

YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT: THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

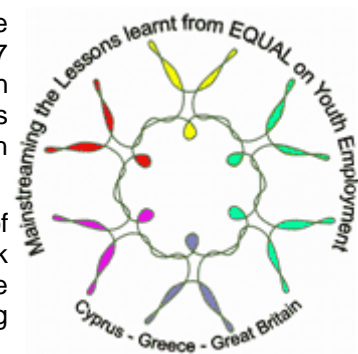
More than ever, the issue of youth employment remains on the top of the European agenda as highlighted by the recent [communication](#) from the Commission. The first ever European-level event on young people in the EQUAL Community Initiative will take place in Limassol (Cyprus) at the end of September 2007. It is intended that the lessons learned in EQUAL should be mainstreamed and used to feed the new ESF Operational Programmes in the Member States.

The Managing Authority of Cyprus, in collaboration with Greece and the United Kingdom, is hosting this Exchange Event on 27 and 28 September. This meeting is co-financed by the European Commission and the intention is to mainstreaming the good ideas and novel approaches on the theme of Youth Employment, which have emerged from EQUAL.

The event will also facilitate the communication and exchange of good practice with the perspective of creating a thematic network on Youth Employment. It will address the four topics which be the focus of workshops on the first afternoon and the following morning, namely:

- Modernisation of existing structures and support services;
- Networking local agencies, NGOs and social partners;
- Enhancing the employability of young people through entrepreneurship and self-employment;
- Tailoring programmes to meet employment problems of young people.

Some 16 EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) will make presentations in these workshops and they will be joined by other DPs and Member State government representatives who will share the opportunity to exchange experiences of developing activities to promote employment for young people and to validate these good practices.



BUILDING A THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Young offenders from the Finnish PoMo DP learning to trust their mentors

In order to provide a framework for the discussions in Cyprus, a thematic analysis was made on all second Round DPs working on the field of (re-)integration to the labour market within the Employability Pillar of EQUAL. This identified 247 DPs that were providing activities for young people but an initial reading of these descriptions revealed that 92 were solely concerned with the labour market integration of young people, as distinct from other target groups. In some Member States the number of these youth-oriented DPs was high. For example they represented 50% of all re-integration DPs in Sweden and in the Netherlands the comparable figure was 30%. Thus, a more representative sample was constructed with a limit of up to 4 DPs per Member State and all 62 of these DPs were improving young people's access to training and employment

THE TARGET GROUPS

These DPs are assisting young people with serious disadvantages including young people with low educational attainments, young people in children's homes and young migrants and Roma, as well as young people with physical or mental disabilities. The DPs are also coping with those who are at the most grave risk of exclusion such as young substance abusers, (ex)-offenders, prostitutes and victims of trafficking.

THE MOST STRIKING OUTCOMES



A number of DPs in the sample extend career options for girls and young women

Many of the DPs in the sample make the point that their target groups have rejected traditional forms of schooling and hence the fact that 92% have developed needs-based modules and courses, NIT and multi-media and practical training to ensure that young people see the learning as being both attractive and relevant.

Given their relative lack of experience and abilities, many young people need to come to a realisation that it is possible to change their existing situation. Some 74% of the DPs are offering motivation and empowerment activities that provide their beneficiaries with the stimulus to change and the proof that they themselves have the capacity to change.

Integrated territorial approaches that involve comprehensive local/regional strategies, networking and multi-agency cooperation have been adopted by 60% of the DPs. These approaches are often driven by EQUAL's partnership principle but they also reflect a growing realisation of the need to adopt an holistic approach if young people are to be integrated into adult and working life successfully.

The most disadvantaged young people are often the hardest to reach and so many of the developments in guidance and counselling in 50% of the DPs are allied to new structures or new delivery mechanisms. For example, DPs are using young people's interest in the internet and inter-active games as a vehicle to provide them with advice on careers and/or job search.

Other priorities pursued by a significant number of DPs include the training of actors in the integration process, the setting up of support structures, new forms of work, new career options and raising awareness that young people are a vital ingredient in economic and social development, as future demographic changes will result in an increased demand for more workers.

- To see all of the outcomes of the analysis of DPs that are promoting youth employment: [en](#)
- For further information and details of the event: [en](#)
- To see the details of the event on the [EQUAL website of Cyprus](#)
- *Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society*, Communication from the Commission (5/9/2007): [de](#) [en](#) [fr](#)