 30–40% whereas the success rate of individual Navigator Centres ranged from 45% to 71% (with an average rate of 47%).</p>	<p>The model used by Navigator Centres was widely regarded as a ‘success’ by all interviewed stakeholders. Social partners, among other stakeholders, call for more funding for Navigator Centres. It was suggested that if funding is not provided for full national coverage, centres could focus on municipalities with the deepest pockets of deprivation.</p>
Connexions (England): A range of intended outcomes, including: to end the fragmentation of services for 13–19 year olds; and to help all young people make informed choices (‘the right choices’) and ease the transition into adult life. Connexions is also expected to contribute to cross-government targets (e.g. student attainment, teenage pregnancy, etc.)	<p><i>Mixed results</i></p> <p>Evaluations and research studies identified positive outcomes. For example, a survey carried out in 2003 found that services for young people had become more coherent, that the majority of young people who had made contact with a personal adviser considered that the service had had a positive impact upon them and that some 68% had been helped to make a decision about their future. Furthermore, more than half of schools were satisfied with the contribution of Connexions to their school and colleges considered that Connexions had a positive impact on increasing attainment and reducing course-switching, and had improved retention of young people in colleges (National Audit Office, 2004). However, a review of careers education and guidance carried out by the Department for Education and Skills found that not enough young people were able to benefit from careers advice (Department for Education and Skills, 2005).</p>	<p>The service was praised for providing an important support net for many early school leavers, for building aspirations for many young people, creating a well-known ‘brand’ among young people and for setting up an infrastructure to bring together different youth services.</p> <p>However, it was felt that the Service was ‘tasked with too many targets and assignments’ to be able to ‘deliver them all’.</p>

Effectiveness of policy measures to increase the employment participation of young people

Name of the measure and overview of specific objectives	Overview of the success of the measures, on the basis of research, evaluation and monitoring data	A short overview of stakeholder opinions
STW transitions		
<p>A job guarantee for young people (SE): The main aim is to quickly offer employment services so that young people will raise their chances of finding employment or education and thereby minimise the time they spend unemployed.</p>	<p><i>Mixed results</i></p> <p>Monitoring data indicate that in 2008 and 2009 just under a third of participants went on to find a job or a study place but in 2010, out of a total of 115,500 participants, 46.1% found a successful outcome (i.e. were integrated either into employment or education). The share of successful outcomes was significantly lower in 2008 and 2009, partly as a result of the weaker economic climate (Arbetsförmedlingens, 2011).</p> <p>The results are comparable to those of the previous ‘youth guarantee’ which was administered at municipal level and ended at the end of 2006. In the last year of its operation, 42% of participants found a job within three months after ending the programme, while 36% found a job within 30 days of finishing the programme.</p> <p>A study conducted in 2011 (Arbetsförmedlingens, 2011) showed that the job guarantee, in comparison to other work support programmes (not directed towards young people) raises the likelihood of participants being employed within three months. This effect is however short-lived. Within one year, the probability of participants being unemployed is the same as other people the same age.</p>	<p>The guarantee was highlighted as being positive because it sped up the provision of activation measures for unemployed young people. However, social partners felt that the three month waiting period for support from the PES is too long and that support should in fact start the day a young person registers as unemployed. It was also criticised for being too focused on searching for jobs, with not enough emphasis on education and training, especially in the context of low-skilled youth (thus it may not provide a long-term solution for all). Upskilling and re-training may be more suitable forms of intervention for the low-skilled than helping such young candidates to find ‘any’ job.</p>
Fostering employability		
<p>FÁS National Traineeship Programme (IE): The main aspired outcome for participants is employment in specific occupations with an appropriate occupational qualification.</p>	<p><i>Particularly positive outcomes for participants, in comparison to other labour market training programmes</i></p> <p>No specific targets for outcomes appear to have been set, but monitoring data show outcomes for participants in the measure are high, with 54% going on to a job (compared to 31% of participants in FÁS programmes overall) and 27% going on to further education or training. Participants feel that the programme helps them to identify new job opportunities (92%) and/or to enter higher skill jobs (73%) (Conway and Fox, 2010). Traineeships are reported to perform better than other labour market programmes in terms of efficiency and effectiveness (Forfás, 2010).</p>	<p>Interviewed stakeholders highlighted the combination of on- and off-the-job training as a key strength. Furthermore, the training was praised for its labour market relevance due to being ‘occupation-specific, industry-endorsed’. Thus employers are confident that people are being trained with the skills that they need.</p>
<p>Higher-level Apprenticeships (IT): To provide an opportunity for people aged 18–29 years to acquire a second or third level qualification through training and paid employment.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>No targets were identified for the share of participants that should achieve certain outcomes. However, only 7.6% left their apprenticeship early and the majority of apprentices (70.9%) involved in the pilot phase of the higher-level apprenticeships were still employed in the same company at the time of the follow-up survey (ISFOL, 2011). For universities, the apprenticeships created an opportunity to introduce new didactic methodologies and consolidate links with companies, which also served to develop their offer to respond to the needs of the labour market. Most companies thought that the apprenticeship was mainly beneficial for them. Companies gave positive feedback on the alignment of lectures and practical training with the needs of the company.</p>	<p>Stakeholders reported a high level of general satisfaction with the level of competences acquired by apprentices, from both university and company-based training. A high insertion rate into employment after the apprenticeship was also highlighted as a strength. Calls have been made to expand the programme (which is currently very small), though this has proven difficult due to the economic downturn.</p>
<p>ÜBA (AT): To provide an alternative form of apprenticeship, as a ‘safety net’ for young people unable to find apprenticeships in companies.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>No specific targets for outcomes appear to have been set, but outcomes are considered positive for this target group. Labour market integration rates of young people completing ÜBA in 2010 were 58% after three months and 63% after 12 months (data provided by AMS for this study).</p> <p>However, drop-out rates from ÜBA are relatively high: a combined rate of 23% for ÜBA and IBA (Bergmann and Schelepa, 2011). Some young people leave for employment or a company-based apprenticeship, but of those who drop out without an alternative destination, labour market prospects are poor with two-thirds unemployed or out of the labour market 12 months after dropping out.</p>	<p>Interviewees emphasised that satisfaction with supra-company apprenticeships is high among participants and that even if their labour market integration rates are lower than those achieved by company-based apprentices, this is due to the fact that participants of the latter are more exposed to employers during their training, and thus have a better chance of being retained. The system could be improved by increasing the time spent in work placements and by widening the breadth of qualifications.</p>

Effectiveness of policy measures to increase the employment participation of young people

Name of the measure and overview of specific objectives	Overview of the success of the measures, on the basis of research, evaluation and monitoring data	A short overview of stakeholder opinions
Fostering employability		
<p>Apprenticeships (as part of formation en alternance) (FR): To give theoretical and practical training to young workers who have completed compulsory general education, with a view to the acquisition of a diploma or professional title.</p>	<p><i>Limited evidence, but indications of positive outcomes for participants</i></p> <p>It is difficult to assess its success due to a lack of specific objectives of this measure, which has a very general character. However it does appear that taking part in an apprenticeship can have positive outcomes for many of the participants. There are no clear-cut patterns in terms of success rates of apprentices and students enrolled in school-based VET. Overall, the success rate of apprentices in achieving a qualification is quite consistent with the success rate of those taking the school-based pathway. Studies of STW transitions have found that former apprentices can enjoy relatively better labour market outcomes in comparison with other VET graduates (Bonnal et al, 2002). In sectors where the apprenticeship system is relatively developed, 81% of former apprentices hold a job three years after the completion of their training, compared to 67% for other graduates (CEREQ, 2009).</p>	<p>The apprenticeship system is seen by stakeholders as having a positive impact on youth employment and employability and its further development and expansion is an important priority for many labour market stakeholders. It was however highlighted that the expansion should not take focus away from the quality of the training. More efforts need to be made to ensure that training places are spread more evenly across the country.</p>
<p>VTOS (IE): Has the global aim of 'enhancing employability'; objectives include improving the general level of education of participants, enabling them to gain certification, and developing their hard and soft skills that prepare for employment and further education and training.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>In 2008, 72% of VTOS students successfully completed their course. Around 26% went on to employment and 42% progressed to further education and training. Of the 28% who did not finish their course, 31% left to take up employment or other further education or training (Forfås, 2010). However direct progression to employment has declined since the economic downturn began in around 2009 and in 2010, 14% of those completing VTOS progressed to employment and 45% progressed to further education and training (data provided by project manager).</p>	<p>VTOS was commended for the progression statistics which show a definite progression directly to employment and to further education and training. Other advantages mentioned include the offer of adult education qualifications that have national and international currency and an adult education approach that is appealing for many young people. A challenge lies in providing an appropriate educational experience for the diverse groups within the unemployed cohort.</p>
Removing barriers and employer incentives		
<p>IBA (AT): To offer young people facing particular integration challenges the opportunity to complete accredited apprenticeship training over a longer period of time or to follow adapted curricula in a workplace setting.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes, especially given the challenges faced by the target group</i></p> <p>Participants in IBA have lower integration rates than apprentices overall; however, the rates are nonetheless encouraging, given the challenges faced by the target group. In 2007, 100% of trainees on this pathway successfully completed a truncated qualification and 70% of trainees completed training through an extended curriculum.</p>	<p>This was perceived to be a successful instrument in assisting young people facing particular integration challenges in accessing accredited training, which helps their opportunities for positive and sustainable labour market integration.</p>
<p>Chances Card (FI): Young people are able to gain employment with the help of the wage subsidy offered by the card.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes in comparison to similar schemes</i></p> <p>No quantitative target was set but just over one fifth (22.1%) of the recipients of the card were able to get a job. However, not all young people who were given the card used it to look for a job (as receiving the card did not place any obligation on the young person); initial survey results show that 40% of recipients never used the card to apply for jobs. If this is taken into consideration, the statistics suggest that over one third (36%) of users of the card were successful at finding a job (Pitkänen et al, 2012).</p> <p>Around 40% of employers would have hired young people even without the subsidy, but around half of employers feel the scheme increased the number of young people hired in permanent (sustainable) jobs due to being 'kept' by the employer after the period of subsidy (Pitkänen et al, 2012). This figure may not seem high but is a positive one if compared to the outcomes of wage subsidies in general: an evaluation of the national wage subsidy scheme (of which the Chances Card is one part), covering all age groups, showed that only 21% of beneficiaries were still in employment 12 months after completing their placement (Terävä et al, 2011).</p>	<p>Interviewees stressed that the scheme was well received by PES advisers, employers, and young people alike and felt the outcomes were more positive than other measures. They were also 'impressed' with the positive impact that the 'branding' of the measure had on awareness among young people. Criticism mainly concerned some employers, chains in particular, relying too much on wage subsidy schemes, thus reducing the number of 'real' jobs available for young trained jobseekers.</p>

Name of the measure and overview of specific objectives	Overview of the success of the measures, on the basis of research, evaluation and monitoring data	A short overview of stakeholder opinions
Removing barriers and employer incentives		
<p>New-Start Jobs (SE): To improve labour market integration opportunities for those groups of people who are most detached from the labour market, such as the unemployed, young people and immigrants;</p> <p>To broaden the group of key beneficiaries for subsidised employment and to encourage employers to take on the long-term unemployed by making it easier and cheaper to hire them.</p>	<p><i>Mixed results</i></p> <p>Currently no specific targets exist for the labour market integration rate. However, when it was first introduced, the government predicted 20,000 New-Start jobs would be ‘created’ in the first year alone (2007). After a slow start, 18,000 New-Start jobs were created in 2007 (indicating a shortfall of 10%). The number of persons employed with the New-Start job scheme has increased continuously ever since. Between 2009 and the second half of 2011, the number of employees with New-Start jobs increased from 15,000 to 50,000.</p> <p>An evaluation of different employment and activity support mechanisms in Sweden claims that people with subsidised employment have higher chances of continuing to work without support than those accessing other support mechanisms. The percentage of persons that start working without any support is higher for New-Start job beneficiaries than beneficiaries of other ALMS. In general, young persons and persons without any disabilities both have a higher chance of continuing to work without support. However, the proportion that continues working without any support has decreased recently due to the recession.</p>	<p>This was praised for broadening the group of key beneficiaries for subsidised employment, as one fifth of participants were not active jobseekers but individuals on sick-leave or recent immigrants. Critics argue that the scheme does not provide incentives or support for education, training or other professional development. Thus, subsidised employment may not prove to be a long-term solution for some unemployed people as it may not get them out of ‘dead-end’, low-skilled jobs. Some concerns were raised over working conditions in companies recruiting candidates through the scheme as well as the risk of wage subsidy schemes potentially replacing regular, ‘normally paid’ jobs.</p>
<p>START programme (HU): To encourage employers to hire young people, by reducing the associated costs.</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>In terms of both budget and the number of young people affected, the START programme is the most significant active labour market policy for young people.</p> <p>By mid-2007, the monthly average employment rate had reached 35,000–40,000 young employees and it has remained at that level ever since.</p>	<p>Though regarded as an expensive programme, it seems to enjoy broad political support. Programme managers believe that youth unemployment would have been even higher in the absence of the programme from 2009 onwards. The principal strength of the programme is seen to be its low administrative cost for employers and the target group (eligibility rules have been kept very simple).</p>
<p>AGE (England): For 5,000 young unemployed people aged 16 or 17 years to take part in an apprenticeship (with a small- or medium-sized employer).</p>	<p><i>Positive outcomes</i></p> <p>The target number of apprenticeship places was met. When the AGE evaluation was carried out (many apprentices were still on their programmes at the time of the evaluation), providers expected the completion rate to be the same as that of standard apprentices. Employer and apprentice reports confirmed this, suggesting a completion rate of 70% or above (Wiseman et al, 2011).</p>	<p>A high level of satisfaction with the measure was found across a range of stakeholders. Employer representatives were glad to see their voices heard and felt that an up-front cash incentive is an excellent way of getting SMEs in particular to take on a young person. Programme was also seen as ‘clearly defined, and easy to manage’.</p>

This assessment of outcomes and achievements has led to a number of generic conclusions. It shows that the specific target groups of the measures can have an impact on the outcomes that they can achieve. Policies that work with young people with low levels of qualifications and who perhaps face considerable barriers to participation in education, training or employment, will have considerably different outcomes to policies that target young people with higher levels of qualifications, skills and perhaps motivation (such as young graduates). For example, the lower labour market integration rates of IBA (AT), in comparison with traditional apprenticeships, are said to be a reflection of the nature of the target group of this measure (young people facing particular learning and integration challenges) and the difficulties they face in making successful transitions to the labour market. In fact, observers consider the integration rates achieved to be encouraging, given the challenges facing this group of young people. The same goes for Production Schools (AT) and Youthreach (IE). It is therefore important when assessing the outcomes of measures to take account of a broad range of outcomes, and not just the participants’ ‘destinations’ (e.g. moving into employment, further education or training).

Another issue that needs to be taken into account is the sustainability of the outcomes for beneficiaries. This is very important for the target group of young people, given their often precarious situation in relation to the labour market. The quality and stability of employment, and the transferability of skills acquired through participation are particularly

important. For example, while some measures might achieve positive results in the short term for young people, such as the completion of a short course or placement in a job, these may not lead to positive outcomes for the young person in the longer term. The short course may not provide sufficient skills or competencies to support the young person to find a job, or the placement in a job may not match their skillset or may be a temporary job, without long-term benefits for their career development. Conversely, a measure might not have placed many young people in employment immediately after their participation but it might have increased their employability, leading to them finding employment six months or a year after completing the measure.

The measures have also provided some lessons regarding the assessment of value for money. It is extremely difficult to make comparisons between the performance of different youth employment measures, particularly regarding their value for money. Evidence shows that those measures that deal with young people facing more complex needs are more likely to require additional expenditure, in order to provide the range of supports required by these young people, than measures that support young people who are more 'labour market ready' but who are facing difficulties finding employment, due to the economic crisis for example. The OECD observes that job-search assistance programmes are found to be the most cost-effective option for young people who are considered to be 'ready for work' and that apprenticeship and other dual vocational pathways appear to be efficient STW routes. Yet for young people facing disadvantage, it is acknowledged that more in-depth strategies are needed (OECD, 2010). It may also be more difficult to quantify the benefits to young people, as discussed above, since these may relate more to 'distance travelled' in terms of labour market readiness than to a final destination in terms of placement in employment, further education or training. Furthermore, a number of the measures reviewed here are still in the pilot phase or are just moving from pilot to mainstream status, and will therefore have incurred additional 'set-up' costs; this would not be the case for those measures that are already established.

For these reasons, any analysis of value for money needs to go beyond a simple assessment of how much the measure cost per young person and to take account of these contextual factors. Furthermore, if comparisons are to be made, it is important to try, where possible, to compare 'like-for-like'. For example it is not valid to compare the costs of a holistic ESL reintegration measure with those of an employer subsidy to promote employment among higher education graduates.

The findings from our in-country research show that again, in many instances insufficient data are available to make an informed assessment. For some of the measures, however, suggestions have been made as to whether they present value-for-money and are cost-effective. The available evidence gathered seems to suggest that amongst those measures that work with harder-to-reach groups, in particular early school leavers, the potential costs of 'non-action' (i.e. not implementing the measures) are judged by stakeholders and in some cases by evaluations to outweigh the costs of the actual measures. For example, according to the independent cost-benefit analysis of the Springboard programme (HU) completed in November 2011, the programme would break even if it prevented 5% of participants from becoming long-term unemployed. Initial outcomes suggest the programme would easily pass this threshold (Tamás, 2011).

Some interventions are actually helping to bring down costs while improving standards, thereby providing a very quick return on investment. This is the case with the Learning Communities (ES). As an example, in the La Paz Learning Community, the student-to-teaching staff ratio in the school has moved from 5.88 students in the school year 2005–2006 to 8.05 students during 2010–2011. In the same period for the same school, the professional monthly cost by number of students has decreased from €417.86 per student in the academic year 2005–2006, to €305.34 in 2010–2011. At the same time achievement has improved. For example in 2006, the average reading competence for the school was 1.4 (out of five); this rose to 2.9 in 2008. Absenteeism has declined; absenteeism for the 2006–2007 school year was 30% and in 2007–2008 fell to 10%. Since 2008–2009 it has only occurred occasionally.

It is important to stress that measures that seem to be low in cost are not necessarily the most cost-effective. The outcomes and impact of the measures need to be taken into account. Certain types of measures presented here can be implemented at a relatively low or almost zero cost. In the context of an economic crisis, when youth unemployment is high and public sector budgets are under strain, these might seem more favourable to policymakers. One example is the measure to promote self-employment (ES), which does not involve any additional cost, as it is simply an alternative way of accessing unemployment benefit. Another is the AGE initiative (England), the cost of which was limited to the grants paid to employers (a total cost of £2,500 each for 5,000 apprentices or £1.25 million in total) as no additional budget was allocated to the other elements of the programme. Despite their low cost, accurately assessing their cost-effectiveness requires taking account of their long-term achievements.

Evidence was identified for only two measures to show that they appear not to have achieved value for money, i.e. that they appear to have been more costly than comparable alternatives. The first is the TISZKs (HU) scheme, which according to an external evaluation has been very expensive by Hungarian standards and furthermore, did not achieve its aim of becoming financially sustainable in the long-run. Secondly supra-company apprenticeships, ÜBA (AT), although playing an important role in ‘filling a gap’ in the supply of apprenticeships in Austria, cost more than twice that of a supported company-based apprenticeship (Lenger et al, 2010). Thus, solely from an economic perspective, the promotion of ‘traditional’ in-company traineeships is significantly more cost-effective. Furthermore, the evaluators argue that due to both economic and labour market reasons, company-level training remains preferable. It is however recognised that while measures such as IBA are relatively expensive compared to company-based apprenticeships, these additional costs appear to be justified when bearing in mind the overarching goals of integration into the open labour market and programme outcomes.

Therefore, the main finding of this evaluative study in relation to the issue of value for money is that more needs to be done to assess the cost-effectiveness of youth employment measures in Europe, if future policymaking and programme design is to be better informed by a robust evidence base. It should also be noted that value for money needs to be considered in relation to the particular context of the young person in question. It is clear that measures for individuals with the longest and most complex pathways to the labour market are likely to be the most costly, but those costs must be considered in relation to the cost of non-action (e.g. the long-term costs of unemployment and social exclusion).

It may also be fallacious to assume that measures that appear to be working well and are providing good value for money would work as well in a different country, context or with a different target group. Transferability is a complex issue which needs to be assessed in full recognition of the surrounding policy framework (as well as the economic and legislative context). Such factors help a particular measure to succeed and would therefore need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

This section has shown that the majority of measures reviewed here have been successful at meeting their objectives, either in full or to a significant extent; only a very small minority appear to not have achieved their intended outcomes. The next section will identify whether a similar finding emerges in relation to their ability to meet their aims.

Assessing impacts

Little robust research evidence was identified that showed the wider impact of the 25 measures being reviewed. Even where evidence is available, it is difficult to identify causality between the measures concerned and their intended wider impact, since their aims are, by their very nature, typically broad; for example, to reduce youth unemployment, to reduce social exclusion among young people. It was therefore not possible to isolate the impact of the measures from the impact of other factors that might have been at play.

We found that the main aims of the various measures reviewed were to:

- Prevent or reduce ESL;
- Enable early school leavers to (re)integrate into education, training or employment;
- Reduce (long-term) youth unemployment;
- Prevent or reduce social exclusion, including for example the NEET rate;
- Improve the link between education and training and the world of work; and
- Improve labour market outcomes for young learners.

The evidence gathered was used to assess the extent to which the 25 measures were or appeared to be having a positive impact in line with their broad aims (as listed above).

Only one of the 25 measures seemed to have a measurable ‘impact target’: in 2010, the Connexions service (England) was given a target of reducing the NEET rate in England by 10%. The results have been mixed. By November 2003, the Connexions service was on course to achieve this target. The proportion of NEETs aged 16–18 years had fallen by 8% in the established Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas and 3% overall, when the newer Phase 3 areas were taken into account – 8.7% of young people whose status was known were NEET in 2003. The remaining measures did not have measurable targets. Indeed, for the majority of them, insufficient evidence was identified to assess whether or not they met their aims.

Despite this, a small number of other measures were found to have had an impact that could be felt ‘nationally’. For example, the significant number of young people that the Youthreach programme (IE) has helped over the years to remain in the education system suggests that the measure has made a contribution towards reducing social exclusion. This has been achieved through a national network of Youthreach centres. Youth Guarantee (FI) currently reaches around 83.5% of unemployed youths aged 18–25 years, thus reducing the length of time many young people spending in unemployment. It has also positively impacted on their qualifications and training levels and their ‘employability’ skills. Although Career Start is small in scale in the context of youth unemployment, evaluations have concluded that it makes a very important contribution to reducing social exclusion (Jäppinen, 2010). This is because it reaches around one in four young people who do not move from lower to upper secondary studies – a group that traditionally experiences high levels of unemployment and social exclusion.

One factor that inhibits the potential of a number of the measures to meet their aims is that of scale. Many of the projects reviewed for this evaluative study are relatively small, in terms of the number of participants involved, geographical coverage, duration and their level of financial support. The large scale of the problems they aim to tackle often requires a major concerted effort, with a real focus on the long-term impact and outcomes of programmes and projects. While progress has been made and many programmes have had a positive impact, much of this is at very local level or amongst a very small proportion of young people within the country. In some cases it is difficult to envisage the long-term impact of the programme for the very people who need it most: young unemployed people, and those with low skills or qualifications.

This is the case, for example, for the Higher-level apprenticeships measure (IT). This has had a positive effect on participating students, universities and employers alike, but as the apprentices make up only around 0.6% of all apprentices in Italy, with only 1,000 young people participating in the first pilot phase of the scheme, its broader impact is limited.

In a similar manner, the Learning Communities (ES) are not making a national impact, although they are making a difference in individual regions, and, even more so, in individual communities. They have not yet been evaluated as a single programme (local studies are available) but they do appear to be generating the intended impact (reducing ESL and raising standards) in those communities where they have been implemented. Various adapted apprenticeship schemes clearly also have an important role to play in reducing youth unemployment. Compared to the wider apprenticeship framework in countries such as Austria, however, they are rather small in scale. It is therefore difficult to rate their overall impact on youth unemployment. The Springboard measure (HU) achieved its intended impact of reducing ESL in participating schools, but the participating 15 schools have a limited impact on ESL as a phenomenon.

Sustainability is an important factor to consider when judging the potential impact of these measures. Although some of them may seem to have a positive short-term impact, their long-term potential impact may not be so positive. Furthermore, a number of the measures may not be continued in the future, which means that their impact will be short-lived. Aside from the measures that have been adopted into the 'mainstream' (e.g. Youthreach), those measures that focus on establishing or investing in or new structures or approaches may have greater potential to bring about long-term change. For example, a strength of the Springboard programme (HU) is that most of its funding was allocated to the creation of dedicated classrooms for its delivery and for preparing teachers, as opposed to bonuses for participating teachers or other costs of operation. This means that the schools are now less dependent on funding when they aim to maintain their Springboard class beyond the end of the programme. The same lesson applies to cooperation across schools and teachers. The network for peer-learning now functions primarily via individual correspondence by email or other means; this remains feasible even after the funding period has ended.

In Italy, an agreement between the Union of Chambers of Commerce and the Ministry of Education in 2003 made School Work Alternation a permanent measure. In 2005, with the legislative decree no. 77, School Work Alternation became a permanent didactic methodology within the education system. In Sweden, the Navigator Centres pilot programme is said to have led to many 'spin-offs' and some pilot centres run by youth organisations have now been 'taken over' by the municipality as they have seen how effective they can be in solving problems related to young people.

Overall, this short assessment of the impact of the chosen youth employment measures has shown that a number are still pilot measures or are deemed to be too small in scale to be able to have a significant impact on youth employment, or other issues such as ESL and social exclusion, at national or even regional level. This is not to say that they may not have an impact on individual young people, providers, implementation partners, employers and other stakeholders. The section has also shown that the impact of these measures is shaped by a number of intangible, qualitative factors that affect their overall effectiveness, and these are explained further in the next section.

Other factors to take into account when assessing effectiveness

A number of intangible factors should be taken into account when forming an assessment of whether or not measures have achieved their intended outcomes. These are:

- the wider outcomes for beneficiaries (including soft outcomes) and partners or stakeholders involved in the measures;
- alternative measurements of success (e.g. looking at 'distance travelled' or the quality of the services provided); and
- the economic context (the effect of the economic crisis in particular).

Beneficiaries of a number of the measures achieved soft outcomes, which may or may not have been included in their originally anticipated outcomes. School Work Alternation measures (IT) for example are said to improve students' basic and transferable skills (e.g. decision-making, communication, problem-solving, group work) that are useful in any work

or study environment. In relation to the TISZKs (HU), teachers cite one of the positive outcomes as the inclusion of soft skills into the curriculum, such as communication training or career orientation. This inclusion of soft skills was thought to have had a very high marginal benefit as skills of this kind had been generally neglected in the Hungarian education system.

It is thus important to look beyond quantitative measurements and to try to take account of a broader picture of the achievements of each measure in order to capture the full scope of the work that they do. For example, looking at the 'distance travelled' by a young person during their involvement with a measure is one way of trying to identify how successful it is. This might relate to the pathway from social exclusion to participation in a subsidised job for one young person; for another it might mean going from graduation into a permanent job.

Conducting reviews of participant satisfaction is another way of assessing the quality of the service provided, how well the measure is working and of identifying areas for improvement. For example, satisfaction with participation in ÜBA (AT) is exceptionally high, with 42% of young people 'very satisfied' and further 44% 'satisfied' with their training. Higher-level apprentices (IT) were generally satisfied with their experience, with most rating it between eight and 10 marks out of 10.

The (intended) outcomes of a measure may not necessarily relate to outcomes for young people. Instead, they may relate to changing infrastructures or systems to better support young people, or to changing employers' attitudes towards young people. Connexions (England) is a good example of a measure that set out to achieve a broader result relating to systemic change in the services delivered to young people. The Connexions partnerships were set up to tackle the perceived fragmentation of support services for young people and to develop a 'one-stop-shop' approach to advice and guidance, as well as to coordinate the creation and maintenance of a national database for tracking young people aged 13–19 years. According to a survey of more than 700 partners of Connexions (2003), services for young people became more coherent and the majority of those surveyed felt that Connexions had improved the way that services were delivered for young people (National Audit Office, 2004). Navigator Centres (SE) have, in a similar manner, sought to change the way in which young people's services are delivered at local level: one-stop-shops have been created where young people can access all the services they need to find a path out of exclusion or unemployment or both. The approach is broadly supported by labour market actors in the country, though no national commitment has yet been set to capitalise on the success of local interventions.

The full range of outcomes of a measure can also involve those affecting the partners and stakeholders involved. These might include for example improved links and relationships between actors working with young people, the development of new expertise and skills amongst staff or a better match between the skills available to (local) businesses and their needs. Some examples are given in the box below. For example, the higher-level apprenticeships (IT) created an opportunity to introduce new didactic methodologies that were appealing to both students and employers, and led to a creation of better collaboration between universities and businesses. Furthermore, School Work Alternation (IT) is said to have contributed to strengthening and in some cases creating regional and organisational networks of different stakeholders. Through the measure, workplaces and schools have reinforced a dialogue and mutual understanding. Companies have developed an understanding of their responsibility in the training process of the future workforce.

The economic context also has a range of influences on youth employment measures, which need to be taken into consideration when assessing outcomes and impact. Indeed, evidence from the reviewed measures shows that in relation to those measures that aim to reduce ESL, the economic crisis may actually alter the context by leading to a reduction in drop-out rates. This is because more young people stay in education due to a lack of opportunities on the labour market. At the same time reintegration measures may face a rise in demand, as young people who left school early to take up low-skilled employment (an example might be in the construction sector, notably in Spain and Ireland) lose their

jobs and need to return to education in order to improve their employability. This can mean that harder-to-reach groups are displaced from the measures, because they are less likely to seek help themselves and therefore might get 'left behind'.

As well as an increase in demand or a change in the profile of participants, it may be that the scope and target groups of these measures are adjusted in the context of the economic crisis to respond to needs of 'new targets groups'. In Ireland, the VTOS scheme has recently been made accessible to those in receipt of statutory redundancy, who are not required to fulfil the eligibility criterion of having spent six months registered unemployed. Extending the scope of measures in this way may put additional strain on the resources available for implementation, which may have negative consequences for their effectiveness (no additional funding was made available during the crisis).

Demand for measures providing support to young unemployed people may intensify and consequently become difficult to manage as a result of the crisis. For example in relation to the Youth Guarantee (FI), during the economic crisis the workload of many PES youth advisers became difficult; the number of customers per adviser grew as high as 700, when the ideal customer number stands at around 120–150. A budget increase in 2010 helped to ease the situation by allowing the PES to recruit more staff (advisers and career guidance counsellors) and create more training and other support places for young jobseekers.

In an economic downturn, measures that aim to place young people in employment will find it harder to achieve their intended impact, due to the lack of employment opportunities. For example, the economic context is said to have made it more difficult for advisers responsible for the CIVIS contract (FR) to identify suitable employment opportunities for beneficiaries. As mentioned earlier, the proportion of beneficiaries integrated into stable employment decreased from 40% in 2007 to 28% in 2009 and 2010, with a preliminary figure of 24% for 2011. At the same time the number of apprenticeship (FR) places in companies also declined, as employers were hesitant to take on new trainees or staff. In Spain the very difficult economic context in which the measures to promote self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts were implemented, with youth unemployment rates over 40%, have had a considerable influence on their impact. Similarly, in Finland and Sweden youth guarantees struggled to achieve good employment outcomes for young unemployed people during the 2009–2010 period, when the competition for the few available jobs was particularly fierce.

It is worth noting that a number of the measures were introduced specifically as a response to the economic crisis (e.g. Chances Card in Finland and AGE in England), in recognition of the fact that young people were hit particularly hard by the downturn. Yet other measures have been negatively affected by the public sector cuts in funding resulting from government efforts to tackle the consequences of the economic crisis. For example, the School Work Alternation measure (IT) is said to have been negatively impacted by budget cuts that affected schools. This is because the schools cannot devote the time and resources to develop new training courses and initiatives, making it difficult to interest teachers in tutoring and planning initiatives. In Italy, Higher-level apprenticeships have been focused on a smaller number of regions in the second phase due to lack of funds. PCPI (ES) have also been adversely affected by spending cuts, which has meant that it has not been possible to expand the measure to cope with the high level of demand.

A key issue to take into account in the design and delivery of youth employment measures is the cyclical nature of the problem. Youth unemployment rises during an economic downturn and declines when the economic situation improves (often more so than overall unemployment). This means that measures need to be flexible to meet these changes in demand.

Certain types of measures could be more effective than others during a crisis. For example, in the absence of job opportunities on the open market, training measures combined with (subsidised) work experience become all the more

relevant to prepare young people well for times when employment becomes available in the upswing, while ‘pure’ subsidy measures may become less effective. Overall funding may be reduced for hard-to-reach groups as the target population of young unemployed people expands. In this context, it is important to maintain strong supports for those young people who are most disengaged from employment; neglecting this group is likely to lead to significant long-term problems, which become more difficult to overcome, even as the economic situation improves.

The above-mentioned factors demonstrate that the youth employment policy arena is a dynamic one, with a range of external and internal factors affecting the effectiveness of measures. It also means that the individuals and organisations involved in the design, implementation and improvement of youth measures should be aware of such dynamics. Stakeholders should also be able to estimate the way in which these factors might affect their policy in the future so that they can as prepared as possible and thereby minimise possible negative effects.

In broader terms, evidence presented in this chapter has shown that the youth employment measures under review here have been relatively successful at achieving their intended operational targets as well as their intended outcomes, thereby helping many young people across Europe to prepare for and access work. However, most of these measures are too small in scale to have a noticeable, concrete impact on youth employment rates at national level. The broader impact of some of the national measures has been hampered by insufficient funding and/or the economic crisis, which has been characterised by a low level of demand for youth employment. Despite these challenges, these measures are united in their shared desire to address the problem of youth unemployment and social exclusion, and they demonstrate a range of different strengths in the way in which they go about tackling these issues. The next chapter elaborates on these strengths, as well as some shared weaknesses of these 25 youth employment measures. It also provides a summary of the key lessons they provide.

Effectiveness and lessons learned

This chapter outlines the key strengths and weaknesses of the different types of measures reviewed for this evaluative study. This information might be useful when deciding when and how to support young people on their path towards employment. It is followed by a summary of some of the key characteristics of effective youth employment measures, with some analysis of the extent to which the measures included in this study possess these characteristics.

Strengths and weaknesses of measures to prevent ESL

One key strength of the preventive ESL measures reviewed as part of this evaluative study is that they tend to take a long-term view of the problem of ESL. They address the risk factors – such as persistent absenteeism from school or exclusion at a young age – before they accumulate to become a more severe problem in the form of dropping out of school. This approach means they can help to prevent youth exclusion, including its associated costs to society and the economy, in the longer term. They are typically more cost-effective than ESL reintegration measures. For example, Career Start (FI) is seen as an important form of ‘transition’ support, provided – at the point of transition between lower and upper secondary education, which is a particularly vulnerable point in young people’s lives. Evaluations have concluded that this programme has had an important impact in reducing social exclusion among young people in Finland. During the pilot phase, over two-thirds of participants (70 %) found a path to education, training (including apprenticeships) or employment upon completion of the programme.

Other ESL preventive measures focus on changing the way education is delivered, or introducing new courses, in order to improve the extent to which mainstream education system meets the needs of all young people. The strength of these measures is that they address the fundamental issues that lie behind ESL, namely the features of mainstream education that cause young people to drop out. The strong collaborative approach introduced through the Learning Communities (ES) initiative for instance is thought to be more effective than traditional teaching methods in tackling the problem of ESL. All schools that have been transformed into Learning Communities have reported positive outcomes, including improved academic achievement, a reduction in school drop-out rates and better ‘coexistence’ within the school. In Barcelona, the implementation of a Learning Community has reduced the rate of absenteeism from 57% to 3% in three years and the rate of ESL from 37% to 5%.

Nevertheless there are some weaknesses associated with these preventive measures. There is, for example, a risk in relation to area-based policies. These policies channel additional funding towards disadvantaged areas, in which a high proportion of young people at greater risk of social exclusion. If the funding allocated is spread too thinly, it may not make a significant impact. Furthermore, without focusing on specific priority learners within the target areas, there is no guarantee that efforts will actually be focused on pupils facing the most acute difficulties. For example, while Priority Education (FR) does (by its very design) reach a large number of young people (almost one out of five pupils in France during the 2010–2011 school year), some question whether the scheme has been too ‘diluted’ to have any type of measurable impact. Overall, the impact of the measure is said to be very modest compared to the size of the challenge; young people from priority education areas face such a comparative disadvantage that a 10–15% increase in school budgets is unlikely to be sufficient to offset the difference. Nevertheless, despite the lack of tangible outcomes in terms of reducing gaps in performance between priority education and non-priority education areas, priority education is considered to have spurred on many small-scale examples of good practice on the ground and to have generated several positive qualitative outcomes.

A possible weakness of transition programmes is that young people may become accustomed to the tailored, intensive support they receive through these measures and as a result struggle to reintegrate into mainstream schooling. In relation to Career Start (FI) for instance, in some cases it has been difficult to integrate Career Start groups into the mainstream life and activities of the VET provider. In response to this problem, the programme has become a more integral part of the work of the VET schools, rather than being seen as ‘separate’ from mainstream activities.

Another challenge associated with some preventive measures is the associated cultural change required – for example when implementing an alternative way of delivering education or a new type of course or qualification. This can mean that substantial investment is needed, for example in teacher training and awareness-raising among key stakeholders, including young people themselves, parents and employers. School Work Alternation (IT) still seems to be a niche measure with a relatively small number of participants, even though all students over the age of 15 are supposed to have the opportunity to pursue their studies by alternating between periods of work and study.

Table 10: *Strengths and weaknesses of preventive ESL policies reviewed as part of the study*

Type of policy	Strengths	Weaknesses
Transition programmes from one level of education to another (or to employment) (Career Start, FI)	Address a vulnerable point in young people's lives which has been somewhat ignored in the past by public policies.	Young people may become accustomed to the tailored, intensive support they receive through these measures.
Area-based policies (Priority Education, FR)	Target additional funding or more human resources to deal with the specific problem of youth exclusion: policies are focused on the 'right target group'.	Funding can be spread too thinly to make a significant impact; Despite focusing on the right target group or target schools, measures may not always reach the students most in need.
Introducing new ways of delivering education or new courses (Learning Communities, ES; School Work Alternation, IT)	Address the issues from a long-term perspective; Can help to address aspects of mainstream education that were 'turning off' young people.	Can be costly and require significant cultural change and investment in training of staff involved in delivery; New qualifications may not be understood, recognised or valued by young people, their parents or employers without significant efforts to build up the reputation and 'brand' of this measure.

Strengths and weaknesses of measures to reintegrate ESLs

The four ESL reintegration measures reviewed for this study can be categorised into two, broad groups: alternative learning environments or qualifications, and holistic programmes. Some overlap can occur between the two, as holistic programmes tend to be offered within an alternative learning environment. Holistic programmes are important for young people with more complex needs and more 'distance' to travel along the pathway to employment. Those that simply provide alternative learning environments or qualifications may be more suited to young people who have found that the mainstream education system does not work for them but do not have more complex barriers to participation in learning or work.

The strength of alternative learning environments or qualifications is that they may be all that is needed to revitalise the interest of learners who have rejected formal education. PCPI programmes (ES) for example, are thought to be more attractive to young people as they are more practical (they include an element of work-based learning). The Springboard (HU) measure also differs from mainstream schooling in that classes are smaller and the modular curriculum includes integrated subjects and covers practical skills such as writing a CV. Pupils also received hands-on experience of various professions, for example by job shadowing in restaurants or other firms. The potential disadvantage of these alternative learning environments and qualifications is that the qualifications obtained may not always be valued or recognised by employers. It is therefore important to involve employers and their representatives in the design of such curricula.

The advantage of the holistic reintegration measures reviewed for this study is that they address the full range of (sometimes complex) issues faced by young early school leavers, by helping them to identify and work towards breaking down the barriers they face, in order to enable them to move on to further education, training or employment. The particular strength of Production Schools for instance is considered to be their wide-ranging and combined offer of personalised social and pedagogical support together with training, learning and practical tasks and experience. It is designed to re-ignite an interest in learning and also to provide participants with some core skills.

Holistic measures are therefore more appropriate for those young people who are at a greater distance from the labour market. By helping these young people to move along the ‘pathway to employment’ they can help to prevent social exclusion and its associated costs. However, these measures can be more costly than others and it can be hard to fully measure their outcomes and impact. They may be more likely to generate ‘soft outcomes’ for beneficiaries, rather than quantifiable outputs such as qualifications. Furthermore, as with (preventive ESL) transition measures, there is a risk that beneficiaries may become accustomed to the intensive support they are given by holistic reintegration measures. It is thus important that reintegration measures focus on raising the aspirations of their participants and on equipping them with the skills and competences to take responsibility for their own long-term development. Youthreach (IE) for example aims to facilitate school completion but also to promote self-agency, self-awareness, and improved confidence among its participants. The aim is to give them the ability to get a job and stay in it – i.e. to ensure their sustainability on the labour market.

Table 11: *Strengths and weaknesses of reintegration policies reviewed as part of the study*

Type of policy	Strengths of such policies	Weakness of such policies
Alternative learning environments / Alternative qualifications (Springboard, HU; PCPI, ES)	Revitalise the interest of learners who have rejected formal education.	Qualifications obtained may not always be valued or recognised by employers.
Holistic programmes (Production Schools, AT; Youthreach, IE)	Seek to address the root causes and the broad range of personal and educational challenges young people face; Can help to prevent social exclusion (and its associated costs).	Can be more costly (although often the costs are thought to be outweighed by the potential costs of ‘non-action’); Harder to measure the outcomes and impact.

Strengths and weaknesses of measures to support STW transitions

The shared strength of the STW measures reviewed here is that they typically help to reduce the amount of time a young person spends out of work after leaving education, thereby reducing the risk of the ‘scarring’ effect which can be incurred by a spell in unemployment at a young age. This might be done by providing them with the information or knowledge to make informed career decisions through information, advice and guidance (IAG) measures; by improving the quality and speed of services offered to them by the PES (youth guarantees); by promoting alternative routes into the labour market (such as measures to promote self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts in Spain); or by improving the quality of vocational training, which equips young people with the skills they need for the world of work (TISZKs, HU).

One possible weakness of most of the STW transition measures covered by this study is that they are more appropriate for young people who are more ‘work-ready’. For instance youth guarantees do not typically prove to be as successful with ‘hard-to-help’ groups as with those who are more ready for the labour market. Much more networking among key actors at local level is needed in order to maximise the impact of youth guarantees on young people with complex needs; in particular collaboration with social and health services needs to improve. If such a measure is to be applied to more vulnerable groups, it needs to be based on a strong collaborative approach with a range of stakeholders involved in providing services to young people.

Another challenge associated with some of the STW transition measures is that their success can be dependent on the other public policies being in place (e.g. availability of student places) and the broader labour market situation in the country (e.g. the extent to which employers have jobs to offer to young people, or the overall business environment). The Spanish measure to promote self-employment among young people, for example, faces a key challenge in that overall, jobseekers are not frequently stimulated to become self-employed; a comprehensive supportive environment that

meets the needs of potential entrepreneurs is still missing. This challenge is also common to other European countries: specific assistance is needed as support from unemployment benefits is insufficient to start a business. As outlined above, the CIVIS contract (FR) initiative has reached its targets in terms of the number of beneficiaries taking part in the programme. It has not been successful in meeting its key objective of 50% of beneficiaries in employment and 40% in stable employment immediately after their participation in the programme; this is partly attributed to the difficult labour market context.

In the context of high rates of youth unemployment, there may be a temptation to focus on ‘quick fix solutions’ which do not necessarily create a long-term benefit for the young person. Returning to youth guarantees for example, they may place young people in employment, education or training in a relatively short timeframe and at a relatively low cost, but may not always offer a long-term solution. The Job Guarantee for Young People (SE) has been criticised by some studies and stakeholders for not providing a long-term solution for many. This is due to the fact that the guarantee does not solve many of the structural concerns of the target group: lack of skills and qualifications. For this reason, many stakeholders feel that the new job guarantee should focus more on up-skilling and re-training rather than on helping young people to find any job they can find. Similarly, it has been noted that the Spanish measure to promote the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts for young people incurs a risk of increasing atypical work and gender segregation on the labour market (as part-time jobs are most common among female workers).

A recent change in the Finnish youth guarantee (with further improvements likely to be introduced in the next few months) reduces the waiting period for an individualised employment plan for an unemployed young person from a month to just two weeks. It also involves the participation in an active labour market measure within the first three months of registration (support to be received immediately but at least within the first three months). This has been positively received by all key stakeholders in the country. Social partners in Sweden also want to see it introduced in the future as they feel that a three month waiting period for support from PES is too long and that it should in fact start the day a young person registers as unemployed.

One strength of the IAG measures is that they go beyond career issues to look at personal and social barriers to participation, thereby help hard-to-reach groups in particular. For instance, Navigator Centres (SE) employ a holistic approach to help the hardest-to-reach young people with their personal, social, family, health and other problems before helping them to return to education or training or to find employment. According to an evaluation of five Navigator Centres, even those beneficiaries who did not find a job, internship or place on a training programme felt that their time at the Navigator Centre improved their self-confidence and enabled them to become more prepared to find work.

In the STW transitions category, three measures can be found that aim to improve or reform the services available to young people, i.e. those measures that run alongside the ‘pathway to employment’ illustrated in Figure 1. The strength of these measures is that they take a broad, longer term approach to tackling the problems causing a difficult transition to the labour market for young people. The TISZKs (HU) initiative for example, which involved over 700 schools by the end of 2011, has helped to bring about large-scale development in the infrastructure of the participating institutions, both in terms of the modernisation of machinery and upgrading the knowledge of the teaching staff. This has undoubtedly had a positive effect on the quality of the teaching and education taking place. However, such large-scale reforms can be costly and require significant investment of public funds, which may be difficult in the current economic climate. The allocation of insufficient resources is likely to be detrimental to a measure’s effectiveness. Connexions in England, for example, was not considered to have sufficient resources to enable it to meet its dual aims of providing a universal careers service and tackling the complex problems of some specific NEET groups (Department for Education and Skills, 2005).

Table 12: *Strengths and weaknesses of STW policies reviewed as part of the study*

Type of policy	Strengths	Weaknesses
Youth guarantees (Youth Guarantee, FI; A job guarantee for young people, SE)	'Force' the PES to focus on young people; Encourage immediate action to address youth unemployment, before disengagement sets in; Avoid long-term consequences or 'scarring' effects of youth unemployment.	Funding is not always attached to youth guarantees, thus impact can be minimal (significant variation across countries); Success depends quite strongly on other public policies (e.g. availability of student places) and the broader labour market situation in the country; Social partners are of the opinion that even the new shorter waiting periods are too long – PES should have an obligation to help a young jobseeker as soon as they have registered.
Information, advice and guidance (CIVIS contract, FR; Navigator Centres, SE; Connexions, England)	Go beyond careers issues to look at personal and social barriers to participation; Can help, in particular, hard-to-reach groups.	Focus on hard-to-reach can be to the detriment of students with less complex needs (e.g. Connexions); Provisions can be too thinly spread (not available to all young people, especially during economic downturn).
Promoting alternative routes to the labour market (Measures to promote self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts for young people, ES)	Provide young people with a foothold on the labour market and with valuable work experience; Can be relatively low cost.	Success depends quite strongly on other public policies (e.g. additional support or training) and / or the broader labour market situation in the country (e.g. whether employers are able to offer jobs or whether the business environment is favourable).
Improving or reforming the services or training courses available to young people (TISZKs, HU; Navigator Centres, SE; Connexions, England)	Take a broad approach to tackling the problems causing a difficult transition to the labour market (e.g. fragmented services, poor quality training).	Large-scale measures can be costly and require significant cultural change, e.g. to adopt and improve partnership working.

Strengths and weaknesses of measures to foster employability among young people

For the purposes of this research, measures to foster employability among young people are those that provide learning opportunities of relevance to labour market integration. Their main strength is that they help young people to improve their skillset to meet the needs of employers, thereby helping to address skills mismatch in the wider economy. Those that provide work-based learning opportunities – such as apprenticeships or traineeships – also help to provide young people with work experience, which is something they lack in comparison to older workers.

A broad consensus has emerged that vocational training should be provided through a combination of theory and practice (apprenticeship, dual or 'twin-track' learning). Yet the provision of this kind of training is unevenly developed across Europe (European Commission, 2012b). In response, a number of countries have begun to focus on increasing existing provision or introducing work-based learning opportunities for young people, in the form of apprenticeships, traineeships or other work-based learning formats (e.g. France, Italy, Spain and the UK). The benefits of such opportunities lie not only in enabling participants to acquire relevant skills for the labour market. They also enable employers to better assess the competences of young workers (Duell et al, 2011). For some young people, this leads to the opportunity to continue working with the employer on a long-term basis, after their training has been completed. For instance almost half (43%) of the FÁS traineeship (IE) participants who had been employed at some point after leaving FÁS said that they had previously worked with their current employer, either before taking up the traineeship (7%) or as work experience during the Traineeship (38%). This shows that many participants go on to take up employment with the employer who delivered their traineeship (Conway and Fox, 2009).

For those countries where alternation pathways are not currently embedded in the system of education and training, especially in higher education, it may take some time and a certain ‘cultural shift’ before these systems can be fully exploited. Change may be needed in the attitudes of education and training providers, employers, students and parents. For example, in the case of Higher-level apprenticeships (IT), the programme managers did face some difficulties in attracting young people because of perceptions about apprenticeships: apprenticeships were perceived to be geared towards jobs with low skills and low(er) pay and there was a perceived lack of certainty about being taken on by the company after the apprenticeship (ISFOL, 2011). However, as discussed before, the programme has yielded many benefits for employers, learners and providers alike, shown for example by positive employment outcomes for learners and new, innovative teaching pedagogies being introduced in participating universities.

Another challenge linked to some work-based learning measures is that it can prove difficult to engage enough employers in order to meet the demand for the number of places from young people. For instance in France, a slight decline in the number of apprenticeships was registered in 2009, which is thought to be due in part to the unfavourable economic context. In Austria, it was felt in relation to ÜBA that emphasis should be placed on ensuring that the availability of supra-company apprenticeships does not increase the trend for employers to opt out of offering placements, as they are most cost-effective and lead to better labour market integration outcomes.

The countries covered by this review are at different stages in terms of the level of collaboration between the education and training systems and the labour market. In Austria for example, there is a strong system of apprenticeships, which has been linked to the low level of youth unemployment in the country. As shown by the Austrian examples reviewed for this study, strong alternative work-based learning systems are also available to those with personal, social or learning difficulties, meaning that the apprenticeship system is open to most young people. In other countries there is more work to be done to introduce or improve the integration of work-based learning and employer engagement into education and training. It was indeed confirmed by stakeholders and in the literature that without availability of additional support for both learners and employees, these measures are unlikely to be suitable for young people with more complex needs. This is because mainstream work-based learning routes require a certain level of motivation and a good level of basic education.

Other measures that aim to foster employability amongst young people focus on enabling them to acquire the basic skills or formal qualifications required to access employment. The strength of such measures is that they provide learners with a second chance to return to a learning pathway, which can lead them towards employment. Furthermore, they can also help to promote increased self-confidence among learners, through the acquisition of skills and qualifications. VTOS (IE) for example helps participants to improve their general level of education, gain certification, develop their skills and prepare for employment, self-employment and further education and training through a range of education-led, vocationally-oriented and progression-focused second-chance learning opportunities. Of those VTOS participants achieving certification in 2010, 14% progressed to employment and 45% progressed to further education and training.

It has been shown that the length of the intervention affects the chances of young people finding employment. For example, in Finland, 16% of young people who took part in a month-long activation measure were employed within three months of finishing the programme. Two out of five (41 %) who took part in an activation measure lasting more than 12 months were employed within the same period (Nio and Sardar, 2011). According to the study results, the most successful interventions were by far subsidised employment and vocational (longer term) labour market training. Shorter-term preparatory training and work placements were less effective in placing young people in employment.

Table 13: *Strengths and weaknesses of employability policies reviewed as part of the study*

Type of policy	Strengths	Weaknesses
Work-based learning / vocational training (FÁS National Traineeship Programme, IE; Higher-level apprenticeships, IT; ÜBA, AT; apprenticeships within Alternance Education and Training, FR)	<p>Ensure that young people are acquiring skills relevant to the labour market, thereby reducing skills mismatch as well as preventing youth unemployment;</p> <p>Enable employers to assess the competences of young workers and for some learners may lead to employment after their training has been completed.</p>	<p>May require a culture change in countries where dual training is not currently embedded in the education and training system;</p> <p>Can be difficult to engage enough employers.</p>
Training in basic skills, competences and qualifications required by employers (VTOS, IE)	<p>Provide a chance to return to learning and to move a step forward on the ‘pathway to employment’;</p> <p>Can also generate soft outcomes such as increased self-confidence.</p>	Benefits in terms of employment outcomes may not be evident in the short-term.

Strengths and weaknesses of employer incentives and measures to remove barriers to employment

This category looks at two types of measures which aim to remove barriers to employment faced by young people and thereby to reduce inequality of access to the labour market. The strength of such measures is that they compensate for specific disadvantages faced by young people in comparison to other jobseekers. Some of the measures remove practical and logistical barriers faced by young people wishing to enter the labour market. For example, IBA (AT) is widely perceived to be a successful instrument in assisting young people facing particular integration challenges in accessing accredited training; it provides opportunities for positive and sustainable labour market integration. It also allows for an element of tailoring of training curricula to participant’s particular learning needs, as well as providing them (and their employers and colleagues) with dedicated support. This led the measure to be adopted on a permanent basis in 2008 (until then it was limited in time). By avoiding the associated costs of social exclusion, these measures to remove practical and logistical barriers can ultimately be of benefit to society and the economy.

The majority of the measures reviewed in this category focus on young people as a wider target group and on breaking down the key barriers they face to employment – most often lack of work experience – by providing subsidies to employers to take on young people. These measures aim to reduce the hiring barriers faced by employers; these can include the cost of wages, as well as administration and ‘red tape’. By giving young people a chance to prove themselves in a job, these measures can help to change employers’ attitudes towards hiring young people. They can also mean that young people are making a better use of their time by gaining work experience rather than being in unemployment.

The employer incentive measures reviewed for this study appear to have been relatively effective in placing young people in employment. The START programme (HU) is the most significant active youth labour market policy in Hungary, in terms of both budget and the number of young people affected, and appears to enjoy broad political support. By mid-2007, monthly average employment through this measure had reached 35,000–40,000 young employees; this rate has remained on this level ever since. The current economic crisis is understood to have underlined the significance of the programme; demand for it was fairly constant over the recent years as opposed to total labour demand which has declined. According to the programme managers, the principal strength of the programme is its low administrative cost for employers and the target group.

However, there are a number of risks and challenges associated with employer incentive measures and the evidence on their effects on labour market outcomes is mixed. They may be more successful in some labour market contexts than others. In Spain for example, employment creation measures that entail subsidies, either for companies or for the self-employed that hire unemployed workers, traditionally have limited efficacy (Rocha, 2010). Accordingly, the massive

unemployment rate has been a great obstacle and job creation initiatives have not historically had a significant role in improving employment levels.

Another concern with employer subsidies is their potential to incur deadweight or substitution costs (see for example Betcherman et al, 2004). A Swedish assessment of the New-Start jobs initiative and other labour market subsidies performed in 2008 suggested that while employer subsidies have had many positive effects on employment, between five and seven out of 10 subsidised jobs would have been filled anyway and in a third of cases the same person would have been hired (Lundin and Liljeberg, 2008). Nonetheless, a key strength of the programme is that it has given many young people real working experience and real opportunities to continue working after the funding period. Similarly, preliminary findings of an evaluation of the Chances Card (FI) that is currently being carried out by Pitkänen et al (2012) show that the subsidy offered through the Chances Card scheme has increased the interest of employers on labour market subsidy schemes to 70%, but 40% would have hired young people even without the subsidy.

This means that it is important to ensure that such programmes are carefully designed to ensure that the risks of deadweight or displacement can be minimised. The START programme (HU) for example was altered in 2010 to reduce the duration of the subsidy provided for higher education graduates. This is because they were considered to include a higher proportion of transfer recipients who would have been employed without a subsidy than of young people with no such qualification. Employers participating in the AGE initiative (England) were required to sign an agreement to include ‘confirmation that they wouldn’t have taken on the apprentice without this additional incentive’.

Finally, there may be a risk that employer subsidies will be exploited by employers as ‘cheap labour’. For instance, amongst the beneficiaries of the Chances Card (FI) scheme, one in 10 had completed another subsidised placement in the same company before their period of employment with the Chances Card and some young people suggested that the scheme was being used as a way of reducing ‘real’ employment opportunities for young people (Pitkänen et al, 2012). Again, it is important to put in place certain measures to try to prevent such issues from occurring.

Table 14: *Strengths and weaknesses of measures to remove practical / logistical barriers and employer incentives reviewed as part of the study*

Type of policy	Strengths	Weaknesses
Tailored, specific training or employment opportunities (IBA, AT)	Take account of the specific needs of the young person, e.g. disability, caring responsibilities etc.	Can be more costly; May not be recognised or valued by all employers.
Wage and apprenticeship subsidies (IBA, AT; Chances Card, FI; START Programme, HU; New-Start Jobs, SE; AGE, England)	Encourage employers to take on people they might not have otherwise employed, and in doing so may help to change employers’ attitudes towards hiring young people; Enable the participants to gain valuable work experience rather than being unemployed.	Risk of deadweight or displacement effects as a significant share of employers would have hired the young person anyway; Wage subsidy schemes ‘exploited’ by some companies.

Lessons learned – key characteristics of effective youth employment measures

The analysis of the chosen 25 youth employment measures has allowed us to identify their general strengths and weaknesses and to recognise key characteristics of effective provision in this field. In total, 10 key elements have emerged from this research. They vary from characteristics linked to the design, content and organisation of measures, to partnership arrangements and quality control mechanisms. They are discussed below.

Consider different, innovative ways to reach out to the target group

A number of key factors need to be taken into account if youth employment measures are to reach out to their intended target groups. For example, in relation to Priority Education (FR), our research found that although the measure allocated additional resources to priority areas, thereby suggesting that it is helping schools most in need. However, there is in fact no guarantee that efforts are actually focused on pupils facing the most acute difficulties. A key lesson from this seems to be that efforts must not only be focused on schools but should also link in with students' families and the local environment.

The Connexions service (England) reached out to large numbers of young people, with on average 4,000 visits to one-stop-shops and community-based access points each week. However, stakeholders interviewed for this study suggested that providers found it hard to offer both a 'universal' service and also to provide the level of support required by vulnerable, hard-to-reach groups. This meant that those young people in need of less intensive support were left behind (this is also referred to in Department of Education and Skills, 2005). It seems that the potentially conflicting targets given to Connexions – to provide an advice and guidance service to all young people but also to meet a range of targets in relation to specific vulnerable groups, including reducing the NEET rate – meant that the service was not able to successfully meet its aims and objectives.

The lesson from Connexions and Priority Education (FR) seems to be that it is important to either set a specific target group (e.g. NEETs) rather than geographical areas for example, or to allocate sufficient resources in order for a measure to reach out to all young people, regardless of their status and needs. This lesson does not just apply to the provision of guidance; it also relates to training and other employability measures. For instance Kluve (2006) and Card et al (2010) found that training programmes that are targeted towards specific groups and which also involve an element of on-the-job learning tend to show positive employment effects, whereas large-scale training programmes, without a clear focus, are not successful in raising employment (McGuinness et al, 2011). Another example is found in the measures to promote self-employment and the transition from temporary to open-ended contracts (ES), a strength of which is said to be the focus on promoting the employment of two crucial groups within the Spanish labour market: young people and the long-term unemployed. This approach is said to contribute to increasing the efficacy of employment promotion programmes, as it has encouraged the PES to give attention to two particular groups who face severe obstacles in the labour market.

Another key lesson that emerged from these measures is the importance of establishing a good 'reputation' or 'brand' which can be recognised by young people, their parents and employers. Two of the employer subsidy measures (Chances Card, FI and the START programme, HU) created specific 'cards' which young people could present to employers as evidence that they were eligible for the subsidy. Survey and anecdotal evidence show that by creating an innovative brand name and design for the Chances Card, it was possible to make a significant difference to the awareness of both employers and young people about wage subsidies. The reputation of qualifications being offered to young people is also important; it is important that they are recognised by employers as being valuable on the labour market, and also that they are seen by young people (and their parents) as offering added value to their existing profile of skills and qualifications. For example a lot of work was needed to promote Higher-level apprenticeships (IT) among young people and their families, because of perceptions regarding low pay, length of time involved and lack of a guarantee of a job

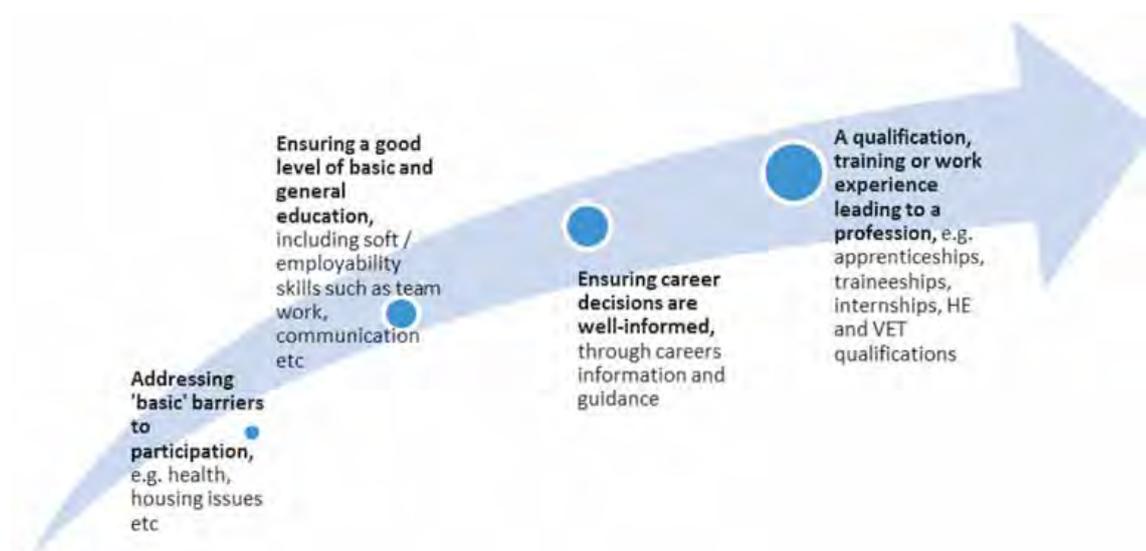
following the apprenticeship. The involvement of highly regarded universities helped reassure students that the apprenticeships represented an authentic opportunity. When young people can see that the outcomes of their participation in a specific course will provide a route into a job or make a clear difference to their career prospects, drop-out is likely to be lower.

Outreach activities form an important part of measures to engage more hard-to-reach young people (Hoggarth et al, 2004). This might mean working with relevant community groups, voluntary and youth organisations, as they tend to be able to reach out more effectively to certain target groups. It may also mean offering drop-in provision in locations where young people from the target groups are more likely to be found. It seems that the countries included in this review are currently working to improve outreach work, or that it is an area where more work needs to be done. The new Navigator Centres (SE) for instance conduct outreach work, such as visiting youth clubs and meeting with young people who are in touch with social services, in order to reach young people who are not captured by mainstream labour market support programmes. In Austria, many disaffected young people do not currently seek the support of the PES; this can mean their needs can be underestimated and that they do not receive all the supports which could be available. In response, initiatives are currently underway to work with relevant community groups to achieve better connections and to improve outreach to young people. This is particularly relevant for the Production Schools (AT) measure; access to schools is currently only through referral by the PES, yet many among the target group are not registered with and are unlikely to come into contact with the PES (even if they are unemployed).

The labour market 'readiness' of beneficiaries is an important consideration

Whilst it is important for measures to be grounded in a strong focus on the needs of the labour market and on skills for employability, it is also necessary to bear in mind that the target groups can vary in their level of readiness for the labour market. Some measures will need to focus on the full range of needs of young people and on breaking down the barriers they face to participation, before it is possible for the young person to move on to education or training in vocational or professional skills. This is particularly so for measures dealing with vulnerable groups or people with complex needs such as early school leavers, NEETs or the long-term unemployed. Thus the measures reviewed for this study support young people to move upwards along a 'scale of employability', as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: *Scale of employability*



Source: Nevala, A-M., Pavlovaite, I. (2009) *Success factors of second chance schools in Ireland and Lithuania*. - GHK Consulting Ltd., 2012

For example, the evaluation of the AGE (England) initiative by Wiseman et al (2011) suggested that ‘Apprenticeship is not the most appropriate vehicle for the less able and less motivated young people who make up some of these who are NEET’. The demands of the apprenticeship framework, together with the reluctance of employers to take on young people they consider ‘ill-equipped for the challenge’ were thought to present considerable barriers for young people with more complex needs. The evaluation therefore suggested that a subsidy to encourage employers to take on young people should take a two-fold approach and separate the problem of youth unemployment into two groups:

those with the least capability, probably with poor literacy and numeracy skills, and with poor motivation; and those with higher capability and stronger motivation who are capable of undertaking Apprenticeships and can be accepted by employers as such.

This finding seems particularly valid in the context of the economic downturn, which is beginning to affect young people with higher level skills as well as the low-qualified. This is also demonstrated by the success of the Austrian approach of having three different types of apprenticeships tailored for different groups of learners.

Staff play an important role in delivering measures

It is important for the staff delivering youth employability and ESL measures to have the right skills and profile to deliver the services and to provide the appropriate level of support to the beneficiaries concerned. This is particularly the case for innovative measures that introduce new ways or structures of working, as well as for those measures working with young people who are more vulnerable or have more complex needs. It is also important for staff involved in employer engagement to have a suitable background and skill set and good understanding of the local labour market.

ESL measures in particular require talented staff that are able to employ alternative methods of working with young people to those used in mainstream education. Dealing with this target group also requires a different approach and attitude from staff, who need to treat young people as adults (though they may not reciprocate this, at least not in the beginning), with respect, as well as to challenge them and set them with high expectations. For instance, training for teachers involved in the Springboard (HU) measure was considered to be essential, as most participants had no previous experience with the modular curricula and individual development plans to be delivered as part of the measure. Thus, teachers received training in the first phase and then were supported for two years by mentors in the implementation of the new curriculum and teaching methods. In relation to the School Work Alternation measure (IT), chambers of commerce have learnt that it is necessary to provide guidance and training to the school and the company tutor on their role in facilitating the relationship between the school and the company.

Where staff are not sufficiently supported or recognised, difficulties can develop. For example in relation to the ÜBA (AT), problems were identified with the high requirements placed on the experience of trainers in such measures, which were not considered commensurate with wages that can be commanded elsewhere in the training sector. This can lead to recruitment difficulties and high turnover among trainers. Another example can be found in France, where an important challenge for Priority Education is the institutional recognition of the commitment of teachers, as competences acquired by teachers in priority education are not formally recognised.

It is important to set up young people on a long-term pathway

One key lesson that has emerged from this study is the importance of setting young people up with the tools and knowledge necessary to pursue a long-term pathway in terms of their further education, training or career. It seems that measures that empower young people, improve their self-efficacy, and equip them to take responsibility for their own future, are more likely to generate sustainable positive outcomes for their beneficiaries. Again, these pathways will start out at different points along the scale of employability.

Measures such as employer subsidies, youth guarantees or short-term training courses may provide a ‘quick fix’ to the problem of youth unemployment, at a relatively low cost and with low requirements in terms of management and administration. They can provide a ‘carrot’ to encourage employers to take on young people rather than older workers with more experience, in this way helping to cut the associated costs of youth unemployment (e.g. the cost of benefit payments). However they may not help the young person in the longer term, unless they are designed so as to ensure that the young person can acquire relevant skills or experience to enable them to continue along their career pathway.

Education and training opportunities – both academic and vocational – also need to be designed to support the long-term progress of the learners on the labour market and in education (Wolf, 2011). As mentioned above, it is important that young people are given opportunities to acquire the generic skills that are valued by employers. It is also important that they are able to develop through their education a sense of ‘ownership’ of their future and the skills and competences to make their own choices regarding their careers.

Holistic measures, while providing a ‘whole person’ approach to addressing the young person’s needs, also need to look towards the long-term and to ensure that the beneficiaries are being supported to develop the competences and capacities they need to move forward independently, on their future employment pathway. For example many schools involved in the Springboard (HU) programme, anticipating that participants might get used to the personal attention and flexibility they received during their Springboard year, came up with strategies to explicitly prepare them for the challenge of re-entering the traditional schooling system.

Strong guidance is an essential component of youth employment measures

Good quality guidance, which includes both career guidance and more holistic advice and support, is a key ingredient in measures to support young people’s transition from school to work or to reintegrate them into education, training or employment. This seems to be an area in need of improvement for a number of the measures reviewed here. For example, the main lesson from the PCPI (ES) is said to be the need to provide better guidance to young people and their families so that they understand the opportunities that education and training courses offer in relation to the labour market. Production Schools (AT) do not currently offer any follow-up support to young people (for example once they have entered employment). It is suggested that such an offer could not only benefit the young person but could also help to strengthen links with local employers and ensure future placements and potential employment opportunities. Similarly, the measure to promote self-employment (ES) is said to be positive but needs to be accompanied by a better promotion of entrepreneurial culture, better access to finance and support and guidance in the preparation of a business plan.

Together, the provision of guidance and measures promoting ‘pathways’ for young people need to go beyond providing information and support to equipping the young person with the confidence and competences necessary to manage their progression independently. This includes raising aspirations or expectations amongst the young people involved. For example, Learning Communities (ES) aim to foster educational success and to promote ‘maximums’, or high expectations, among young people.

It is also important for young people to be able to easily access wide-ranging guidance and support, in order to address questions relating to personal, social, learning and career needs. Two of the measures looked at for this evaluative study have shown that ‘one-stop-shops’ are a particularly effective way of doing this. They bring together the range of services and providers that might need to become involved in addressing the barriers a young person faces (Navigator Centres, SE and Connexions, England).

The provision of guidance can also vary in terms of the degree of support a young person requires. Some may only need to access information, which could be provided online, via reference documentations or perhaps a telephone helpline. Others may need a one-to-one discussion to help them to formulate a decision about their future. Young people with more complex needs may need longer-term support, from a dedicated counsellor. The heterogeneity within the youth cohort means that the provision of guidance services needs to be diverse in order to meet their different needs.

Youth employment measures should be client-centred, not provider-focused

Rather than offering a young person a selection from a range of services on offer, it is important for a tailored support programme to be developed to meet the young person's needs and address their skills or competences gaps and barriers. Again, the level of tailoring and support provided will depend on the individual and their 'distance' from the labour market. While some students may need one consultation with an adviser in order to be guided to an apprenticeship place, others may need a longer-term support programme to help them to overcome specific personal and social issues before they can take up a formal learning opportunity.

A first step in providing such tailored support is to carry out a diagnostic of the young person's needs. Several measures – in particular those working with ESLs – use individual learning or action plans to determine the steps a young person needs to take. In the Springboard (HU) measure for example, individual development plans were set up for participants as a result of consultation between the student, their parents and the teacher. These were then signed by all three to demonstrate its consensual nature and the commitment behind it.

While some young people will be able to join a standard learning route, such as an apprenticeship or traineeship, others may need to be given a tailored learning pathway, based on the gaps identified in their skills and competences and the barriers to employment they may face, which are identified through the diagnostic process. IBA (AT) for example, which supports young people with more complex needs, allows training curricula to be tailored to the young person's particular learning needs. It also provides them (and their employers and colleagues) with dedicated support. Production Schools (AT) offer a combination of personalised social and pedagogical support, alongside training, learning and practical tasks and experience.

One way of providing this individualised support to the young person during their learning pathway is to assign them with an individual support worker or mentor. This seems to be a common approach among measures that provide work-based learning opportunities. A specific colleague or mentor within the company is often assigned to support the young person during their time with the employer. As part of the School Work Alternation measure (IT), for example, both companies and schools are required to assign a staff member who acts as the 'alternation tutor'. This person is responsible for facilitating the relationship between the school and the company, as well as offering support to the student. Trainees taking part in ÜBA (AT) are accompanied by social educators throughout their training process, allowing for gaps in their learning and other social or personal problems to be addressed more effectively, thus making successful completion of the measure more likely. Young people in France undertaking a form of apprenticeship must be allocated to a 'master' (maître d'apprentissage) who is responsible for in-company training.

Some aspects of the education system can be a source of disillusionment among young people: these include curricula that are not relevant to the lives of young people and the absence of individualised innovative teaching methods. Thus another way to take account of the specific learning needs of certain groups of young people is to provide learning in an alternative environment or to use alternative methods to those commonly found in mainstream formal education. This is particularly important for early school leavers, who may have previous negative experiences of education. For this reason, a number of the ESL measures we have looked at for this study have focused on providing their participants with an alternative to mainstream schooling or traditional qualification routes. In Hungary for example, school failure is closely associated with traditional teaching methods and large class sizes which still characterise the typical Hungarian

classroom. The Springboard (HU) measure therefore used personalised teaching methods, and involved small classes of pupils and only two or three teachers. This is opposed to the typical arrangement where each of the 10–15 subjects is taught by a different teacher. Taking an adult education approach, which involves treating young people with respect so that they feel that their adulthood is recognised, is another way of tailoring provision to meet the specific profile of young people who have already left the education system, including early school leavers and the (long-term) unemployed. For young people with previous negative experiences of education, the school setting could prove a barrier and the appropriate social, psychological and learning environment may be more difficult to achieve than in an adult education centre, where structures may be more fluid (Keogh, 1993). Surveys of beneficiaries of the Navigator Centres (SE) show that they enjoyed their time at the centre because were treated in a ‘dignified’ way; in other words, they were treated with respect, which is very important for young people (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2008). In these centres, staff are genuinely interested in hearing about participants’ lives and they take their problems seriously. This differs from the attitude of other youth agencies and services, according to the survey.

Another important part of the client-centred approach is to ensure that the clients themselves – young people – are able to inform the development and delivery of the services or training on offer (Big Lottery Fund, 2012). Youthreach (IE) centres involve learners in the management of the programme through learner councils. An evaluation of the programme (Evaluation Support and Research Unit, 2010) found that

...the most effective programmes in centres were participant-centred and participant-led. Such programmes also aimed at fulfilling the identified interests and needs of the learners and fostered a learning process in which learners and staff operated as equal partners.

Genuine inter-agency collaboration yields multiple benefits for all concerned

Given the variation of support needs faced by young people, it is important for a range of stakeholders to be involved in the design and delivery of youth employment measures. This includes, among others, education and training providers, employers, public employment services, social partners, third sector organisations, and health and other authorities (e.g. from the youth justice sector). Young people themselves and their parents also need to have the chance to contribute to programme design and management. The active engagement of partners and stakeholders in programmes can have a critical impact on the programmes’ long-term success, for example by ensuring that programmes are managed and delivered responsibly. Fostering strong links between programmes and stakeholders can also ensure ‘buy-in’ and support from stakeholders and the wider community. This can lead to programmes being maintained even after official funding has ended (this was the case with the Learning Communities, ES), as well as potentially leading to new and innovative ideas as a result of a wider input.

The range of stakeholders involved will naturally vary, depending on the aims, activities and target groups of the measure concerned. What is clear from this evaluative study is that inter-agency work is necessary to provide a ‘joined-up’ youth employment policy. Although some of the measures reviewed appeared to be working well in this area, often through the use of management boards or committees that bring representatives of key partners or stakeholders together, it appears that this aspect could be improved.

For example, one problem identified in the evaluation of the Connexions (England) initiative was that schools and Connexions services did not have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities (National Audit Office, 2004). The evaluation also stated that, ‘the current regulatory framework does not offer clear national standards, roles and responsibilities or robust arrangements to ensure minimum expectations are met’. Another example is the New-Start Job (SE) policy, which was said to be difficult for PES staff to understand in the beginning; this led to their engagement being less effective at the start of the programme (Lundin and Liljeberg, 2008).

In order for such inter-agency working to be successful, a clear strategy or plan for the implementation of measures is required, which allocates specific roles and responsibilities to each partner and stakeholder organisation.

Where measures are delivered locally, in line with a national strategy, it is also important to provide opportunities for local providers to share their learning and understanding of ‘what works’ as well as lessons learned. For example, cooperation between schools was promoted in the Springboard (HU) programme. Teachers from participating schools received training together in the preparatory year, and were then encouraged to stay in touch and to help each others’ work in subsequent phases of the programme. This took place initially via a webpage maintained by the Public Foundation for Persons with Disabilities (FSZK) and at later stages by direct correspondence. Thus one of the positive impacts of Springboard is said to be the benefits for teachers in accumulating expertise and creating their own peer-support networks. Another example is the Career Start measure (FI), which has encouraged regional cooperation among different local Career Start teams by organising annual conferences, at which teams can learn from one another.

Labour market focused measures help to ensure buy-in from the business sector

It is important that measures aiming to foster the employability of young people and to facilitate their STW transition focus on providing their beneficiaries with skills that are in demand (both now and in the future) from employers, as well as more generic, transferable ‘employability’ skills and competences which will support them to continue their career pathway into the future.

This approach, driven by the needs of the labour market, requires a strong level of engagement with employers and their representatives, in the design of measures and their delivery. For example, the FÁS traineeships (IE) are developed in response to identified skill needs and are constantly reviewed to maintain their relevance to the changing labour market. A key characteristic of the traineeship programme is the role employers play in the training process; they are involved in the recruitment of learners and also have an opportunity to give their views on curriculum design. Each type of traineeship has a steering committee which outlines the syllabus of each course. Employer representatives – lead bodies from the industry – are invited to join the steering committees. Sometimes representatives from trade unions are also invited as committee members.

A benefit of involving employers in the delivery of schemes is that in some cases, their involvement may help to boost the employment chances of the young participants. For example, an evaluation of the pilot phase of the Higher-level apprenticeships (IT) found that the majority of apprentices (70.9%) were still employed in the same company when the evaluation took place; this was in 2008, the year the pilot came to an end. This shows that companies are keen to capitalise on the investment that they have made in the training of the young person. In France, studies of STW transitions have found that young people who have undergone an apprenticeship (through Alternance Education and Training) can enjoy relatively better labour market outcomes than other VET graduates. In sectors where the apprenticeship system is relatively well developed, 81% of former apprentices hold a job three years after the completion of their training, in comparison to 67% for other graduates (Bonnal et al, 2002).

Engaging employers may require some effort. One way of doing this is to promote the ‘business case’ of participation on the part of the employer. While some employers may become involved in measures supporting young people out of a sense of social responsibility, it is also important that they can see the benefit to their business. An evaluation of the AGE initiative in England (Wiseman et al, 2011) found that employers engaged in the measure were motivated to offer apprenticeships out of ‘a mix of altruistic and business reasons, but business reasons seemed the most important’. Almost three-quarters (73%) of employers said that the business factor was an equal, the major, or the only reason for their engagement (Wiseman et al, 2011).

Representative organisations (social partners such as chambers of commerce and employers' associations) can also play an important role in facilitating links between schools or universities and companies, as demonstrated by the School Work Alternation (IT) measures overseen by the Italian Chambers of Commerce. The Chambers carry out a range of activities including: the analysis of demand for professional and training qualifications and skills; research into companies that are willing to host interns or work placements; managing an internet service (POLARIS) which aims to match supply with demand regarding work placements; and supplying tools, guidelines and manuals to support stakeholders to implement the initiatives.

Youth unemployment requires flexible responses, whereas social exclusion is a structural issue

As the economic crisis has shown, young people are particularly hard-hit by cyclical downturns in the economy. As youth unemployment rises, this increases demand for existing support services. Providers such as the PES can find they are unable to cope with the increase in their number of clients. It is therefore important that measures to support young people to access the labour market are flexible and can respond to the labour market context by increasing or decreasing in response to changing youth unemployment rates. Youth employment measures – in particular those that include a training element – also need to be flexible in meeting the changing needs of the labour market. For example demands for new skills can emerge while others become less valuable to employers. The level of support required by young unemployed people will also vary; the recession has affected young people with higher-level qualifications as well as those with low skills.

This differs from the more structural and 'ongoing' problems of ESL and social exclusion among young people. These issues require a consistent level of provision and a long-term approach to both the design and delivery of the supports and services offered. This should include monitoring and evaluation of how well the measures are working and whether they could be improved. Long-term investment in such measures can enable them to make these alterations over time.

Robust monitoring, evaluation, quality assurance processes are important

As has been noted previously in this report, a significant number of the measures examined did not set clear quantitative targets or objectives at the outset, which has made it difficult to evaluate their success. For example, no quantitative targets were set for the TISZKs (HU), which meant that participating institutions enjoyed a large degree of autonomy in terms of how to report their achievements. This led to a high level of heterogeneity in the output indicators and ultimately to a low comparability of the performance of the schools involved.

Other measures do not appear to have put effective systems in place for monitoring the short-term and long-term outcomes for their beneficiaries, their wider impact or their cost-effectiveness. Although a careful selection process was undertaken to try to identify a shortlist of measures where evaluations or at least monitoring data would be available to inform this study, in a few instances, formal evaluations of the measures examined had not been recently carried out.

There is a general lack of evaluation of youth employment measures and this seems to be an area for improvement in the future. In order to examine how effective a measure is in achieving its aims, objectives and impact, it is important to have systems in place for monitoring, tracking and evaluation. These systems should look at the outcomes achieved (e.g. the number of young people placed in employment) as well as the outputs produced (e.g. the number of individual action plans prepared). For example, the Chances Card (FI) measure is being evaluated in terms of its impact on employment. This is done by monitoring the career and employment progression of Chances Card beneficiaries and comparing their progression with that of other unemployed young people and of young people who received a wage subsidy two years before them.

Some of these monitoring and evaluation activities could be incorporated into a quality assurance framework, as is the case for Youthreach (IE), which uses its Quality Framework Initiative (QFI) as a means of engaging staff in a process of

self-evaluation and continuous improvement. The framework was developed after an in-depth consultation with all stakeholder groups including learners, staff and management. This has resulted in the development of quality standards and a range of quality assurance processes. The introduction of the quality framework helps to ensure that a consistent approach is taken in the delivery of the programme across the country. It has contributed to a culture of self-review and planning in the centres and the adoption of a centre plan by most Youthreach providers. These plans are focused, realistic, and achievable with time-bound actions for completion (Evaluation Support and Research Unit, 2010).

Quality assurance systems, or national standards or guidelines are particularly important for measures that are overseen at national level but delivered locally. A degree of freedom in the implementation of the local level is important, so that local provision can meet the specific needs of the local youth population and labour market. However, a framework to guide implementation and opportunities for providers to learn from each other are also important. For example, regional decentralisation is said to have resulted in a lack of consistency in the way in which PCPI (ES) schemes are delivered. Similarly, CIVIS (FR) is a national scheme, implemented locally, and significant differences in its implementation can be found. An evaluation focusing on the region of Rhône-Alpes in 2007 for instance showed that the objectives and modalities of implementation of the CIVIS are not always clearly identified and shared by all partners involved. This suggests that there is a need for a common reference framework and mutual learning to capitalise on existing good practice (DRTEFP, 2009).

An assessment of the success of a measure does need to go beyond recording quantitative data on the numbers of participants and other related outputs, such as qualifications awarded and number of job placements, if it is to recognise the full range of work involved. This is particularly the case in relation to those that work with young people facing specific challenges and barriers to participation in education, training or the labour market. Performance measures are also needed regarding the quality of process. An evaluation of the Connexions services (England) for example recommended that measurable performance indicators should be developed for the full range of activities of Connexions partnerships, which could look at issues such as

the value that young people place on advice and the perceived approachability and professionalism of Personal Advisers; the accessibility of services, customer satisfaction and the usefulness of advice; and the impact over time of advice on all young people (National Audit Office, 2004).

As well as indicating the success of a measure, these kinds of performance indicators can also inform its future development so that it fully meets the needs of its target beneficiaries.

Importantly, data and feedback collected via monitoring and evaluation activities can be used to inform the future development of a measure, so that it meets the needs of its beneficiaries, partners and other stakeholders. The START (HU) measure was changed in response to a clear lack of understanding among beneficiaries regarding how it worked, as well as concerns among labour market experts about the programme's potential to incur deadweight. In Finland, a large, national tripartite committee was set up in 2011 with the task of improving the model of Youth Guarantee. It is due to report its recommendations in spring 2012, with a view to changes being implemented from 2012–2013 onwards.

The issues faced by young people can change over time, as the labour market and wider social and policy context evolve. It is therefore important that there is a willingness amongst programme managers and staff to adapt programmes in line with such contextual changes. This might mean for example adjusting to reforms in the education and training system, targeting different groups of young people or introducing new qualifications.

Conclusion

There is a general consensus that the current economic situation in Europe creates the risk of a ‘lost generation’ of young people who lack opportunities and pathways. Recently, even the most highly educated and skilled have struggled make the transition from education to work. It is clear that action needs to be taken by the Member States to ensure that this does not continue. In the context of constrained public sector budgets, it is increasingly important that policymakers make the right choices in terms of the measures they choose to invest in and that they select those that have the strongest potential for a wide impact and which represent good value for money.

In this context, a bigger knowledge base is required in relation to the effectiveness of youth employment measures in Europe. This forms the rationale of this study, which aims to shed light on the relevance, outcomes and effectiveness of measures implemented by EU Member States to support youth employment. The 25 measures reviewed here are very diverse in terms of their range of aims, objectives, activities and target groups. Many have not been implemented in line with a clear process of target-setting, making it difficult to evaluate their success. Some have very little evaluative data available regarding their effectiveness.

Despite these issues, it is possible to draw several conclusions, drawing from the evidence gathered, in relation to whether the chosen measures have been able to meet their intended operational, outcome and impact related targets and objectives. Overall, this evidence indicates that youth employment measures have been relatively successful at achieving their intended operational targets, as well as their intended outcomes. Only a small minority of these measures appear to not have achieved their targets or objectives regarding intended outputs or outcomes, or to have achieved these only partially.

At the same time, this study found no evidence regarding the extent to which many of these measures achieved their wider aim of noticeably impacting on national, regional or even local rates of youth employment, or other phenomena such as ESL or social exclusion. This is mainly because many of the reviewed measures were, at the time of research, pilot measures or were deemed too small in scale to be able to have a considerable impact. In addition, the potential impact of some of the national measures has been hampered by insufficient funding and the economic crisis, which has had a particularly detrimental impact on demand for youth employment. Furthermore, it is difficult to isolate the impact of the measures from that of other factors at play.

In this regard, this study has illustrated that an evaluation of the effectiveness of youth employment measures would be more straightforward and even more valuable for all key stakeholders if measurable targets were set for more youth employment measures and if they were available in a more transparent manner to all interested stakeholders and linked to a specific timeframe. In the absence of clear targets, it is difficult to make too many generalisations about youth employment measures and the extent to which they can be deemed a success. This calls for better monitoring and evaluation of such measures, going beyond data collection of the outputs to look at the broader outcomes and impacts of the measures. Evaluations need to consider what makes a measure effective and what represents value-for-money in order to inform policymaking in this area in the future.

In terms of the relevance of measures, this study’s findings suggest that the aims and objectives of youth employment measures are relevant to the needs of young unemployed people and a broad spectrum of different strategies is used to meet the needs of different subgroups within the ‘youth population’. In this regard a particular strength is the availability of different types of measures to support young people at different stages of their progression towards the labour market. Different strategies are employed to reach different target groups. This approach recognises that measures that successfully facilitate young graduates’ transition to employment, for example, will clearly not work for young people who have dropped out of education and are experiencing complex problems.

Even if these measures have proven to be relevant to the needs of young target groups, a number of them are experiencing challenges related to their implementation. There is room for improvement in ensuring that the interventions are provided in a timely manner (rather than after a specific waiting period). Improvements could also be made in efforts to address root causes of unemployment, in order to maximise the chances for sustainable labour market outcomes, and in making sure that inter-agency working involves mainstream service providers in a meaningful manner. Among all the countries included in this study, serious concerns also present regarding envisaged budget cuts in the months and years to come. This includes youth employment services that have been ring-fenced from budget cuts and even those that have seen budget increases throughout the crisis years.

This study has provided a number of lessons about key characteristics of effective youth employment measures. It has shown that successful youth employment measures make use of a range of innovative ways to reach out to their target group(s), with outreach activities forming an important part of efforts to engage disfranchised young people. Incentives, 'branding' and marketing campaigns can be useful in the context of more universal youth employment services. Effective youth employment measures also have tools and strategies in place to involve employers as well as social partners.

The study has shown that the labour market 'readiness' of beneficiaries has to be taken into consideration in the design and implementation of youth employment measures. Whilst it is important for measures to be grounded in the needs of the labour market, it is also necessary to bear in mind that young people vary in their level of readiness for the labour market. Person-specific labour market barriers need to be addressed before young people can be guided onto a pathway to employment. The success of the Austrian approach of having three different types of apprenticeships tailored at different groups of learners is an example of effective practice in this regard.

It is important for the staff delivering youth employability and ESL measures to have the right skills and profile to deliver youth services and to provide appropriate support to the beneficiaries concerned. This goes hand in hand with a need to set up young people on a long-term, sustainable pathway. There is some controversy around the way in which some of the measures support labour market integration of low skilled youth. Those approaches that seek to find an employment solution for all young people as soon as possible, rather than prioritise a return to either education or work-based training for the low-qualified, are of concern to a number of stakeholders, social partners especially. For example, while some measures might achieve positive results in the short term, these may not lead to positive outcomes in the longer term. Consequently there is a growing consensus around the need to ensure sustainable labour market outcomes for young beneficiaries, with the sustainability of outcomes being related not only to the speed of labour market integration but, importantly, to the quality and stability of employment as well. Ensuring that young people are equipped with qualifications needed for successful labour market integration, or that they hold vocational and transferable skills demanded by employers, is instrumental to a pathway to good quality, sustainable employment.

Good quality guidance, which includes both career information and more comprehensive advice and support, is another key component in measures supporting young people's transition from 'learning to earning'. This is especially important in the context of today's labour market where young people can no longer expect to find many traditional job-for-life careers but rather a range of different career pathways. In fact, career management skills are essential for both high and low skilled youth. They are needed to make sense of different career choices and navigate through the increasingly complex route from education to work.

Youth employment measures should be client-centred, not provider-focused. This means catering for different pathways, from mainstream learning routes to tailored, supported learning pathways. One-stop-shop services as well as case worker and mentoring approaches can be effective at guiding young people into and through tailored pathways to employment.

This study also shows that inter-agency working – where all partners have specific roles and responsibilities – is necessary to provide a ‘joined-up’, cost-effective youth employment policy. Involvement of a range of stakeholders in the design and delivery of youth employment measures is therefore important; this includes education and training providers, employers, public employment services, social partners, third sector organisations, and health and other authorities. Young people themselves and their parents also need to have the chance to contribute to programme design and management.

Measures that focus on providing their beneficiaries with employability skills require a strong level of engagement with employers and their representatives. Engaging employers requires innovative but persistent efforts by staff working on the measures concerned to promote the ‘business case’ of participation and to establish a process of collaboration which benefits employers, providers and learners alike.

The youth employment policy arena is a dynamic one, with a range of external and internal factors affecting the effectiveness of measures. Measures thus need to be flexible in meeting the evolving needs of the labour market, including new skill needs and demand for services during different stages of the economic cycle. Furthermore, the issues faced by young people can change over time, as the labour market policy context evolves. It is therefore important that measures are built on a willingness and capacity to adapt in line with contextual changes.

Finally, data and feedback collected via monitoring and evaluation activities can be used to inform the future development of youth employment measures, so that they meet the changing needs of their beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders. There is a need for improved target-setting at the outset, followed up by comprehensive formative evaluation or monitoring, together with long-term tracking monitoring, in order to improve evidence-based policymaking in this field. Effective youth employment measures recognise the full range of work delivered; monitoring and evaluation tools should capture both tangible as well as intangible (soft, structural and process orientated) outcomes.

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Annex 1: Topic guide for interviews with policy / programme managers

[Note: The term 'measure' is used in this topic guide to refer to the policies/programmes reviewed as part of this evaluation]

BACKGROUND

1. Why and when was the measure set up? Is it a pilot, temporary or a permanent measure?
2. Is this a new type of (innovative) measure for your country or something that has already been piloted or used with other target groups or sectors? [Prompt: by innovative, we mean that the measure has found new ways of doing things, developed new outcomes, outputs or products for the target group, or developed new frameworks or interventions.]
3. What was the rationale for introducing it? [Prompt: Why is the measure needed in your country – what gap is it filling in support for young people?]
4. What are the aims and objectives of the policy / measure?
5. What activities are undertaken to pursue these aims and objectives? [Prompt: by activities we refer to the main forms of support your measure provides to young people, such as career guidance, education, work-based training, etc.]
6. What partners and stakeholders are involved in the design and implementation of the measure? Please tick (✓) as appropriate.

Stakeholder	Design of the measure	Implementation of the measure	Tick lead implementing organisation(s)
National/regional authority in charge of education and training			
National/regional authority in charge of labour market matters			
National/regional authority in charge of social and/or health affairs			
National/regional authority in charge of economic affairs			
Public employment service (PES)			
Employers and their representatives (individual employers, employers' federations, or trade/business bodies, chambers of commerce)			
Employees and their representatives (trade unions)			
Parents representatives			
Teachers representatives			
Schools, training providers, universities			
Representatives of young people or students or other NGOs (please specify what type)			

OUTPUTS: Target groups and related achievements

7. Does your measure have quantitative targets (annual or for the programme period) for the number of:
 - A) Young people engaged?
 - B) Interventions [e.g. training places, counselling sessions, holistic interventions provided]?
 - C) Employers involved? [if relevant for your measure]

Questions regarding possible targets / achievements related to young people engaged

8. How many young people does the measure aim to support? How does this number compare with the scale of the problem in your country (e.g. the number of unemployed youth, early school leavers, etc.)?
9. If you have a target for the number of young people engaged in the measure, have you met this target?
- A) The number of young people actually engaged in the measure....
- ... Exceeds the original target?
 - ... Is around the same as the target?
 - ... Almost meets the target (90 - 99%)?
 - ... Falls short of the target (60-89%)?
 - ... Falls significantly short of the target (fewer than 60% of targeted young people engaged)?
- B) Can you identify the reasons why the target has not been reached / been exceeded? Is demand from participants exceeding the number of places provided?
10. Was the measure targeted at specific groups of young people and if so, which groups and why? Please tick (✓) as appropriate.

Target groups	Please tick (✓) if relevant
All ages	
Programme available to all people	
All unemployed people (any age)	
All low-skilled people	
Young people	
All young people (of certain age)	
Young unemployed	
Early school leavers (e.g. all low-skilled aged 15-24)	
Young people from disadvantaged or remote areas	
Young people from certain social, ethnic or migrant background	
NEETs (Not in Employment, Education and Training)	
Young people with a disability	
Higher education graduates	
Students	
Primary or lower secondary school students	
Upper secondary students (general)	
Upper secondary students (vocational)	
Higher education students	
Other	Please specify

11. Have you been able to successfully reach out to the specific target groups (and the number per group) of young people (if relevant)?

- If you had difficulties in reaching out to them, can you tell us what the difficulties were? [Prompt: For example, difficulties might be lack of outreach staff to engage young people from vulnerable groups, lack of interest/motivation among the young people concerned, etc.]
- If you were successful in reaching out to the specific target groups, can you tell us what you think made your approach successful?

Questions regarding possible targets / achievements related to employers engaged

12. If you have set a target for involving employers, have you achieved this target?

- If you had difficulties in reaching out to them, can you tell us what the difficulties were?
- If you were successful, what made your approach successful?

Questions regarding possible targets / achievements related to employers engaged

13. If you have set targets for the number of interventions to be provided [e.g. number of apprenticeship places, number of internships, number of counselling sessions, number of places at second chance schools, etc], have you achieved them?

OUTCOMES

[Note: Outcomes are the immediate or initial effects / outcomes of an intervention, for example the number of young people who gained a qualification or found employment as a result of the intervention]

14. Please tell us about the education/training, qualifications and employment related outcomes of your measure, such as [please discuss results relevant to your measure]:

- What share of young beneficiaries found employment following their participation in the measure [permanent, temporary, supported employment, etc]?
- What share of young beneficiaries has been reintegrated back into mainstream education or training as a result of the intervention?
- What share of young beneficiaries has achieved higher levels of qualifications?
- What share of young beneficiaries has remained in education/training as a result of the intervention?
- Etc.

15. How do the outcomes compare with the results of other similar measures in your country?

16. How successful do you feel the project has been, given the economic / educational context in your country?

17. Please tell us about the other (soft) outcomes for beneficiaries [e.g. what proportion of young beneficiaries have improved their employability, for example, through improved basic skills (literacy or numeracy), transversal skills (i.e. team work) or vocational skills? What proportion of young beneficiaries has experienced other positive outcomes e.g. improved self-esteem?]

18. What have been the key results for the partners and stakeholder organisations involved, including employers (if relevant)?

IMPACT

[Note: Impacts are the longer-term effects / outcomes of an intervention]

19. Is there any information on medium and longer-term outcomes for participants in terms of qualification levels, labour market participation and quality of employment [e.g. obtained through tracer studies] or 'soft' outcomes' [e.g. on citizenship, attitudes towards lifelong learning]?
20. How would you describe the contribution of this measure to the national/regional efforts to reduce youth unemployment (or early school leaving)? [Prompt: for example, has it helped to bring down youth unemployment in your country/region / increase the employability of young people / to reduce early school leaving and NEET rate / to modify attitudes and perceptions from employers and encourage them to hire or train more young people / influence policy developments in the field of education and training, employment and youth policies?] Do you have any evidence of this impact? [Prompt: e.g. reports from internal / external evaluations, quantitative data etc.]
21. How does the impact of this policy/measure compare with the impact of other policies introduced in your country to improve the employability of young people? [i.e. is this the most successful, have others been more successful at improving employability of young people - if yes, why?]

COSTS AND VALUE FOR MONEY

22. Is it possible to provide an estimate of the cost per participant?
23. How does the cost per participant compare to the cost of similar interventions for young people or other target groups?
24. Do you have evidence that your measure provides value for money (is cost-effective)?

LESSONS LEARNED

25. What do you think has made the measure effective (what are the key strengths)? Can you suggest any 'success factors' which might be useful for project managers working on similar initiatives?
26. What would you say are the weaknesses of the measure? Can you suggest how project managers working on similar initiatives can avoid similar weaknesses in the future?
27. What challenges have been encountered when delivering the measure? How have they been overcome?
28. Have any changes been made to the aims / objectives / activities / approach? What were these changes and why were they introduced? Were they introduced in response to results from evaluation?
29. Will the policy / measure continue into the future? [Prompt: How long has funding been secured for and is this funding sustainable? If it is a small-scale of regional/local initiative, will it be expanded? If it is a temporary measure, will it be renewed or made permanent?] If the measure will not continue, why? [Prompt: Is it a pilot project with a clear end date? Is it a temporary measure with funding secured (for a certain number of years)? Is it discontinued due to broader budget cuts? Is it discontinued due to a lack of political support? Other (please specify)?]
30. What learning has taken place among key partners and stakeholders as a result of the measure?
31. What has been the impact of the economic crisis on your measure? [Prompt: E.g. has increased demand (more young people requesting such services), have been affected by budget cuts, lack of training places in companies, etc.]

Annex 2: Topic guide for other stakeholders ('critical friends')

BACKGROUND

1. What do you consider to be the main issues faced by young people in your country? [Prompt: Is unemployment a key issue, or school absenteeism and/or drop-out? Is the employment situation of young people in jobs precarious (e.g. low wages, temporary or part-time contracts)? Do young people have the skills needed by employers? What services are lacking to support young people to make the transition to the labour market, e.g. guidance/counselling, 'matching' services, training in basic skills, training in vocational skills etc?]
2. What policies / measures have been successful at tackling these issues?
3. Do you consider that enough is being done, or are there gaps in provision?
4. Do certain groups of young people face particular challenges on the labour market in your country, are 'falling through the net' or in need of additional support? [Prompt: e.g. early school leavers, young people who are in 'precarious' or unsuitable employment, migrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled, teenage parents, young people from disadvantaged areas, young people from workless families, higher education graduates, etc.]
5. Do you consider that enough is being done to support these particular groups?

Please ask the interviewee about the policy cases he/she is familiar with (she/he may not be familiar with all three cases you are evaluating).

QUESTIONS RELATED TO INDIVIDUAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT MEASURES

Policy case no. 1:

6. Would you say that the policy / measure is relevant to the issues faced by young people in your country, as already discussed? What do you think of the scale of the measure in comparison to the problems faced by young people in your country (e.g. the number of unemployed youth, early school leavers, etc.)?
7. Are you able to elaborate the extent to which, in your opinion, the aims and objectives of the measure have been achieved? What evidence do you have to support your judgement?
8. What are, in your opinion, the strengths and weaknesses of the measure?
9. What would you say are the main outcomes of the measure for beneficiaries?
10. What would you say was the wider impact of the policy /measure? [Prompt: *has it helped to bring down youth unemployment /increase the employability of young people / to reduce early school leaving / reduce the NEET rate / to modify attitudes and perceptions from employers and encourage them hire/train young people?*]
11. What do you think made the policy / measure effective? Alternatively, if not particularly successful what are the reasons you feel like the policy has not been particularly effective?
12. Do you know if learning has taken place among key partners and stakeholders (schools, training institutions, teachers, education authorities, decision makers, local/regional authorities, student organisations, youth organisations / NGOs) as a result of the policy/measure?
13. How does the success of this policy/measure compare with the success of other policies introduced in your country to improve employability of young people? (i.e. is this the most successful, have others been more successful at improving employability of young people - if yes, why?)

Policy case no. 2:

Questions as above for policy case no. 1 (if aware of the measure)

Policy case no. 3:

Questions as above for policy case no. 1 (if aware of the measure)

EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT MEASURES

14. Which of the policy cases we have discussed do you consider to be the most effective in addressing youth unemployment / early school leaving (as relevant) and why?
15. Which do you consider to be the least effective and why?
16. Are you able to say how the costs of the measures per young person compare with the cost of similar interventions for young people or other target groups? [*Consequently, can you say which you consider to be the best value for money? Which do you consider to offer the least value for money?*]
17. What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses in your country's overall approach to tackling youth employment and social exclusion issues?
18. Has the economic crisis had an impact on measures to support youth employment in your country? [*E.g. has it led to an increased focus on the problem of youth unemployment (by policymakers? Has it led to decreased funding for youth employment measures?*)]
19. Can you identify any lessons learned which might be relevant to other countries / contexts?
20. What are your recommendations for further action to tackle the issues faced in your country by young people?

Annex 3: 'Fiche' for data collection – [Country name]

Chapter 1: Background and Context

Brief overview of context in relation to youth employment / social exclusion / NEET / ESL in the country [e.g. key issues faced, key groups of young people affected, gaps in provision]

Chapter 2: Policy Case 1 - [Name]

Overview of findings in relation to case 1, to be structured according to the following headings:

Rationale, aims and objectives

Brief overview of what the measure set out to achieve (aims and objectives) and why it was put in place.

To include an assessment of whether the measure could be considered innovative and whether it was targeted towards specific groups of young people.

Activities and partners

To include a short overview of the key activities, partners / stakeholders involved and their roles

Outputs, outcomes and impact

Were quantitative targets set? Did the measure achieve its aims, objectives, targets and specific target groups? If not, why not?

To include quantitative data on the number of young people engaged in the policy / measure, outcomes for beneficiaries and partner organisations involved, as well as a qualitative assessment of whether the aims and objectives were achieved and the wider impact on youth employment / employability / social exclusion.

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

Value for money (efficiency)

How cost-effective was the measure - evidence of value-for-money? What was the cost per participant? Comparison of costs to other similar measures?

Effectiveness of the measure

What are the success factors / strengths that led the initiative to achieve its intended outcomes or what were the weaknesses that led the initiative to not achieve its intended outcomes? Are these relevant / transferable to other policies working in different contexts?

How does the result of this policy/measure compare with the result of other policies introduced in the country to improve employability of young people? (I.e. is this the most successful, have others been more successful at improving employability of young people?)

How successful is the measure, given the economic context in your country? Is the measure relevant to the key issues/challenges faced by young people in your country? How does the scale of the measure match the problems faced by young people in your country?

Is the initiative sustainable? Why/why not?

Lessons learned

To discuss challenges encountered and how they were overcome.

Any changes to the measure and why?

Impact of the economic crisis

Learning among partners

Chapter 3: Policy Case 2 - [Name]

Overview of findings in relation to case 2, to be structured according to the following headings:

Rationale, aims and objectives

Brief overview of what the measure set out to achieve (aims and objectives) and why it was put in place.

To include an assessment of whether the measure could be considered innovative and whether it was targeted towards specific groups of young people.

Activities and partners

To include a short overview of the key activities, partners / stakeholders involved and their roles

Outputs, outcomes and impact

Were quantitative targets set? Did the measure achieve its aims, objectives, targets and specific target groups? If not, why not?

To include quantitative data on the number of young people engaged in the policy / measure, outcomes for beneficiaries and partner organisations involved, as well as a qualitative assessment of whether the aims and objectives were achieved and the wider impact on youth employment / employability / social exclusion.

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

Value for money (efficiency)

How cost-effective was the measure - evidence of value-for-money? What was the cost per participant? Comparison of costs to other similar measures?

Effectiveness of the measure

What are the success factors / strengths that led the initiative to achieve its intended outcomes or what were the weaknesses that led the initiative to not achieve its intended outcomes? Are these relevant / transferable to other policies working in different contexts?

How does the result of this policy/measure compare with the result of other policies introduced in the country to improve employability of young people? (I.e. is this the most successful, have others been more successful at improving employability of young people?)

How successful is the measure, given the economic context in your country? Is the measure relevant to the key issues/challenges faced by young people in your country? How does the scale of the measure match the problems faced by young people in your country?

Is the initiative sustainable? Why/why not?

Lessons learned

To discuss challenges encountered and how they were overcome.

Any changes to the measure and why?

Impact of the economic crisis

Learning among partners

Chapter 4: Policy Case 3 - [Name]

Overview of findings in relation to case 3, to be structured according to the following headings:

Rationale, aims and objectives

Brief overview of what the measure set out to achieve (aims and objectives) and why it was put in place.

To include an assessment of whether the measure could be considered innovative and whether it was targeted towards specific groups of young people.

Activities and partners

To include a short overview of the key activities, partners / stakeholders involved and their roles

Outputs, outcomes and impact

Were quantitative targets set? Did the measure achieve its aims, objectives, targets and specific target groups? If not, why not?

To include quantitative data on the number of young people engaged in the policy / measure, outcomes for beneficiaries and partner organisations involved, as well as a qualitative assessment of whether the aims and objectives were achieved and the wider impact on youth employment / employability / social exclusion.

Outputs

Outcomes

Impact

Value for money (efficiency)

How cost-effective was the measure - evidence of value-for-money? What was the cost per participant? Comparison of costs to other similar measures?

Effectiveness of the measure

What are the success factors / strengths that led the initiative to achieve its intended outcomes or what were the weaknesses that led the initiative to not achieve its intended outcomes? Are these relevant / transferable to other policies working in different contexts?

How does the result of this policy/measure compare with the result of other policies introduced in the country to improve employability of young people? (I.e. is this the most successful, have others been more successful at improving employability of young people?)

How successful is the measure, given the economic context in your country? Is the measure relevant to the key issues/challenges faced by young people in your country? How does the scale of the measure match the problems faced by young people in your country?

Is the initiative sustainable? Why/why not?

Lessons learned

To discuss challenges encountered and how they were overcome.

Any changes to the measure and why?

Impact of the economic crisis

Learning among partners

Chapter 5: Analysis

Summary analysis of the research findings, to include:

- Brief country overview regarding quantitative analysis of the success of the initiatives in young country reaching out to young people, e.g. in reaching the young people targeted and achieving ‘hard outcomes’ (i.e. achieving their objectives in terms of placing young people in employment, training, enabling young people to achieve qualifications etc), and value for money
- Brief country overview regarding qualitative analysis of the success of the initiatives in reaching out to young people, e.g. in reaching the ‘right’ young people (those who really need help) and achieving ‘soft outcomes’ (e.g. improving young people’s ‘employability’, improving employers’ perceptions of young people as employees etc) and in addressing the problems faced by the country in terms of youth employment
- Brief assessment whether enough is being done to support young unemployed people? Which gaps in provision exist?
- Comparative analysis of which measures seemed to be more effective / present better value for money and suggested reasons why this might be the case.
- Brief overview of lessons learned.