



## 4.1 Final publishable summary report

**EU collaborative project WorkAble**

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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Activity 8.1: Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society – the European case

Area 8.1.1 Changing role of knowledge throughout the economy

SSH-2009-1.1.1 Education in a European knowledge society



## **Content**

1. An executive summary
2. A summary description of project context and objectives
3. A description of the main S&T results/foregrounds
4. The potential impact and the main dissemination activities

### **4.1.1. An executive summary**

“Making Capabilities Work” (WorkAble) scrutinised strategies to enhance the social sustainability of Europe by strengthening the capabilities of young people to actively shape their personal and work lives and to cope with today’s economic, cultural, demographic, and technological challenges. It assessed the political and institutional strategies challenged by the high rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving and dropouts from upper secondary education in many member states of the EU. Bridging quantitative and qualitative methods, WorkAble assessed the potential of innovative European strategies for dealing with local labour-market demands and regional inequalities. Adopting a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, it systematically analysed whether and how young people are enabled to participate in working life and society. Applying the Capability Approach as a heuristic framework, WorkAble surveyed whether and how the match between young people’s supply of skills and competencies and changing labour-market needs is sustained and secured, while simultaneously broadening their options for living in and actively shaping European knowledge societies. WorkAble explored how educational strategies are implemented and assessed whether they enable young people to convert knowledge, skills and competencies into capabilities to function as fully participating active citizens. This called for a three-phase research design: 1) a comparative institutional mapping and analysis of vocational and labour-market policies in all educational regimes; 2) case studies to reconstruct the conceptions, aspirations and practices of local actors implementing educational and training programmes; and 3) quantitative secondary analyses of national and European longitudinal data revealing how effectively these strategies enhance economic performance and close the capability gap for young people. The application of the capability approach as an evaluative framework followed in the analysis central benchmarks, namely, the capabilities for education, work, and voice. Therefore it was also possible to develop an explicit normative framework that integrates the necessary dimensions of good and meaningful work, a broader understanding of education, and a democratization of social service organizations within European transition regimes.

## **4.1.2. A summary description of project context and objectives**

“Making Capabilities Work” (WorkAble) provided knowledge on how to enable young people to function as capable citizens in the labour markets of European knowledge societies. It assessed the political and institutional strategies aiming to cope with the high rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving and dropouts from upper secondary education. The young adults concerned often exhibit multiple strains and remain stuck longer in a transitional state between insecure employment conditions, short-term educational and employment support projects and educational and social welfare support systems. Their situation poses major challenges to European knowledge societies. Yet, European societies are shaped by a diversity of economic conditions and political traditions resulting in different national and regional policies and practices, different welfare policy arrangements and different vocational and educational regimes. Therefore, WorkAble adopted a comparative perspective and analyse institutional employment policies and educational regimes on a local and regional, a national and a European level. This provided a consistent framework for reconstructing commonalities and differences - based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses -, identifying best-practice solutions and providing knowledge that enable each regime to learn from the others through comparative research.

### **Theoretical framework and methodology of capability acquisition**

The objective of the theoretical and methodological work package (WP 2) was to design the overall theoretical framework which is and will be used for analysing the complex transition process of young people in Europe from education to the labour market and adulthood as inspired by the capability approach, and to deal with the related methodological requirements of its operationalisation. In order to develop an integrated and multi-perspective framework that covers a broad range of aspects, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were and will be combined. More specifically, WP2 objectives were threefold:

- 1) A reformulation of the capability approach on the basis of an in-depth discussion regarding pros and cons of such an approach vis-à-vis other theoretical frameworks;
- 2) A clear specification of the interlinked steps which characterise the well-being process from the “means to achieve” to “achievements” and of the plurality of factors that can affect this process;
- 3) The identification of the methodological requirements for the effective operationalisation of our theoretical framework.

## **Educational, vocational and policy landscapes in Europe**

The objectives of work package 3 were threefold:

- 1) To describe the various educational regimes at work in the countries or territories investigated, and analyse the standard paths of education and transition to employment and the labour market.
- 2) To analyse how these educational regimes integrate the labour-market requirements of a knowledge-based economy inter alia with respect to the factors of migration, technological change and aging societies; to consider the issue of civic engagement and participation in community life at large; and to assess the concern for a balance between private life and working life.
- 3) To identify the people who fail in the standard routes of education and transition to employment and the reasons for their problems; to describe how various educational regimes cope with them; to analyse the provisions for school leavers, dropouts and people with problems in entering the labour market; through this, to add knowledge to the debates about educational regimes.

Hence, the aim was not only to describe the educational and training systems, but also to see how they situate themselves in the nexus "education-employment-community/social integration". As a result, the educational system will not be considered as a self-contained institutional device, but as part and parcel of a more encompassing configuration in which initial and lifelong training are envisaged together as being required to integrate the economic, political, social, etc. concerns of a knowledge-based society.

Four dimensions have been specifically emphasised in WP3: a) the *objectives* pursued by policymakers (including the underlying principles of justice and the normative frameworks with regard to the nexus "education-employment-community/social integration"), b) the *configurations of actors* involved and the distribution of roles and responsibilities between them, c) the *ways to organise* training and the transition to employment (available resources; definition of key qualifications and/or competencies; division of labour between professional or general education, or between initial and lifelong training; logics of certification and recognition, etc), d) the *provisions (programs, measures, support) available for people who have problems* in following the standard routes of education and transition to employment/the labour market.

## **Capabilities in context - educational programmes in a micro perspective**

The work package "Capabilities in context - educational programmes in a micro perspective" (WP 4) aimed to enhance understanding of successful methodologies for supporting young people who fail in the standard routes of education and transition towards employment by empowering their capabilities for learning and for work.

The WP 4 objectives were threefold:

- 1) To describe local programmes/agencies of education, vocational education and training (VET) designed to deal with people who fail, or are at risk of failing, to cope with the transition from education/training to employment. We have selected 9 cases of local programmes/agencies for school leavers, dropouts and young people who have

problems in entering the labour market. The main criterion for programme selection is the new or innovative methodology they apply in the transitions i) compulsory school - further education; ii) education/vocational training - labour market; iii) unemployment/outside the labour market - employment. The description will focus on the following issues: the institutional and normative frame of the programmes, their organisational forms and logics of action and the inter-organisational networks they are embedded into in the local context they operate in. The research will also look at how all the involved actors assess the problems and define programme objectives. What are the key competencies, both technical and social, these programmes consider as relevant for young people to cope with failure, or the risk of failing, in the transition to an active and well-integrated social life? Do their educational/training methodologies thematise and deal with the issues of technological change and of migration? Are they equipped for a perspective of lifelong learning consistent with the problems of an ageing society?

- 2) To analyse these case studies by applying the capability approach as developed in EU surveys on different fields in which similar issues of access to labour market and to employment are at stake. The importance of educational resources does not lie exclusively in increasing an individual's professional skills and economic productivity. It also lies in reducing inequalities and empowering people to lead an integrated and active life in the community at large, and to face the requirements of a knowledge-based economy. This approach places the focus on: i) how the programme/agencies are situated in the nexus "education-employment-community/social integration"; ii) which factors facilitate (or impede) the conversion of educational resources into capabilities for people "to choose and to act" their own life/job; iii) how and when capability for education is enhanced and becomes translated into capability for work. Capability for education is also a key concept in assessing the long-term effects of the programmes of education/vocational training, because it manages to consider the whole professional career and a perspective of lifelong learning consistent with the dynamics of technological change.
- 3) To produce a cross-country comparison of answers to the above-mentioned questions, in order to find out and assess the "new" or "innovative" features of the selected programmes/agencies. Through this comparison, the WP4 aims to contribute to the research on successful educational and vocational methodologies and: i) reduce inequalities and address the inadequacies and the mismatch between education and the labour market; ii) promote active inclusion of young people by enhancing their capabilities for learning and for work, and iii) ensure that they maintain and update over the long term the necessary competencies to live in and to contribute to the "knowledge society".

### **Effects on transitional trajectories of young people**

The quantitative research work (WP 5) aimed to identify and understand transitions from the educational system to the labour market among young Europeans and whether educational strategies contribute to extending their capabilities for work and social participation. Therefore, WorkAble identified different types of typical transitional trajectories and understand how these trajectories relate to different European educational and labour-market regimes. It was particularly interested in analysing the degree to which comparable educational attainments among young people lead to different labour-market

opportunities depending on the configuration of labour-market and educational regimes. Another central aspect was the relationship between education, transitional trajectories and individual well-being and social exclusion and how this relationship varies between different EU member states.

By utilising new comparative and longitudinal EU-SILC data, WP5 delivered new insights into young peoples' transitions from the educational system into the labour market while simultaneously providing a better understanding of why this transition sometimes fails. The fact that EU-SILC is made up of representative samples of the total population in each country makes it possible to compare the situation of young people with other age groups, which is essential in order to understand what characteristics in each country are specific for young people and what are more general country, or regime, characteristics. Even though the EU-SILC is an excellent data source, it has certain limitations. Therefore, in order to provide more detailed information, we also conducted more in-depth analyses of specific countries and comparative analyses of pairs of countries in order to better understand the link between upbringing conditions, educational careers and labour-market programs on the one hand and transitional trajectories on the other.

### **Dissemination objectives**

The overall objective of the dissemination activities (WP 6) was to disseminate the generated knowledge to different groups of people. We differentiate between academic and EU policy and practice dissemination. Academic dissemination aimed at informing scientists about the project results. EU dissemination informs young people, policymakers as well as educational providers about the project results and their effects on the organisation of education in a European knowledge society. The project examined local, regional and national differences and commonalities in approaching the acquisition of capabilities. The generated knowledge is and will be further transferred into broader recommendations to be fed into the political debates in the field of education and lifelong learning at EU-level.

## 4.1.3. A description of the main S&T results/foregrounds

### 1. Introduction

The Collaborative Research Project “Making Capabilities Work” (WorkAble), funded by the EU within the Seventh Framework Programme, was initiated in response to the way in which a high level of youth unemployment has become a stable feature throughout Europe. This feature is impacting on all countries without exception - although varying in its degree. The situation is particularly dramatic when the youth unemployment rate is higher than that of all other employees. This has justifiably led to a public call for radical change - a call always expressed with concern but sometimes also with aggression. It is not unjustified to talk about a lost generation, and this description applies particularly to southern and eastern European countries. However, alongside the contemporary situation, what we are really dealing with here is fundamental questions of justice that even the EU is now beginning to address in its official papers and policy statements<sup>1</sup>.

There are a host of reasons for these problem constellations facing job-seeking youth. They range from structural rifts as a result of the European fiscal crisis, across the traditional forms of employment and training for youth, up to the acquisition of insufficient knowledge at school. Although descriptions of the problem have now elicited an almost overwhelming mass of argumentative conflict analyses, these have not led to any improvements for the youth concerned. Indeed, one can take the opposite position and argue that their general situation has deteriorated even further. Against this background, all the different training initiatives merge into a far-reaching lack of any prospects for the group of vulnerable youth. The present project has particularly identified the following target groups:

1. early school leavers,
2. the young unemployed,
3. young adults with no secondary education qualifications
4. and - as part of a contrastive and theoretical sampling - unemployed young higher education graduates as well.

The current educational and welfare regimes are broadly incapable of opening up new opportunities for these target groups by introducing the necessary innovations that would extend individual capabilities and provide the structural opportunities for their realization.

WorkAble has set itself the goal of performing a problem-oriented analysis of youth unemployment and acquiring the necessary knowledge for a broader clarification of what we need to know. On the one hand, it is performing analyses of longitudinal EU-SILC and other data, in combination with in-depth analyses of specific countries and comparative analyses of pairs of countries (see section Labour market trajectories of Young Europeans). On the other hand, it is carrying out qualitative case studies (see section Capabilities in

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<sup>1</sup> compare i.e. the council recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee  
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9221&langId=en>



Context) in the following nine countries: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK (Scotland).

Each of these countries reveals substantial problems with its specific welfare systems, education systems, and labour market policies. These simultaneously mark the major approaches to handling the problems facing the vulnerable youth that the project is examining as they go through their transition from school to work. The first step in the in-depth analysis of the transition systems set up in these countries is to build up a comprehensive description of the forms of organization and the accompanying approaches to solve the problem (see section Educational, vocational and policy landscapes in Europe). However, the focus of research is on a more far-reaching qualitative analysis of the activities in each of the nine countries that can be described as model projects. These should specify conditions more precisely. The empirical analysis is based on the Capability Approach, drawing particularly on the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (see section Workable's key concepts). This proposes an alternative information base for judging life prospects. The question of a good and flourishing life is not conceived in the hedonistic-utilitarian tradition as an individual state of inner satisfaction, but as being part of a practical way of life. The Capability Approach analyses the specific interplay between subjects' characteristics, abilities, and needs in the sense of optimizing their agency through objective (social and political) givens and potentials within the framework of institutional and material conditions. Its goal is to make actors capable of conceiving a life that they can value for good reasons. Such capabilities or "real freedoms" cannot be reduced to individual traits, dispositions, or competencies, but point to the complex interplay of infrastructures, resources, rights, and capabilities. Successful relations of this kind will deliver the necessary knowledge on appropriate transition systems. The project is examining how far each model succeeds in extending the real scope for decision making and autonomy in those concerned rather than just getting the actors to engage in lifestyles and activities whose content is fixed in advance. It is only when this approach succeeds that new chances will open up for vulnerable youth to engage in social self-realization, to overcome both qualitatively and substantially the human capital approach with its fixation on an employability framework, and to become able to function within the increasingly flexibilized labour markets in line with their own wishes and with viable chances of success.

In the present project, the capability approach was applied as an evaluative framework in which the application of indicators will follow central benchmarks, namely, ***the capabilities for education, work, and voice***. The background to the Capability Approach is always formed by a justice theory framework directed towards what is particularly important for the population under study: namely, that all persons have the freedom to exploit alternatives to those possibilities of reproduction that have either been assigned to them or that they have chosen for themselves. It is only when this stage is achieved that the transition regimes can be assigned a quality in the sense of a more far-reaching definition of well-being that makes capabilities and the chances for their realization into the overarching content of the opportunities available to youth. The Capability Approach will also make it possible to develop an explicit normative framework that integrates the necessary dimensions of good and meaningful work, a broader understanding of education, and a democratization of social service organizations.

"Making Capabilities Work" is the first empirical project to pursue a justice theory perspective on a European level and thus be also to contribute to a fundamental change in

the currently mostly insufficient attempts within the human capital approach to use the labour market to ensure desired lifestyle forms and a secure income for vulnerable youth.

## ***2. WorkAble's key concepts: Capability for voice, capability for work and capability for education***

The work conducted in the whole project has particularly focused on the reformulation of the CA in the light of our research questions and the definition of the key concepts for WorkAble.

The Capability Approach identifies wellbeing as the expansion of opportunities to choose the life the individual has reason to value. Capabilities, functionings and agency are three key concepts which characterize this framework. Functionings (or achievements) are “the various things a person may value doing or being” (Sen, 1999), which can be specific activities and states of being, such as being healthy, having a secure job, being educated or moving about freely. Capabilities refer to the potential functionings an individual has access to and represent the various combinations of beings and doings that a person can achieve. Therefore, they relate to the notion of substantive freedoms. Agency is a person's ability to pursue and realize goals she values and has reason to value, a concept close to those of self-determination, empowerment and autonomy. In the CA the person is considered as an agent, “someone who acts and brings about change”.

Two main factors determine the capability set people might have: a) the endowments, that is the amount of (private and public) goods and resources the individual is endowed with and b) the conversion factors, that is the combination of internal/personal characteristics (i.e. age, gender, ability and disability) as well as the external/contextual factors, which determine the ability to transform resources into achievements and therefore the real set of opportunities people have.

### ***The value added of the CA for WorkAble***

The mainstream economic approach to education, mostly based on - or largely inspired by - human capital theory, focuses on the instrumental value of education related to broadening the account of “productive resources” (Sen, 1999). The CA goes beyond the notion of human capital by acknowledging not only the instrumental value of education in promoting productivity, economic growth and individual incomes, but also its intrinsic value and the direct relevance that it can have in terms of both individual wellbeing and freedom, as well as for social development.

By drawing a clearer distinction between the intrinsic and the instrumental role of education, it is possible to give more emphasis to the undeniable value that investments in education have both for economic growth and for human flourishing, and to portray individual wellbeing in a broader and more comprehensive perspective. It also makes possible a better understanding of the real opportunities and constraints that people have in different domains of wellbeing including participation in the labour market.

Overall, the CA allowed us to address four main questions:

1. What (private and collective) resources are available and/or required in order to help develop the capabilities of young people?
2. Are youth empowered to have autonomy, freedom and a voice?
3. Do individuals have the required conversion factors in terms of individual characteristics (e.g. gender, education, social status) to transform resources into capabilities?
4. What is the role of external factors (e.g. labour market conditions, workfare policies, social stratification) in the conversion process of resources into capabilities/functionings?

Both the quantitative and qualitative work developed in Workable has been focussed on these four questions.

### ***Which capabilities do we talk about?***

Preliminary to the empirical analysis conducted, there has been the identification and specification of the capabilities to be investigated, namely: capability for voice, capability for education and capability for work.

#### *a) Capability for voice*

Capability for voice is the real freedom to express one's wishes, expectations, desires, etc. and make them count when decisions concerning oneself are made. The degree of capability for voice depends on at least three factors:

- a) Individual conversion factors, i.e. mainly 1) the cognitive ability to express one's viewpoint (mastering the appropriate language or argumentative rhetoric), or to be represented by someone who can adequately express this viewpoint; 2) the political ability to push this viewpoint and make it count in the decision-making arenas.
- b) Social conversion factors, i.e. mainly 1) the entitlements guaranteed in terms of rights to express one's viewpoint (this includes procedural rights, such as the right to be consulted or to be involved in decision-making processes, e.g. in the line of the German "Mitbestimmung"), 2) the availability of the institutional interlocutors to listen and take into account the viewpoints expressed (e.g. institutionalized arenas where youth are allowed to voice their concerns and their interlocutors are obliged to take account of them).
- c) Freedom to choose, i.e. the ability not to express one's voice without having to incur severe penalties (this opposes a conception of participation as a duty imposed on youth). This implies for example that those people, who cannot voice their concerns or choose not to, should not be inflicted unbearable costs (in line with the issue of passive empowerment, that implies that entitlements should not be conditional upon adequate behaviours in terms of participation). Participation and voice should not be duties, but options.

In the field investigated within the WorkAble project, this implies that youth a) have the necessary skills and political influence to push their viewpoints, b) are entitled to do this and to be listened to when they do it (since their interlocutors ought to be pushed in this

direction by legislative or other regulative provisions), c) are free not to participate in the democratic debate without any substantial loss in terms of rights and entitlements.

#### *b) Capability for education*

Capability for education is the real freedom to choose a training program or curriculum one has reason to value. This entails:

- a) Being adequately empowered to make such a choice: this should apply to all pupils, whatever their sex, nationality, social origin, age, etc. This calls for an in-depth examination of the issues of equity and non-fragmentation within educational systems (e.g. existence or absence of bridges between curricula). Any kind of discrimination that would entail the exclusion of some young people from genuine capability for education would be considered as problematic in this perspective. This encompasses all issues related to “education as a public good” (quality and accessibility of education, absence of discrimination, usefulness of education in terms of professional and social integration and, more widely, of citizenship, etc.).
- b) Being free to choose one’s own educational path (be it of short or long duration, or even non-education), i.e. education (and the type of education) is not a “must” but a choice. This entails that youth are allowed to choose what type of education they have reason to value: education as a means toward a well-paid job or as an end in itself, short-term or long-term education, etc. should be equally available. Real freedom to choose in this matter requires that such choices do not result in discrimination when it comes to valuable social and professional integration. This also implies taking into account the issue of adaptive preferences or aspirations (it is indeed key that the expression of limited educational aspirations is not the outcome of adaptation to a limited set of opportunities); the link with the issue of empowerment (tackled in point a) is crucial in this respect: indeed the most efficient way to deconstruct adaptive preferences is certainly the enhancement of the available opportunities for all categories of youth.

With regard to the WorkAble project, this entails looking at a) the quality of educational systems and their ability to integrate everyone at any stage of the curriculum, b) the ability of young people to 1) make their own educational choices (and not to have adaptive aspirations – this calls for investigating whether the social and institutional conditions for the flourishing of the “capability to aspire” are given or not) 2) without being inflicted unbearable penalties for that (e.g. becoming a working poor, being non-recognized or discriminated, etc. if their educational choice has been interpreted as a bad one).

#### *c) Capability for work*

Capability for work is the real freedom to choose the job or activity one has reason to value. It encompasses the same kind of issues as in the case of “capability for education”, namely:

- a) Being adequately empowered to make such a choice. This implies the existence of 1) adequate skills, 2) sufficient valuable opportunities in terms of available jobs and/or activities, 3) prevention of discriminatory practices with regard to access to such opportunities.

- b) Being free to choose one's job or activity without being penalized. This means that 1) the definition of what is a "valuable job" should be wide enough to take into account the wishes and desires of all young people (by contrast, if a "valuable job" is defined along purely market or productivity criteria, this implies that some young people, who are not able or not willing to fulfil these requirements, will not have equal access to valorised jobs). Hence, capability for work entails that the social definition of "valuable jobs" (i.e. those jobs that are recognized as valuable by society at large) ought to be wide-ranging enough to encompass all types of activities that young people might consider as valuable; 2) there should be at least some entitlement to be inactive without unbearable costs (here too, passive empowerment matters, as illustrated by the key issue of available cash benefits for inactive people and of their conditionalities: what kind of inactivity is socially recognized and compensated for? What kinds of inactivity are not?).

In the WorkAble project, this implies investigating a) the quality of training programs at large (i.e. any measure related to the development of competencies, be those technical, social or personal) and of available opportunities in terms of jobs and activities, b) the entitlements linked to job loss and inactivity and their conditionalities (i.e. the extent to which people are allowed to choose inactivity at a bearable cost), c) the way the notion of "valuable work" is actually constructed (who decides what is a valuable job that is recognized by society and paid as such, and along what criteria – here the link ought to be made to the constructive dimension of democracy [cf. Sen, 1999, 2009] and to the very important notion of "informational basis of judgment in justice").

These requiring definitions ought to be considered as normative yardsticks. When translated in analytical terms, however, they should not be interpreted in a transcendental, but a comparative way. The issue is then: to what extent are these notions translated into reality (comparative)? It is not: are these notions translated into reality (transcendental or absolute)?

### ***3. Educational, vocational and policy landscapes in Europe***

Even though the situations in the countries and the proportions of young persons in vulnerable life situations after compulsory school differ to considerable degree, the reports on the national regimes within the WorkAble project make obvious that the identified "problem groups" are largely similar. They are

1. Young persons with parents of low educational background respectively young persons from low social class or manual working class;
2. Young persons with a migrant background (most typically from eastern and southern countries);
3. Young persons with actual or ascribed non-conformist behaviours;
4. Sometimes but not always and not primarily the major target group encompasses also young persons with physical or mental handicaps.

These young persons might be classified as “unemployed”, as “socially excluded” or just as “pupils”. These classifications are not only rhetorical. Rather they tend to covariate with different social, educational and labour market philosophies and tasks.

Generally there are four major tasks which may be more or less found in every educational and labour market regime. However these tasks vary in their compositions and their relative significance in the different regimes.

*A first general task* is the attempt to remedy failures of the educational system. Typically the aim is to provide people with acknowledged certificates and qualifications. A challenge to achieve the task to remedy failures of the educational system is the unequal disposedness of given educational, vocational and labour market systems to acknowledge certifications which might not be acquired in the originally intended pathways.

*A second task*, which is gaining prominence within the investigated educational, vocational and labour market regimes, is to improve the employability of the young persons. The focus here is the transition to employment. This focus is particularly important in the context of “activating” social policy respectively “active labour market policies”.

The *third task* is to improve the transition into vocational educational training (VET). This focus is different from a focus on the transition to employment. In particular in educational, vocational and labour market regimes where VET is not primarily provided by the state but rather by the market or in terms of a “dual system” it seems to make difference whether policies give priority to transition into employment or into VET.

*A fourth task* is to avoid “social exclusion”. This includes the other three tasks but is seemingly broader. Beyond an employment or educational focus, such policies account for a range of problems, stresses and strains of the young persons.

The composition of the tasks and their order of priority are approximately reflected in the general orientations of the national regimes.

*A first axis of differentiation* is whether the regimes are publicly provided “universal” systems or “dual systems” which combine on-the-job training in terms of apprenticeships in a company with vocational and technical education and training in school systems. In particular with respect to regimes that give priority to employment over education and training there are also systems which are to a high degree market-based. In some cases also quasi-markets are installed which for instance use voucher systems. Most typically the market based systems seem to be least universalistic. The universalism in the regimes might be further differentiated with respect to the degree of stratification. Even though a regime might be formally universalistic (for instance in providing vocational training for all) the kind of training might be highly stratified.

With respect to the focus on education there are typically two clusters of strategies. The first cluster of strategies (most typically in the Scandinavian countries) tries to bring young persons “back to the main road” of the educational and vocational systems. The second cluster of strategies tries to create “new” or “alternative roads”. However the problem of the second strategies might be that the “alternative roads” are sometimes hardly acknowledged and/or have a lower quality than the “main road” education. Thus there is a certain correspondence between the degree of universalism and the strategy of bringing young persons “back” to the “educational main” road.

The strategies of bringing young persons back to the educational main road depend on “bridges” from different (and stratified) tracks or pathways to the other. Whereas in some regimes such bridges may exist only formally with rather few young persons being able to shift from one track to the other, other systems try to get more or less all young persons back to the “main road”.

Another difference of the regimes reflects the question until what age of the young persons the attempts of repairing or compensating failures of the pathways of the main road respectively the re-entry to main road continue.

*A second axis of differentiation* between the regimes reflects the composition of the strategic and operational significance of national, regional or local levels as well as the convergence of these levels. Whereas some countries have a centralized educational system (e.g. Sweden, France), others tend to develop a multilevel approach (e.g. Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy). In particular on the local level the differentiation between state and market may fall short, as a number of for-profit and not-for-profit private and third sector institutions are involved.

Generally there is a tendency that as well on the national as on the local level more or less fragmented markets of training emerge. At the same time however there is not a decreasing but rather an increasing influence of state level institutions in terms of funds, tendering and regulations. What is decentralised is rather the practical provision of programmes and services. This tendency is accompanied by an amplification of managerialistic modes oriented towards complying with external key performance indicators at the expense of professional scopes of discretion and latitude of judgement but also at the expense of participatory decision-making.

Beyond privileging education or employment the tasks of *the different national systems differ with respect to the degree to which they give priority to enhancing competitiveness or ideas of social justice*. Depending on the prioritising of the tasks and their general orientations the educational and labour market regimes aim at remedy different system failures. These failures are broadly speaking

- failures of the main educational pathway, in particular with respect to young persons with no (or very low) certificate of the educational system or so called “school drop-outs”,
- failures in the transition for employment, and
- failures to enter the next step of VET.

Even though system failures seemingly play a role, the general strategy seems to be the attempt to adapt people to (labour) market demands rather than the other way round. This becomes particularly apparent in the emphasis of individual case management and the quest to find individualised solutions.

With respect to the individualised solutions the regimes vary in the degree to which they conceptualise qualification as a public good and to which they stress rights, opportunities and responsibilities of companies or the duties and responsibilities of the individual young persons. In particular those regimes which stress the latter, tend to ascribe comparatively high significance to aspects of “moral education” i.e. to “secondary virtue”, work ethics etc.

Regimes which stress rights and opportunities of young persons and responsibilities of companies are typically oriented in enhancing both choice of the young persons and an idea of social equality. Against the background of a decreasing significance of companies in providing vocational education attempts of enhancing significant choice seem to be more and more restricted.

*The Capability Approach understands public policies and institutional arrangements as important social conversion factors which may enable or hinder people to convert resources into (for the individual person) valuable functions and provide a mediating space which influences their capabilities in terms of their real freedoms and their autonomy.*

#### **4. Labour market trajectories of Young Europeans – Empirical insights from EU SILC Data**

Europe faces new and tough challenges. A globalised economy demands competitive economies, which requires a highly skilled and well-educated labour force. European countries are also ageing societies, which means that relatively large cohorts are about to retire from the labour market and that we are facing an increasing support burden on those who are working. At a first glance young Europeans seems to be in an ideal position to shoulder both these challenges. They are, although there are large differences between countries, better educated and possess more formal human capital than any previous generation. Still, for young people, getting a foothold in the labour market has become increasingly difficult.

The analysis of the quantitative analysis built on the assumption that young people want a life without economic hardship and that they want to establish an independent household, i.e. being able to leave the nest. That is, we assume that these are functions that young people have reason to value. The question is why young Europeans to a large extent lack the capabilities to do so. More specifically we investigated the link between young peoples' living conditions and their labour market related position.

Our point of departure is that all people are in a transitional phase, that a human life is a transition from the cradle to the grave involves a chain of more or less significant changes. It is only when we look at the society through a snapshot lens that we can make categorisations that provide a picture of, we would say, deceptive stability that makes it seemingly meaningful to talk about, for example, students, workers, single mothers, and unemployed as if they were fixed entities. If we accept that transition is the normal state we can not only see that some periods in life such as adolescence are more volatile than others but also investigate to what degree different types of trajectories have different implications on peoples' life.

##### ***Data, measurement and European diversities***

We used longitudinal EU-SILC data that contains monthly information about 'main activity' to estimate labour market related trajectories (LMRTs) that covers a 36 months period. In the end we extracted nine trajectories relevant to young people, i.e. people between 16 and 25 years of age. Some young people are found in stable cluster, for example full time employed or full time students. Others moves between positions, starting as students and



ends up as employed, starts like employed but ends up as unemployed, etc. The point is that in a cross-sectional analysis we cannot separate those who are on their way into employment from those who are on their way into unemployment. The analysis of young Europeans we finally made use of nine different LMRTs, which were related to three outcome variables indicating economic hardship and independence:

- Income poverty, i.e., living in a household with an income below 60 per cent of the median income in the member state
- Material deprivation measured as the inability to afford a basic set of consumption items.
- Lack of independent living, that is, young people who have not left the nest.

Young people's living conditions vary greatly between European countries. The highest poverty rates among young people are found in the Nordic countries with Norway, richest of them all, in the top. In the other end we find Czech Republic, Cyprus, Slovenia and Slovakia. If we look at material deprivation the picture looks very different. The Scandinavians are now, together with the Netherlands, found in the bottom end of the distribution while Hungary, Poland and Latvia are in the upper end of the distribution. If we look at non-independent living, i.e., not being able to leave the nest, we again find the Nordic countries together with the Netherlands and this time also the UK at bottom end of the distribution. There is a marked difference between these six countries and the rest of the EU. The differences between countries become much clearer if we divide the population into those below 22 years of age and those between 22 and 25 years of age. The country differences are not that big when we look at the young-young but they are vast when we look at the old-young. In the Nordic countries less than 20 per cent remains in the nest when they reach the age of 22 to 25 while in the majority of countries the figures vary from close to 70 per cent up to above 90 per cent. Hence, young Europeans live very different kind of lives.

The main idea guiding the analysis was that peoples' current situation can be related to previous experiences of employment, unemployment, studies and other types of labour market related activities. It is clear from the analysis that certain labour market trajectories are closely related to all three of our outcome indicators. Unemployment, but also periods of unstable employment positions are problematic all around Europe. However, differences when it comes to distribution of labour market trajectories could thus not explain much of the differences in poverty, deprivation, and independent living between EU-countries. But, they are nevertheless important at the individual level – young people that experience long term difficulties establish themselves at the labour market are experience economic hardship and lack of independency all around Europe.

### ***Specific conclusions***

This research has delivered a number of significant studies on young peoples' living conditions and their capabilities to establish an adult life they have reason to value. The main results are highlighted in these aspects:

- Comparative analysis of 26 countries shows that in the great majority of EU countries higher educational levels lead to better jobs and better life chances. The number of high-skill jobs in a given labour market is always limited, regardless of the educational level of its workforce, so the rewards from higher education vary.

- Labour market trajectories are instrumental in exposure to poverty, deprivation and ability to form an independent living across Europe. However, labour market trajectories explain only a minor part of country differences. Especially in the Nordic countries, young people have the capability to set up an independent household. It makes them relatively poor, but not particularly deprived. As a contrast and with a few exemptions, for example the Netherlands and to some degree the UK, in most European countries young people lack the capability to set up an independent household. As a result they are relatively well protected from poverty, i.e., protected by their parents' incomes.
- There are positive short-term effects of active labour market policies, there are considerably more doubts considering the long term effect, as it seems active labour market policies have little, if any, long-term effect on the capability for work.
- Jobs available to early school leavers are for the most part temporary or compulsorily part time. The lack in capability of people aged 18-24 has an impact on the chance of finding a job they have reason to value.
- Periods of unemployment lead to scarring in terms of pay and unemployment though not in terms of wellbeing (measured by life satisfaction). - The impact of people losing confidence is important in all cases and indicates that psychological factors affect the capabilities of young people in the labour market.
- There are strong negative effects of open unemployment on mental health in the short term. Participation in youth programmes does not cause the same negative short- and long-term mental health scarring.
- Class background matters for the non-market capabilities of agency and voice, but not for subjective health. - Education, primarily at university level, matters for the non-market capabilities. - Education matters most for youths with a blue-collar background.

These findings have important implications for policy making across the EU. For young people, getting a foothold in the labour market has become increasingly difficult. This is especially so for young people who fall behind in the education system. However, although education increases job chances and the capability to find a job that one values, higher education no longer guarantees success in job or career. Even though young Europeans are facing similar challenges, their capabilities to respond to these challenges vary systematically both between, and within, countries. From a European perspective it is vital to understand these variations and the structural conditions that restrict or enable young people's capabilities. Addressing structural conditions (rather than implementing individualised measures only) will make it possible to strengthen Europe's economic development and at the same time increase young people's capability to live a life they have reason to value. The quantitative analysis focused on young people's transitions from education to work. From this angle, unemployment can be seen as a failure both from societal and individual perspectives. From a societal perspective unemployment results in a double cost: the costs of income support, which either fall on the social network or the state, and the costs of unutilised capabilities. However, it is the unemployed themselves who carry the heaviest burden.

Our longitudinal analyses have been able to distinguish between different types of labour market trajectories among young Europeans and to show that extended periods of general employment insecurity is a main cause of poverty, deprivation and lack of independence. One could always argue that difficulties in the transition from education to work are commonplace and do not have long-term negative effects. The results show, however, that such an assumption is wrong. In the short-term, employment insecurity increases the risk that young people are deprived and will live in poverty. Difficulties in making the transition from education to work also hinder young Europeans from establishing their own households. But the negative effects are not only short-term. Analyses based on unique longitudinal data from both Sweden and the UK shows that unemployment in youth has long term scarring effects on future employability, pay and often wellbeing in adult life. Hence, youth unemployment is not a problem that we can afford to ignore; it is a problem that European societies need to tackle now.

Today supply side measures dominate labour market policies and the main strategy is to make young people, and young unemployed people in particular, employable. Education plays a central role in this policy, providing young people with the skills and qualifications necessary to compete in the labour market. Thus, it comes as no surprise that early school leavers find it problematic to get a foothold in the labour market. In relation to this group, active labour market policies are important and special programmes addressing the specific problems among young people in vulnerable situations are crucial. The statistical analysis carried out in this research shows that there are immediate positive effects of active labour market programmes. However, there is considerably more doubt when it comes to the long-term effects. Young people in countries with high expenditures on active labour market policies are, for example, less likely to be fully employed over a three-year period. Our analysis also confirms the consistent pattern of the intergenerational reproduction of educational and occupational inequalities. What this means is that even though today's generation of young Europeans are better educated than ever before, the relative inequalities between different socio-economic strata are more or less intact. It also means that education can be looked upon as a positional good, i.e., it is not the knowledge acquired that matters in the labour market in the first instance; rather it is the relative position in the educational hierarchy that is important.

However, an analysis, based on Swedish longitudinal data, also shows that education brings non-market benefits. Higher education increases young people's voice and agency, that is, their capability to formulate and bring forward their own opinions and take action to safeguard their rights. It also demonstrates that higher education promotes good health among young people. What is most important is that these effects seem to be strongest among young people from working class backgrounds. Our findings paint a picture of a young generation that is better educated than ever before and probably is also more capable of speaking their minds and taking action to reach their goals. However, young people are also participants in a globally competitive economy that imposes structural constraints on what is possible to achieve.

At any given point of time, education can be seen as a positional good in relation to a given labour market structure. Thus, early school leavers and young people with only primary or lower secondary education are facing severe difficulties in finding a job, especially a long term one, let alone a job they value. This may come as no surprise but the question is what should we do about it? There is no doubt that education is important and that any

responsible policy must ensure that all young Europeans are given the opportunity to achieve the capabilities needed to steer their own lives. From a capability perspective, this means, among other things, that young people in today's Europe should be able to get a job that they have reason to value. To achieve this, education and supply-side driven labour market policies are important since they provide the individual with skills. The problem, however, is that skills are not enough.

The educational resources or skills they possess do not only decide young individual's capabilities, this also depends on the opportunity structure that a young person operates in. In relation to the labour market, it is the combined effect of individual resources and labour market opportunities that make up an individual's true capability set. What this calls for is the development of labour market policies that focus more on the demand-side aspects, i.e. job creation. But sustainable job creation is not about creating just any job, it has to be built on creativity and adaptation. Important resources for achieving this are the well-educated young Europeans themselves, which means that we need labour market policies that focus on how to utilise this resource. This implies that we need policies that make it possible for young people not only to be employed but also to be employed in positions that match their skills and, most important, allow them to influence their work organisation. If we can achieve this, we will not only be able to help revitalise European economies, we will also be able to provide young people with jobs they have reason to value. Not everyone wishes to, or can, have a job that makes high demands on skills and creativity. It is also the case that there are tasks that need to be performed which do not necessarily require advanced education or offer many personal development prospects. These jobs do not necessarily have to be bad jobs with low pay. What is needed is a policy that guarantees both good working and economic conditions in relatively low skilled jobs. Even though young people benefit from education and education is a good in itself, we cannot ignore the fact that education is also a positional good. Even if considerable effort and money is put into education and supply side labour market policies – someone still has to do the relatively low-skilled jobs. Thus, we need to create a labour market where young people also have reason to value relatively low-skilled jobs, and in order to do that we need to start talking again about the re-distribution of resources. It concerns status, working conditions and not least economic rewards. These issues must be addressed from a structural perspective, which among other aspects mean that we need to address the distributional issues, i.e., wage settings and taxes. In concrete terms it implicates that those of us that are relatively well off need to pay more for getting our cafe latte served, getting our streets cleaned, and get someone to care for grandmother. Why should young people have reason to value jobs that are not valued among the rest of the society?

## ***5. Capabilities in Context – Educational Programmes in a Micro Perspective***

The nine case studies (Germany, Poland, Italy, France, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, United Kingdom and Sweden) put the Capability Approach in context by examining the transitions of (disadvantaged) young people from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment, as well as looking at examples of the education and employability programmes that may support them in these transitions.

The aim of the nine case-studies was to enhance understandings of successful ways in which to support young people who encounter difficulties, or who fail, in the 'standard' routes of education and the transition towards employment, by empowering their capabilities for voice, work and education. By applying the capability approach, we have elaborated a perspective which highlights:

### ***The relation between freedom, education and work***

The importance of educational resources does not lie exclusively in increasing individual professional skills and economic productivity. It also lies in reducing inequalities and empowering young people to lead integrated and active lives in society. In this sense we refer to the capability for education as the real freedom to choose a training/curriculum programme one has reason to value. This poses specific challenges to public policy, namely through education and training. Likewise we use the notion of the capability for work to indicate the real freedom to choose the job/activity one has reason to value. Therefore the capability for work is a very complex issue that encompasses a series of dimensions and the need to take into account the plurality of views about what 'valuable work' is. It requires a focus on issues and dimensions such as adequate skills, the availability of work opportunities and access to them. The questions adopted by the case studies take into consideration this complexity: in what conditions does the process of developing skills in young people correspond to a process of capability building?

### ***The relation between capabilities, the knowledge society and the future***

Capabilities are intimately connected to the availability of knowledge through which young people can steer their own future development and contribute at the same time to the development of the society they belong to. Crucial, therefore, is the capacity to realign themselves to ever changing circumstances and actively pursue and realise occasions for learning and face the requirements of a knowledge-based economy. In this sense what is at stake is clearly the future, both individual and collective. Therefore, besides resources, opportunities and freedom of choice, young people should be empowered with the capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2010). This concerns "how human beings engage their own futures" and the normative frameworks from which the desire and imagination of the future take form.

### ***The relation between capabilities, voice and democracy***

Voice is essential for sustaining capabilities. In fact, when choice comprises of pre-determined options, Sen holds that there is no real freedom: "The relevant freedoms include the liberty of acting as citizens who matter and whose voices count, rather than living as well-fed, well-clothed and well-entertained vassals" (1999: 288).

It is in this light that voice assumes relevance as the "political" expression of capacity. More precisely the capability for voice is the capacity to express one's opinions and thoughts and to make them count in the course of public discussion. In this sense voice is neither an alternative nor an accessory, but operates as an integrating part of well-being. On this basis, the case-studies focus on how to equip and enable young people to be capable as participants in labour markets and as democratic citizens of a European society. Our research highlights the voices of young people and their chances to lead the life they value

and thus provides better opportunities for young people to play an active part in decisions affecting them.

Apart from the differences in educational and welfare regime context, the nine cases analysed are different in their methodologies, levels, contexts and intervention targets. Also the architectures of governance are different, both vertically along the EU/national/regional/municipal axis, and horizontally with reference to the relations between public and non-public actors.

The main criterion for programme selection was that those have applied new or innovative approaches; although the transitions of young people with less favourable labour market opportunities who are not involved in any specific kind of programme are also explored (Swedish case study) (see table 1). In three cases (France, Switzerland and Italy), the target is early school leavers; two cases (Denmark and the UK) deal with the young unemployed; in the German and Austrian cases the subject is young people with no upper secondary education qualifications; the Polish case study concerns young people in upper secondary vocational school who suffer from low skills; and the Swedish case is about higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job.

Topic	Country	Case Study Description
Early school leavers	France	Two state regional action plans: 'Regional plan against school dropout' (Rhône-Alpes) and 'Local networks for school perseverance' (Aquitaine).
	Switzerland	FORJAD (formation pour les jeunes adultes en difficulté/training for struggling young adults) programme set up by the cantonal department of Social Affairs, together with the departments of Education and Employment. FORJAD gets marginalized youth out of welfare programmes and offers them the possibility to achieve a vocational training.
	Italy	'Trespassing Project' operated in Naples by a community development agency. The project provides personalised paths towards labour market for young people not in employment, education or training.
Unemployed	UK	Two third sector programmes in Scotland that help disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 make the transitions from unemployment to employment by providing work placements and work experience opportunities.
	Denmark	Basic Vocational Education and Training Programme (EGU) at the local municipality level for young people who have failed their earlier schooling (e.g. early school leavers, or students of technical schools that have given

		up their education).
Those in upper secondary vocational school who suffer from low skills	<b>Poland</b>	Implementation of programme 'We empower you to learn' (programme of cooperation between education and the power industry) in one of Warsaw's upper-secondary vocational schools.
No upper secondary education qualifications	<b>Austria</b>	The 'Youth at Work' (Jugend am Werk) programme which offers supra-company training places for a range of apprenticeships in craft, industry and service sector professions. The supra-company apprenticeship training is seen as a "safety net" for those young people not able to find apprenticeship training on the labour market.
	<b>Germany</b>	Two contrasting programmes within a local transition management institution were chosen to represent the spectrum of interventions available there: Kompetenzagentur (Agency of competence) and KSoB (Courses for pupils without vocational qualification contract).
Higher education graduates experiencing difficulties in finding a desired job	<b>Sweden</b>	Young people with an individually composed bachelor's degree in one of the disadvantaged academic fields/subjects.

*Table 1: Case study descriptions*

The reasons for such a variety are to be found in the need to set up a cross-country comparison capable of throwing light on the most significant situations in the transition from compulsory school to further education, from education/vocational training to the labour market, and from unemployment/outside the labour market to employment or further education.

Our conceptual and analytical framework has allowed particular situations to emerge and at the same time has helped clarify our key questions: how to reduce inequalities and address the inadequacies and the mismatch between education and the labour market? What conditions allow young people to maintain and update over the long term the necessary competencies for living in, and contributing to, a democratic knowledge society? What individual, social and environmental factors promote or impede young people's capabilities for education, for work and for voice?

To answer these questions people and contexts, and individual and collective dimensions have to be considered all together. On one hand, the individual level is indeed essential to the concept of capability, and it is the dimension in which capabilities may be exercised and increased. Therefore the perspectives of young people themselves have been taken into account. On the other hand, the conditions that allow for the development of capabilities

have their roots in institutional and social contexts and frameworks, and in the organisational cultures that define public intervention. To be free to choose what they have reason to value, young people need to be embedded in a context which allows them to exercise their freedoms. Therefore the case studies have highlighted the link between the individual and social dimensions of the capabilities, revealing those factors that allow the promotion of individual capacities and the modes in which they are constructed in the relation between context and persons. From this point of view our research aims at highlighting in what sense the promotion of capability for education, work and voice of young people is decisive both for individual well-being and our collective life.

While different groups of young people are considered all the case studies examine the uncertainty about which skills are needed for young people to be able to flourish and become capable citizens who are able to choose work that they have reason to value.

Key themes and questions emerging from the case studies include:

- Questions are raised about the voice of young people: young people's voice can be limited because of the social contexts in which they live (such as local community or networks of family and friends); the lack of voice and choice given to disadvantaged young people in the education system; the extent to which young people are able to have voice in the design and delivery of the initiatives; the extent to which young people can exercise their voice in the institutional and structural contexts in which they live; the need for young people to meet the expectations of employers and the labour market in terms of skills; young people's awareness of their rights to a voice in the workplace (as well as their responsibilities).
- The important role of those delivering the initiatives on the ground to their success: the skills of the staff, young people trusting and respecting the staff, staff acting as role models for the young people.
- The role of institutional and structural factors (such as funding), as well as the external context of local labour markets, in constraining the extent to which initiatives can take a Capability Approach.
- The findings identify that young people can face particular risks at key transition periods such as early selection in the education system, or the transition to upper secondary education. It was identified that inequalities were often established early on highlighting the need for early intervention.
- The findings provide useful insights into what work young people find reason to value: that sometimes young people value any job because of the constraints of the labour market; aspirations for valuable work may not be developed because of a lack of education or a lack of knowledge about working life due the family backgrounds and social networks in which the young person operates in; the importance of a supportive work environment in helping young people sustain their work placement and educate them about the world of work; how the type of work that young people value is not static and preferences change over time.
- There may be adaptations of preferences due to: a lack of self-confidence; the job opportunities open to the young people because of local labour market conditions; and



the young people's skills and experiences (e.g. young people may discount certain job opportunities if they feel that they are beyond their reach).

- Whether the initiatives really encourage young people to choose a life they have reason to value, or whether they encourage young people to choose a life as defined as valuable by social norms or project workers/organisations.
- That young people require access to different levels of resources to achieve the same goal. Therefore if the resources offered to young people are the same then inequalities can be reproduced and reinforced.

In particular, the case-studies reveal that:

- The role of the family is ambiguous. On the one hand, it may be supportive in its attitude towards education and serve as an important source of information, and emotional support as a "stability factor". However, it may also constrain the individuals' free choice or even promote certain preferences.
- The skills and values of professionals influence the choices of young people. Among these professionals are tutors in Italy, social or project workers in Germany, Switzerland and the UK, teachers in Denmark and France, trainers in Poland, Austria etc.. These professionals are often placed at an intersection between the actualisation of formal rights and active labour market legislation. They become 'gatekeepers' for the space of opportunities the young people have at their disposal. Furthermore, professionals influence capabilities through creaming, that is focusing on the students with the best results, and thus reproduce inequalities in terms of capabilities.
- The provision of sufficient valuable opportunities in terms of available jobs and/or activities is not only a question of resources, commodities and social justice in general. It also is the condition and target pathway for the institutions and measures in itself (e.g., in Germany, Denmark, Austria, Italy). Often the free choice of occupation is formally granted, it is true, but if the respective internships or apprenticeship positions are not guaranteed, this guarantee remains merely an empty formal right with no chance of realisation. Therefore, enabling youth to actualise their voice and choice in the selection of placements cannot be achieved without taking the services' external context into account. The major factors in this respect are the local labour market conditions, funding issues, the social responsibility of companies and the wider policy environment.
- The aspect of capability for education as "Bildung" is crucial (in Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria etc.). A precondition for processes of Bildung (understood here as cultural self-formation) is to create a context for, and stimulation of, practical reasoning and the enabling of biographical reflexivity. This entails taking a wider perspective on informal and non-formal learning, points to artistic, creative and non-standardised experiences, and can be path-breaking for the orientation, formation and recognition of young adults ( in Switzerland, France).
- Infrastructure together with the (material) resources of the transition measures, constitute indispensable preconditions for practical learning and the encouragement to participate in constructive, productive, useful and tangible learning processes (see

especially the Austrian case study). Here, a supportive work environment becomes essential, which can help young people sustain their work placement.

- The findings of the case studies provide useful insights into what kind of work young people find reason to value. On the other hand, it sometimes turned out that it is hard for young adults to reflect on what they value, on their social positioning as the major predictor of life chances and especially on the desirability of different options which are all essential preconditions for moving beyond functionings and realising the possibility for (positive) social mobility in the sense that measuring progress is by the extension of freedom (Sen 1998: 8), which is at the heart of the capability approach. This also implies that the constraints of the labour market and aspirations for valuable work may not be developed because of a lack of education or a lack of knowledge about working life due to the biographical backgrounds and social networks in which the young person operates. Furthermore, the type of work that young people value is not static and preferences change over time. “Realistic perspectives” and their handling and negotiation became a crucial point within several case studies (see Germany, Denmark). This can be read in two directions: in a positive version as the creation and support of a condition for practical reasoning, in a negative reading as a form of adaptive preferences. In the negative interpretation, individual reflexivity is transformed through institutional practices with the aim of aligning aspirations with institutional demands. In this respect, aspirations and opportunities are curtailed by the adaptation to circumstances. This can be considered as the problem of “adaptive preferences”. However, “realistic perspectives” are not inherently a bad thing - indeed they are inescapable - but if the adaptation leads to a massive displacement from a person’s original inherent concerns, young people are forced to cope with alienation – an eminent issue in this context. Our assumption is that young people’s concerns are already supported by reasoned valuations – which themselves are bound and adapted to their context. This dialectic of respecting and regulating young people’s aspirations (and sometimes even wishes and desires) has to be coped with institutionally.
- Looking at the institutional level, the main objective of public action is - in the words of the CA - to create a broader (and deliberative) informational basis on the one hand and open up new opportunities on the other hand. Within the case studies, critical questions were raised about whether the dominance of people processing technologies and a narrow view on employability within Active Labour Market Programs (ALMP) is constraining these aims (see especially Germany). Furthermore, in several local transition institutions the possibility of an exit option was not made clear or even not assumed, and the young adults felt like having the last – and not very likely – chance to jump on the bandwagon to the labour market. As the Austrian case study puts it: “the opportunities on offer are inevitably limited and constraining since, due to a lack of resources or non-feasible conversion factors, not everybody has all options or the possibility to convert all these options into strategies to be pursued. What is more, the exit option – alternative pathways that go beyond other forms of training or a badly paid job – is perceived as very negative. The youngsters are full of fear of ‘getting lost on the street’, becoming delinquent, falling from grace. Often they see no way back from a non-conforming way of living”. Therefore, the assumption of voluntariness within the programmes and the aspect of agency in general have to be challenged.

- Programmes and interventions can make a major difference if they facilitate the capacity to aspire, which indicates the desire for, and imagination of, the future and the normative frameworks from which they take form. Thereby, institutions can become the main driving force in the development of young people's positive attitudes towards learning and their becoming capable citizens in European societies. To a certain extent, the capacity to aspire can be helpful when persons who have had very negative schooling experiences are brought into situations where they experience themselves as "able to learn". Therefore, institutions should function as enablers of an empowering learning process. The capacity to aspire and the will to learn or (in case of drop-outs) to get back to school (France) can both be effectively supported by accompanying cultural activities.
- In a normative reading, capability for work entails a social definition of "good and meaningful work" (i.e. those jobs that are recognised as valuable by society at large) and ought to be wide-ranging enough to encompass all types of activities that young people consider as valuable. This means that the definition of what is a "valuable job" should be wide enough to take into account the wishes and desires of all young people. This normative idea of good and meaningful work becomes relevant on all levels. It does not only pertain what could be desirable for each young adult and which aspirations are favoured (and socially accepted), but also to the opportunities the transitional sector itself offers - as an institution of social mobility or as an institution tending only to the demand side of the labour market and thus activating young people for employability. In several institutions and transitional regimes the idea of what constitutes good and meaningful work is lacking (i.e. Germany, Italy).
- Understanding youth as a specific transition period can be seen as an important aspect when securing the opportunity to re-make choices made within this time of transition either from school to further education, from school to work or even from early youth to adulthood. This period could be conceptualised as a sustainable capability space (see Denmark, Germany in detail but other case studies as well). In our conceptual understanding a sustainable capability space preserves a period and a space for flourishing in a supportive and developing environment. Whereas adolescence is often seen as a delay or suspension of an activity or a law – which would point to stagnation – the concept of a sustainable capability space refers to a time of growth and human flourishing, wherein the young persons have time and space to express their desires, develop their aspirations and life plans they have reason to value. This is therefore a new kind of understanding and it fits well to the dynamics of the capability approach: "This amounts to seeing a person in as it were, an 'active' rather than a 'passive' form (but neither the various states of being nor even the "doings" need necessarily be 'athletic' ones)." (Sen 1990: 44) From this perspective, job orientation could be understood as a long-term issue and leave designated room for trial and error as part of a period of selfdetermination.
- Voice options are mainly available in the young people's relationship with local agents and professionals. This is why participation in the support process becomes crucial. This does not only entail that multiple opportunities and aims are possible and made transparent, but also that the youth are involved in the process of decision-making and perceive themselves as part of a working alliance. This contrasts, however, with the sense of constraint that can typically be observed in working class and 'underclass' youth. Many young people may have very narrow horizons in terms of what type of

employment they aspire to. They are sceptical and uncertain about social institutions and do not expect them to meet their needs and requirements. Thus, a “sense of entitlement” has to be institutionally enabled and subjectively instilled into them, with the aim of fulfilling young people’s selfconscious expectation that institutions and their agents respond to their needs and aspirations.

More generally, a capacitating project in terms of voice is one that implies the active involvement of young people but also grants them the freedom not to participate. Young persons should not be compelled to participate in programmes; rather, they should be invited to get involved and therefore receive good and sufficient information.

In addressing the issues facing young people in making successful transitions it is often necessary to have inputs from across a number of agencies and for these agencies to work effectively together. ***Those programmes that were most ‘successful’ tended to be those that were holistic, multidimensional and integrated in their approach to addressing youth disadvantage.***

*In the WorkAble project we conceptualised the capabilities for Education, Work and Voice as fertile Capabilities which have positive effects on other central human capabilities – and can be seen as a subject and field oriented adaptation of the capability approach (see Table 2).* The mentioned subset of capabilities is regarded as an important relational framework that can enable young people to act as capable citizens in European societies. Furthermore, it can also be used as an evaluative framework raising questions as to which social and institutional conditions are necessary not only to keep young people in the labour markets, but also to maintain their autonomy and freedom of choice.

Fertile Capabilities According to...	Capability for Education	Capability for Work	Capability for Voice
<b>Resources &amp; Commodities</b>	Inequalities in educational regimes / certificate poverty	Sufficient valuable opportunities in terms of available jobs /activities	Voice as a substantiation of citizenship and social rights
<b>Constraints</b>	Negative schooling experiences	Enabling of adequate skills vs. realistic perspectives	Dominance of people processing
	Misregognition of informal and non-formal learning	Work-first vs. life first approaches and the “realistic” reference to the labour market	Invisibility of exit options
<b>Enablings</b>	Education as ‘Bildung’	Prevention of discriminatory practices and labelling	Participation within the support process

		processes	
	Informational base for choice making in a professional working alliance	Infrastructure and (material) resources of the measures in itself	Democratisation of social service organisations
Normative orientation (for institutions)	Capacity to aspire	Good and meaningful work	Sustainable capability space

Table 2: Dimensions of the capabilities for education, work and voice

It appears that *voice* was a crucial element of some projects. A capacitating project in terms of voice is one that implies the active involvement of young people but also grants them the freedom not to participate. More generally, a project will be enabling if its operation is one of value in the eyes of the young adult and they for that reason chose to participate. Young people should not be compelled to participate in experimental programmes; rather they should be invited to get involved which requires that they are well informed. According to this, we can say that among the studied projects, very few if any, pay special attention to the capability for voice per se. Capability for voice is not explicitly an end or a means to be achieved by the projects.

So far we can state that the capability for voice can be seen as a ‘transmission belt’ for the other two capabilities and perhaps as a link between them. On the one hand, having a voice only becomes crucial when (real) opportunities of education and work are provided; because if valuable options and choices are effectively missing, this processual dimension of freedom turns out to be a chimera and can be stated as a biographical reflexivity without embodiment and materialisation. On the other hand these opportunities are in need of a practical reasoning for being able to form a conception of the good, to engage in reflection about the planning of one's own life and in the end to value educational and occupational choices.

### ***A strong relationship between the capability for education and work***

We observed in the different case studies that education is often closely connected to the capability for work. This double perspective on education in relation to work and the good life one has reason to value raises several problems for vulnerable young people within Europe, especially when the certificates and qualifications are unequally distributed and thereby cause inequalities in the space of other valuable capabilities, such as the capability for voice. Therefore, on a macro level, this causes several paradoxes and counterproductive practices particularly in life-course transitions whether from finished education into the labour market or from compulsory education to further job-qualifying education. For instance in the case of Germany, when leaving lower secondary school it is obvious that finishing school with a general qualification for apprenticeship entrance is by no means an absolute guarantee for a job and training placement. Therefore it can be stated that to foster the capabilities for education and learning, learning methods or processes should lead to concrete, useful and sensually tangible outcomes appreciated by the apprentices themselves and by others. We find similarities across several different contexts as risks when facing these transition periods.

### ***The capability for voice as a just negotiation with exit options***

When making informed professional and political decisions within this field of interest it seems of relevance to have in mind the relation between resources (commodities) and the different structural and individual conversion factors. The decisions made need to secure what could be called a just negotiation with exit options between youth services and families with the young persons' aspirations, wishes and needs at the centre. Just negotiation with exit options would imply that a young person is not forced to adapt his or her choices to the counsellors or families idea of „realistic perspectives“ in relation to the labour market situation at the present. Real freedom to choose in this matter requires that the choices the young individuals make do not result in discrimination when it comes to valuable social and professional integration. On the other hand this does not indicate that the young person should not reflect his or her wishes in relation to the de facto structures in the labour market or educational system, but they should be equipped with an adequate informational basis for making choices. In this manner, just measures will tend to allow youth on a well informed basis to choose what type of education they have reason to value. This opens up for a double sided understanding of education, both as a means for good and meaningful work and as an end in itself. In addition, the France case study highlights that the capability for voice can be developed through education and thereby the capability for education becomes fertile for the development of young people's ability to voice their concerns. When: “The interviews show that developing capability for voice is at the very heart of the educational approach” and “a weak performance at school is generally related to a poor capability for voice”, then the three capabilities have “transversal characteristics” between each other. Then again, “the capabilities for voice and work are bound to the capability for education. A weak capability for education results in lowering down the two other capabilities. On the one hand, claiming and voicing requires some self-confidence and skills provided by education. Capability for voice is not given per se but comes out of a formal and informal education. On the other hand, the access to the labour market and a valuable job is in France strongly dependent on the kind of degree gathered in education”.

At last, if the above is brought into perspective, it could be discussed whether enabling young people to act as capable citizens in European societies in a just educational (transitional) system would entail a sustainable capability space for young adults that would secure:

1. through a manifold service system that each young person not only has access to information, but can form their own informational basis for choice making in relation to education and work,
2. the real freedoms and not merely the formal entitlements (veto or exit opportunities and necessary commodities for their actualisation) in relation to transitions between employment and education vis a vis. This implies that the voice of the young is seriously taken into account,
3. interventions based on individual needs and resource alignment for all young citizens that secure the real opportunity to enjoy the capabilities for voice, work and education meeting or exceeding a threshold determined through a democratic political process.

## **4.1.4 The potential impact and the main dissemination activities**

### ***Strategic impact in educating capable agents for a European knowledge society***

To raise employment and productivity and to strengthen social cohesion, the EU supports and supplements Member States' efforts in the domains of human capital, education and vocational training, including a particular focus on the participation and integration of young people, as set out in the European Youth Pact. To find appropriate strategies of training and education which enable young persons to cope with the economic and social challenges of the emerging knowledge economy and society is a central task for in all European member states. WorkAble contributed to this task. To transfer its approach into practice, WorkAble identified factors that promote or impede the participation of young people as workers in the labour market and as citizens in society as a whole, and formulate recommendations for stakeholders, politicians and various sectors of civil society with respect to closing the capability gap and enhancing young peoples' opportunities.

WorkAble provides knowledge about strategies to increase young people's capabilities and thereby knowledge that helps to capacitate young people to lead the life they have reason to value.

The rigorously comparative approach taken by the WorkAble project enables researchers both to clarify the impact of local, regional and national contexts and to create a new, wide-ranging theoretical understanding of the conditions for the functioning of educational and welfare systems throughout Europe.

The research conducted by WorkAble improves understanding of the role of capabilities in relation to employment and growth in Europe as well as in relation to deliberative participation, social inclusion and individual flourishing. Thereby WorkAble creates knowledge that helps to reconcile economic growth and individual flourishing by developing a society facilitating the development of capabilities through education.

### ***Utilisation of results***

EU Member States still play the main role in implementing youth policy, and, in the European Youth Pact, they have already committed themselves to give special attention to young people within the Lisbon Strategy. There is a need for a transversal youth strategy building on cooperation between policymakers and stakeholders at European, national, regional and local levels.

WorkAble provides a broad map of European opportunities structures for the acquisition of skills and capabilities and present them in terms of valuable recommendations, guidelines and tools. These are useful to policy makers and other key social players for the definition of social policies and plans for action at a European scale. Recommendations are based on prior in-depth analysis of the innovative systems, practices and policies that have been

implemented in order to overcome societal problems related to social and educational exclusion.

Utilisation of project results have been ensured by the

1. involvement of different stakeholders (policymakers, educational providers, and young people),
2. presentation of the results of the project to a wide range of actors,
3. consistent character of dissemination activities throughout the whole duration of the project,
4. multilevel character of dissemination activities, that are being planned locally, in each participating country, on the European level, and through international exchange via the internet,
5. variety of forms of demonstration and dissemination (workshops, presentations at conferences, academic publications as well as those in national and local media, briefing papers, a textbook, the production of short films, presentations via 'Second Life', the final conference).

### ***Impact on the scientific community***

Academically, the WorkAble project is set to make a significant contribution to developing new theoretical and empirical tools to study capability provision through local providers in specific educational regimes from comparative perspectives. Europe, as a scientific field, is already making efforts to find a common perspective on human capital development. WorkAble, however, went one step further by linking together current theoretical debates. Today, for instance, a growing number of scientists in Europe are arguing in terms of the capability approach in the research fields of education, welfare and human development.

The approach of our group of collaborating researchers has been interdisciplinary from the outset, and the Capability Approach serves as a unifying perspective that focuses on the practical preconditions for young people to realise those states and actions they reasonably value. This practical orientation makes the knowledge produced directly accessible to educational and welfare providers while incorporating a social-justice perspective embracing wider contexts. This creates a 'transmission belt' for EU policy instruments such as the Open Method of Coordination.

One of the tasks for the researchers in the network was to work across disciplines, fields and national boundaries particularly in terms of developing common tools and concepts for the collection and interpretation of data. The project contributes to standardisation of the databases, the transferability of single national good practices and experiences, and the comparability of scientific instruments and methods.



The project built on and expands the state of the art in educational, economic, sociological and political theories and remained both flexible and broad in scope, while, at the same time, laying the foundation for solving concrete problems by enhancing opportunities for and developing the capabilities of young people.

Through the broad range of comparable data to be produced or analysed, WorkAble yielded recommendations that can be applied to a wide range of contexts for diverse end users in the fields of education and welfare: (1) (experienced and early career) researchers in related academic fields; (2) national and European policymakers; (3) educational and welfare services; and (4) non-profit organisations involved in education, welfare and training.

The project structure created a number of additional opportunities for collaboration and more intensive communication among partners. All partners from different disciplines are working on the same problems, thus making findings comparable even when data are gathered using different methods. The WorkAble project aimed to turn this into an advantage, because a wide array of competencies in research methods is a necessary precondition for being able to tackle the broad research questions defined by the Work Programme.

The group significantly widened its impact through the integration of excellent young scientists, especially through deepening its empirical and analytical scope by inviting them to workshops and conferences.

### ***Impact on systems, reforms, policies and practices***

WorkAble advanced the knowledge base that underpins the formulation and implementation of youth, welfare and educational policies in Europe. The project involved stakeholders on all levels in the accomplishment and diffusion of research. It provided educational and training systems with knowledge that improves delivering efficient, fair and relevant services in a long-term perspective, stimulating the individual's potential for creativity and autonomy, while avoiding mismatches with the labour market. They are supported in preparing young people for entry into and functioning in the labour market but also to enable them to continue their education throughout their lives, for their personal development and to help them to master changing technological and occupational challenges which become all the more pressing in a globalised and knowledge-based economy.

The Commission proposes a number of new initiatives for building bridges between education and employment and fostering young people's active citizenship. WorkAble makes contributions to this aim stated at the Lisbon summit. If Europe is to achieve full employment, improve quality and productivity at work and strengthen social cohesion, it must attract and retain more people in employment. By identifying factors that promote or impede the participation of socially vulnerable young people as citizens and (prospective) workers in the labour market, WorkAble provided elements that will increase the capacity of European educational systems and reforms to

1. minimise the risk of school failure

2. increase labour supply
3. modernise general and vocational skill formation institutions
4. improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises alike
5. make young people and VET institutions capable of becoming actors in European knowledge societies by enhancing autonomy and freedom as understood in the framework of the capabilities approach.

The project provided orientations to policymakers, practitioners and other key players that will help them to account for social and cultural diversity. Furthermore, having people from these groups on the advisory board and their active participation in the dissemination activities throughout the project increased the impact of the results.

These findings serve as the foundation for a multi-sectoral, multi-perspective framework for labour-market policy as well as providing targeted policy recommendations for regional measures to tackle unemployment through enhancing capabilities.

WorkAble in particular focused on socially vulnerable young persons who are at risk of social exclusion. WorkAble provides knowledge about their participation in democratic institutions which is essential to the sound functioning of democracies and the sustainability of policies which impact on young people's lives. WorkAble's research highlighted the voices of young people and their objective chances to lead the life they have reason to value and thus provides better opportunities for young people to play an active part in the dialogue with relevant stakeholders, especially for young people with fewer opportunities and those who are not members of a youth organisation. Workable provided knowledge about how to promote these young people's full participation in an emerging knowledge society.

### ***The main dissemination activities and exploitation of results***

The WorkAble project makes a significant contribution to developing new theoretical and empirical tools to study skills acquisition through education and welfare from comparative perspectives. It also assisted policy makers and practitioners in learning appropriate lessons from contrasting practice in different countries. The project examined local, regional and national differences and commonalities in approaching the acquisition of capabilities. WorkAble also included a distinctly European perspective which is especially represented in the dissemination of the project findings. The members of the advisory board including external experts from institutions operating Europe-wide assisted the dissemination process especially regarding policy and practice. The different levels at which stakeholders operate called for a differentiated dissemination strategy catering to the diverse needs of the involved actors.

The approach of the group of collaborating researchers has been interdisciplinary from the outset, and the capability approach has proved its value as a unifying perspective that focuses on the practical preconditions for young people to realise those states and actions

they reasonably value. This practical orientation made the knowledge produced directly accessible not only to a wider, multidisciplinary audience, but also to educational and welfare providers. The results have been disseminated to the groups interviewed in the WPs as well as to the young people themselves. The close connection to the contexts and delivery of VET was not only crucial for the research design of the project, but is a central requirement of its normative stance: To integrate economic prosperity and human flourishing demands action on all these levels.

The WorkAble Dissemination Plan guaranteed the exploration of its results and assures that the project's main findings are spread beyond the consortium and the scientific community to policy-making audiences and to the wider public. The dissemination plan therefore rested on two pillars: Academic dissemination and dissemination on the policy and practice level.

### ***Highlights of the dissemination strategy***

#### ***Project website:***

The project website gathers most of the project's output and makes it accessible to a general audience. Since the end of the project the website is completely updated.

The *website* informs about

- the people and organisations which are involved in the project ("About us");
- the project's objectives, research strategy, and work packages ("About WorkAble"),
- the groups the project addresses ("Target audience"),
- the workshops and events ("Events"),
- the publications of WorkAble including all deliverables ("Publications")
- The sixth category contains an option for contacting the coordinator ("Contact"), and
- the last menu point as well as the starting side show website links related to the project or/and the context ("Links").

During the second reporting period the following information and material was added:

- A news option informing about new added presentations of the WorkAble scientists, about the latest deliverables and publications, about the final conference and the short films.
- All short films with explanations and pictures from the shootings and a link to the youtube channel,
- Pictures of and proceedings of the final conference.

### ***MP3 lectures:***

The consortium accomplished two MP 3 lectures. The first one was held and produced by Thomas Ley (UNIBI) and Christian Christrup Kjeldsen (DPU) and is called “Making Capabilities work in empirical case studies - A crossnational perspective on the transition from school to work (Germany - Denmark)” (multimedia lecture). The NAPIER team produced the lecture: “The Capability Approach and Disadvantaged Young People in the Labour Market”. They are both available on the website.

***The workshop related papers/working papers*** emerge from the research findings and document the work of the workshops of WP 2, 3, 4 and 5. They ensure an in-depth information flow between the WPs and make the results available to the scientific community.

***Second Life*** provides a unique opportunity for dissemination of project results as well as for effective communication in the network. The infrastructure includes showrooms and an interactive area for presenting the public project deliverables. Second Life is used as a tool to widen the target audience, especially VET and higher education institutions, but also political organisations and parties. Second Life is used as a platform for education by many institutions, such as colleges, universities, libraries and government entities. Like the website it is presenting our project deliverables. All content generated in the course of the project is presented here.

***The updated project-related publications*** list summarizes all WorkAble related publications arisen from the project and gives a very good overview and hints for interested groups.

### ***Policy recommendations on the European level:***

A special emphasis was on policy dissemination on the European level. The research and policy recommendations are summed up in three policy briefs. The Consortium targeted all relevant levels including EU institutions, umbrella organisations, policymakers, networks of project promoters and the wider audience of neighbouring countries to maximise European impact.

Along with the preparation of the **final reports**, each WP produced **briefing papers** and recommendation reports for policy makers and social agents (Del. 3.4, 4.2., 5.3) oriented to reach the political arena and to make it possible for the results to have a real impact on the citizenry.

A **textbook** (Del. 6.7) on “Vulnerable young people in Europe and the issue of full citizenship”, written especially for practitioners and university students has been published

outlining the concept of capability acquisition and synthesizing the findings from WPs 3 to 5. The common language of the textbook is English to maximise the target audience.

The chapters of the textbook give (1) detailed insights in the conception, theoretical foundation and the empirical significance of the relevant and outlined dimensions. Thereby it becomes apparent that the suggested capability perspective of enabling young people to participate in working life and society has the potential of providing a fundament for more appropriate alternative strategies which are of high practical significance to educational and labor market policies in Europe. While the Capability Approach offers a rich, comprehensive and innovative way to analyze well-being, (2) its operationalisation is a demanding task, posing several conceptual, methodological and empirical challenges. The textbook also provides an overview of the current state of the art of the application of the Capability Approach in economically developed countries to labour market and education research. Methodological and empirical strategies are presented to highlight how the issues of suitably capturing and measuring young people's capabilities can be addressed. In doing so the textbook presents interesting perspectives and examples for those who wish to make use of the Capability Approach for future investigation.

### ***Short films:***

Policy and practice dissemination carried out innovative dissemination activities in order to reach wider target audiences and foster public understanding of science. For this purpose, nine short films have been produced on VET interventions analysed through the case studies. There is one short film about one innovative case study in each partner country (except Belgium). These films provide hands-on experience of innovative capability-enhancing projects and give practice examples situated in local contexts. To make the advanced conceptual approach of WorkAble accessible, a common introduction to the films has been produced.

The WorkAble-films show the specific directions and characteristics of nine exclusive educational and vocational programmes supporting young people on their way from school to work or to apprenticeship (from Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, Austria, Switzerland, France and Italy). The short films integrate several perspectives:

- Young Europeans on their (not always easy) ways from school to work or to apprenticeship,
- Experts from the educational and vocational sector fighting for the rights of young people,
- Policy makers and scientists who are interested in a future of justice and chances for the upcoming generation.

The film premiere has been at the final conference on 30th October. All 19 films are available now on our website, on youtube and as a DVD (9 short films in original language, 9 short films in English, one introduction film in English).

**The final conference** in Brussels acted as a bridge between the scientific, policy and practice spheres. It involved stakeholders on the European level, especially members of the DGs for Education and Culture as well as Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities to discuss project results. It has made a major impact on the scientific community through the elaborated methodological approach to skills acquisition; on policymakers through the attention to regional, local and national contexts; and to practitioners because of the applicability of the capabilities concept to real-life contexts while respecting professional ethical commitments and wider humanistic and social justice concerns. The title of the final conference was “Making Capabilities Work – New ways of tackling young Europeans’ transition from education to work” and took place on 30th October in Brussels (not only) to reach easily the involved European stakeholders.

During the conference the following issues were presented and discussed:

- the empirical field and the relevance of the WorkAble topics on the basis of statistical analyses
- the key theoretical framework and the benefit and innovative potential of using the Capability Approach in this field of research
- case study findings and their implications for institutional and political strategies including the belonging short film
- a kind of summary what all this could mean for future policies
- a final remark and summary of the coordinator.

Within all sessions and between, the heterogeneous audience had the chance for questions in detail and for an exchange of ideas with the WorkAble scientists.

Besides the people from different scientific disciplines, the audience consists of practitioners from the field of education and vocational training, policy makers from EU level, members of the European Commission (Education and Culture), people from the permanent representations of different member States, scientific officers from the European Commission (Social Sciences and Humanities), representatives from diverse networks in the field of education and Social Work, Assistant policy officers, the German National Agency for the Youth In Action programme, New Europe – Newspaper, and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education.

The whole *proceedings of the final conference* are published on the projects’ website including the conference programme, all spoken contributions as a summary in written form,

an overview of the contributors, the press release, an overview of the WorkAble consortium, a list of participants and pictures.

## **EU Policy Dissemination**

The European level plays an increasingly important role in inspiring and harmonising VET policies in the member states and was a primary target of the dissemination activities. Multiple dissemination tools were utilised to accomplish a flow of communication between social and political actors and networks and the partners involved and the diffusion of alternative proposals for fostering social Europe and participation in the field of education and training: Representatives of the project were present at several European policy maker conferences. For dissemination on the EU policy level, the BBJ Consult AG acted as a 'transmission belt' between academia and the fields relevant for skills acquisition: It both brought expertise on European relevancies and decision making structures into the project and helped to make the project outcomes suitable for policy makers on the EU level.

### ***Further dissemination activities:***

Academic dissemination mainly rests on written output and the presentation of the project findings at conferences, workshops etc. It targeted both experienced and early-stage researchers, the latter especially through the TiSSA meetings. To disseminate and discuss the research findings to young scientists, members of the consortium had been present at the annual international TiSSA conferences, providing their expertise at an established platform for PhD students from all over the world meeting regularly to exchange their experiences with their dissertation project. TiSSA is also a forum for academic seminars to gather actual knowledge about international policy and practice.

Given that the members of the consortium come from diverse disciplines (economics, educational science, sociology, political science), the project results have been and still will be disseminated at diverse national and international conferences in the fields of work, education, training and welfare. (a full list of dissemination activities is prepared)

***In summary***, the dissemination activities

- a) took place throughout most of the duration of the project,
- b) had a multilevel character (local, national and European level) and
- c) used a variety of forms of demonstration and dissemination (workshops, academic publications as well as those in national and local media, leaflets, briefing papers, workshops, the final conference, films, second life for institutions, records of presentations, project website, textbook etc.).

This ensured a maximum dispersion of the knowledge produced during the lifetime of the project and the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the process of determining the individually and collectively valued capabilities needed for European knowledge societies and economies.