

WORKING TITLE: Young adults/Youth in transition: Linking better lifelong learning with employment opportunities in Europe (YOULINK)

1. Scientific and/or technical quality, relevant to the topics addressed by the call

1.1 Concepts and objectives

The project “Young adults/Youth in transition: Linking better lifelong learning with employment opportunities in Europe” (YOULINK) is to explore the current state of adult education in selected European countries and compare these with international trends. Likewise, the project will uncover successful educational and/or training initiatives, focusing on both public and private initiatives and the links between them, aimed at improving learning outcomes, particularly for vulnerable young adults. In doing so we believe there is a need to look at migrants in particular in each of the partner countries as migrants are the most vulnerable in terms of access the labour market (migrants may also be both internal and external in each country). The results will be developed into a policy making model which can ultimately be transferred to other countries. This model will allow policymakers the opportunity to assess how particular measure will have different results based on the context.

The ‘wills’ and ‘shoulds’ of the updated call

The proposal must:

- a. look at adult education with a specific focus on **young adults** and **vulnerable groups**;
- b. consider the **complementarity between public policies and** dynamics of **private markets** in the EU;
- c. analyse **actors, dynamics, trends, mismatches** and **overlaps** in adult education;
- d. include a **historical perspective** on lifelong learning;
- e. identify **successful programmes** that demonstrate to improve learning outcomes, particularly those reaching out to young adults at risk of social exclusion;
- f. address their **transferability** to other contexts;
- g. address the learning potential and **innovation ability in workplaces**;
- h. help to set-up a **cooperation mechanism** between the various agencies doing research and collecting data at international and European level **for developing synergies** and avoiding overlaps;
- i. reflect on existing **taxonomies and indicators** and on their appropriateness to sustain European strategies;
- j. investigate the feasibility and possibly **develop an Intelligent Decision Support System** (policy making modelling) for simplifying the access to information and support policy making;

- k. develop a systematic **impact analysis** of adult and continuing education policies linking it to forecasts for demand of skills.

YOULINK will need to:

1. Identify successful programmes that are demonstrating to improve learning outcomes, particularly those focusing on young adults/youth at risk of social exclusion and other vulnerable groups and address their transferability to other countries/regions by:
 - a. Identifying learning outcomes, which foster employability (which types of learning approaches are most effective and generate more benefits for young adults/youth)
 - b. Mapping and reviewing successful learning programmes, including those implemented in non-formal and informal contexts. A need to look at the system for recognizing and certifying this type of learning (Note that in the formal education system the data is easier to collect as well as to record the qualifications achieved)
2. Address the learning potential and innovation ability in workplaces
 - a. Identify SMEs and other industry/private sectors that demonstrate innovative learning programs (we may also consider programmes that promote or develop entrepreneurship skills).
3. Investigate the feasibility and possibly develop an Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) (policy making modelling) for simplifying the access to information and support policy making;
 - a. Analyzing information needs
 - b. Identifying appropriate technical solutions with the use of ICT, Big Data, software tools, an interactive map, etc.

Other issues to consider

Some conclusions can be made from the analysis of the above concerning the specific benefits of adult learning. However, we need to recognize that in the formal education system the data is easier to collect as well as to record the qualifications achieved, most studies focus on formal learning. Less consideration is paid to non- and informal learning and little research exists on general and leisure related adult learning. Moreover, there is no empirical evidence on how and which types of learning approaches are most effective and generate more benefits for adults. This will be a challenge for the project overall.

Background

The effects of the global economic crisis have left few countries unscathed and the impact on youth has been felt worldwide, with respect to their livelihood and educational opportunities, health, and (un)employment status (ILO, 2014). For instance, recent EU figures show that youth unemployment was 24% in January 2013, which is more than double that of the adult rate (Eurostat, 2013). Thus, a

total of 7.5 million young Europeans (aged 15-24) are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) of any kind, these youth are often referred to as the NEETs. Not only are the youth unemployment figures in Europe alarming, but the global youth unemployment rate is also causing concern and has long exceeded that of other age groups. The global youth unemployment figures saw the largest annual increase on record in 2009; at its peak, 75.8 million young people were unemployed (United Nations, 2011a). In 2010, the global youth unemployment rate was 13%, dramatically overshadowing the global adult unemployment rate of 5 per cent (United Nations, 2011b). Ultimately, youth unemployment poses serious challenges with long-term implications for both young people and the societies in which they live, the outcome can be political and economic instability and also “scarring” effects such as the deterioration of skills and lack of work experience. Further, we are reminded that during this youth period fundamental decisions are made relating to

...transitions out of school, into work, into sexual relations, into marriage, into parenting and, generally, into assuming adult roles in communities in which individuals will spend their early adult years. Although these transitions onto various trajectories are not immutable...[they considerably affect the possibilities and opportunities] over the rest of people’s lives and, indeed, the context in which their children are born and raised (Lloyd, Behram, Stromquist & Cohen, 2005, p. 1).

Posing an added challenge to the current state of global affairs is the high percentage of youth residing in the Global South, with figures estimating that 1.2 billion youth worldwide aged 15-24 (87%) now live in low and middle-income countries (World Economic Forum, 2013). Accordingly, between 2010 and 2015 the number of youth living in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is expected to increase by 19.4 million, which translates to an increase in the region from 14 to 15 per cent (ILO, 2010). Thus, many low and middle income countries are experiencing a ‘youth bulge’. In Africa (both sub-Saharan and North Africa), about 40% of the population is under the age of 15 and nearly 70 percent is under 30 years of age (United Nations, 2011b). This youth bulge has the potential to become either a dividend or dilemma; a dividend can be either demographic or economic while a dilemma can be in terms of political unrest such as those in Tunisia, Egypt, but also in France and Sweden. Furthermore, many of the youth from the Global South are also among those migrating to the EU it is important to consider these youth in the overall project.

Balancing the consortium partners

1. It appears beneficial to involve a diverse profile of actors beyond the academia in the team in terms of organization type, gender, geography, size etc. as active, sleeping, dialog and advisory partners. These can be:

- private industries and SME (small and medium enterprises) include for the purposes of IDSS1 design or as cases of good practice (e.g. Choice Hotels with “the first job for asylum

¹ Intelligent Decision Information System (IDIS) or Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) is a decision support system that makes extensive use of artificial intelligence techniques and can be, for example, communication-, document-, knowledge- or data-driven in nature). Ideally, an intelligent decision support

seekers" program, Norway); NOTE! What other private and SME partners would be possible to have in the consortium countries? Do we have an EU actor that might work, ie. Manpower, Adecco or other staffing enterprise?

- Training companies;
- NGOs;
- INGOs (e.g. European Youth Forum, Nordic Youth Council)
- companies whose job is getting people in the jobs (e.g. Youth Coordinators Project at NAV, Norway) and their contractors; employers' associations (e.g. NHO: Confederation of Norwegian enterprises)

2. It is important to find partners to test the IDSS/IDIS model and further use it (effectively enabling the transition from research to innovation)

- Can consortium partners suggest potential partners and places where the IDSS can be tested and further used?

3. Intelligent Decision Information System (IDIS or IDSS)

- What does the IDSSs look like?
- Whose needs will such a IDSS fulfill? (i.e. who are potential beneficiaries/users: policy-makers, case offices etc.)
- What big data in adult education is out there? (e.g. [PIAAC](#), [Eurostat](#), demographic data on job markets, employment, adults in training etc. in EU and around the globe)
- What data in adult education can be the basis for IDSS?

4. Miscellaneous emerging themes/questions

- How is education using workplaces in the educational process? What are the educational ways of including companies (workplace pedagogy)?
- Internships and apprenticeship programs: How can vulnerable youth be included more effectively? What groups fall out of such programs and why? How does the policy of paid internship influence the first-job trajectories of youth at risk?

The proposal will need to include countries' context sections. Each partner will need to write this part and send it to the team will put these into the overall proposal. We will need to define/decide what should be included here so the proposal and these sections fit well together. We need to identify a team of 2-4 persons that will be responsible for collecting the parts from the partners and this team will work to put the entire proposal together into one final document. The team members will have to meet and work together very intensely from early March until the May deadline.

Possible Work Packages

WP1: Review of the situation in adult education in the EU (and internationally?) and a historical perspective on lifelong learning.

WP2: Data mining 1) successful cases of learning/improved learning outcomes, 2) complementarity of public and private inputs in education

WP3: Innovation in adult education

WP 4: Development of the IDSS

WP 5: Dissemination and impact

WP6: Management (can also be listed as WP1).

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