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How to avoid cooling out? Experiences of young people in their transitions to work across Europe

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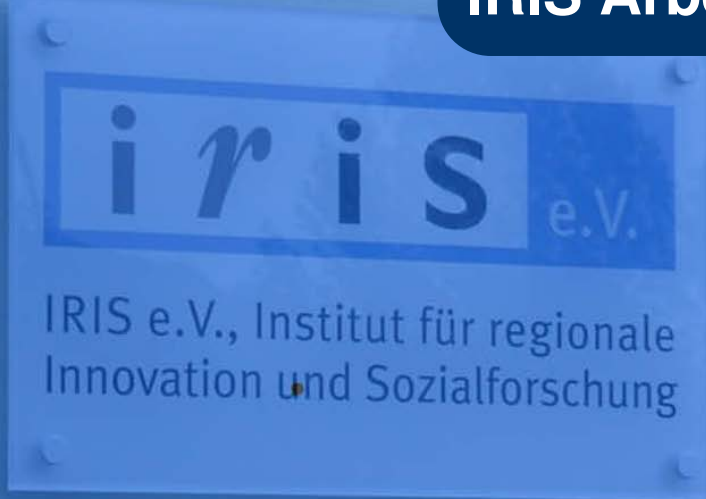
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How to Avoid Cooling Out?

Experiences of young people in their transitions to work across Europe



Research Project YOYO

“Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of Participation and Informal Learning for the Transition of Young People to the Labour Market. A Comparison in Ten European Regions”
funded under Key Action “Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base”

Co-ordinated by IRIS Tübingen

Working Paper 2

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1 Introduction¹

Research into youth transitions highlights the increasingly individualised and fragmented character of transitions in which unequal resources and segmented opportunities are reproduced through individual decisions rather than through milieu-specific, collective patterns. Individual learning becomes an ever more important human activity in knowledge-based European societies. Self-regulated learning, context-bound learning, lifelong learning, informal learning, personally or with peers, and non-formal learning are discussed as leading concepts in education and training, as well as formative forces in the lives of young people (European Commission, 2001; Du Bois-Reymond, 2002). In this research we investigate the active engagement of young women and men in shaping their transitions from school to work. How do they navigate through increasingly flexible and risk-laden transition systems? What strategies do they apply to develop and maintain learning motivation – or to cope with demotivation? The research is conducted within the EU's Fifth Framework Programme “Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base” and involves research teams from Denmark, East and West Germany, Great Britain (Northern Ireland), Ireland (Republic), Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Spain. Under the title “Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of Participation and Informal Learning for Young People's Transitions to the Labour Market” it investigates how young people will use programmes and training measures which define active participation and the involvement of participants as essential, for their approach towards young people. The research aims to collect and analyse *good examples* of programmes and training measures throughout Europe, which might be used in policies addressing young people's transitions to the labour market in the foreseeable future (see also final report of the project ‘Misleading trajectories’: Walther et al., 2002).

In this research, our basic assumption is that active participation is a precondition and prerequisite for successful learning in both formal and non-formal contexts. It allows for making inspired choices and influences both the methods and the environments where young people learn and work. An increase in active engagement would therefore be considered as an effective weapon in the fight against dropping out of educational and training systems, which ultimately can result in young people becoming socially excluded and marginalised. We expected that the fewer resources and opportunities young people have, the lower their objective and subjective control over their lives and the lower their motivation to actively use education and training or counselling will be. We assumed that most young people have a

¹ Special thanks go to Amanda Hayes (University of Ulster) for a final proof reading.

positive inclination towards education, work and their career as long as they can choose subjects and professions/jobs that suit their interests and fit their life concepts and contexts. Furthermore, we assumed that young people who drop out of education and training otherwise referred to as ‘Status Zer0’ (neither in education, training or job nor registered unemployed) try to protect their fragile identities against being ‘cooled out’ (Goffman, 1963) when being forced to accept jobs or schemes below their aspirations and being classified as “deficient beings” (cf. Williamson, 1997). However, the assumption is also that – for example, in contrast to the ‘soft’ policies as employed in youth work – active participation is not an integral part of education, training or work-related schemes, the ‘hard’ sector of policies addressing youth transitions². Here, participation is rather referred to as the objective of policies in term of ‘participation in education or training’ and subsequently ‘participation in the labour market’. Therefore our choice of ‘best practice’ examples and subsequently our interview sample is “biased” in favour of policies where we can find both, support for young people’s transitions to the labour market *and* active participation.

This report is concerned with the experiences young people make during their transitions from school to work. It is based upon the findings of exploratory interviews with about 280 young men and women (in the aforementioned nine European countries/regions) on their aspirations and expectations towards learning and working; on their experiences with institutional agencies of the respective transition systems; the support they received of their families and counsellors; and the plans they developed (or failed to develop) about their future career. The purpose of the interviews was to gain knowledge about the processes of motivation and de-motivation young people experience during their transitions. For the exploratory interviews we decided to compare two groups of young people with regard to their transition experiences, the ‘*disengaged*’ and those termed as ‘*trend-setters*’:

By “*disengaged*” we refer to young people who have disengaged (or are in the process of disengagement) from the formal transition system. They are de-motivated because the mainstream education and training system does not provide them with a realistic perspective in their transitions to the labour market. Some of them withdraw from the education and training system because they object to being labelled as disadvantaged by teachers and trainers and society at large. These young people were approached via the selected case agencies. They are the prospective participants of the programmes and measures of the chosen

² For in-depth discussion of these terms see the state-of-the-art report on “Youth Policy and Participation”,

agencies. We were interested in their experiences immediately before entering the agency in order to be able to make a comparison at a later stage with their experiences after having participated for several months in the project.

By “*trend-setters*” we refer to young people who have been successful in a broad and personally defined sense by following individual pathways, based at least partly on informal resources (informal learning, informal support networks, informal work experiences). Such young people are often referred to as the new entrepreneurs, the ‘independents’ (Leadbeater & Oakley, 1999) and stand for the ‘winners’ of the post-fordist flexibilisation of labour markets and individualisation of life courses. Others call them “biographical designers” (Alheit, 1996). The term ‘trend-setter’ was chosen to signify new solutions in the course of transitions. These young people do not set trends that will be followed by the majority of their contemporaries, but they do carve out new patterns which redefine concepts of learning, working and dealing with risks and uncertainties. ‘Minorities can be avant-garde, and new majorities need not necessarily lead to changes in the meaning of reflexive modernisation’ (own translation - see Beck et al., 2001: 53). We identified the trend-setters by the snowball method: looking for young people with exceptional careers and trying to find them in as many different places within society as possible, in the ICT sector as well as in ‘art’ and youth cultural scenes, among young entrepreneurs and in all kinds of alternative milieus. Of course, this distinction has been typically ideal – especially if biographic processes are taken into consideration. On the one hand the resources, biographical skills, engagement and success (defined personally) has to be considered, on the other hand approaching ‘disengaged’ young people via projects identified as participatory meant that they either already had engaged in entering the project by themselves or had experienced empowering support towards engaged transition behaviour, i.e. occupational choice, education or training, getting work experience. In Appendix 1 we give an overview of the two groups of young people.

The research we conducted in the respective European countries/regions is not comparative in a strict sense. Rather the aim was to choose agencies according to our start criterion of ‘good examples’. That means that the national research teams looked for those agencies they regarded as a ‘good-fit’ with that criterion. It showed that countries differ widely in their offers of participatory agencies/projects. The chosen cases are located in different policy sectors, varying from the ‘soft’ sector in youth work to regular training schemes in the ‘hard’ sector. But in all cases examples were chosen that divert one way or the other from

mainstream national transition systems and which allow for a larger scope for active participation. This means that all information collected refers to exceptional situations rather than to the institutional mainstream of national transition systems. The comparative or intercultural value of the research rather points to other dimensions. First, although being exceptional, the case agencies relate in particular ways to their local and national contexts. These contexts stand for different ‘normalities’ regarding transitions to work but also for different meanings of participation. Second, the diversity of 28 different cases serves for getting a broad array of knowledge about the relation between participation and motivation (see Appendix 2). Learning from good examples however implies knowledge of contexts. Which are favourable factors for success in which context? Is there a potential functional equivalent for such factors in another context? Third, we will show that the experiences of the young people we interviewed refer also to the wider context of local communities and labour markets and national transition systems. Due to the absence of comparable sampling of cases the experiences of the young people cannot be compared systematically. Instead we shall highlight the individual experiences in relation to the respective institutional, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

The report is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a ramification of the concepts “disengaged” and “trend-setters”. Section 3 presents a model of motivating/motivated versus de-motivating/de-motivated biographic constellations, drawing from a first analysis of our empirical research and a more in-depth analysis of the concepts disengaged and trend-setters. In Section 4, we look at the turning points in the biographies of young people in order to understand the processes and outcomes of choices on an individual level and the dynamics that shape these processes over time. In section 5, conclusions will be drawn for both further research in the framework of the “Youth Policy and Participation” project and for European policies addressing young people’s transitions to work.

2 Trend-setters versus disengaged. A heuristic approach

At the beginning of our research, we used the concepts of “disengaged” and “trend-setters”, to distinguish different patterns of young people’s transitions rather than empirically clearly defined categories. The heuristic value of the distinction lies in its suggestion that it would enable us to obtain knowledge about links between structural categories - such as gender, class and ethnicity - and individual processes of motivation (Du Bois-Reymond, 2000). Against the backdrop of individualized transitions and their partly hidden demands of young

people (Walther et al., 2002), this kind of information is of considerable importance to transition policies addressing disengaged/disadvantaged youth. This approach links individual agency and experiences of young people to different starting positions as – at least partly – the result of social structures, without making the mistake of defining the first through the latter or vice versa (see Giddens 1984). We assume that *both* groups share the attitude of protecting their subjective aspirations from being forced into standardised institutional schemes, but as regards the social starting positions, we expect “trend-setters” to benefit from better resources and opportunities than the “disengaged”; they can afford to divert from institutional routes and support systems or are able to use them for their own purposes and on their own terms, while the latter are much more shaped by forces and conditions which lie outside their influence (that is precisely what the selected cases are meant to change by providing these young people with opportunities to experience what participation can mean for them).

In discourses of lifelong learning, the ‘trend’ to which we refer in the term ‘trend-setter’ has been theorized as ‘biographisation’ of life course and social integration (Alheit, 1996; Böhnisch, 1997). The ability of a person to reflect on his or her strengths and weaknesses and to relate them to subjective interests and needs, implies that individuals become the “planning agency” of their lives (Beck, 1992). Concepts of learning in education and training increasingly assume that the opportunities and capacities of individuals to shape their own learning biographies is of paramount relevance for the integration of late modern societies (Young, 1998; Walther & Stauber, 1998). In our research we ask what transition policies can learn from so-called trend-setter biographies. It is noteworthy that there are only a few empirical studies undertaken on this section of young people, and the perspective of looking into unconventional and successful transitions with a biographical and social policy-related framework is neglected by research. But it is our strong conviction that in order to understand the dynamics of ‘modernized modernity’ (Beck & Bonß, 2001) the notions of disadvantage and social exclusion must be discussed *in relation* to their opposites. For example, our material shows that both groups criticise the educational system. But the disadvantaged do so only in negative terms while the ‘trend-setters’ spell out their criticism in terms of emphasizing their own learning strategies and working out alternative learning projects (see below).

Despite the heuristic value of the terms ‘trend-setters’ and ‘disengaged’, using them in empirical research bears some risks. In identifying and selecting young people, the terms tend

to become ascriptions and may even be in fact misleading. We therefore felt the need to constantly move back and forth between the terms of trend-setters and disengaged; on a conceptual level, as well as on the level of the empirical evidence, as we gained knowledge through the interviews with both groups. In doing so we learned to saturate the concepts of 'trend-setter' and 'disengaged' theoretically as well as empirically (for the concept of saturation see Strauss & Corbin, 1998). During this process, we began to distance ourselves from the terms of 'disengaged' and 'trend-setter' and replace them through distinct biographical traits and constellations. In other words, we recognized that there are no two neatly distinguished groups belonging to either trend-setter or disengaged but that it is rather a continuum we are dealing with, with many forms in between. We thereby opened the possibility of 'mixed biographies', exposing traits and conditions of trend-setter as well as disengaged. In refining the perspective we applied to the two terms we took into account three different levels of the research process: the biographical contextualization, the impact of the research methodology on the findings, and the fluidity in the way we use the heuristic concepts.

Contextualization: beyond taking into account the national and cultural heterogeneity of the sample, contextualization with regard to "trend-setting" or "disengaged" youth has to be understood at a more fundamental level: they are located in different social, cultural, and economic contexts, in different contexts of gendered expectations, in different migration contexts respectively in a normalizing dominant culture (Rommelspacher, 1992), in varying family contexts etc.. According to all these different contexts, "trend-setting" could mean very different subjective strategies: for some young people it may mean to rigorously follow their educational and vocational routes, for others it may mean to leave their careers, even for an uncertain future. The same applies to "being disengaged". The fluency of these categories is underlined further when we look at individual transition biographies, where 'being disengaged' could change into trend-setting, and vice versa.

The impact of research decisions, research access and interview methods: There were other - methodological - difficulties to be dealt with: some of the young people we labelled as 'disengaged' had already entered the project or measure before the interviews started and therefore had already undergone some positive experiences which motivated them in a new way. To some extent this development blurred the sharp distinction between the two categories of trend-setters and disengaged. We tried to compensate for this methodological

flaw by paying particular attention to the learning and working experiences these young people made before they entered the project. Furthermore, we cannot exclude the possibility that some of the disengaged might become a trend-setter later on in his or her life, if he or she manages to break the vicious circle of disadvantage and de-motivation. In fact, some national research teams defined certain young people as trend-setters, as they had entered the chosen case study projects with the clear goal of attaining qualifications which would enable them to realize new career patterns. In these cases their social-cultural background was close to the disengaged. The key differences centre around attitudinal areas, most commonly represented in opinions on potential employment chances and subsequent lifestyle outcomes. For the disengaged young people, life and employment options and choices seem much more limited. But, they may re-gain motivation by entering the participatory projects. We will take up this question in section 4.

A trajectory which diverts from average transitions becomes only visible after some years of experimenting with alternative solutions. Therefore it might be said that we worked with two trend-setter groups; one contacted through the case study agencies consisting of former participants, and the other contacted independently through the snowball method. In the latter case the trend-setter interviewees were a couple of years older than the rest, simply because it takes time until trend-setter-biographies emerge as such.

Another factor concerns the interview-methodology: we conducted individual as well as focus group interviews. Both approaches have their advantages and drawbacks in getting information on issues of learning motivation, ideas about work, and success and failure in life and plans for the future. It turned out that the respective national research teams handled this question differently because of the different conditions they found in the field. Some national teams conducted more focus group interviews with disengaged young people and more single interviews with trend-setters while others applied both methods to both groups. While individual interviews provide richer material concerning biographical turning points, focus group interviews are strong in the area of collective group norms and experiences (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999). Where necessary, additional single interviews were conducted.

Fluidity of concepts: Trend-setters might describe themselves as having been disengaged at a former stage in their life. Within both groups of young people, 'trend-setters' as well as 'disengaged', there is a large degree of heterogeneity, which tends to blur the differences between the two. It shows that young people labelled as de-motivated or disengaged do not meet these labels per se or entirely, but that they have disengaged with institutions they came

across during their transition period. This fluidity indicates the dynamic character of the concept ‘dis-engaged’ and ‘trend-setters’: if young people manage to break the vicious circle of disadvantage and de-motivation or if they receive appropriate support their situation can change into what we originally considered to be a trend-setting situation. This leads to the question of biographic turning points (see below, 4.): when and why do young people start to do something different and re-evaluate previous experiences, including bad ones interpreting them now as important learning experiences? What are the biographical constellations which enable young people to develop “strong, effective, and above all fluid individualized systems of social capital” (Raffo & Reeves, 2000: 154)? Who is able or unable to learn the often hidden rules of an individualized society without compromising too much? What kind of contextualised informal learning is necessary to maintain one’s aspirations (Mørch, 1999; Wenger, 1999)? And how and why are certain forms of learning more successful than others? Engagement alone is not enough: within an ethnically structured society, cultural identification with, and activities in a minority group, could even become an obstacle to success in mainstream society.

The interplay between structure and agency can be further explained by drawing on psychological motivation theory (e.g. Heckhausen, 1990; Holzkamp, 1993). Motivated agency towards a certain goal results from the incentive this goal represents for the actor, and from the anticipated probability to achieve it through individual action. On the dimension of incentive we find there are young people who are clear about their priorities and conscious of the subjective relevance or meaning of a certain goal and there are others who do not know what they want. On the dimension of anticipated chances and risks, we find those who can rely on the necessary resources and skills but also have enough self-confidence to cope with challenges while other anticipate failure rather than success.

Because of all these factors, the supposed dichotomy of “trend-setter” vs. “disengaged” dissolved and became more fluid. It stimulated us to broaden our understanding of the phenomenon of biographical diversity in late modernity.

Our considerations about ‘trend-setters’ and ‘disengaged’ resulted in a collection of conditions on the basis of our theoretical discussions as well as from our empirical experiences (table 2). The table must not be misunderstood as (again) making a clear-cut distinction between the two groups of young people. Rather the categories in the right and left column point to the extremes of an imaginary continuum.

Table 2: Biographical constellations of trend-setters and disengaged young persons

Dimensions of biographical constellations of independent activity and engagement	... biographical constellations of disengagement and de-motivation
Choice of trajectories	Enabled to follow alternative routes	Lead into routes which are institutionally defined or defined from outside
Meaning of learning	Learning of high personal importance, ability to use transversal learning, peer learning, and informal learning; intrinsic motivation	Learning experienced as an obligation; external locus of control (e.g. being forced into measures)
Meaning of work	Work as a personal project; success not primarily defined in economic but personal terms	Work mainly defined in materialistic terms; few possibilities to experience other kinds of success than material gratification
Flexibility and mobility	forced as well as voluntary	Forced
Leisure-work-relation	Mix of leisure and work; distinction blurred	Clear distinction between leisure and work
Networks	Strategic use of dense, diverse and resource-rich networks	Networks can be extensive but will be rather homogeneous; often with poor resources
Attitude towards risk	Risk assessment	No or unproductive risk taking
Evaluation of experiences	Able to evaluate (also bad) experiences as important learning steps	Few possibilities to give value also to negative experiences as important learning steps
Self-concept	High self-esteem	Low self-esteem
Social recognition	Social acceptance even if alternative routes are followed	Poor social acceptance of routes followed (criminal careers)
Future and adulthood	Future is now and open and is positively and at the same time realistically evaluated; desirability of adulthood is questioned in many ways	Future is externally imposed and closed; normal gendered biography; depressive about goal achievement or unrealistic ambitions; adulthood as a clear goal

Each biographical constellation is embedded in a particular national and cultural context, which gives specific meaning to the categories. It is the interplay of these (and possibly other) factors which give young men and women belief in themselves or not, which provide them with meaning in life or not, which give them the feeling to participate in something bigger than themselves or not.

The categories in this table are the outcome from the first results of our research the aim of which is to help us obtain a more elaborate picture of the dimensions on which individual and structural resources and learning motivation are linked. They have been developed through discussions based on the research teams national reports. In the following section, we present some of our empirical findings according to the dimensions of personal and social resources on the one side, and the levels of personal engagement on the other side.

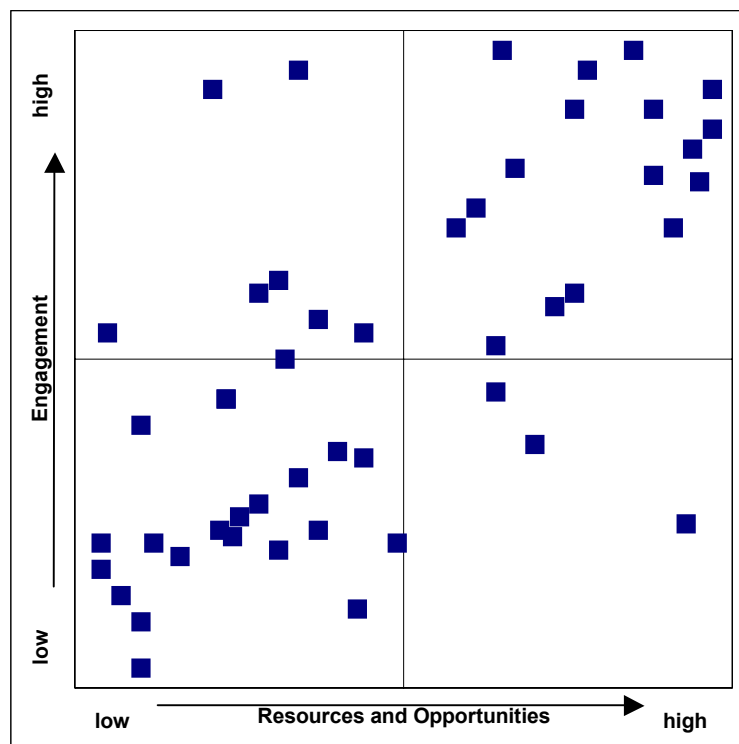
3 Biographical constellations of engagement and disengagement

Figure 1 displays a graph of four possible constellations consisting of resources and opportunities as the structural factors (horizontal axis) and engagement and motivation as the subjective factor (vertical axis) of individual biographical transitions:

- low resources - low engagement
- high resources - high engagement
- low resources - high engagement
- high resources - low engagement

The model is not derived from empirical evidence but from a heuristic distinction between trend-setting and disengaged young people. In this section we will relate it to our empirical data. Due to our main research interest, we concentrate on the clusters in the fields ‘low resources and low engagement’ (disengaged) and ‘high resources and high engagement’ (trend-setters).

Figure 1: Biographical constellations according to dis-/advantage and dis-/engagement



However, there are categories in between which might be as relevant as the extremes to account for the ups and downs in a life-course. If we look at motivation and engagement *in process* socially and in *development* individually, we have to leave this model and go back to the dynamics of individual and collective transitions. This will be considered in section 4

where especially the constellations of low resources and high engagement will be analysed. Considering the percentage of young people who, despite youth unemployment and increasing transition risks follow conventional formalised trajectories in most European countries, one has to admit that probably the constellation of high (or at least sufficient) resources and low (or medium) engagement is the one which accounts for a majority of young people in European transition regimes. In the perspective of this report this group is of least interest. On the one hand we suggest that the de-standardisation of transitions contributes to the decrease of this constellation. On the other hand we assume that innovative transition policies may learn more from the extremes (see section 1).

Constellation of disadvantage and disengagement (low – low)

We use the term ‘disadvantage’ exclusively for structural factors, which limit the resources and opportunities of young women and men in their transitions to work. While normally addressed as a homogeneous category, already at the structural level a huge variety of disadvantage becomes visible – both cross-nationally but also within single contexts. In most cases disadvantage included a family background with poor financial, cultural and social capital – including as in the case of Romania, sheer hunger. In some cases a section of the respondents belonged to ethnic minorities, for example; gypsies or migrants from Africa (Portugal), Turkish or Moroccan (Netherlands, West Germany, Denmark, Spain), Hungarians (Romania), Travellers (Ireland). In addition to this, some young people had spent at least a part of their childhood and youth in care (especially in the Romanian sample). Another factor of disadvantage is the structure of local and national labour markets. While Southern Italy, East Germany, and Spain can be seen as extremely difficult labour market contexts, the same was also true for some respondents living in parts of Belfast (Great Britain), Stuttgart (West Germany), and Turin (Italy).

School plays a central role in creating and reproducing disadvantage as well as disengagement. And it is true that low qualifications and early school leaving undermine the career perspectives of young people decisively. Nevertheless, this was by far not the case with all interviewed young people in the disengaged-group. Both cross-national and gender differences occur. Among our interviewees there were young women in East Germany, young people (both males and females) in Southern Italy or Romania who had completed post-compulsory education or vocational training. However, due to the lack of adequate training and employment opportunities these qualifications had no value. Gender and local labour markets can either reinforce or counteract school stratification. Apart from these issues there

are complaints about school and teachers across all countries and groups of young people. Learning is experienced as cumbersome, boring and apparently leading nowhere. This feeling is expressed by young people in almost identical phrases which refer to, too little practice and “too much theory”, disconnecting learning from reality. Even more emotionally laden are the statements referring to teachers not treating students with respect, but rather with indifference or humiliating them by drawing attention to their poor achievements.

“I only see standardised education, teachers not giving a damn about anything that goes beyond Ministry Programmes and everybody learns the same history in the same way” (male, 23, Italy) – “They have no time for individual teaching” (male, 24, Italy) - “They don’t give you nothing to do. They let you sit there and do nothing all day” (male, 17, Great Britain).

In Spain, despite its exceedingly high rates of unemployment, parents, teachers and career counsellors alike press young people to stay as long as possible in the educational system – even if they are bored by school, as they are told life on the labour market will be even harder. If originating from ethnic-cultural minority group’s school may be experienced as not only boring and difficult but also as open form of discrimination. School experiences therefore in general provide no sources of intrinsic motivation; they may in fact contribute to the loss of it – also in other areas by the accumulation of experiences of failure. Young people are subsequently caught in the trap of less and less fun in learning and a mounting pressure to get at least a minimum qualification/diploma. All young people are fully aware of the absolute necessity of gaining a diploma, however at the same time, they have doubts regarding the value of it:

“We won’t get nothing unless we’ve got a junior cert” (female, 16, Ireland)

“You really get under pressure in lower secondary: you must, you must ... training, training, without training you will not make it. And there are no alternatives” (female, 21, West Germany).

Those young people with poor resources and negative school experiences realise that their chances to make a smooth entry on the labour market are slight, often even extrinsic motivation is not enough to hold on. These young people suffer from the growing tension between the educational/pre-vocational system and the labour market without any means to escape it. In a double sense: their risk of getting unemployed or ending in precarious jobs is higher while at the same time opportunities to start a career that meets subjective interests is almost impossible. However, even in the group of the most disadvantaged there is *learning and motivation potential* which is neglected and even wasted by the educational and

vocational system and the labour market. This potential shows in different personal reactions and strategies:

- regret not to be able to meet educational or job standards
- rebellion (see above)
- migration (from South to North Italy; from Romania to EU and other countries)
- self-assurance (hidden by self-blame) that one is able to achieve more in education, if given a second chance:

“Not playing the cheeky any more, this time giving the clever one” (male, 19, West Germany)

In all countries – yet to a varying degrees – “parallel systems” (Braun 2000) or schemes for disadvantaged youth have been established, e.g. *pre-vocational education and training, low level training, subsidised employment* etc. Most of the young men and women interviewed as ‘disengaged’ have experiences with career guidance and various kinds of schemes. *Career guidance* as the institutionalised link between school and training or the labour market is meant to help young people to better understand their possibilities and perspectives, to inform them of potential careers and prepare them for their next transition steps; at least inform them thoroughly about the ongoing developments and frictions on the labour market. However, virtually all-young people – not only the disengaged – report negative experiences, though in different ways, which reflects the different contexts.

In most contexts young people neither expected nor had the experience of receiving valid information. For young women, counselling can be even more frustrating due to its gendered orientation, advising females towards typically female – which often means low status – professions (e.g. hair dressing, retail or child care) while they themselves would prefer more promising professions. What young people want from career officers is that their *whole personality* is taken into account, not just the aspect of work or qualification. They experience career counselling in the same way as they experience school and learning in general: a routine and alienating affair with no relation to their needs. The different statements in this regard however reflect the different transition systems and the role of career guidance.

“I was forced to go, you had to, it was crap, a waste of time” (female, 19, Ireland)

In *Ireland* and *Great Britain/Northern Ireland* statements like this stand for a high level of explicit mistrust in the context of increasingly coercive (workfare) policies.

“It is administration after all. They are not in the mood for working. Just staring into the file they have on you (male, 23, West Germany)” – “You have to wait for a job equivalent to your training, end of discussion” (female, 26, East Germany)

In *Germany*, it is the combination of a highly bureaucratic setting and a normalising approach related to the standardised training and employment regime that gives young people the feeling of alienation. While in *Spain* through the re-structuring of institutions such experiences with the employment service are a new phenomenon -

“Antonio doesn't exist. He is invisible, he is a number that doesn't exist. Because I am not getting any benefit” (male, 25, Spain).

In *Italy* (and similarly in *Romania*) young people just complain: *“We are alone!”* (male, 19, Italy) thus expressing the persisting structural deficit of the transition system. The other extreme can be found in *Denmark*. While some migrant girls complain about the lack of information they received in school, no comments were found that stand for young peoples general mistrust towards public institutions (except school and except of two alternative young men who are critical against the whole of ‘paid work’).

Young people’s criticism in most contexts (except Denmark) tends to focus on the training or employment measures for disadvantaged youth. Either for providing surrogate experience – “not real” (female, 26, East Germany) –, or for leading into dead ends – “you can’t turn back” (female, 17, Netherlands) – or, for not being effective in improving chances – “You make it into an apprenticeship, if you are lucky. I wasn’t” (male, 20, West Germany).

For most of the young people interviewed it would appear difficult for them to make a fair estimation if unemployment is due to structural or personal factors or if it is a mixture of both – and what kind of mixture that would be. As a trend, it may be more ‘normal’ for young people in contexts with high unemployment (Italy, Spain, Romania, Great Britain/Northern Ireland) – and thus less personalised and stigmatised. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that many young people from practically all countries are of the opinion that you have to blame yourself if you get unemployed (except Romania where mostly the state is blamed). And even if they mention structural factors to be responsible for unemployment, they still add ‘laziness’ as a decisive personal factor.

Self-blame about their inability to get a fairly good job is the result of earlier discouragement at school as well as internalising the common ideology that training and workfare policies would diminish unemployment. And indeed, young people realise that not *all* their contemporaries are without work – so why are they? Their *self-esteem* is seriously threatened by periods of unemployment with no money and much boredom:

“I am not worth, I don't have fulfilled expectations” (male, 18, Spain) – “When I'm looking for a job as well as while I am unemployed, nobody remembers me” (male, 25,

Spain) – “Float about and doing nothing all day; get stoned.” (male, 18, Great Britain)

In Germany this is reinforced by the fact that young people normally actively apply for an apprenticeship. But how are young people to maintain self-esteem after 50 rejected applications?

“I wondered why they did not take me on? What problems did they have with me? I stopped to write applications. You start to ask yourself what kind of asshole you are.” (male, 18, West Germany)

There are a disproportionate number of young people caught in *precarious jobs* with temporary contracts and/or in the informal economy which do not allow for the development of long-term perspective and planning of one's own future. This is especially the case in Spain, Italy, Portugal but also in Great Britain and Ireland. Often work is experienced as a humiliating experience: young people feel abused by their bosses, the work is boring or so low that one feels it as “slavery”. This either leads to the refusal of work in general

“There's easier ways to make money, drugs to be bought – know what I mean?” (male, 21, Ireland)

“Well, if I find a job, but this (work) is something that doesn't really attract me, I would like to work to cover my expenses, but if my parents give me the money I need, then why (bother working)...” (female, 19, Spain)

or, the pay is the only compensation. The *meaning of work* is exclusively or mainly associated with money. Without work one is worthless, one is a no-body and thus one must be determined to take on any job in the end. The pre-dominance of instrumental work orientations only presents needs with no future prospects as a reaction to denied occupational choice and processes of cooling out has been also shown in other studies (cf. Baethge 1991). Yet, for young people in Southern countries this may include to work without any remuneration in the family business (e.g. Spain).

At the same time it has to be said that these jobs, at least in part, make young people independent from their parents and lead to work experience. However, this experience is not always recognised by employment services, training agencies or other employers (especially not in formalised employment regimes, such as the German one):

“I have worked in construction, as bricklayer, painter, carpenter ... as plumber, electrician. If I don't find a thing I will find another one” (male, 18, Spain)

But there is also a sense of *self-respect* and rebellion, expressed for example by a minority of German male youths, who would rather leave a job than remain it to be humiliated:

“The boss owes me respect. He said ‘I’ll have a cup of coffee and you carry up the tiles – to the sixth floor. I said ‘Since when do we have slavery again?’. He said ‘If it doesn’t suit you, just leave’. So I left” (male, 19, West Germany)

A Turkish girl put the idea of self-respect in positive terms, claiming

*“You (should) have a say, that you get the feeling: I am also someone special.”
(female, 21, West Germany)*

In their jobs the young people experience again what they have already experienced at school, with career counselling or in schemes: you do not count as a person. Yet the young people feel that working could and should be more rewarding. For many of them the only expressions for this are dream jobs as “football player” (Great Britain). However, this is also shown by their high estimate of the experiences they make in the case study projects (see below). There they feel, often for the first time in their learning and working or unemployment career, to be taken seriously and trusted to be able to achieve. They report of trainers who treat them with respect and as individuals.

Due to limited choice and perspectives, material aspects predominate in the definition of work. And still, non-material aspects are named as well. In the interviews we found the following motives:

- financial independence
- stability (steady jobs)
- fair payment and treatment
- social acceptance
- good working conditions
- pleasant working climate, agreeable colleagues
- ‘fun’ (which in discussions often turns out as a definition of self-fulfilment)

Given the precariousness and the risks connected to their trajectories, sources of support are of high relevance for these young people. As regards their *families* potential support tends to be limited – apart from providing housing and food in the parental home (yet in all cases not guaranteed). But there are differences not only between Northern and Southern countries but also within Mediterranean family regimes. While most Italian respondents spoke about warm and supporting family ties and family-related networks which are highly valued in getting a job, some of them pointed to the material weaknesses of their family networks. Many of the Spanish young people also referred to the costs of dependency:

"One feels like shit. My family is working class. And this kind of families can give you some food and some money, but look, something temporary. The family cannot be always there. They make you feel like a sick person. You don't have a job... and you don't have money at all..." (male, 25, Spain)

Young Irish and British reported to be on their own, parents being unsupportive or indifferent, some of them having left home already. Obviously, this was even worse for the young people from care institutions (Romania). In countries like the Netherlands, Denmark or Germany, families seem to play a role in between those extremes. As regards support in terms of orientation and advice the differences seem to depend less on context. We find either young people not expecting their parents to be able to support them

"How could they help us?" (male, 21, Germany) – "We are now living in a different world" (female, 23, Romania)

Those young people who report of highly supportive parents or those whose parents display a laissez-faire approach between indifference ("do what you want, we'll not interfere"), feeling overburdened and the expectation is that children should take care of their own lives ("You have our support, but don't ask us anything, do it on your own") with an inclination to exert pressure on them. If support does come from the family, *mothers* are mentioned more often than fathers. At the same time especially in Southern Italy where family support goes along with massive youth unemployment, relations between dependency and individualising explanations of unemployment are drawn: "I know about young people, living with their families up to their thirties, claiming that there is no work." (male, 24, Italy). *Gender* is another decisive factor in this regard as family dependency is more often tied to control in the case of young women, especially, girls living in ethnic minority contexts. For example the gypsies in Portugal, or the Turks or Moroccans, in Germany and the Netherlands all experience sharp contradictions between family expectations and their own life plans which – due to dependency from support – are likely to fail.

Many young people mention *informal personal networks* and contacts as more important for a successful transition to rewarding employment than any particular individual ability or qualification possessed by themselves. This finding was confirmed by young men from Spain, Ireland, and West Germany especially, which illustrates their distrust in what formal education and career counselling can provide for them, never mind how hard they try. But following down the hierarchy, formal qualifications are held in higher regard and are a more effective currency than any such individual ability. Disengaged young people regard informal

networks as allowing others to secure training, employment and ultimately advancement. This point is made from two perspectives:

1. Young people who expect to advance due to familial or other contacts:

“my grandfather owns a contracting company, so I can get a job no problem” (male, 15, Ireland)

2. The attainment of success as being directly related to formal qualifications:

“we won’t get nothing unless we’ve got a junior cert” (female, 16, Ireland)

In both cases, *external motivation* and *external locus of control* predominate. Personal networks, while not absent, do not usually open doors to a broader world but are rather restricted to the life world of the young people themselves. Such networks are certainly not a rich source for getting information on work or other resources necessary in the transition period. This holds true particularly for young people involved in criminal activity (drugs, petty crime, joy-riding etc.) as stated especially by young men from Northern Ireland, Ireland or West Germany.

Besides, informal networks may provide psychological support in terms of protection against humiliation. For example, in West Germany young men from Turkish backgrounds mutually reinforce their insistence of being respected by employers or employment service officers – thus undermining the perspectives of entering a stable career.

The *future* the disengaged see for themselves can be characterised as restricted *normal biographies* with no extravagant expectations but just one big wish: to get a stable and steady job and thereby to be able to build a family and get decent housing. The most restricted in this respect are the Portuguese gypsy girls whose scope to emancipate from the trajectories foreseen for them by their parents are for them quite narrow. Here ethnicity and gender are intertwined in a most unfortunate way for the young women.

“We all begin to get married and don’t fulfil our dreams. We marry at age 13, 14, 15.

There’s a girl from our neighbourhood who was married with 13 years old. They have children, and more children, and more children, and that’s it!” (female, 14, Portugal)

Spanish parents would encourage their children to achieve what they have achieved when they were young: a couple’s relationship, to buy a motorbike or a car... Wishing for the future moves between normal biographical modesty, unrealistic ideas, like professions with a high income and promising great wealth (footballer; lawyer), or total disillusion. In the last case, the future is closed altogether (*“I’m a waster” – male, 18, Great Britain*). Connected with future prospects are ideas about *adulthood*. Adulthood is associated with:

- self-confidence and self-esteem

- control of one's own life
- more responsibilities
- there is no complete adulthood because there will always be a child in someone
- reciprocity of support, e.g. financially helping the own family (Spain)
- satisfying ones own vital needs
- getting emancipated and forming a family; assuming responsibility; steady job

The variety of associations show that for these young people, adulthood as a stage in the life-course is on the one hand a goal worth to strive for. On the other hand the outlook is more pessimistic.

Evaluating our interview material on the group of disengaged young people from all countries, we do find local and cultural differences. But the overall impression is one of discouragement and frustration. Yet, there are different forms of disengagement to which young people react to. A first dimension of this variety is the continuum between active and passive forms of disengagement. To a certain extent this coincides with the existence of active (or aggressive) institutions and agencies young people are confronted with. So it is quite hard to imagine that young Italians express their frustration in the hostile and aggressive way of young Irish or Germans who do try to liberate themselves from conditioning institutional pressure. In Italy – partly also in Spain – young people appear more fatalistic. Gender and/or youth culture may also be influential in this regard as aggressive and hostile attitudes towards institutions are often connected to peer support (and pressure). A second question is whether disengagement affects the individuals' whole life or is limited to the area of school to work transitions. Especially, some of the British-Northern Irish youngsters (partly also some from Spain and East Germany) appeared to have lost (or never developed) any positive life perspectives. Others compensate for lack of paid work through being actively engaged in associations, leisure activities or informal work.

Constellation of success and satisfaction (high - high)

The opposite constellation refers to young people with considerably high resources and opportunities, and who are actively engaged in constructing their biographies. Although sharing the severe criticism about school as an institution, which makes learning a strain and a boring experience, they develop an attitude of actively dealing with matters of learning already in school – without getting discouraged. They respond to school-related frustration with either, contempt and rebellion or by compensating frustrations with elaborated activities

they conduct outside school. Often these self-directed learning activities are the starting point for their later (trend-setting) careers. In or at the margins of the uninspiring (but safe) world of school and often backed by the safe and stimulating world of their families, they create their own world of developing and experimenting with their leisure activities and interests. Some tell about developing their extra-curricular interest inside the educational system, i.e. by running the school café or being active in a students' club rather than conducting their studies properly. It is noticeable that many of them complain about the discrepancy between 'theory and practice' as do the disengaged; they miss concrete experience mediating between the two. Both groups miss a *fusion of learning and living*, which is not satisfied by formal education. Some even dropped out of school and continued their study in private schools or institutes where they were responsible for their own learning process and felt in charge of it. This is partly the case in Italy, Spain and Portugal and especially in Romania where some young men and women prepared for the flexible labour market by sampling totally different qualifications and skills, for example music, stoker, catering and foreign languages (male, 27, Romania).

Another parallel is that their experiences with *career counselling* are negative as well. They either state to have never referred to such agencies or just once and not coming back after disappointing experiences. However, despite many negative experiences with formal education they manage to value positive aspects as well. These young people know about the importance of formally acquired certificates for their careers and continue formal education after finishing school.

Before the backdrop of their diverse backgrounds and careers, these young people develop *intrinsic learning motivation* early in life, satisfying – if not in school then outside, in terms of a productive relation between intrinsic motivation derived from subjective life perspectives and extrinsic motivation related to necessary steps in order to achieve them. By experiencing satisfaction in various forms of learning – formal learning in school in subjects they have interest in, non-formal and informal learning outside school in projects and self-directed activities – these young people are confronted with, and confront themselves with diverse contexts in which active learning takes place.

They succeed in managing the *dialectic between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation* pushing them to search for new fields of learning and exploring. Exploration itself is mentioned as crucial in terms of learning – enlarging the limits, thus having to make new experiences and develop new abilities – emerging from being bored by present demands:

“I was a little bored with IT courses at school. Then I was allowed to build up the computer room together with my teachers. I set up the computer network for the school ... and gave classes in computer technology” (male, 21, West Germany)

Exploration is closely (and reciprocally) related to their high *communicative skills*:

“I’m a talker” (male, 25, Netherlands).

Communicating, not only with their peers but with all kinds of people in different professions and positions, is part of their *youth-cultural capital* which they have accumulated by making lots of contacts and building up of *networks* in various surroundings (du Bois-Reymond, 2000; Keupp et al., 2001: 166). The diversity of their networks has to do with the socio-economic and cultural milieu they come from as well as with the range of their interests. The more diverse their interests and activities, the more diverse and dense their networks are, running through all stages of their lives: mates from school and university; experts in something or other; family members who might connect them with valuable persons outside their reach and experience; friends to discuss plans with; older siblings they set up new projects with or whom they join in their activities.

“Your friends help you with what you can’t do and you learn step by step” (male, 33, Italy).

Peer-learning for them is self-evident, simply because so much learning and working takes place with peers. They have possibly more trust in their own generation than in the older one (although they will use their advice and experience if offered and regard it as useful) knowing that they are confronted with (or explore themselves) demands their parents are not familiar with nor indeed may never have any experience of. A young man from Northern Ireland (as well as two dress makers in West Germany) employs graduates from the local university, as he believes they are full of enthusiasm and have just as much to offer as the older person:

“They (the young people) are very much in touch with what is happening ... I know I’m very ambitious but I think there is this ability, the strategy and the knowledge we have gained to date, there is nothing really from stopping us” (male, 25, Great Britain).

Many of the young women and men labelled as trend-setters have had a range of various *jobs* since they were pupils and students, until they have found, or discovered – what they wish do now (or alongside these activities). These jobs may have been ordinary and uninspiring or even precarious and odd. In contrast to the ‘disengaged’ young people however, they can strategically refer to the instrumental character of these jobs without relating them to their

occupational careers or identities. These jobs were acceptable as a means to get money for leisure activities, travelling or for acquiring things one wants to have :

“When I was a pupil I used to buy my clothes in Paris “ (male, Netherlands).

Like the disengaged they have a *flexible working attitude* but less out of necessity but rather because it suits their needs and because they derive status and identity from other sources. And if not, they endure a bad job with their mind open for change.

“Do you think you're unemployed? No, because I'm studying. I work in summer if I want to, not where I would like to work, but to get some money” (female, 24, Spain)

In the extreme, mobility may be almost totally virtual, like the case of a Dutch young man who buys and sells music from the sixties upwards all over the world via the internet and hardly ever leaves his little house somewhere in a little village (for different forms of mobility in modernised modernity, see Bonß & Kesselring, 2001).

If trend-setters have experienced *unemployment* this has not been for long periods and they usually had the firm conviction that it was not permanent and that they were still in charge of their own life. They did not perceive themselves as unemployed but in search of something better:

“I have been unemployed for one year but in principle I made music and prepared myself for the music academy” (male, 27, East Germany).

Self-blame has a different meaning for trend-setters than for the disengaged: they *would* blame themselves if things did not work out, but it would not have a considerable affect on their self-esteem. But they usually *do* work out one way or the other. They have a high *self-esteem* as they know that they are good at what they are doing.

In comparison with the disengaged, the trend-setters attach more *intrinsic meaning to work*. Work represents an extremely significant part of their lives and of their identities, which is not surprising in view of the fact that they have created their work and working conditions largely themselves. They use terms as “fun”, “self-realization”, “passion”, and “curiosity”.

Their statements about the meaning of work can be interpreted as a sound critique of late capitalist working conditions that neither correspond to personal needs nor use the possibilities of contemporary (information) societies based on their own experiences.

“The human factor is the most important thing in work” (female, 30, Portugal)

Most of the young women and men interviewed as trend-setters are *self-employed* (or aim to set up their own enterprise. The desire to become an entrepreneur originates in their rejection of others having power over their lives.

“I’m in control of my own life, I wouldn’t let anyone make decisions for me. At the end of the day it’s up to yourself to make it work” (male, 26, Ireland).

In contrast to the ‘disengaged’, young people who share this dislike of authority have more powerful strategies at their disposal. One of their strategies is deliberate risk-taking:

“I decided I’d go a completely different road. I decided I’d manage a bar full time. ... they gave me a brilliant wage that I couldn’t walk away from. So I went down, done the job, and ended up hating the job... I made a decision – I have to get out of here. I knew that I was walking away from a lot of money to nothing” (female, 30, Ireland)

As with regard to learning, networks and informal social support, are the favourite approaches in dealing with risks. Take the case of the following two Italians, a young man and a young woman (in love with each other) both unhappy with their present jobs, and decided to set up a restaurant-bar together.

If plan A does not work ‘trend-setters’ would not be discouraged but learn from their failure and begin something else, applying voluntarily or forced by misfortune, the principle of *trial and error learning* and developing one way or the other *multiple option strategies* so that they have always a way out, for example combining a (low paid) job-aside with getting an own business started. This requires perseverance and planning capacities and at the same time flexibility to switch jobs or let a plan go if not promising enough. The most striking examples are the Romanians for whom the objective is to prepare as multi-skilled labour in order to adapt (like a chameleon) to unforeseeable labour market opportunities. The main difference to ‘disengaged’ young people is that most ‘trend-setters’ accumulate such (informal) learning strategically on the basis of formal qualifications, backed by family resources and therefore they can afford to interpret failure positively as a ‘necessary experience’.

Another motive for self-employment is that they do not like fixed 9-5 work schedules but want to set their own timetable. They do not mind working 80 hours a week if necessary as long it is they who have taken that decision.

“Our time is the time of the (own) enterprise. We have no personal life. It’s a sacrifice we’re willing to make” (male, 29, Portugal).

And a young Dutch male who has set up a ‘mobile catering’, in addition to being engaged in the organisation of an annual theatre festival, tells us that he alternates between working his head off in busy periods and going to South America for two or three months.

Work and spare time are combined in many ‘trend-setter’ careers; an emerging trait of post-modern working conditions which is experienced by trend-setters as deliberate choice and not as coercion of precarious demanding adjustment of one's own life to the needs of the

company. Trend-setters loathe routine in all forms (as do the disengaged but they cannot help it):

“Every day something different happens” (female, 28, Portugal)

They like to use the strategy of doing different things at the same time, which most often starts for material reasons but after a while becomes a habit:

“In principle I do three different things: I am a bar-keeper, I make music and work as a DJ. I find that exciting. I wouldn’t like to do the same thing for five days a week”

(male, 27, East Germany)

What role do *parents* play in the learning and working careers of these young women and men? We have no unequivocal answer to this question – our material exposes a broad range of parental attitudes and resources reaching from active emotional and material support to a more distant attitude and no help at all. Perhaps it is safe to say the following: if the young people originate from well-to do families with considerable cultural capital, parents are likely to sympathise with their critical attitude concerning formal learning, possibly help them to find another school or are patient if their child does not get a diploma. They may not like it, but they hope or feel intuitively that their son or daughter is clever enough and will figure out a solution. By and large trend-setters talked with a kind of critical affection about their parents, recognising that sometimes they gave them a hard time accepting their solutions and needs.

Looking at their *future prospects*, trend-setters are optimistic and realistic at the same time. Some would say that they have fairly extravagant or unusual ambitions, but they will realise them – or do something else. *“My options are open” (female, 30, Ireland)*. Others would state that they live by the day, experimenting with this and that, but that eventually one has to look for more structure and security. Marriage and children are for most of them still far off (even for the older ones); what they do now or achieve in the nearby future is more urgent. All feel **self-responsible** for what they do and do so to an exceedingly high degree, yet many realise that they depend not *only* on their own energy and initiative but also on developments of the labour market as well as the idiosyncrasies of consumer behaviour (which they serve with their products and services) or policies (if they run a project with public funding).

Adulthood for them is more open than for the disengaged, they worry less and describe it in less concrete and more general terms, certainly not coinciding with the normal biography:

- not feeling adult yet: *“I do not want to be too adult...” (female, 28, West Germany)*
- or they view themselves as adults, independently of steady job or partner or age.

In conclusion, we want to summarise briefly some crucial contextual factors.

Firstly, the *relationship between formal education and parental background* in most of the cases described in this section has been advantageous. Still it seems that higher socio-economic strata and cultural capital of the family – if not a prerequisite to develop a trend-setter learning habits and biography – is a valuable asset for such a development. And precisely *because* it goes almost without saying that these young women and men are destined to follow higher education, they can afford to divert from that path more easily.

Secondly the *relationship between trend-setting careers and the national or local labour market* has to be taken into account. Booming and dynamic labour markets provide a better environment to operate within, than one with high youth unemployment. This shows in our material if we examine the experiences from the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal and Ireland with those from Germany, Spain and (Southern) Italy. Another point are *legal regulations and requirements* which might be advantageous for promising projects and enterprise creation – such as in Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Ireland – or disadvantageous by discouraging self-initiatives through an excessive amount of rules and regulations, as is the case in Germany especially.

The relationship between formal education, family background and labour market is least clear with regard to *Romania* where the social and economic conditions are so unstable that it is already an achievement if young persons manage to make their transition from school to work at all. To do this they need not only energies and capacities but also inventiveness in terms of combining formal and informal learning. Accordingly, they suffer more severe setbacks from poor career counselling, but they are perhaps the most explicit about their demands: they ask for information on national, but even more so international developments concerning labour and financial markets; for information about possibilities for self-employment, and for second chance education especially in foreign languages and ICT. And it is no wonder that they seek, more than others, normal biographical life goals, such as a steady job that will allow for a fairly decent quality of life.

Constellations of considerable resources and low (or average) engagement (high – low)

Another constellation refers to those young men and women who have at their disposal a considerable amount of family resources and/or cultural capital without displaying a degree of engagement comparable to that of ‘trend-setters’. Their resources enable them to follow pre-defined regular school to work trajectories. Considering the percentage of young people who, despite high youth unemployment and increasing transition risks, follow conventional

formalised trajectories in most of the European countries, one has to admit that probably the constellation of high (or at least sufficient) resources and low (or medium) engagement is the one that accounts for the majority of young people in European transition regimes. In the perspective of this report this group is of least interest. On the one hand we suggest that de-standardisation of transitions contributes to the decrease of this constellation, on the other hand, we assume that innovative transition policies may learn more from the extremes (see section 1). In our sample, there are only few respondents that may be – with some caution – related to this constellation, for example some young Spanish women from middle class families studying social education at the university. They have persisted and succeeded in post-secondary school in order to enter higher education in a rather typically female profession. Though involved in sideline-jobs they have a clear career orientation related to the subject they are studying for.

“...I chose it because that was what I always wanted. At first I thought about being a teacher because Social Education wasn't well-known ...but teachers told me about its options and people studying teacher told me to study Social Education too. I think I've been right because of the human deal and so ...” (female, 23, Spain).

“I'm in an association in order to get a job and stay there ... We are all social educators and people studying psychology, pedagogy ...we are volunteers now but we hope to receive a reward in the future. And if they want to contract somebody, you hope to be the one contracted ... you think as a volunteer at first but if you've got a degree you hope to be the first if they need someone” (female, 22, Spain).

Due to their starting conditions (compared to those of the disengaged) these young women do not need to develop motivation and engagement to the same extent as the trend-setters (or disadvantaged young people) who want to alter their situation. They are able to realise average transitions albeit within given structural restrictions.

Constellations of disadvantage and medium to high engagement (low – high)

From the perspective of the project “Youth Policy and Participation” this group is the most interesting one because of the dynamic relations between disengaged and trend-setting transitions. Young women and men with poor family resources and/or school qualifications who nevertheless showed a high level of engagement were found among young people originally labelled as ‘disengaged’ or ‘trend-setters’. Yet these constellations point to different stages in their biographies. Most of them had failed or at least not achieved a lot in school. They did not get support from their parents, as they were afraid that an alternative learning

and working route (instead of a standard low level route in secure reach), would imply too many risks. And of course gendered segmentation and care obligations were particular disadvantages as well as discrimination related to ethnicity.

Engagement did not imply in all cases unconventional or individualistic trajectories; often the objective was to live a normal biographical life, which however still requires a particular type of engagement to overcome structural barriers of disadvantage and segmentation. It could also be that while reflecting on the contradictions between their opportunities, aspirations and society's promises, they have gradually distanced themselves from their original normal biographical orientation. Still, others have been able to maintain intrinsic motivation with regard to constructing their biographies, regardless of negative school and transition experiences, because they were encouraged through youth work or transition agencies like those analysed in our project. It is these transitions that are of particular interest to us because they inform us about necessary prerequisites for the maintenance or stirring of motivation under conditions of disadvantage. In this group therefore heterogeneity is highest as regards the range of biographical solutions. See for example:

- Young men and women of African origin in Portugal with (normally) limited opportunities in both school and labour market who are motivated by a project to engage in both African dance culture (intrinsic) and school (extrinsic);
- Young Italians who chose self-employment as an active way out of unemployment;
- Young immigrant women in West Germany (from Turkey, former Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Togo etc.) with low (or no) qualifications who are supported by a project that offers an apprenticeship in dressmaking exclusively for Non-German young women in a highly protective and empowering atmosphere; several young women are encouraged to continue this route towards self-employment and the development of their own collection
- Young people – especially from Italy and Romania - who experience in NGOs and through voluntary activities the value of self-directed learning-by-doing:
“From this small responsibility something bigger can be born.” (female, 19, Italy)
In Romania this often included the experience gained from professional courses provided by the NGOs, which are more practical and related to both individual and labour market needs.
- Young homeless in Ireland who after years of living on the street and mistrusting any agencies cope with the step ‘into’ a supportive environment – thus becoming potential trend-setters for their peers to eventually do the same.

- Young Danes and young migrants in Denmark who through the experience of Open Youth Education – an alternative educational pathway to prevent students from dropping out – a highly self-directed setting, appreciate the possibility of choice, the strong peer influence and also the relaxed relationship with teachers.
- Young single mothers in Northern Ireland (Great Britain) who – through a comprehensive measure including child care, education and training, were motivated and empowered to work with groups of young mothers in their local communities, delivering accredited modules and putting their training into practice;
- Young people in almost all contexts who through contact with the case agency — were motivated to (re-) engage in formal education and training; i.e. they were encouraged that this time – with the ‘right’ support – they would not fail again in achieving their objective of a normal biography; or they learned to accept that the compromises they had to make due to their low qualifications were preferable to the consequences of a life without work and income at all.

This list is far from complete but it shows that engagement in terms of biographic success depends on the individuals’ starting positions as well as on their subjective aspirations and the support they find ‘on the road’. In this group the *dialectic between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation* is crucial. On the one hand we find those who already have disengaged with active life management and who have – by force (either through necessity, welfare policies, peer or family expectations) – come across empowering support which initiated a process of biographic reflection and intrinsic motivation. On the other hand we find those who already had a strong intrinsic motivation which either helped them to overcome setbacks or to actively avoid them. The decision to wait for, actively look for and/or be prepared to accept support, as provided by the case agencies is part of this initial motivation.

In terms of *learning* the contrast between previous experiences and the experiences they make in the case study projects is striking, regardless of country. Often the projects are perceived as a safety net, which makes up for shortcomings in support systems, such as poor career services. Motives to enter case study projects are either

- a) Intrinsic, searching (and finding) new possibilities to learn and obtain training which enhances one’s chances to get a decent job in the end (Italy; Portugal, the Netherlands). What is especially valued in the projects is the possibility of learning while working. However, the Italians in particular, report irregular working conditions make that impossible;

b) Extrinsic, just passing time and avoiding less attractive alternatives, such as unemployment and low paid jobs. Or one is attracted to the recreational and leisure pursuits offered by the project, or because the parents are nagging to get out of the house and to go and do something (Ireland, Spain, Portugal).

Through these experiences the young people regained a positive though critical attitude towards learning: they have learned to distinguish between (alienating) education and learning as a self-directed activity to explore and increase individual possibilities:

“Learning is opening up your mind, bringing out what you have inside” (male, 32, Ireland).

Choice is an important issue in this regard. While many others complain about the lack of choice with regard to subject’s, young people in Open Youth Education in Denmark have had a different experience:

“Here we can ask for teaching in those subjects that we want to study” (female, 17, Denmark)

Yet, despite these insights, they have learned that in some situations they also have to accept less motivating and intrinsic learning contexts in order to maintain options for further choice and subjectively meaningful learning and working. The young Portuguese, whose participation in a dance project was connected to the condition of good school performance and, despite their artistic and creative aspirations, attended a regular professional training course in computing, can best illustrate this:

“We don’t learn in school. We learn on the streets! We learn from the people we meet during our lives. We see who talks more, who says more trues than others, and we always keep those things in our head. Then (and talking in rime) ‘A guy can improvise; It will come out and I’ll come back; It’s the same as to pick a rime; and I’m beginning to improvise’. It’s just to have this flowing (again riming): ‘Today I left home; Seven o’clock in the morning; It was dawning’” (male, 19, Portugal).

Experiences with *institutions* are contradictory for these young people. On the one hand they have made the same experiences between lacking effectiveness and humiliation as the others. On the other hand they have experienced the difference of warm and empowering support being considered as individuals and taken serious. This not always easy to handle:

“A lot of my friends are looking down on what I am doing ... but on the other hand, I feel myself as being high above them” (female, 18, Denmark)

“It was fucking difficult to start here, because you’re used to look upon teachers as being stupid opponents to us (pupils), but up here, that is not possible to think –

because up here there are no arseholes. Honestly, not even the personnel taking care of the buildings and making food are stupid. That was so difficult for me, I could not figure out whom I should hate, also because all the stupid little things as rules and regulations on what you are supposed and allowed to do – they are non existing here. It was damned difficult for me to admit, that everyone was quite nice – there are simply no-one to hate. That taught me a lot” (male, 18, Denmark).

As for the ‘disengaged’ described in the first section, the transitions of these young people are characterised by *unemployment* and/or *precarious jobs*. Due to lack of family resources or income from the activities they are really motivated for, most of them have to combine jobs with learning and/or the development of something subjectively meaningful. As the trend-setters starting with high resources – or even more – they have to develop the ability to do many different things at the same time – to survive while keeping options open:

“As soon as the theatre or film production needed me, I had to drop out of the temporary job and again step into the shooting. And after the shooting immediately back to the temporary job. Planning had to be extremely tight (...) Really like this: back and forth. Means I really had no vacation at all for two years and worked all the time because I thought you have to go on ...” (female, 28, Germany).

As regards the *meaning of work* these young people choose between (or are torn individually) a normal biographic instrumental work orientation – being able to afford a decent living – and more intrinsic values.

Self-esteem is not self-evident for these young women and men who have experienced disadvantage, failure and discrimination, in particular girls and those young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. In contrast to those trend-setters, who came from privileged backgrounds and who in many cases showed a certain basic confidence in their abilities and their future, these young men and women have to develop self-confidence step-by-step.

In conclusion, it shows that by opening oneself for and looking at intermediate forms between ‘disengaged’ and ‘trend-setters’ we found that many of those labelled as disengaged do show considerable motivation and engagement, yet not in formalised settings. In this regard, young women in particular have to be mentioned. Many of them compensated for the disadvantages imposed through gendered segmentation in both education and training and labour market as well as through care obligations by a higher degree of biographical reflexivity compared to young men – which confirms findings of other research (cf. Peters & du Bois-Reymond, 1996; Leccardi, 1996; Geissler & Oechsle, 1998). On the other hand we found so-called trend-setters who came from disadvantaged backgrounds but through particular experiences

and support were enabled to look for new biographical options appropriate to their experiences, needs and aspirations. Here, again different contexts come into play. While in some cases tight local labour markets conditions add to limited opportunities (Southern Italy, Northern Ireland, Romania, East Germany), in others dynamic labour markets provided potential niches in which individual activity could be developed and established (especially Ireland and Portugal). Flexible regulations in terms of education and training (Denmark, Great Britain, Ireland) or self-employment (Italy, Great Britain, Ireland, Netherlands) stimulate and allow young people to work out their own life plans.

In this type of biographic constellation the dynamic character of biographic engagement becomes obvious. The next section therefore will deal explicitly with the ups and downs, the turning points of motivational careers focussing on those young women and men described in this last section.

4 Turning points in young people's motivational careers

As the last section showed, there is some empirical evidence which shows smooth transitions from biographic constellations of disengagement to biographic constellations of (re-) engagement, which in some cases also improved their networks or qualifications. Some others within this group lost the little motivation they had through frustrating school- and job-experiences. In the case of young people with high resources, who also experienced changes that could either be motivating or discouraging, the latter case was often buffered by the financial and social/cultural capital of their families. In this section we will search for such *turning points* in order to stress the dynamic between biographical constellations of “disengaged“ and of “trendsetters“. By turning points we mean changes in young people's motivation and engagement, which may go along with transitional steps, such as entering a supportive measure, but which could also happen through other crucial (learning) situations. Taking into consideration the ups and downs in young people's motivation (as in their transitions in general, see Walther, Stauber et al. 2002), we suggest that every young person has his or her *motivational career*, and the way this career develops is highly dependent on learning experiences he or she has made in the past and in the present: that is to say were these experiences encouraging or not encouraging; did they or did they not provide them with social recognition and self-esteem? All is highly dependent on the social settings, structural circumstances, and gender contexts in which they are taking place. Looking again to the four-field-scheme introduced above, we suggest that these points describe - maybe transitory - points on young people's motivational careers, which over time, may transpire into something

different. A biographic constellation of disengagement may be regarded as the (transitory or persisting) result of discouraging experiences, mainly in schools or jobs, which let young people turn away from “*doing well for meself*” (19, male, Ireland). The opposite movement may be motivated by supportive experiences, but also by critical life events such as an accident or a bad job, etc., if buffered by specific biographic constellations (support, acquaintances, experience of being able to rely on oneself, a phase of psychological stability etc.). ‘Turning’ then is pro-active, and risk-taking can produce a positive result.

In order to raise awareness of the dynamics and developments in young people’s motivational careers we want to concentrate on the (hidden) arrows behind (some of) these points, which eventually moves them between the different fields of the table. Keeping to the four-field-structure, we regard such turning points as procedural results of interplay between structurally different social circumstances (“resources/opportunities“) and the dynamics of motivation.

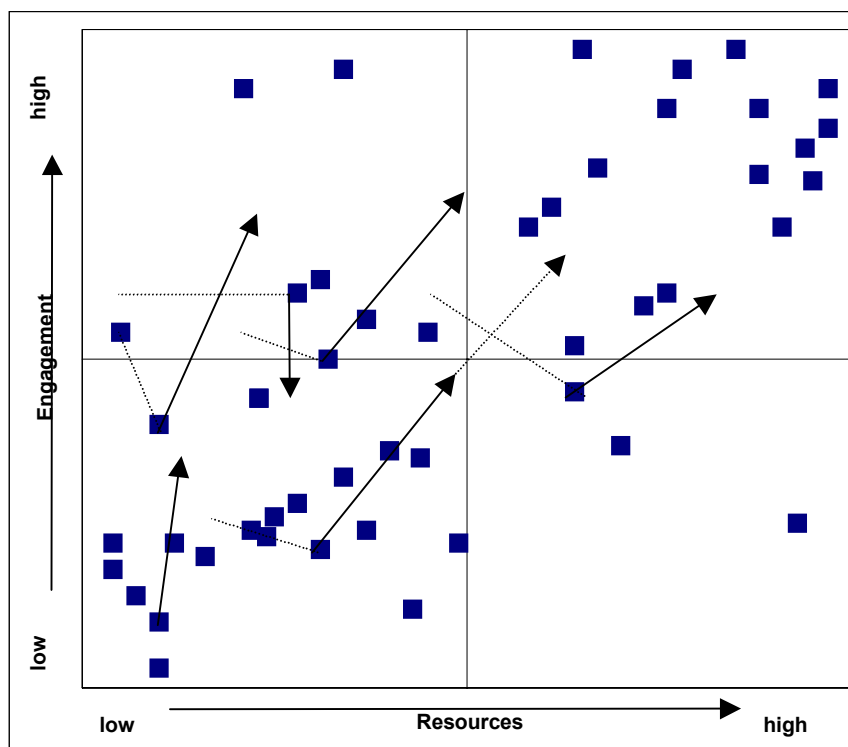


Figure 2: Biographical constellations in terms of motivational careers

Thinking in such a dynamic perspective, brings to the foreground *the factor of time/age*³. Some of the young people we met in the case agencies projects (e.g. in Italy, Ireland and

³ The age factor has the strongest influence on the transitional situation in Italy, where it is difficult to find young people who have already embarked on a successful pathway (or entered into stable jobs) in their twenties. But in

Western Germany) have been interviewed as trendsetters, because of their destinations after having passed the concerned measure. If we had met them a few years before, we would have interviewed them as disengaged. The same could be said about some of our interviewees from the so-called group of disengaged: if the opportunity arose to interview them a few years later, perhaps we would be addressing them as trendsetters. But sometimes the future is predetermined by the past, if the past consists mainly of disengaging experiences. However, the future may also be predetermined and the only way to cope with it is to focus on the present as this may be the only period that may in a sense, be controlled (cf. Reiter 2002). Even in such biographies there are interesting changes and moments where the motivational curve ascends (sometimes sharply) or descends (unfortunately often sharply as well). And the interesting question is: which kinds of experiences make young people develop in this (ascending) or that (descending) way? Which kind of experiences become key-experiences for young people's motivational careers?

Again, the *context* - the social, economic, cultural, gender context, which has an effect on a specific biographic constellation – proves to be significant for identifying and experiencing turning points – this concerns the subject's perspective as well as our external perspective as researchers. Therefore we cannot simply pick out and generalize on the “decisive factors“ as turning points independently from the contexts in which they achieved relevance for the concerned young men or women. Nevertheless, we want to refer to our distinction of biographic constellations (table 1). These eleven categories have been clustered in four sections, and accordingly we have tried to identify turning points in the motivational careers of young men and women:

- *Educational and occupational choices, future and adulthood*: This cluster integrates the categories “choice of trajectories“, “meaning of learning“ and “meaning of work“ – which are also strongly related to attitudes towards the “future” and “adulthood”.
- *Networking*: Taking into account that young people's networks often combine different life spheres this cluster links “networks“ and “leisure and work-relation“.
- *Social recognition*: This cluster relates to the categories “self-concept“ and “social recognition“.

- *Individual strategies*: This cluster comprises “flexibility and mobility“, “risk“ and “evaluation of experiences“, which all appear crucial for the development of strategies for the coping with and shaping of biographical transitions.

In accordance with these clusters, we will try to discover (not define) turning points in young women and men’s motivational careers. We do this by providing examples of exemplary biographical portraits that we found to be especially interesting in this regard. Our material provides a rich source of information about disengaged young people who have already entered the case agency, and who by these first experiences – are already aware of how their attitude has changed positively towards the idea of engagement in their own future⁴. But we will also have a look at turning points in the other groups, as well as considering different country and gender contexts. Doing this, we possibly run the risk that examples are taken as “typical“ for countries or genders. We therefore want to stress explicitly that these biographical constellations described in the following paragraphs have an *exemplary* status.

Educational and occupational choices, future and adulthood

Turning points of course can be a result of educational and occupational choices, but they can also happen before such choices are made, or indeed, they can provoke them. This refers to the complex dynamics of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: a new situation, maybe extrinsically motivated, may enable young people to develop intrinsic motivation, because they now know what they are able to achieve. Such is the case in L.’s biography, a 23 year old mother of a 7-month-old son from Northern Ireland, interviewed as disengaged. She comes from a deprived background, as she was raised in a family surviving on welfare benefits, and has herself been on benefits since the age of 16. Consequently, L had low self-esteem and she and her family had few resources available to them, financial or otherwise. However, she always had the desire to do social work, or work in a related area, but was unsure as to how to go about this. On discovering that she was pregnant she took on a part-time job in a supermarket, while at the same time knowing this was not the type of work she wished to do for any length of time. But she had doubts in getting something better as she had no self confidence and was afraid of losing the only financial security she had ever known – welfare benefits. Furthermore, childcare also posed a problem, as it was not accessible to have family care for her son and in the first months after giving birth to her son, she did not want to be

⁴ Perhaps because this specific group can also look back on some upward developments as regards motivation, it is they who can most easily talk about biographic turning points: as biographies being always constructed, the upward turn can be built into biographic narratives more easily, and former – perhaps more problematic – periods of life then appear as “the story of the bad boy/girl I have been“.

away from him for long periods of time. With these limitations she thought she would never find the right job. Nevertheless, she was motivated enough to search the newspapers for jobs - and detected the advert of “Lifting the Limits“, a project which provides a model of training thus combining personal and professional development with ICT skills in order to prepare young mothers for the modern labour market. Already the advert immediately gave her the feeling of hope ...

“... that this would be the perfect job for me“.

The project had addressed the barriers facing young mothers entering the employment world and life of the community, as contributions towards childcare and travel were made available for the young mothers who entered the project. It is evident from the following quotation that the project improved her self-esteem, which motivated her and ultimately gave her hope:

“Lifting the Limits has given me back the hope that I can achieve my ambitions and get the career that I want. It has given me a sense of independence and shown me that I have a choice in how I live my life.“

And indeed also in her educational choices she now appears much more pro-active:

“After I finish this programme I want to go to university to do a degree in Youth and Community Work; Lifting the Limits will not only give me the qualification, but also the experience, the drive and most importantly the confidence to be able to take that next step. I am determined now that I will not return to the benefit trap, I will get the career I want and make a life that both myself and my son can be proud of, and Lifting the Limits will have been the first step.“

In L.’s case, entering the project opened up a new horizon for biographic choices. Holding on to some degree of professional aspiration (consisting of a mixture of intrinsic and extrinsic factors) laid the basis for a new experience, which started by entering the project, which in turn then provoked a noteworthy turning point in her motivational career. Of course, in her case the fact that she is now also responsible for her little son, who later on “*can be proud of*” her achievements, is an important motivational factor. Biographical factors always interact with the specific social and cultural context – here: the context of a gendered culture of dependency on social benefits but also the opportunities provided by a flexible and modularised education and training system (in this case access to studies in youth and community work) providing multiple entrance options – made the difference.

This is also true in the opposite sense where the lack of job opportunities limits choice, as is the case of K., a 26 year-old female from East Germany, interviewed as disengaged. After

school, she had a 3 three year vocational training in wholesale and retail, which – due to a lack of regular apprenticeship places – was not organised in the usual company-based form.

“You’re not trained in a proper company – as everyone here. You don’t work on real commissions. When you are on placement you do not learn anything, you just do the coffee and the cleaning. I would have preferred training in a real company.”

As is the case with many young East Germans trained in a non-company based apprenticeship, she does not find a job. She complains that the employment service was not of any help in finding her work – and she would have been happy with any kind of work, even at a salary equivalent to benefits – but insisted on placing her in a job she had been trained for.

“I just was hanging around at home, I hated myself, really, it was the worst.”

Having time for leisure activities did not compensate for the lack of paid employment. After two years of unemployment she entered re-training in telecommunications and – due to pregnancy – dropped out after six months. Absence through childcare responsibilities and subsequent unemployment, amounted to almost four years passing before she enters the actual agency, which combines subsidised employment with competence development. Despite her dual role as housewife and mother she wanted to have *paid* employment where she would have some form of social recognition.

A regular income as well as the need of some socially recognised work is the main motives for entering the current scheme. However, due to the lack of recognised qualifications she is very critical of the project, although it does provide a variety of activities and competencies to be acquired. Her experience to date has shown that both the labour market and the employment service only accept regular qualifications – while at the same time the employment service has placed her in a scheme without ‘real’ value – which undermines both her job search activities and her trust in the efficiency of public support. Though still hoping for some work to come she seems to have accepted the fact that this is highly unlikely due to the lack of opportunities on the local labour market.

K. shows a highly compromising attitude. Nevertheless, she constantly experiences disappointment and frustration either through the lack of opportunities or through the inadequacy of offers from the employment service. Whilst following the institutionalised pathway does not pay off, there are no other alternatives due to the structural misery of the labour market. In her example the interplay between social/structural context and biographic factors potential turning points reveal to have a negative impact in the end.

Experience, as well as maintained aspiration for educational and occupational choices, is strongly related with the attitudes towards *future and adulthood*. However, this is not to say that turning points in young people's motivational careers are specifically linked to a specifically expressed feeling of being adult or not feeling adult, or of feeling prepared or unprepared for the future. But attitudes towards the future have a mutual relation with the individual motivational curve turnings upward or downward, and with the perceptions of available options: options for choice tend to go along with a rather open view of the future combined with more optimistic views and expectations; on the contrary a more closed future combined with more pessimistic views goes along with choices not available.

Interesting in this regard is the development of M., a 20 year-old young man from Romania, who has initially been interviewed as "disengaged", but after the analysis of the interview has been regarded as "trend-setter". M. finished his vocational training as a sanitary-gases plumber, after which he gained a qualification as a chef assistant in a restaurant. M. had no family support at all – he originates from a kind of dysfunctional family, and spent his last years in youth care which created more obstacles in his transition. Since his childhood he has struggled against the limitations that society confronted him with. In a way, he always struggled for a future perspective. At present, he is not officially working, but works on the black market, he attends an arts school (singing) and undertakes artistic activities as a choreographer for a company of children in the framework of an NGO. He also has worked with UNICEF in different projects. He regards this only as a complementary activity, with no decisive role to play in his professional development. But contacts and working experiences with NGOs opened the doors to his artistic activities, which revealed to be highly relevant for his motivational development. M.'s life dreams include professional success as chef in a restaurant, to make a CD, to establish himself in show-biz, and to set up a family. His main dream is to find a person in whom he could place his trust and who could advise him in all-important matters of life, as this is what he feels has been lacking in his life.

Although he has experienced discrimination in the labour market due to the fact that he comes from a youth care institution, he now is very optimistic, as the offer he got to work as a chef within a foundation, will soon become reality.

As regards turning points, one driving factor all over his life has been his persistence in struggling for the future – his own future as well as that of the children he is working with. And as soon as concrete opportunities appear (e.g. artistic activities through NGO's or the foundation's offer for a working place) his persistence pays off.

In the case of N., a 21 year- old female from Portugal, an opportunity opened up for a future perspective when she engaged with an Afro-Portuguese dance group (the *Batoto Yetu*, i.e Swahili for “our children“). N. was born in Angola, and at the age of six she came to live with her grandmother in a deprived neighbourhood in the area of Lisbon. Her mother is dead and her father is a political prisoner. She has five “official” brothers and sisters and a few other “unofficial”. She attended school in Casa Pia de Lisboa, an institution that shelters and educates “problematic” young people. She talks about *Batoto Yetu* with great enthusiasm, and also about its creator, a dancer who is now in New York, and who feeds her desire to take *Batoto Yetu* to Angola. The dancing group allows her to stay in contact with her culture of origin. It has become so meaningful for her, that she also has accepted the rules of the project in terms of good achievements in school, as the pre-conditions for participating in dancing. In her case she is excused some sideline-jobs, which made her fail one year in school, because she could not reconcile studying and working. She concentrates on her studies at university, as it is important for her future prospects as a young Afro-Portuguese woman. Good achievements in school are the extrinsic motivation. The project links with more intrinsic motives such as dancing – a perfect means to empower young people in their immigrant culture, to give them self-esteem and gain self-consciousness about their culture of origin and to make them develop into someone attractive and employable. With their body competence they can clearly develop a kind of expertise, which is unique (or which can not easily be copied or adopted by the dominant culture)⁵.

In the case of N., who comes from a deprived neighbourhood in Lisbon, this empowering aspect is linked to her specific role as a dance monitor, a position she had achieved over the years, which also gives her the position of a leader (power) and which gives her an important orientation. The dancing project therefore provides ideas to negotiate culture and also in future life. In twenty years time she still sees herself dancing in *Batoto Yetu*:

“I think this is beautiful. Some people ... think this is just dancing but there’s so much more to it”.

She tells about the sponsorships and supports *Batoto Yetu* used to have, without forgetting the friendly people that “are always on our side”, like the one who brings snacks in the break of the rehearsals. She would like to work in management, but she would also like to have a career in dancing, perhaps in Great Britain or in America, as prospects in Portugal are limited.

These plans are not totally unrealistic: N. is about to finish university – a degree in management – and through her work in *Batoto Yetu* she is also prepared for following the other route. Her future is rather open, but in a way secured by the educational foundations she had laid with her studies. Meanwhile she travels with the project – again good school achievements are the incentive:

“*Those who don’t have good grades don’t travel and I love to travel*”.

Networking

Networking has shown to be a very important aspect of motivational turning points, in both directions: allowing for turning points as well as resulting from turning points. As regards the first, in some cases existing networks enabled young people to increase their strength and motivation in order to change something in their lives; as regards the second, networks grew after turning points had taken place – e.g. after having entered a project young people made new contacts and social relationships.

Often leisure and work are interrelated, as is the case of K., a young man from Denmark, 24 years old, interviewed as disengaged As regards financial assests (low), housing (poor), and occupational status (unemployment, unskilled work) his resource base is rather low. K. had stepped in and out the *Ecological Starters* project throughout three periods of unemployment⁶. On the other hand he also has made a trip to Far East and has always enjoyed parental support. He made his educational and occupational choices following a certain life-style. For him periods of unemployment are as much a result of a conscious choice as a matter of not being able to find work. This life-style is strongly supported by his local socio-cultural network: where he lives, he is associated with several groupings of people who are actively involved in either political or cultural matters – organising concerts, exhibitions, meetings, demonstrations (anti-racism, anti-globalism etc). But although he is dependent on these kinds of networks, and he is very conscious about that, *Ecological Starters* contributed something special: a broad focus (ecology), potential contacts, relationships and partners – known and unknown –, and above all a professionally run organisation. One could say, that *Ecological Starters* strengthened and enlarged existing networks. Working for the *Ecological Starters* gave his life-style a professional and social frame. K. feels fully recognised. But ...

⁵ Also in other case agencies meaning is provided by creative activities and arts (Italy, Germany/Munich). See for a deeper reflexion of the meaning of performing arts for young people Miles et al. 2002.

⁶ The *Ecological Starters* is a grass-root project running a number of projects in Copenhagen, such as education for ‘Green Guides’, an ecological café, or a production school. The project offers transition from poor educational backgrounds to further education or employment and keeps young unemployed people in activity.

“being supported economically by the state is not exclusively good, but something will turn up. It is not getting easier and you are quickly being stigmatised as unemployed. One of the limitations is, that you have to be able to live on a very low budget”.

Recently, and empowered by his experiences within the project, K. decided that he feels strong enough to enter the university to study Philosophy of Religion although he will not give up certain habits that he sees may pose problems with university life.

Also in his attitudes towards future he is aware of the support of his alternative networks:

“I think that there`s a lot of meaningful things to be involved in. In some respects it is stupid to think of one self as privileged because that involves the comparison to other people worse off. But regarding future possibilities I can think of lots and lots of possibilities of doing something both sensible and interesting. If you are something of a loner, the alternative milieus gives you an enormous liberty of action and that is privileged.”

The existing networks were the basis for further networking, and together they have helped K. to develop fluid and individualized systems of *social capital* he can now rely on.

Similarly, R., a 28 year old young man from Ireland, having left school at age 14, interviewed as trendsetter, can be seen as a perfect creator and user of such systems of social capital. He arrived in Cork City from Sligo Town five years ago and has already a number of established informal networks⁷ within the city. These networks represent perhaps the most potent information channel for him. R.’s progress has been rapid within a short space of time. R. has been working as a doorman and moved on to become a barman (with no training whatsoever). He was then offered the opportunity to manage a bar, and credits ‘luck’ with having his current position:

“Stroke of luck really, I was working for a man across town behind the bar, he offered me this job, so I gave it a shot”.

Although ‘luck’ may have played a role, it is clear that R. was not afraid to try his hand at managing the bar. He has moved within the space of one year from being the bouncer to a managerial position, which strongly suggests that ability and willingness to risk failure contributed more to his progress than ‘luck’. Of course, this kind of (successful) strategical behaviour is linked to the interplay of strong networks and social recognition: R. has a rather stable and supportive family background and within his milieu his jobs also provide social status. These two factors must be considered alongside the assertion that success is a largely

individual issue. Likewise, it may be necessary to cite self-esteem and self-confidence as critical factors here, especially in the area of risk taking.

Social recognition

Social recognition implies both the inner and outer view: the self-concepts young people develop in accordance with the social recognition they achieve through their activities. The interplay of both and the dynamic of how they interfere are of crucial relevance for turning points in young people's motivational careers. Again, such developments can be initiated by extrinsic motives, and later giving way for or turn into intrinsic ones because of the relevance they enfold. Most impressive are the examples from young people with low resources who were empowered by supportive learning experiences, which at the same time provided them with self-esteem and social recognition.

Such is the case with S., a young Turkish woman living in Western Germany. 28 years old, she was interviewed as trendsetter exactly because of the progress made in her own personal development, during and after her vocational training in the project *LaSilhouette*. *LaSilhouette* is a project for immigrant young women, that offers recognised training in dressmaking. After the training course she undertook a placement as costume designer at the theatre, an experience she still would like to take up again and during occasional jobs (e.g. six months as a make-up artist) and spells of unemployment she continued to work for free in the theatre. Finally she ended up in a temporary work agency, through which she found a stable job in a bank. After four years she was fed up with the bank job and went back to the temporary work agency where she now has an internal job as team assistant. S.'s parents had remigrated to Turkey in the meantime, leaving her and six siblings in Munich. As she is one of the older sisters she had to help care for the younger ones. All have now since become independent and for the past four years she has lived with her boyfriend. In terms of economical independency, she has not been very successful – on the contrary: she still has to pay for debts she incurred during a period of unemployment. But as regards self-esteem she stresses:

“Looking back, before I started training I was totally without self-esteem, super-shy ... This is the worst thing that could happen to a woman: to be without self-esteem ... And with the time (in LaSilhouette), I could enfold pretty good. And now: result (presents herself, laughing) ... I recognized mostly afterwards what they (LaSilhouette) have given to me. After training with the time, I developed further and then at a certain point I got the idea of power-woman, and then I said: now I move out, now it's time.”

⁷ Roper's networks stretched from bikers, to dealers, to bar trade and music networks (he provides live music in

Although she locates her “turning to power-woman” after the period of training, it is closely linked to the values gained through her profession. Fashion to her - and her colleagues – reveals to be the perfect medium for achieving both self-esteem and social recognition by expressing oneself and also for negotiating gender and ethnic origin:

“For us dressmaking is really creation, fantasy. There is a lot included, above all: a damned lot of patience ... And you have to have a sense for creating ... And above all you are learning this here in the dressmaker’s workshop. By means of the fashion shows, you get a really wide-spaced fantasy. You are developing a crazy wide-spaced fantasy by dressmaking. For me dressmaking is really art ... And this is what we are doing now – we are realizing our ideas, that originally were on paper ... It is a wide-spaced source of art. A source!”

Under conditions of uncertainties emerging in late modern societies, both self-esteem and social recognition are more and more related to abilities and opportunities of self-presentation (Stauber 2001). At the same time, self-representation is one of the hidden demands in late-modern youth transitions, and a skill that will also be required in an interview situation with a possible employer. But already in peer-contexts this demand is present. There is a big need and desire to develop such skills, but at the same time there are often a lot of internal and external thresholds to overcome. S. and her colleagues have benefited from the various opportunities delivered by the project, and they have learned to present themselves. For example, in Munich at fashion shows where she and her colleagues presented their own collection, with professional make-up, coiffure, and a perfect music and light show to a large audience, all of which was reported in the newspapers. Here the aspect of power has to be taken into account (cf. Skelton & Valentine 1998)⁸.

Individual strategies

What is the active part of young women and men in the turning points of their individual careers? It is obvious that identification with a project of ‘their ‘own’, practical consciousness about the appropriate strategies – such as networking, using ‘the system’ strategically without neglecting the importance of informal resources – are necessary strategies and attitudes in actively shaping the own biography. In this regard, young people from socio-economic

the bar, and uses the musicians to contact other musicians and services).

⁸ Even more striking is this aspect of taking over place in the case of the Portuguese dance-project Batoto Yetu (see above) addressing young Afro-Portuguese: their performances are not only located in some kind of niche culture, but also on the consecrated stages of cultural production – famous stages or centres of high culture as well as TV – which can be seen as a real break into the structures of the dominant culture.

backgrounds with higher resources and with higher qualifications have advantages in thinking strategically. Both their broader opportunities as well as positive experiences of coming to terms with their learning biographies encourage them to actively make plans. However, we also have to admit that such strategical narratives were more easily identified in individual interviews (conducted more often with “trend-setters”) rather than in focus group interviews.

N., 25 years old, from Netherlands, interviewed as a trendsetter with high resources, is currently running his own business – a catering service. His way to get to this current point is marked by some remarkable career decisions and strategies, by flexibility, risk taking and the ability to evaluate (bad) experiences. At secondary education level, he ran through the pre-university route. Although he considers himself to have been a quite difficult student, he finished this route with the necessary certificate to go on to university. But instead of simply choosing a university study he starts working – in a job he was familiar with from his school days, when he worked as a sideline job in catering. With a couple of friends he started to run the school cafeteria. From this job he moved to a friend’s relative’s restaurant to be a kitchen help which lead to a job as a chef in an Italian restaurant where he worked full-time for two years before starting to study communication sciences. During his second year at university he realized that university did not suit him and he went back to his sideline job which he had maintained all the time. This time he starts his own business with a catering service.

The resources he has acquired informally and his motives mark his educational and occupational choices. Because he viewed his university studies as being too remote from the labour market he chooses the more risky route, that of direct entry into the labour market, without formal education or training, he relied on his informally acquired skills in cooking and catering. He builds his career in the business step by step utilizing his social network. However, he had entered university without leaving the catering business completely behind, therefore he kept his options in case of failure in the university route.

Although being aware of the long-term risk of having no formal qualifications, he argues that he did neither profit from studying at university in terms of personal intellectual growth nor with regard to facilitate his entrance into the labour market. For pretty similar reasons he does not consider taking a professional course in catering. He can afford to try out the catering business because he may still enter university later and work for his if he feels he should want or need it.⁹

⁹ One important contextual prerequisite: In the Netherlands, this is not a protected profession, so he only had to attend some short courses to be registered at the Chamber of Commerce.

His parents seem to support this strategy by not putting him under pressure to choose a more regular career and thus leave him the space to stick to his “independent” way of making a living.

It seems to be crucial with regard to the direction of motivational turning points that young people get the chance to evaluate their experiences, even if they have been frustrating – instead of drawing back from activity. Another young man, C., 27, from Italy, interviewed as “trend-setter” with high resources from his family background as well, has gone through demotivation and frustration in his studies, then quit from university and worked for MacDonalds for one year. Retrospectively he regards this as an important experience:

“That awful job gave me the picture of what I don’t want.”

He managed to cope with frustrations and learned to see them as indicators; a) university is not the right place for him; and b) jobs like the above will not help him further himself. One has to consider that C., since the age of 18, has tried to gain independence from his parents, whom he did not experience as being especially supportive – except in a very general sense. And one has to consider that his present situation with which he is very satisfied, influences the way in which he views the past: C. works now for a gay association where he can realize his idea of work – as non-alienated work –, where he can follow his ideals as a young marxist, and where he can shape his sexual identity as a young gay male. The fact that this job allows for negotiating aspirations and orientations reveals to be highly supportive and motivating per se:

“The sense of belonging helped me to take crucial decisions ... I was asked to work for them ... we discussed that together ... then I thought I’d do it.”

He is now contracted as the head of the documentation centre and is highly motivated to do his job well – and able to draw considerable self-esteem out of it:

“I’m the only one, all over the country, who manages an entire library without holding a university degree.”

What this example shows very clearly, is what turning points are in essence all about: they contribute to any kind of (gendered) *identity work*, a term which implicates learning and stresses once again the need to be individually responsible for it (Keupp et al. 1999). This task has to be done also *against* social conformity, as is especially the case of young homosexuals within a dominant culture of heterosexuality, of members of minorities (migrants etc.) in majority contexts. But what stands in the foreground here, is both the values and the prerequisites of C.’s strategies: due to his good educational (and family) background he can

afford to decide against the formal route of university, and he also can afford to abandon bad jobs.

Other examples can be found in Sicily (Italy), where young people make strategical use of their participation in voluntary initiatives and third sector organisations, which provide them with a widespread, rather powerful and effective network.

“One of my personal and selfish reasons to get in touch with the association is connected with my idea of future and work: gaining a remarkable field experience and then being sponsored by an association. The faculty I chose [Psychology] helps me so much on a personal level but you still need contacts with the institutional bodies that allow practical experience, also in terms of management, contacts, planning, bureaucracy. You can get it all only if you belong to an association ...Actually, I think the experience gained right on the field will be useful in the future” (male, 23, Italy).

Here, such extrinsic motives are interwoven with intrinsic ones, because as regards working contents, these organisations offer the possibility to do very satisfying work in the area of performing arts with children from deprived neighbourhoods.

Comparable mixtures are to be found in Romania among young people interviewed as trendsetters, who are “collecting” courses and certificates – sampling formal education at the university with non-formal training and education at adult education centres or with NGO’s, subjects and activities they are intrinsically motivated for and others which have only a strategical function – in order to develop a skills profile as broad as possible for an uncalculable labour market demand. *Flexibility* to a high degree seems to be the only way to cope with this structural problem. This strategy is combined with another strategy, which is also flexible: temporary jobs, mainly in areas that have nothing to do with their qualifications, even in the black market. In the cases of these young people, very often the supportive contact to an NGO is the one which supports their motivation and prevents it from turning downwards.

5 Conclusions

In this report we were interested in the learning experiences of young people from their attendance at institutions concerned with education and work. For heuristic reasons we addressed two contrasting groups for exploratory individual and group interviews: young people who have *disengaged* or are in the process of disengagement with the formal transition system and those who have been successful in a broad and personally defined sense by

following individual learning pathways whom we called *trend-setters*. We assumed that *both groups* of young people would share essentially the same desire to protect their subjective aspirations and needs from being forced into standardised institutional transition schemes. But as regards the social starting position, the disengaged have less chance than the trend-setters to succeed in that desire. This approach depends on the broader context of this analysis which consists of an action research project investigating the relation between active participation, informal learning and young people's motivation (or active engagement) in their biographical transitions. We discerned two crucial dimensions to account for the assumed differences between the young people interviewed: structural *resources and opportunities* (education, socio-economic background, family support, gender, ethnic origin) and the degree of personal *engagement*, i.e. the individuals' motivation to actively acquire and use resources or to or to seize given opportunities.

The first step we undertook was to construct a typology of dimensions which – based on theoretical as well as empirical evidence – are relevant for biographical constellations between independent activity and engagement on the one hand and disengagement and de-motivation on the other (table 2). In relating the interviews to these dimensions we found more evidence for a variety of biographic constellations on the continuum rather than the contrast between engagement and disengagement. We also found that among those who were next to the ideal types of low resources/opportunities and disengagement there was a range of forms between passive apathy, compromising adaptation and active or even hostile rebellion against the formal institutions of the transition system. At the same time, in only a few cases disengagement extended over the individuals whole lives but referred to formal trajectories whilst they engaged in leisure activities or family life. The most valuable knowledge we gained by moving between theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence is the broad range of mixed and ambiguous constellations, a finding that corresponds to the highly de-standardised, individualised and fragmented character of contemporary youth transitions.

One fact which contributed to the relativisation of the concepts (or labels) 'disengaged' and 'trend-setters' was the fact that due to variations in access to the young people being interviewed the age range was rather broad. Furthermore, as transition agencies were used to access towards potentially disengaged young people we found the borders between disengagement and engagement increasingly blurred. At the same time however, this raised our interest for the dynamic structure of motivation – or better: *motivational careers*. Young people who originally had been de-motivated and actually had disengaged, turned into potential or actual 'trend-setters' in terms of individually constructing their biographies and

claiming for opportunities of choice. We therefore looked for ‘turning points’ in their motivational careers. Such turning points were most visible in the biographies of young people whom – despite of disadvantages in terms of resources and opportunities – maintained or regained intrinsic motivation and active engagement. For our research purposes this group was the most interesting one, revealing both the counterproductive effects of the formal transition system (e.g. education, careers counselling and standardised training schemes) and the boost in motivation and self-confidence facilitated through agencies that applied an explicitly participatory and open approach addressing young people as authors of their biographies in the first place.

We tried to show turning points in the motivational careers of young women and men by looking for examples in which the relevance and the dynamic effects of the motivational and biographical dimensions clustered as *educational and occupational choices*, *networking*, *social recognition*, and *strategies* became most obvious. This exercise did not only have the objective to show how fluent our previous ascriptions of “disengaged“ and “trend-setters“ in reality are, but also to emphasise the dynamics of transitions. This may provoke another misunderstanding in terms of “all is fluent“, “everything can change all the time“. Therefore, the contextualisation of turning points with regard to learning or empowering situations (and the structural properties of these situations) is crucial.

First of all, we can say that these turning points are about *learning*; they are about getting access to learning experiences, about opening oneself for learning, they are about getting in touch with personal meaningfulness. Where meaning in general is regarded as a scarce resource, which has shifted from a given into a task (see Bauman 2001), such learning – on a structural as well as on an individual level – becomes more and more important. “Meaning – our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful – is ultimately what learning is to produce“ (Wenger 1998:4). These general statements are illustrated on a very concrete level in these young women and men from different contexts and in different biographic constellations: as soon as they can detect something relevant for themselves, they have the opportunity to (re-) engage – and as soon as structural conditions and resources allow for it, they most probably do – be it because this learning experience supports them in their *educational or occupational choices*, be it because it empowers their *networking facilities*, be it because it provides them with *social recognition* and self-esteem, be it because it opens up their *personal future* or let them develop *appropriate strategies*. A closer look at the examples shows the relevance of our cluster-categories, and how they are linked to each other.

Without representing a comprehensive collection, their common ground is a *relevant learning experience*. As such, these learning experiences relate to *concrete learning situations* as socially structured time-space situations, in which something personally relevant happens. Learning is always both: it is structurally situated, but it is also an activity taking place in the individual biographies of young women and men, where it can enfold specific biographical relevance. Here the duality of structure (Giddens 1988) reappears: where relevant learning cannot take place, structure is just reproduced, that means: young people's lives tend to follow institutional pathways, structural constraints included. Where young people can make relevant learning experiences changes are possible: for example learning to know interesting people who give an idea for personal future prospects; learning how to deal with a problem successfully which perhaps empowers them with a different attitude towards future; learning to get social recognition for some activities which will reinforce such engagement, etc. This will make a difference in basic feelings, but also in decision making and in concrete engagement. By this, the whole setting may change – even more, if one takes into account, that young people themselves are part of this setting. Their own motivational careers could become part of the structural setting for others to follow.

This interplay of structure and agency is prominent as regards *gender*: Getting an idea how to live a life as young woman or as young man is one of the most hidden but at the same time one of the most important questions in young people's life. If we ask a young woman or man what makes learning experiences biographically relevant, almost always the answer is implicitly related to gender identity: where young women turned towards more engagement, they often had articulated an idea how to shape female gender roles according to their needs, they had found a kind of solution for gender-specific constraints (L.), or had experienced a kind of female empowerment (S.). Correspondingly, where young men turned towards more engagement 'for themselves', it was most often related to a more satisfying way to live masculinity: maybe by detecting a possibility to stay or to become authentic, maybe by getting support for homosexual orientation as one way of living masculinity (C.). Turning points therefore are about the "big topic" of (gendered) identity work: to balance and re-balance what an identity as young man or woman could be about, and to benefit in this sense from what such learning experiences potentially provide: a feeling of coherence, a feeling of comprehensibility, of manageability, and above all: of meaningfulness (see Keupp et al. 1999 with reference to Antonovsky 1987).

To sum up: Turning points – if they turn towards more motivation and engagement - are about learning; they are the consequence of personally relevant learning experiences, which take place in concrete learning situations as interplay between structure and agency. They also represent ways for negotiating gender, which underlines their personal relevance. This is how turning points in young people’s motivational careers can be described. But how can they be explained? We want to finish with some more explanatory ideas about how such turning points are facilitated or at least enabled by appropriate policies. At the same time this points to research questions, which in part, will be answered in the next phases of the research “Youth Policy and Participation”.

The impact of the informal

Young people frustrated by the formal transition system (mainly education, training, counselling and labour market) – be they trend-setters, disengaged or in between – often need (and claim) a different learning setting. Our exemplary cases have shown that they benefit from a more informal setting, where learning is linked to their life-worlds, life-styles, to youthful interests etc. Such settings can be found in non-formal learning settings – e.g. in third sector projects, in youth work, in all kind of artistic activities like performing arts, dancing, but also in training schemes with an alternative concept, where the empowerment of the whole person is the main objective. Young people themselves, as informal learning in personal networks, of course can also create comparable settings autonomously. Once the meaning of learning as personally relevant has anchored, this may bring young people back to fulfil even some basic demands of the formal transitional system, or make them realise ideas for their lives, or even stimulate them to develop new routes (if necessary resources are available). What we want to stress here, is that the quality of the informal (in terms of facilitating learning as well as providing support) is not restricted to privileged situations, it can also be provided and used in structured settings which then are experienced by young people as different. Turning from a disengaged state to re-engagement with regard to one’s own development often started with entering a project, where – maybe for the first time in their life – young women and men felt addressed *personally*. Only under such conditions, learning could start which – to a certain extent – can also be described as a process of adaptation – but with a big difference compared to former experiences: now they know, why they engage, and for which purpose.

The impact of active participation

What makes young women and men engage in their own transitional project? While transitions in the formal system imply participation in education, training and career counselling, young people experience these settings and their demands as highly alienating or even coercive. Disengagement therefore can be understood in a way that young people do not feel themselves participating in their own transitions while following standardised pathways. Interestingly, participation into the own biographical project often is closely linked to participation in something bigger than oneself – a group, a project, a community, a place to live. As regards our sample, this is not very surprising because, as mentioned above, the main criterion to choose case study agencies exactly was a more participatory approach compared to mainstream measures. And a lot of young people we became familiar with through these projects already the opportunity to experience active participation and were aware that this made a difference. Nevertheless, before the backdrop of this (biased) sample we can say: *if* young people have a say from the beginning, they feel personally acknowledged and are much more likely to engage in their own project; *if* young people have the opportunity to learn something subjectively relevant, to enfold their creative potential, to apply what they have learned, to show their skills and competences in their direct context or to a broader public, they feel empowered and as a consequence also will engage more. *If* young people can participate in their local contexts, create them, change them, shape them, they feel responsible or at least co-responsible – and will engage further. Participation therefore seems to be one of the clues to identification, social responsibility, and personal engagement.

The impact of trust and its implications

A central dimension which has not been addressed explicitly in most interviews but which appears to be implicit is trust. In the case agencies, young people who have disengaged with formal institutions now take up the challenge of engagement again – which always includes the risk of failing. Why is that so? Obviously, there is a relation between self-confidence and trust into the agency and its staff, which is at the core of active participation, engagement and intrinsic motivation. However, is trust possible in a situation which – regardless of open approaches – is structured by inequality?. One can assume that young men and women with low resources and opportunities who have disengaged with the formal system are highly sensitive to social inequality and interest conflicts. So, how is it possible that they start to trust and consequently to engage?

Social theorists stress the fact that in late modernity trust is both more necessary and more difficult (Hartmann & Offe, 2002). On the one hand the question for trust relationships and their effects on young people's motivation may be taken up in further research steps, on the other hand the dimension of trust is closely related to the aspects of social capital and social networks which have been very important for most of the young people interviewed

The impact of social capital and powerful networks (informal of not)

Turning points in motivational careers are mostly enabled (e.g. by participatory measures) and/or secured (e.g. by parents). The latter is shown clearly by young people whom we addressed as trend-setters and who disposed of high resources: the melange of social, cultural and economic capital provides a good and safe ground even for "risk behaviour"; this melange in the best case, provides powerful networks and social contacts to rely on, and in the worst case, it means a buffer preventing young people from too severe consequences. This allows young people with high resources to make the important experience that risk-taking some-times is worthwhile. Such an attitude, such openness towards risks (on a secured ground) in itself can be seen as a source for developing social capital further. In comparison, young people with less parental support or low social capital can develop such productive risk-taking only under the conditions of high personal risk. Social capital and powerful networks therefore are necessary to *afford* turning points and to keep the personal risk limited. This means: the encouraging benefit of such (risky) learning experiences is unevenly distributed among young people. Where social capital is available, it tends to flourish further, where it is not, young people tend to stick to what they regard as restricted but secure solutions. There is also the question about social space – a wide range of networks in a spatial sense reveals to be decisive for young people's careers (Ball et al. 2000). Consequently, some of the projects analysed in the framework of "Youth Policy and Participation" intend to provide disadvantaged young people (in terms of low resources and opportunities) with network skills and relevant contacts, to provide them with access to other spaces, and to give them the opportunity to learn about the "strength of weak ties" (Granovetter 1977), and of strong ties. This potential will be further explored in the research steps to follow.

Consequences for comparative research on transition experiences

As regards the appropriateness of this analysis for the research on youth transitions and transition policies two remarks should be made.

The first regards the comparative, cross-national or intercultural nature of our research. On the one hand, it is obvious that due to the difficulty accessing both young people addressed as

disengaged and trend-setters as well, and the fact that we concentrate on exceptionally participatory projects for young people in transition to work, sets limits to the comparability of the findings. On the other hand, experiences of de-motivation and disengagement as well as examples of highly motivated and individualised biographies were related to concrete given contexts. For example the forms of frustration and disengagement with formal institutions were related to the manner in which these institutions operated.. The scope for individually constructed biographies – the incentive to invest in the individual transition, the probability to arrive somewhere by doing so – was related to education, training and employment systems that were flexible enough to provide a diversity of access options while leaving space for reconciliation with formal and informal support networks. In further research it will be necessary to systematise such favourable contextual factors, which may serve as a list of indicators for a comparative evaluation of transition systems.

The second remark regards the approach of addressing two contrasting groups labelled as ‘disengaged’ and as ‘trend-setters’. It has shown that – though guiding the selection of respondents – this distinction served only heuristic reasons in terms of leading to questions and dimensions of ideal-typical biographical constellations between engagement and disengagement. Empirically the material only rarely matched these ideal types, i.e. the concrete biographical constellations of the 280 young women and men who have been interviewed. Yet, the contradiction between the heuristic distinction and real lives opened our eyes for the dynamic relation between disengagement and engagement, between motivation and de-motivation, between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. As a consequence this means that using fixed categories to classify young people – not only as disengaged or trend-setters but also as disadvantaged – always to some extent are ascriptions inspired by the dominant assumptions of ‘normality’. They do not only lead to policies that tend to de-motivate young people and to waste learning motivation but also to research that runs the risk of neglecting, overlooking or actively hiding the complexity of young people’s transitions, identities and strategies, their strengths and weaknesses. Initially, the term ‘disengaged’ had been explicitly chosen for reasons of research ethics. It was supposed to reflect that de-motivation often leads to active withdrawal from institutions thus reflecting that lacking options produce active coping strategies of young people. The intention was to avoid the term disadvantage which often primarily refers to individual deficits – lacking motivation included – and therefore merely conceives young people as passive victims. However, our analysis process revealed that at the same disengagement can be used as a moral category ascribing individual responsibility for disadvantages as a result of having disengaged while disadvantage may

more easily be related to structural dimensions – if explicitly done so. MacDonald and Marsh (2001) by „disconnected“ youth refer to the relation (or distance) of young people to „mainstream opportunities, lifestyles and outlooks“. Such a notion may have the advantage of being restricted to the fact of social exclusion and not to refer to (individual and/or structural) causes at the same time. Yet, it can be assumed that all attempts to describe and classify young people who face problems and exclusion risks in their transitions to work are prone to being hitch-hiked by ascription mechanisms in order to reproduce and justify structures of selection and social inequality.

In the following research steps we will depart from the ‘trend-setter’ group and fully concentrate on the experiences of young people with low resources and opportunities who have at least partly disengaged with the formal system and their paths through the case agencies. Yet, the dimensions of motivation and engagement that have been developed around the category of ‘trend-setters’ (table 2) and the evidence we found in their biographies will guide us in analysing and evaluating the chosen agencies.

Policy implications

Investigating the potential of participation and informal learning on young people’s motivation in transitions to work one cannot pay attention solely to the support provided through participatory pedagogy or projects. This is even particularly true if analysing so-called best practice projects and concentrating on the biographies of young women and men who despite structural disadvantages have maintained or developed motivation to actively engage in their transitions (especially after experiencing agency support. One has to consider general political-economic structures as well (and it will be necessary and helpful to use the comparative-contextual knowledge related to upward turning points in this regard). Otherwise, participatory approaches just contribute to the elevator effect of re-structuring competition for scarce socially recognised *and* subjectively meaningful positions in society.

When we state that *all* young people should be entitled to receive satisfying and successful learning and working experiences, we distance ourselves from a position which concentrates only on the most disadvantaged young people. In policy terms this means to argue for an approach of *Integrated Transition Policies* (see Walther, Stauber et al. 2002) which avoids one-sidedness in youth-oriented policies (education and training, welfare and labour market policies). Integrated Transition Policies means that policies are planned and evaluated from the perspective of the individual biography. Therefore they have to be flexible in terms of cross-sectoral coordination, in terms of recognising learning processes, also if occurring

informally, in recognising work also if not paid according to standard work arrangements. Finally, and this has been underlined by our findings, flexibility has to be balanced by security. In many cases this basic security is provided by young people's families, whilst in others it is lacking and thus may undermine the development of trust into society and its institutions. Therefore, an equivalent to family support might be extended to all young people through a form of basic income for young people to give them minimum security during their transition period in order to make full use of their learning potentials in a knowledge based society which is at the same time a risk society.

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ANNEX 1:

TABLES OF RESPONDENTS YOYO PROJECT

‘DISENGAGED’ SAMPLE

1: PROJECT / NUMBER / GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Denmark

Project:	Male	Female	Total
1/ Open Youth Education	1	7	8
2/ Ecological Starters	2		2
3/ Girls House/ Boys House	7	4	11
<i>Total</i>	10	11	21

Ireland

Project:	Male	Female	Total
1/ Glen Foroige	6	4	10
2/ Youghal Youthreach		8	8
3/ Cork Simon	2	2	4
<i>Total</i>	8	14	22

Italy

Project:	Male	Female	Total
1/ Palermo	5	3	8
2/ Turin	2	1	3
3/ Campagnola	4	2	6
<i>Total</i>	11	6	17

Germany-West

Project:	Male	Female	Total
1/ La Silhouette		5	5
2/ Mobile Youth Work	11	1	12
<i>Total</i>	11	6	17

Germany-East

Project:	Male	Female	Total
1/ Shalom Freiberg	1	3	4
2/ Job-Shop / Kompass-Job-In / Dresden	4		4
<i>Total</i>	5	3	8

Netherlands

Project:	Male	Female	<i>Total</i>
1/ Cityteam	5	6	11
2/ Center Parcs	3	5	8
3/ Starters Service Center Almere	6	1	7
<i>Total</i>	14	12	26

Portugal

Project:	Male	Female	<i>Total</i>
1/ Batotu Yetu	2	3	5
2/ Principes do Nada		7	7
3/ Aldeia de Santa Isabel	3	2	5
<i>Total</i>	5	12	17

Romania

Project:	Male	Female	<i>Total</i>
1/ Solaris	7	6	13
2/ Szinfo	4	2	6
3/ project 3	1	3	4
<i>Total</i>	12	11	23

Spain

Project:	Male	Female	<i>Total</i>
1/ University Valencia			
2/ 'Laura Vicuña'; Torrent		7	7
3/ Alfajar's Labor Cooperative	5	1	6
4/ Mallorca's Labor Cooperative	7	2	9
<i>Total</i>	12	10	22

United Kingdom

Project:	Male	Female	<i>Total</i>
1/ Community leadership programme 'Lifting the Limits'		8	8
2/ Opportunity Youth Females		6	6
3/ Opportunity Youth Group 1 - Males	3		3
4/ Opportunity Youth Group 2 - Males	3		3
<i>Total</i>	6	14	20

2: COUNTRY / AGE

	DK	IRL	IT	GER-W	GER-E	NL	P	ROM	SP	UK	Total
12							1				1
13							2				2
14		1	1				2	2			6
15	1	4					3				8
16	7	6		1	1	1	2	1	6	1	26
17	5	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	5	5	28
18	5	2	2	2		4		5	4	2	26
19	1	3	3	3		5	2	1	1	2	21
20		1	2	4		3		4	1	1	16
21		2	2	3		4	1	3		3	18
22			1	1	2	3		3	2	1	13
23		1	3	1		2		1	1	2	11
24	1		1			1				2	5
25			1		1			2	2		6
26					2						2
27					1	1					2
28											
29											
30	1										1
Total	21	22	17	17	8	26	17	23	22	19*	192*
<i>Average age</i>	18	17	20	19	23	20	16	20	19	20	-

* UK: one respondent missing; totals based on n=19

3: GENDER

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	Total
DK	10	11	21
IRL	8	14	22
IT	11	6	17
GER-W	11	6	17
GER-E	5	3	8
NL	14	12	26
P	5	12	17
ROM	12	11	23
SP	12	10	22
UK	6	14	20
<i>Total</i>	94	99	193

4: LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	<i>At most primary^o qualification</i>	<i>Lower secondary / compulsory¹ level</i>	<i>Higher secondary / post-compulsory²</i>	<i>Higher education</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>
DK	7	12	2			21
IRL	1	20	1			22
IT		7	10			17
GER-W	6	8	1		2	17
GER-E	2	2	4			8
NL	5	10	5	1	5	26
P	7	8	2			17
ROM	3	8	12			23
SP	2	17	3			22
UK		18	2			20
Total	33	110	42	1	7	193

^o Includes early school-leavers at the compulsory level and those still studying at compulsory level

¹ compulsory level = successfully finished lower secondary education: includes early school-leavers at the higher levels and those still studying in higher levels

² successfully finished post-compulsory general education or vocational training

‘TREND-SETTER’ SAMPLE

1: PROJECT / NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (IF APPLICABLE¹)

	<i>First project</i>	<i>Second project</i>	<i>Third project</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Total</i>
DK		1		6	7
IRL	3	1	2	4	10
IT				9	9
GER-W	5	1		2	8
GER-E				7	7
NL				9	9
P				13	13
ROM	5	4	1		10
SP	16	3			19
UK				7	7
Total	29	10	3	57	99

¹ Not all trendsetter have been picked in relation to different projects; in that case they are in category ‘none’

2: GENDER

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	Total
DK	1	6	7
IRL	6	4	10
IT	7	2	9
GER-W	3	5	8
GER-E	5	2	7
NL	8	1	9
P	8	5	13
ROM	6	4	10
SP	2	17	19
UK	5	2	7
<i>Total</i>	51	48	99

3: LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	<i>At most primary^o qualification</i>	<i>Lower secondary / compulsory¹ level</i>	<i>Higher secondary / post-compulsory²</i>	<i>Higher education</i>	Total
DK			2	5	7
IRL		7	2	1	10
IT	2		6	1	9
GER-W			8		8
GER-E		1	5	1	7
NL			8	1	9
P		4		9	13
ROM		4	6		10
SP		1	2	16	19
UK			3	4	7
Total	2	17	42	38	99

^o Includes early school-leavers at the compulsory level and those still studying at compulsory level

¹ compulsory level = successfully finished lower secondary education: includes early school-leavers at the higher levels and those still studying in higher levels

² successfully finished post-compulsory general education or vocational training

4: PROFESSIONAL STATUS

Denmark

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
28	Male	Unemployed / volunteer consultant for ecological production school / housepainter (moonlighter)
28	Female	Psychology student / part-time job in institution for mentally ill
35	Female	Psychologist and part-time employed within IT research project
31	Female	Teacher at Psychology Institute at University / psychotherapist
38	Female	Psychologist working in project for children with brain damage
35	Female	Clinician in children's ward of hospital
33	Female	Research assistant at psychological research center

Ireland

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
32	Male	Disabled
26	Male	Self-employed musician
21	Female	Full-time education
23	Male	Catering
21	Female	Care staff / Sports instructor
23	Male	Factory operator / Computer tutor
19	Male	Factory operator
30	Female	Hairdresser
33	Female	Shop owner
28	Male	Bar manager

Italy

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
33	Male	Graphic designer in advertising / active member of Bologna gay association
27	Male	Librarian / active member of Bologna gay association
33	Male	Art director of gay center / scriptwriter / active member of Bologna gay association
29	Male	Cinematographer of independent video productions
35	Male	Restaurant manager
30	Female	Restaurant manager
29	Female	Manager of theater group for children
33	Male	IT-consultant and lecturer in educational technology
34	Male	Iridologist / naturopath

Germany-West

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
26	Female	Tailor
26	Female	Employment in fashion-related computer business
28	Female	Employed by temporary work agency
34	Male	Setting up tailor business
35	Female	Setting up tailor business
21	Male	Enrolled in higher education

Germany-East

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
23	Female	Part-time university student
28	Male	Setting up own cycling shop
27	Male	Enrolled in media school / projects, presentations and tour accompaniment for artists and musicians
27	Male	Self-employed as musician, DJ and barkeeper
25	Male	IT employee at 'New Economy'
27	Female	Occasionally employed and unemployed in outdoor jobs and education
32	Male	Education and training

Netherlands

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
25	Male	Own catering company
27	Female	Enrolled in education (primary education teacher)
30	Male	Own company for selling music via internet / selling music at record fairs
24	Male	Enrolled in university
24	Male	Own temporary work agency for students via internet and enrolled in university
27	Male	Own import business and enrolled in higher professional education
24	Male	Own import business / part-time cleaner
30	Male	Own decorating company (parties, clubs) and assistant-manager at local cultural center
29	Male	Own decorating company (parties, clubs)

Portugal

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
29	Male	Own enterprise (Enviestudos): consultancy projects in environmental area; creating new, complementing enterprise
30	Male	Own enterprise (Enviestudos): consultancy projects in environmental area; creating new, complementing enterprise
28	Female	Own enterprise (Vertigem Azul): dolphin-seeing trips and canoe lessons for children
27	Male	Own enterprise (Vertigem Azul): dolphin-seeing trips and canoe lessons for children
23	Female	Own enterprise (Multiweb) in multimedia: digital newspaper, designing websites and other multimedia projects
21	Male	Own enterprise (Multiweb) in multimedia: digital newspaper, designing websites and other multimedia projects
27	Male	Own IT-enterprise (NetVita): developing information systems for both public and private Health Care Institutions
24	Male	Own enterprise (Netsonda), internet business: internet surveys
26	Male	Own enterprise (Netsonda), internet business: internet surveys
24	Male	Own enterprise (Netsonda), internet business: internet surveys
32	Female	Performance artist doing live caricatures at events or on shops (Animaovivo)
30	Female	Owner of beach bar and restaurant (Windsurf Caff�)
30	Female	24 hour (emergency) service for dog owners (SuperC�o)

Romania

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
16	Male	Occasional jobs
20	Female	Student of Foreign Language University / Occasional jobs
27	Male	Stoker course
21	Female	Secretary at Solaris and occasional distributor Oriflame
24	Female	Secretary at Solaris
27	Male	Executive Director in Youth Union (local NGO)
21	Male	Employed at Radio Star
23	Female	Student at Economic College / Occasional jobs
21	Male	Own company (utilitarian mountaineering)
20	Male	Involved in artistic projects

Spain

<i>Age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
25	Male	Student of Social Education at university
19	Female	Student of Social Education at university
19	Female	Student of Social Education at university
19	Female	Student of Social Education at university
19	Female	Student of Social Education at university
21	Female	Student of Social Education at university
21	Female	Student of Social Education at university
20	Female	Student of Social Education at university
20	Female	Student of Social Education at university
20	Female	Student of Social Education at university
20	Female	Student of Social Education at university
25	Male	Student of Social Education at university
22	Female	Student of Social Education at university
23	Female	Student of Social Education at university
19	Female	Student of Social Education at university
19	Female	Student of Social Education at university
21	Female	Job training via Association 'Laura Vicuna'
16	Female	Job training via Association 'Laura Vicuna'
19	Female	Job training via Association 'Laura Vicuna'

United Kingdom

<i>age</i>	<i>gender</i>	<i>Professional / educational / other status</i>
23	Male	Actor
25	Male	Director (<i>own company</i>)
23	Female	Political Aid
25	Male	Managing Director
25	Female	Artist
20	Male	Web celebrity
26	Male	Managing Director (<i>own company</i>)

ANNEX 2:

TABLES OF CASE STUDY AGENCIES INVOLVED

1: TYPES OF AGENCIES SELECTED FOR CASE STUDIES

	Number of cases	Countries
Youth work (incl. youth information and cultural activities)	7	Italy, Great Britain, Germany (West), Portugal, Romania; NL
School-related projects	1	Denmark
Prevention of social exclusion (projects for groups at risk)	7	Ireland, Great Britain, Portugal, Romania, Spain
Community development projects	2	Great Britain, Italy
Pre-vocational schemes	3	Germany (East), Ireland
Training schemes; dual trajectories	3	Germany (West), Netherlands, Romania
Job creation projects	2	Germany (East), Spain
Promotion of self-employment	2	Denmark, Netherlands

2: SHORT CHARACTERISATION OF CASE STUDY AGENCIES

DENMARK

Place	Aarhus
Name of Project / Organisation	Free Youth Education
Target Group	Young people with difficulties with normal formal educational systems/Youth marginalised
Objectives	To have a youth education in an alternative way

Place	Copenhagen
Name of Project / Organisation	The Ecological Starters
Target Group	Primarily Young people or secondarily unemployed, skilled or unskilled.
Objectives	To educate "Green guides", form activist groups, run ecological caf�es/catering and promote ecologist thinking/trading and living.

Place	Copenhagen
Name of Project / Organisation	<i>Cultural IT-Activity House (No-name)</i>
Target Group	Young people with technological/artistic imagination/skills
Objectives	To experiment and/or start private one to two person companies

GERMANY (EAST)

Place	Freiberg
Name of Project / Organisation	Shalom Saxony – Bohemia: documentation of the history, culture and tradition of Jews in the Saxon-Bohemian border region.
Target Group	10 Recipients of welfare benefits of different qualifications aged 18 to 28 but without labour market experience
Objectives	Sensitisation against anti-semitism and racism, easing labour market integration through practical work experience and vocational training (Specialized employee for media and information services)

Place	Dresden
Name of Project / Organisation	QAD Ltd., Job Shop
Target Group	Young people aged 15 to 25 with low or no income (registered or not registered unemployed, with or without school leaving certificates, welfare benefit recipients) interested in short term or fixed term contracts and no primary interest in permanent labour market integration or traditional forms of vocational youth assistance schemes
Objectives	Placements in short term jobs liable to social security in private enterprises and households, counselling, advice and training whenever necessary

GERMANY (WEST)

Place	Munich
Name of Project / Organisation	La Silhouette
Target Group	Young females with different ethnic background (african, turkish, afghan,...)
Objectives	Providing vocational training in the area of dressmaking for young females with low opportunities on the local labour market (12 places); Support and empowerment; space for cultural origins; intercultural learning; space to negotiate femininity in-between different cultures

Place	Stuttgart
Name of Project / Organisation	Mobile Youth Work (in deprived neighbourhoods Hallschlag and Zuffenhausen)
Target Group	Young Women and Men with low school attainment aged 16-27 years (80 per cent from a non-German family)
Objectives	Providing guidance and counselling to those who aren't reached by the Employment Service and other youth services

IRELAND

Place	Cork City
Name of Project/ Organization	Cork Simon Youth and Drugs Project
Target Group	18-25 Yr. Old Homeless Young People at risk of or using drugs
Objectives	Engagement/Stabilization/Support towards re-integration with mainstream society. The ongoing core aim is to intervene so as to prevent the young person from falling into the cycle of homelessness, which is in some respects akin to institutionalization.

Place	Youghal, County Cork
Name of Project/ Organization	Youghal Youthreach County Cork Vocational Education Committee
Target Group	15 to 20 year old early school leavers.
Objectives	Achieve basic qualifications/prepare young people for labour market.

Place	Cork City
Name of Project/ Organization	Glen Action Project (GAP) Foroige
Target Group	10-18 Yr Olds at risk of or involved in crime
Objectives	<i>"To enable the target group" "to integrate into the labour force in a systematic manner and to prevent them from becoming unemployable"</i>

ITALY

Place	Palermo
Name of Project / Organisation	"From play to work"
Target Group	Target group: Young people between 12-25 years, living in 2 districts of Palermo characterized by poverty, high mafia density, and a strong lack of social and public structures/services. Many children leave early the school and are often involved in the local micro-criminal bands.
Objectives	Objectives: to give alternatives to social and cultural poverty and to a context, which is often aggressive and indifferent; to give recreational and cultural chances to young people, promoting their personal qualities and resources; to start initiatives aimed at their socialization and personal growth

Place	Campagnola (District of Reggio Emilia)- North
Name of Project / Organisation	Youth Centre
Target Group	Young People 15-24 years
Objectives	Objectives: 1)To offer an alternative way of life (instead of apathy and indifference) 2)To stimulate guys forcing them to be active and creative 3)To build up a "sense of community"

Place	Turin - North of Italy
Name of Project / Organisation	Progetto "Giovani e Periferie" (Youth and Suburbs)
Target Group	Young people between 15-25 years, living in 4 zones of Turin with big social problems (high rates of school wastage, poor social extra-familiar relations, implosion in micro-groups with self-protective functions, youth tribalism, few self-organised and consumption-free initiatives, loosing the sense of citizenship and giving up the fight for civil rights, looking for alternatives based on micro-violence and micro-criminality)
Objectives	re-generation and development of four suburban districts ; creation of social and cultural "workshops" for young people; training and job creation for young people in the field of self-maintenance of public buildings in the districts (repairing works, green belts, etc.); training and job creation for young women in the field of care works.

NETHERLANDS

Place	Different places, mostly rural areas; on-the-job training takes place at Centerparcs holiday resorts
Name of Project / Organisation	Helicon
Target Group	-(young) unemployed -job-switchers -school-leavers without a high enough starting qualification
Objectives	-Gaining work experience -Obtaining a diploma in an alternative way -Development of new qualifications for educational institutions

Place	Rotterdam, Utrecht (two of the major cities in the country), Zoetermeer
Name of Project / Organisation	Cityteam
Target Group	Young people, approx. between 15 and 25 (although no explicit age-barriers are mentioned: early school-leavers, unemployed, homeless, ex-convicts, etc. Some are also still in school but use Cityteam as a means of orientation for further education or the choice of a profession
Objectives	Supporting young people in helping themselves with regard to education, choosing a profession, the transition from school to work, getting out of unemployment, etc. Among other things, this is done by doing voluntary work for the community. Enrolment occurs on a voluntary basis; participants are picked on their motivation to enter

Place	Regional: province of Flevoland, partly rural, partly urban
Name of Project / Organisation	3 items: 1. Flevoland Starters Traject (FST) in Almere (town in Flevoland; more or less local project) 2. FST, regional coverage 3. 'Ondernemerschap als een reëel alternatief' (entrepreneurship as a real alternative; EQUAL program)
Target Group	Variable: Item 1: unemployed (young) people and starting or already started entrepreneurs who can be mediated relatively easily Item 2: in general similar but now also aimed at with less mediation opportunities (regional coverage) Item 3: in general similar but aimed at those with the least mediation opportunities (those (young) people who are at great distance of the labour market)
Objectives	Among other things: -exploiting untapped entrepreneurial resources in the region -integration of (young) people at a relatively great distance of the labour market -preventing long-term unemployment

PORTUGAL

Place	Lisbon
Name of Project / Organisation	Principes do Nada (Princes of Nothingness)
Target Group	Gypsy Community in Carnide (Lisbon)
Objectives	To promote an integrated intervention with the Gypsy Community of Vale do Forno, to solve their basic needs such as food, health, education, and housing and, at the same time, to promote social, cultural, economical competencies and skills, in articulation with the surrounding environment.

Place	Sintra (Lisbon)
Name of Project / Organisation	Aldeia de Santa Isabel (Village of Santa Isabel)
Target Group	Disadvantaged young people
Objectives	Aldeia de Santa Isabel is a village where different generations live and share different things. This project deals with elderly people as well as with children and young people. People suffering from abandon, physical/affective isolation, battering or orphans. The interchange among the elderly and the young aims to promote both their integration in the community supporting each other and sharing/changing experiences and experiencing mutual learning.

Place	Lisbon
Name of Project / Organisation	BATOTO-YETO
Target Group	Disadvantaged African young people aged 7 to 17
Objectives	By being a part of a dance and music group they establish contact with their African origins. This is done through cultural activities such as dance and music. At the same time increase self-esteem, perseverance and discipline.

ROMANIA

Place	Bucharest
Name of Project / Organization	“We want to become independent” Community Supporting Children (CSC)
Target Group	Children from Placement Centers
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting children to develop their capacity to live independently ▪ Enhancing children’s motivation for participation ▪ Improving training system and trainers’ performance in the Placement Centers

Place	Odorheiu Secuiesc, Harghita County
Name of Project / Organization	Information and Counseling Services for Youth
Target Group	Young people aged 15-35
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep young people informed on available opportunities for their individual accomplishment ▪ Help young people to solve their day to day problems ▪ Help young people to build up their adult identity and develop the sense of responsibility ▪ Facilitate relationship between young people and institutions/organizations that provide youth related services and/or implement youth policies ▪ Help young people to find their right place and role within society ▪ Contribute to diminishing the disadvantages shoulded by young people because of their age or social position ▪ Help young people to understand social processes and encourage their active involvement in these processes

Place	Piesti, Arges county
Name of Project / Organization	SOLARIS
Target Group	Young people under the risk of unemployment
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting young people to enhance their educational and vocational credentials and gain a foothold in the labor market ▪ Developing and improving the vocational training system on nongovernmental basis ▪ Providing integrated services that may help young people to better manage their transitions (information, counseling, training and retraining, job club etc.)

SPAIN

Place	Alfajar, small town near Valencia (20,000 inhabitants, including immigrants who arrived in the 60s/70s; town keeps on receiving immigrants from North Africa.
Name of Project	Infinite patience!
Target Group	Local youth between 16 and 30 outside the school system and with difficulties to become socially included.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.- To favour laboral insertion. 2.- To avoid social exclusion. 3.- To support groups with social difficulties. 4.- To make townspeople aware through their participation in the closest social environment. 5.- To create jobs for young people with difficulties. 6.- To look for non-formal strategies of inclusion for socially-excluded young people and women.

Place	Torrent: town near the city of Valencia (63,000 inhabitants) including a good number of immigrants who arrived in the 60s/70s. Nowadays this town keeps on receiving immigrants from North Africa and other areas.
Name of Project	Association Laura Vicuña (Drop out / Gender)
Target Group	Local youth between 16 and 25 outside the school system and with difficulties to become socially included.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.- To acquire basic professional abilities and skills. 2.- To widen the training of the participants through the acquisition of those skills characteristic of a basic training. 3.- To encourage motivation and autonomy in the process of job search. 4.- To accomplish a real middle-term socio-economic insertion. 5.- To develop the autonomy and to consolidate the personal maturity which allow and favour public participation. 6.- To inform on issues of a general interest and to encourage personal thought and involvement.

Place	Palma de Mallorca, Majorca (Barrio), capital of the Balearic Islands.
Name of Project	“Pep-Pepes” Insertion of youth and immigrants.
Target Group	Local youth and immigrants outside the school system and with difficulties to become socially included.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.- To favour labour insertion. 2.- To favour labour training. 3.- Orientation and follow-up of the youth.

UK – NORTHERN IRELAND

Place	Belfast
Name of Project / Organisation	‘Lifting the Limits’ A Community Leadership Programme for Young Mothers (Youth Action) – Northern Ireland
Target Group	young mothers aged 16 – 25
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the inequalities of training and barriers facing young mothers and support their inclusion into the employment world and life of community • Provide a model of training which combines personal and professional development with information Technology skills (IT) in preparation for the modern labour market

Place	Belfast, Based in Winetavern Street (city –centre neutral location) Satellite locations in each of the training organisations Community & Youth Groups
Name of Project / Organisation	Opportunity Youth Belfast
Target Group	<p>marginalised high risk youth affected by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Troubles” • Live in highly disadvantaged and deprived areas • High unemployment, job prospects limited • No role model of working parent • School achievements minimal- literacy/numeracy problems • Consequently low self esteem; poor motivation • Home/Community Life likely to be unsupported and unfulfilling • Family problems are a feature of daily life for many • Lack of service provision for this age group- reduced to life on the streets
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To access a marginalised high risk client group and reward achievement • To empower young people to make informed choices about their current lifestyles • To enable young people to make the most of their potential (employment and other) • To encourage young people to make more effective use of health and social provision

Nr.	Titel	AutorInnen	Datum
Nr. 1-2007	Youth – Actor of Social Change. Theoretical reflections on young people's agency in comparative perspective. Interim discussion paper for the UP2YOUTH project.	Axel Pohl, Barbara Stauber & Andreas Walther	Oktober 2007
Nr. 1-2006	Lebenslanges Lernen - ein Konzept zum Abbau der Benachteiligung von Jugendlichen?	Axel Pohl	Dezember 2006
Nr. 1-2005	Thematic Study on Policy Measures concerning Disadvantaged Youth. Final report	Andreas Walther & Axel Pohl	Dezember 2005
Nr. 1-2004	Trust, space, time and opportunities Case study report on participation and non-formal education in the support for young people in transitions to work in West-Germany	Axel Pohl & Barbara Stauber	Februar 2004
Nr. 1-2003	Participation and Informal Learning in Young Peoples Transitions to Work. Joint Analysis Report for the YOYO project	Morena Cuconato, Corina Laasch, Gabriele Lenzi & Andreas Walther	April 2003
Nr. 5-2002	How to Avoid Cooling Out? Experiences of young people in their transitions to work across Europe. WP2 Report for the YOYO project	Manuela du Bois-Reymond, Wim Plug, Barbara Stauber, Axel Pohl & Andreas Walther	July 2002
Nr. 4-2002	Families and Transitions in Germany. National Report for the Project 'Families and Transitions in Europe' for Germany	Jutta Goltz, Barbara Stauber, Andreas Walther & Simone Menz	April 2002
Nr. 3-2002	Ehemalige Sindelfinger HauptschülerInnen im Übergang in die Arbeitswelt. Ergebnisse der Längsschnittuntersuchung zum beruflichen Verbleib von HauptschulabsolventInnen in Sindelfingen	Wolfgang Carl, Axel Pohl & Sabine Schneider	April 2002
Nr. 2-2002	Chancengleichheit von (jungen) Frauen und Männern am Übergang von der Schule zum Beruf bei der Einrichtung von lokalen Netzwerken für Beschäftigung. Endbericht	Gunter Neubauer, Sabine Riescher & Reinhard Winter	März 2002
Nr. 1-2002	Youth Transitions, Youth Policy and Participation. State of the Art Report for the YOYO project	Andreas Walther, Gry Moerch Hejl, Torben Bechmann Jensen With the assistance of Amanda Hayes	März 2002
Nr. 2-2001	Transitions to work, youth policies and 'participation' in Germany. National report for the YOYO project	Andreas Walther, Barbara Stauber, Axel Pohl & Holger Seifert	November 2001
Nr. 1-2001	Abschlußbericht zum deutschen Teil des Projektes INTEMIGRA	Jutta Goltz, Gebhard Stein unter der Mitarbeit von Sarina Ahmed & Friedemann Bär	Oktober 2001
Nr. 2-2000	Beratung sozialer Netzwerke im Dritten Sektor: Beschäftigung für (benachteiligte) Jugendliche in der Jugend- und Sozialarbeit. Abschlussbericht	Anne Schwarz, Barbara Stauber & Andreas Walther	Dezember 2000

Nr.	Titel	AutorInnen	Datum
Nr. 1-2000	„Coming out of the shell“ - Advantages of performing arts in the context of riskful youth transitions. Report on the research project „Secondary learning effects in community arts“	Rui B. Banha, Maria do Carmo Gomes, Steven Miles, Axel Pohl, Barbara Stauber & Andreas Walther	März 2000
Nr. 1-1999	Institutionelle Risiken sozialer Ausgrenzung im deutschen Übergangssystem. Nationaler Bericht für Deutschland (West)	Barbara Stauber & Andreas Walther	März 2000

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