

Systematic Review. Troubled Families

Dr. Ioan Durnescu

The document describes the evidence available on what works and what doesn't in working with Troubled Families. Four vulnerable sub-groups are in focus: Offenders' Families, Multi-Generational/Long Term Unemployment, Anti-Social Behaviour and Educational Problems.

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Active Inclusion Learning Network

Troubled families

Systematic review

A. Context

This systematic review is a part of a wide project dedicated to the active inclusion of vulnerable groups. The project is implemented by the Active Inclusion Learning Network which is an European Social Fund transnational network involving countries such as: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The management of the network is ensured by the National Offender Management Service (UK). The aim of the Active Inclusion Learning Network is to support individuals in vulnerable groups, including Troubled Families, Disaffected Youth, and those who are Marginalised in Community to re-engage with the labour market.

The purpose of this systematic review is to inform and support the selection of best practices across Europe in the field of employability and employment of vulnerable groups. In practical terms, this review will provide 'hard' evidence on what works in this area, thus guiding the selection and analysis of the best practices. In the process of selecting and analysing the best practices, the network also uses a pan-European survey, interviews (using appreciative inquiry approach) and peer review platforms.

As detailed by the project partners, the particular vulnerable groups that are in the focus of this systematic review are:

1. Disaffected Youth:

- Disaffected youth inclusion and empowerment
- Disaffected youth employment, education and training

2. Marginalised in community

- Homelessness
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Offenders / Ex-offenders
- Mental health, physical and learning disabilities

3. Troubled families

- **Offender's families**
- **Multigenerational unemployment/Long term unemployment**
- **Anti-social behaviour**
- **Educational problems**

This systematic review was conducted by the research partner – European Strategies Consulting – a Romanian research company - in consultation with the other partners involved in the Network. The present document will detail only the review conducted on the Troubled Families.

B. Inclusion & Exclusion criteria

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

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

Reports based on evaluations conducted by the project/program staff were only taken into consideration when independent evaluations were not available for that particular group of vulnerable people.

Two large electronic databases were investigated – SAGE and Taylor and Francis – using different combinations between keywords like: 'employment', 'offender's family', 'anti-social behaviour', 'vulnerable groups', 'educational problems', 'troubled families' and 'after 2009'. At the end of this exercise 31 studies were identified as corresponding to the inclusion criteria.

Apart from the papers identified in the electronic databases, members of the learning networks suggested also websites and reports that were also included in this review. For more details about the review procedure, please see Annex 1.

Since this review is still work in progress, we would welcome any suggestions and literature on the topics discussed here. At the end of the each section a note has been included to inform the readers to what extent more literature is needed.

C. Troubled families

Policy context

Recognising the current economic downturn and its consequences on children and women, in particular, the European Commission adopted in February 2013 the Recommendation 'Investing in Children-breaking the cycle of disadvantage'¹. Among others, the Recommendation provides guidance to EU countries on how to tackle child poverty and social exclusion through actions such as: quality childcare, family support and benefits etc. One of the first principles mentioned in these documents is 'access to adequate resources – support parents' participation in the labour market' (Recital 2.1). Indeed, research shows that preventive measures that target families as a whole are effective in protecting children and families.

As a response to the civil unrest in the summer of 2011, the UK Government took a step forward and launched, in 2011, the Troubled Families programme. This puts together expertise and resources from a significant number of government departments and local authorities. Based on their own website², Troubled Families are defined as those that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector.

I. Offenders' family

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

Other studies demonstrate how offending can impact on family life. This is most obvious in sex offending cases where the sex offenders are met with a lot of employment barriers and face severe subsequent financial hardship.

¹ Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/c_2013_778_en.pdf

² Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-troubled-families-turn-their-lives-around>

Moreover, family members living with ex-sex offenders are more likely to experience threats, harassment, stigmatisation and differential treatment by neighbours, teachers or other relevant ones (Levenson and Tewksbury, 2009). In sex-offending cases, it seems that the most effective method of intervention is multisystemic therapy as opposed to individual therapy. Borduin et al. (1990), for example, followed sixteen adolescent sexual offenders randomly assigned to either multisystemic therapy or individual therapy. They concluded that multisystemic therapy is more effective than the individual one due to its emphasis on changing behaviour within the offender's natural environment.

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

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

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

months from the programme exit. Qualitative research also supports this conclusion (Nixon et al., 2008).

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

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

Although it is severely affected by adverse consequences of offending, the offender's family is not yet fully analysed in the literature as a natural system that needs intervention in order to develop or grow. The research accent is still placed on the family as instrumental in reducing re-offending. There was no single empirical study identified in Europe on employability or employment of offender's family. However, as the Natcen research (2012) shows, supporting the functioning of the families generates important improvements in the employment area.

Need of assistance to gather literature - High

II. Multigenerational unemployment

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

In this context, the concept of 'intergenerational unemployment' seems to be a rather political British notion than an empirical one. Therefore, it can be usefully replaced with a broader concept with a more solid empirical support – the **long term unemployed**. The definition of this concept depends largely on the geographical or legislative frameworks. Different states define long-term unemployment differently. For instance OECD and the European Union (EU) define long-term unemployment as referring to people who have been

unemployed for 12 months or more³. The same concept is defined in the US as including those who have been unemployed more than 27 weeks⁴. For the purpose of this paper we will use the EU definition of the concept.

In June 2013, OECD released the report '*Tackling Long-Term Unemployment Amongst Vulnerable Groups*' where a set of useful recommendations was produced. These recommendations were based on an online survey among Public Employment Service in Europe and outside Europe and a collection of good practices or learning models. Most of the recommendations focused on the approach or the context:

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

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

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

³ Definition available at: <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/factbook-2013-en/07/02/02/index.html?contentType=&itemId=/content/chapter/factbook-2013-58-en&containerItemId=/content/serial/18147364&accessItemIds=&mimeType=text/html>

⁴ Definition available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureau_of_Labor_Statistics

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

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

Need of assistance to gather literature – Moderate

III. Anti-social behaviour

Policy context

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

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

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

1. a strong and active engagement of all stakeholders seem to be essential,
2. the location of the project has to be familiar to the participants,
3. evaluation has to be based on clear and concrete expected outcomes.

The lack of good quality data about reoffending or other hard results, like employment, prevented the author to advance strong conclusions. However, judging from the participant's satisfaction point of view and also from the level of participation among young people, these projects were considered at least partly successful.

Need of assistance to gather literature - High

IV. Educational problems

Social and policy context

Education and training has become crucial in a changing world where the nature of employment was transformed in an important number of European countries.

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

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

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

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

Good short- to medium-term results are obtained under certain conditions and with some beneficiaries by **short term skills training programs**. Career Workforce Skills Training (CWST) was such a program in the US based on a partnership between four community colleges and the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation Services in Oregon. The program was conceived to provide a postsecondary training option that would result in improved employment outcomes for vocational rehabilitation consumers. The program was set up also to support and meet the needs of the individuals with disabilities. Flannery et al. (2011) evaluated the program using a longitudinal follow-up and concluded that certain student and program factors were associated with positive employment outcomes. Female, older participants and those receiving financial help were more likely to complete a certificate, be

employed at exit and maintain employment for at least 90 days. On the contrary, individuals with psychiatric disabilities and other skill barriers were less likely to obtain positive outcomes.

The issues of readiness and employability were also tackled in the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme in the UK. The programme targeted those who are not in education, employment and training (**NEET**). E2E can be defined as a market-led programme that offers work related learning opportunities for young people considered not ready to enter employment, an apprenticeship or other forms of further education and training. Entry to Employment was a publicly funded programme and it was delivered by a range of public, private or voluntary sector organization. E2E was, therefore, a programme aiming at improving the 'employability' of young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming so. The study of Russell et al. (2011) is based on a the lived experience of E2E learners drawing on data from an ethnographic research of E2E programme conducted during 2008-2009 in two neighbouring local authorities in northern England. The study was conducted in four case study sites with all three forms of organisation included (public, private and voluntary). The ethnography involved 87 hours of observations and 58 tape-recorded and transcribed interviews with learners, managers, tutors and so on. The learning comprises three core areas: personal and social development, basic skills development and vocational development. Each of these stages corresponds with the level of development of the learners. In terms of the employability, the great majority of the learners reported benefits such as acquiring vocational qualification, increased confidence and improved basic skills. However, as the authors observe, these benefits must be qualified in two ways. Firstly, for most learners E2E directly enhance employability in a limited way, largely for routine and semi-routine work requiring few or no qualification. Due to the learners disrupted school career, the road towards 'knowledge-based' employment would be long and fragile. Secondly, learners entering directly the job market would face intense competition from the adult workers and also from other young people with higher levels of education and personal capital. Therefore the ability of E2E to deliver employment, rather than employability, was severely constrained. In the concluding section, the authors call for a reconciliation between accessible learning with opportunities for progression to employment or mainstream education. Furthermore, the relationship between low-level vocational education and other areas of the educational system needs to be carefully considered.

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

- 'Policy measures have to be diversified, tackling different issues along the pathway to employment and paying attention to vulnerable groups that are more likely to cumulate multiple disadvantages.'

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

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

Since the education deficit is mainly a subject affecting youth, it is useful to analyse it in dialog with Disaffected Youth working group.

Need of assistance to gather literature – Moderate

D. Discussion and conclusions

As outlined above, evidence on what works and what doesn't work is generated by a large variety of studies. Some of them are based on surveys; some others are based on longitudinal follow-up or social experiments and so on. Depending on their design, their 'scientific power' is different. Therefore, their results and conclusions should be interpreted differently depending on the methodological quality employed. There are many scales and templates that can be used to assess the quality of a research study. One of them is the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale based on the work of Cook and Campbell (1979). According to this scale, there are five levels of quality:

- Level 1 – correlation between an intervention and an outcome is measured at one point in time (there are many threats to internal validity and fails to establish a causal order)
- Level 2 – pre and post-test with no comparable control condition (establish a causal relationship but there are too many threats to the internal validity)
- Level 3 – pre and post-test in experimental and comparable control conditions (rules out many threats to the internal validity)
- Level 4 – pre and post-test in multiple experimental and control units, controlling for other variables that influences the outcome
- Level 5 – random assignment of program and control conditions to units (the highest internal validity but with implementation problems).

According to Cook and Campbell (1979) only Level 3 and upwards are considered interpretable designs that is adequate for drawing conclusions about what works and what does not work.

Without exaggerating the importance of this scale, we can not prevent us from observing that most of the studies included in this review are non-scalable or can be allocated to Level 1 or 2 on the scientific quality scale. Based on this observation, we can conclude that a lot of interventions described in this review are not based on very solid scientific bases. It is not the time or the place to discuss the reasons behind this reality, however, it does become obvious that the European Commission can do more to support the 'the culture of a real evaluation'. Although there is a formal expectation that EU projects are to be evaluated there are no specific standards that should be followed to ensure an adequate quality of that evaluation: most of the project evaluations are conducted 'in-house' with no external input; the evaluation is expected to be finalized at the end of the programme/project and that does not allow for any impact analysis etc. One way to progress in this area would be to set up solid standards for evaluation and contract independent evaluation before, during and after the programme/project end.

This solution would be appropriate also for another methodological deficit identified in this review. It seems that too many policies, programs and initiatives lack clear and measurable success indicators. The immediate consequence of this structural deficit is that researchers found them difficult to

evaluate especially in terms of their impact. In general, stakeholders and beneficiaries reported positive outcomes and high level of satisfaction but in many cases it is hard to quantify this in terms of the impact on employment.

The little evidence available so far demonstrates an important potential of transfer between target groups and interventions. In many cases, the interventions considered effective in targeting different social problems or individual social groups may be effective as well in working in other problem areas or with other groups. A good example is the family or the systemic intervention. While it was known that family intervention was effective in targeting anti-social behaviour, it seems that it can be also used successfully in improving employment, preventing school drop-out and so on (National Centre for Social Research, 2012).

Some general principles can be distilled for an effective programme aiming to support employability of employment among vulnerable groups. One of the most important principles in this respect is the use of **the sequential approach**. In most cases, the literature emphasises the importance of working first on preparing the individuals for the job market and only in the second stage to move them into employment. The preparation covers usually issues like: motivation, self-confidence, literacy, accommodation, health or drug treatment etc. Moving people from unemployment to employment takes place only when people are ready to face the challenges.

Once people from the vulnerable groups move into employment the interventions should not stop. Help and support in maintaining employment including financial assistance seems to be equally important as getting in employment. This **principle of continuation of care** seems to be important in particular for ex-offenders, disabled and mental health individuals. Another constant finding in the literature is the **principle of personalised service**. This principle seems relevant in particular for people with multiple needs and allows for **flexibility** and adaptation according to the needs of the person or the moment of intervention. Linked to the personalised service principle, the principle of the **holistic approach** was mentioned several times in the literature. Coordination between different services can be ensured through the so-called 'one stop shop' services (see also NAV in Norway, as an example for the macro level). However, literature calls also for more attention to the social structures and social mentalities that can discriminate people from the vulnerable groups. Interventions should challenge also **structural or spatial obstacles** such as: criminal record systems, access systems in institutions, the way different tools are handled etc. In this respect, initiatives such as the Rights Commissioners in Ireland (Hann and Teague, 2012) seem to be very welcome to develop a model of economic citizenship that has a strong dimension of enforcement of the employment rights.

Another principle that is frequently mentioned in relation to many vulnerable groups is the **demand-driven approach**. According to this principle, education, training, vocational training and other forms of developing employment skills should focus on the labour market demands. Literature on ex-offenders employment demonstrated that sometimes training can be

counter-productive and disappointing if not oriented towards the labour market demands.

In terms of financing the initiatives in the employment of vulnerable groups most of the literature emphasises the importance of a **large partnership** between state funds and other sources such as: local municipalities, employers, ESF and so on. Different ways of financing, including 'wacky finances', were tested and some of them look promising. In order for these initiatives to be implemented effectively, they require **competent and enthusiastic staff** and also **strong leadership**.

Apart from these rather general principles, literature describes also specialised principles that seem to be important for different vulnerable groups. For instance, it seems that in working with vulnerable groups that have some stigma attached, **involving employers** in designing and implementing interventions can enhance the success chances.

Another important learning point derived from this systematic review is that different interventions work only with different vulnerable groups. To give only one example, the welfare-to-work approach seems to be more effective for long-term welfare recipients but has not positive impact on immigrants and single mothers.

More **solid studies** are needed in Europe to evaluate the impact of different employment initiatives with offender's families, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse and disaffected youth.

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Annex 1

Keywords, databases and websites

Databases	Keywords	Results (hits)	Included
Google Academic	'employment' + 'vulnerable groups'+ after 2009	32 100	10 (most of them from outside Europe)
SAGE	'employment' + 'vulnerable groups'+ after 2009	390	6
	'employment' + 'troubled families' + after 2009	15	2
	'employment' + 'offender's family' = after 2009	0	0
	'employment' + 'long term unemployed' + after 2009	207	4
	'employment' + 'long term unemployment' + after 2009	236	4
	'employment' + 'anti-social behavior' + after 2009	557	0 (no connection to employment)
	'employment' + 'educational problems' + after 2009	66	1
Taylor and Francis	'employment' + 'vulnerable groups'+ after 2009	381	7
	'employment' + 'troubled families' + after 2009	1064	0 (no connection to employment)
	'employment' + 'offender's family' = after 2009	140	0 (almost all look at how the family can support the offender in getting employment or desist)
	'employment' + 'long term unemployed' + after 2009	4927	4 (most of the papers are from outside Europe)
	'employment' + 'anti-social behavior' + after 2009	3812	1
	'employment' +	15737	2

	'educational problems' + after 2009		
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WEBSITES:

EUROPE 2020

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm

FAMILIES

http://europa.eu/epic/index_en.htm

EUROFOUND

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/index.htm>

OECD

<http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/>

YOUTH

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth_strategy/index_en.htm

WOMEN

EIGE <http://eige.europa.eu/>

TROUBLED FAMILIES

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243718/evidence-reduce-reoffending.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254451/Intermediate-outcomes-of-family-and-intimate-relationship-interventions.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prisoners-childhood-and-family-backgrounds>

<http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/cacs/projects/coping/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-troubled-families-turn-their-lives-around>