



Building a policy partnership with young people

EMPLOYMENT-YOUTHSTART and
the European Employment Strategy

Employment & social affairs



What is the European Social Fund?

The European Social Fund (ESF) invests in people. Its purpose is to improve the prospects of those who face the greatest obstacles in finding, keeping or regaining work. In this way the ESF enables millions of people throughout the European Union to play a fuller role in society and thus improve their quality of life.

The ESF provides European Union funding on a major scale for programmes which develop or regenerate people's 'employability'. This task centres on providing citizens with the right workskills as well as developing their social interaction skills, thereby improving their self-confidence and adaptability in the job market-place.

The ESF channels its support into strategic long-term programmes which help regions across Europe, particularly those lagging behind, to upgrade and modernise workforce skills and to stimulate entrepreneurial initiative. This encourages domestic and foreign investment into the regions, helping them to foster greater economic competitiveness and prosperity.

The ESF is the main tool through which the European Union translates its employment policy aims into action. In the six years 1994-1999 the ESF, which operates in all Member States, will have

made available ECU 47 billion, accounting for almost ten per cent of the European Union's total budget. The ESF also helps unlock funding at national level, through the use of a joint-funding principle which permits ESF support to be made available only for active measures already being undertaken by Member States to increase people's employment prospects.

The ESF's aims are both preventive and remedial. To help prevent future long-term unemployment, the ESF focuses its support on programmes which prepare young people better for working life, which help those in employment adapt or develop their skills to meet the challenges of change in the workplace, or which intervene early to help those losing their jobs who may be at risk of long-term unemployment to regain work quickly. For those who have reached the stage of long-term unemployment, the ESF concentrates on supporting coordinated programmes which provide a step-by-step path for people back into work. Underlying all the ESF's work is the principle of ensuring equal access to employment for men and women, the disabled, and disadvantaged minorities at risk of social exclusion.

Programmes are planned by Member States together with the European Commission and then implemented through a wide range of provider organisations both in the public and the private sectors. These organisations include national, regional and local authorities, educational and training institutions, voluntary organisations, trade unions and works councils, industry and professional associations, and individual companies.

The ESF helps fund a broad range of active schemes and projects, which include vocational training; work experience and placement schemes; training of teachers, trainers and public officials; employment counselling and job search assistance; employment aids and child-care facilities; schemes for developing or improving in-company training systems and structures; and research projects which anticipate and help plan for economies' future workforce needs.

The ESF acts as a catalyst for new approaches to projects, harnessing and bringing to bear the combined resources of all involved. It fosters partnerships at many different levels and encourages the Europe-wide transfer of knowledge, sharing of ideas and best practice, ensuring that the most effective new solutions are incorporated into mainstream policies.

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Foreword by Commissioner Flynn



The European Social Fund and the Community Initiatives have made a significant contribution, both in resource and policy terms, to helping to improve employability and to developing new policies and practice in the area of training and employment. In particular, YOUTHSTART has supported the exploration of new and innovative ways of tackling the continuing problem of youth unemployment.

Since the Luxembourg Jobs Summit and the adoption by the European Council of the first employment policy guidelines late last year, the implementation of the European Employment Strategy has progressed rapidly. A key part of this strategy has been the preparation by the Member States of their first National Employment Action Plans (NAPs), which form the basis for a concerted attack on the persistently high levels of unemployment across the Union.

This latest publication in the European Social Fund's Innovations Series is the first step in a continuing process which will relate the best of the practices developed in the EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT Community Initiatives to national and European employment policy priorities. The publication shows how many aspects of the issues identified as priorities in Member States' NAPs have been and are being explored within YOUTHSTART and that successful solutions have been found. It offers a range of practical examples, which should assist policy-makers and providers to make their guidance, employment and training services more relevant to the needs of young people.

I would encourage Member States to continue the process begun in the publication, and to draw on the experience of YOUTHSTART projects in order to frame new policies and approaches that are relevant to their own national contexts.

Pádraig Flynn

Commissioner in charge of Employment and Social Affairs





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Introduction

Making a policy impact

EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT are the two Human Resource Initiatives which are led by the European Social Fund. The YOUTHSTART strand of the EMPLOYMENT Community Initiative was established in order to help Member States find new solutions to the continuing problem of youth unemployment. It does this by supporting innovative actions in the areas of training, guidance and employment policies and practice. A total of 1,299 YOUTHSTART projects throughout the European Union are coming up with fresh approaches to tackling youth unemployment in an integrated and coherent way.

YOUTHSTART is now entering its crucial dissemination phase which, to a large extent, will demonstrate whether it has been able to fulfil its objectives of promoting positive changes in labour market policies and practices. Member States and the European Commission are currently working together to make the best possible use of the knowledge and experience gained to-date. A common strategy has been agreed which will combine both national and European activities to identify, highlight and disseminate the positive outcomes of YOUTHSTART and to decide on how they can best be used to influence current policies and practice at both European and national level.

During the remainder of the period of the programme, much more work will be undertaken, at both Community and national levels, to synthesise the successful outcomes of projects. This will produce further evidence of the need for new approaches and detail how such approaches can be implemented.

The results will be reported in national documents and in other publications in this Innovations Series.

In recent years, the Commission and the Member States have adopted a whole new approach to tackling the long-standing problems of unemployment across the European Union. Following the Amsterdam Treaty, which gave employment policy a legal basis in the Treaty of the European Union and the Special Jobs Summit in Luxembourg, which agreed a European Employment Strategy, Member States committed themselves to produce Annual Employment Plans which would show how the strategy was being put into effect at national level. A considerable amount of joint work has also been done on identifying Member States' standards of performance in relation to the reduction of unemployment and the promotion of sustainable jobs, in order that Member States' policies described in their annual plans could be linked to meaningful and attainable goals.

This new approach provides a framework which can help Member States and the Commission to identify where the successful outcomes of YOUTHSTART projects can make a real contribution to the development of national employment policies directed at tackling youth unem-

ployment. The present publication is an initial attempt to make the links between the reality of the local projects and the policy priorities which have been defined at national and European level. It will help YOUTHSTART promoters to see how the innovative approaches, which they are pioneering in their own local area, fit into the wider policy picture. At another level, the publication also illustrates, for decision makers and others who are concerned with youth employment policy, the wealth of knowledge and experience available within the YOUTHSTART Community Initiative.

A Fact Sheet containing a summary of the main characteristics of the YOUTHSTART projects selected in 1995 and 1997 is provided as an annex.

The European Employment Strategy

The European Commission's White Paper "Growth, Competitiveness, Employment ..." (1993) highlighted the unacceptable reality of a European labour market with persistent and growing unemployment. It specifically called for urgent action to address the difficulties faced by young people and launched the YOUTHSTART strategy to combat youth unemployment. In 1994, the Community Initiative EMPLOYMENT-YOUTHSTART was introduced as a catalyst for the development and sharing of innovative actions to support young people's transition from school to working life, and as a stimulus for policy change.

Since 1993, also, the conclusions of a series of European Councils have reflected the increasing political realisation of the importance of making unemployment a central issue for European governments. Most notably, the Essen Council (1994) first mapped out a framework for a co-ordinated approach by Member States, in Florence a "confidence pact" of action for employment was agreed, while the outcomes of the Dublin Council in 1996 paved the way for the Council of Amsterdam, in June 1997, to include employment policy in the new Treaty of the European Union.

The Amsterdam Treaty

The Amsterdam Treaty makes employment a matter of primary concern for all the Member States of the Union. It gives employment policy a legal basis in the Treaty of the European Union by introducing a Title, or, in other words a chapter, on employment in the Treaty.

In this way, it marks a new beginning for European policies on employment, emphasising the need for co-ordinated and joint action by all the Member States of the European Union. For the first time, economic and employment policy are linked in the same agenda to promote more jobs.

The Title on Employment also sets up four ways of monitoring this new, co-ordinated employment strategy:

- annual Employment Guidelines for Member States' employment policies;
- annual reports in each Member States on the principal measures taken to implement these Guidelines;
- a joint annual report by the Council and the Commission on the employment situation and the implementation of the Employment Guidelines;
- Council procedures for making recommendations, if necessary, to Member States on their progress in implementing the Guidelines.

The Conclusions of the European Council in Amsterdam also state that

"The European Council ... reaffirms the importance it attaches to promoting employment and reducing the unacceptably high levels of unemployment in Europe, particularly for young people, the long-term unemployed and the low-skilled."

The Jobs Summit: from intention to action

The first step in translating the new Title into action for jobs was taken at a Special Jobs Summit, in Luxembourg, in November 1997 when the Member States agreed that the employment strategy should be built on four main areas of action. These are known as the four pillars of the Employment Strategy and each addresses a specific problem or gap:

- **EMPLOYABILITY to address the skills gap:** The lack of appropriate skills makes it difficult for unemployed people to get back to work while, at the same time, jobs are vacant because there are no applicants with the required skills. This means that the **employability** of people must be improved. The objective is to modernise education and training systems and strengthen their links to the workplace so that more people are equipped to take up new employment opportunities;

- **ENTREPRENEURSHIP to address the jobs gap:** Too few jobs are being created in Europe and the immediate priority is to develop a new culture of **entrepreneurship**. The underlying idea is to bring about a new climate and spirit which will stimulate and create more and better jobs both in the open labour market, and in the social economy;
- **ADAPTABILITY to address the partnership gap:** A lack of partnership between employers and workers, especially at local level, is hampering the process of modernising enterprises and workplaces, so increased **adaptability** is required. The task is to develop new approaches to the restructuring of workplaces, work processes and sectors so that they are able to exploit new technologies and new market conditions;
- **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES to address the gender gap:** The labour market is still segregated along gender-based lines and unemployment remains higher for women than for men. The fourth priority is to strengthen **equal opportunities**. Society needs to modernise and have men and women working on equal terms, with equal responsibilities, to develop the full growth capacity of our economies.

The 1998 Employment Guidelines

For each of the pillars, annual **Employment Guidelines** are proposed by the Commission for adoption by the Council. These set out a number of specific targets for Member States to achieve in their employment policies. The Employment Guidelines are based on the recognition that jobs are created through local initiatives and that European and national level actions should support such local initiatives to create jobs and promote employability. These Guidelines are the framework for Member States' reports on their progress towards meeting these targets, which are called **National Employment Action Plans (NAPs)**.



In the 1998 Guidelines, particular importance is attached to the development of preventive measures aimed at reversing the trend of youth and long-term unemployment through early identification of individual needs and tailor-made responses which in a systematic way give precedence to active employability actions rather than passive support measures.


A total of 19 Guidelines have been defined under the four pillars which, in addition to the emphasis on preventive and active labour market actions, address issues such as the need for building partnership approaches, easing the transition from school to work, developing entrepreneurship and job creation, encouraging adaptability in businesses and their employees, and strengthening of equal opportunities policies.

Three of the 19 Employment Guidelines specifically relate to young people:

- G1 Tackling youth unemployment;
- G6 Easing the transition from school to work;
- G7 Better equipping young people for the labour market.

Building a European Employment Strategy

Four principal problem areas			
SKILLS GAP	JOBS GAP	PARTNERSHIP GAP	GENDER GAP
to be tackled by actions under four pillars			
EMPLOYABILITY	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	ADAPTABILITY	EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
defined by the 19 Employment Guidelines for 1998			
<p>Tackle youth and long-term unemployment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer of a new start to young people within 6 months of unemployment 2. Offer of a fresh start to unemployed adults within 12 months of unemployment <p>Move from passive to active measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Increase the number of persons in active measures to at least 20% <p>Partnership approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Social Partners to agree to increase training and similar possibilities 5. Member States and Social Partners to develop life-long learning possibilities <p>Easing transition from school to work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Substantially reduce drop-out from school systems 7. Better equip young people for the labour market 	<p>Simplify regulations effecting employment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Reduce the administrative burden on firms <p>Promote entrepreneurship:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Encourage self-employment <p>Exploit opportunities for job creation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Promote job creation at local level, in the social economy and in new activities <p>Employment-friendly taxation systems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Set targets for reducing overall tax burden 12. Reduce VAT on some labour-intensive services 	<p>Modernise work organisation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Agreements with Social Partners, especially on more flexible work arrangements <p>More flexible forms of work contracts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Explore the possible development of new forms of contracts for, e.g. part-time or teleworking <p>Support adaptability in enterprises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Reduce obstacles to investment in human resources and provide incentives for in-house training 	<p>Tackle gender gaps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Reduce gap in unemployment rates between men and women <p>Reconcile work and family life:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Raise levels of access to care services <p>Ease return to work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Specific provision for women, and men, wishing to return to the workforce after an absence <p>Integration of disabled into working life:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Pay special attention to particular problems of disabled people



The response of Member States: their National Employment Action Plans (NAPs)

Member States had to submit their first NAPs by 15 April 1998, using the 19 Employment Guidelines as the framework for describing what they intended to do under each of the four pillars of the Employment Strategy. These NAPs set out what they hope to achieve, the policy initiatives to be taken, the timetable, the actions required and the actors to be involved.

A first review of Member States' NAPs was prepared by the Commission for consideration by the EU Council, in Cardiff, in June 1998. The next European Council to be held, in Vienna, in December 1998 will assess to what extent Member States' plans have been translated into action, whether this action adequately addresses the problems and needs and whether real progress has been made in attaining the objectives defined by the Special Jobs Summit. This discussion will also lead to the definition of the Employment Guidelines for 1999.

An initial examination of the NAPs indicated that Member States also identified a number of important priority actions directed at young people under several other guidelines. Accordingly, a full list of Guidelines under which Member States had indicated policy actions or priorities specifically directed at young people would include, in addition to Guidelines 1, 6 and 7, which specifically mention young people, Guidelines 4 (Social Partner agreements), 9 (Encouraging the development of self-employment) and 10 (Promoting job creation at local level), since a significant number of Member States described actions or priorities relevant to young people under these Guidelines.



YOUTHSTART action reflected in Member States' NAPs

Six of the Employment Guidelines were immediately seen to be relevant to YOUTHSTART. When these six Guidelines were analysed in detail to see how they could reflect the innovation and good practice developed by YOUTHSTART projects, a number of YOUTHSTART-related actions were identified as being priorities in the National Employment Action Plans

of Member States. In order that the results of this analysis could be generalised as much as possible across the Union, only those actions clearly identified in several NAPs were retained.

The table below shows both the Guidelines and (in black) the II types of action which relate to them.

The rest of this chapter considers these II actions in turn. Examples from YOUTHSTART practice are provided, which illustrate what this programme has to offer to the further development of relevant methods and approaches for the measure in question. In addition, two examples are included of Member State measures mentioned in their NAPs that reflect the main YOUTHSTART priority actions.

		B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	IT	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK
G1	Tackling youth unemployment															
	Preventive approaches Individual action plans	●●	●●	●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●		●●	●●	●	●●	●●	●●
G4	Encouraging a partnership approach															
	Local Social Partners			●	●		●		●	●		●			●	●
G6	Easing the transition from school to work															
	Specific groups	●●	●●	●●	●●		●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●		●●	●●
	Guidance and counselling	●●	●●	●●	●●		●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●		●●	●●
	Improving initial VET(*)	●●	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●●	●●
G7	Better equipping young people for the labour market															
	Adapting VET	●		●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●		●	●
G9	Encouraging the development of self-employment															
	Entrepreneurship	●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●				
G10	Exploiting the opportunities for job creation															
	Social economy	●						●	●							
	New areas of work Territorial pacts	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●

(*): Vocational Education and Training

Guideline I: Tackling youth unemployment

The focus of actions under this guideline is to encourage Member States to adopt more preventive approaches to tackling youth unemployment, with a particular emphasis on the early identification of individual needs. Many Member States indicate a commitment to adopting preventive approaches to the problems of youth unemployment. It is important to distinguish between those countries with a longer tradition of preventive approaches to tackling these problems and those, such as Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland, Luxembourg and Finland, which are developing new measures in line with the higher priority given to such actions in their NAPs. It is these latter countries that are most likely to be responsive to YOUTHSTART projects offering examples of good practice in these areas of development.



Germany

QUAS - Qualifizierung und Arbeit für Schulabgänger

(Qualifications and work for school leavers)

Under Guideline I of its National Action Plan, the German government has indicated its intention to extend and further develop existing pre-training schemes which combine schooling or training courses with work experience. This will be carried out in close co-operation with the Social Partners. Where necessary, new measures incorporating personal development and basic and pre-vocational skills training will be introduced to meet the needs of young people who do not fulfil the entry requirements for mainstream apprenticeship training (the Dual System).

Since the early 1990s, there has been a gradual reduction in the number of apprenticeships on offer and, at the same time, an increase in the level of standards applied in mainstream training pro-

vision. In this situation it is difficult for school leavers, and especially socially and educationally disadvantaged young people, to find apprenticeship places and, as a result, a significant number risk exclusion from the labour market.

In the spring of 1997 the Land Hamburg launched a pilot scheme to address this situation, called **QUAS - Qualifizierung und Arbeit für Schulabgänger** (Qualifications and work for school leavers). This scheme is being co-financed by the federal government and the regional authorities.

QUAS offers an alternative training cycle which combines vocational preparation and part-time work placements, backed up by social skills acquisition and individual support. The scheme puts particular emphasis on practical in-company placements as a means of attracting and motivating young people who would otherwise not have had an opportunity to attend a qualifying training course. It enables school leavers to enter immediately into a contractual relation-

ship with an employer on a part-time basis, instead of having to complete a full-time pre-vocational course.

The National Action Plan recommends that this pilot scheme be introduced as a mainstream labour market integration measure in other regions of Germany, which have high rates of youth unemployment. The potential of the model is widely recognised and local authorities have committed themselves to reinvest social benefit savings into promoting this initiative to provide an alternative progression pathway from school to working life.

This measure will guarantee the acquisition of recognised skills and work experience in real work situations. The fact that the federal government, city and local administrations are working together to finance and implement the programme demonstrates the importance which they attach to providing new and different integration opportunities for young people.



Project Example: “Euro Alfa”

The Danish **Euro Alfa** project in the municipality of Køge was a preventive measure which targeted young people who had neither progressed into further education nor entered employment and, as a result, were dependant on social welfare assistance. The overall aim of the project was to encourage these young people either to start an education programme or to get a job.

This was achieved by giving them a 34-week course which presented education and work experience in a way that was both attractive and interesting. At the same time, it gave them a sense of achievement and boosted their self-confidence. Six modules were offered:

- personal skills development, such as self-confidence and self-esteem, giving the opportunity to work independently, take decisions, exercise influence and responsibility;
- genuine project-oriented work in the tourism, media, environment and health care sectors;

- meaningful work experience in real work situations;
- transnational work placements;
- permanent individual counselling and guidance;
- individual follow-up at the end of the project.

What this bridge-building project achieved was to combine young people’s interests – and consequently motivation – with their educational needs and labour market requirements. The initial prejudices of the participants towards learning and attending school were overcome through linked support measures like ‘buddying’ and mentoring. Their attitudes changed from scepticism and rejection to positive expectation. Work placements provided an introduction to the labour market. Transnational placements (in Ireland) contributed considerably to the personal development of the young people and to their views on their future job prospects.

Project Example: “Options”

The **Options and Progression in Transition** project in Northern Ireland aims to increase the number of school leavers from the special school sector who progress to vocational training and employment. The initiative was developed from a concern expressed by local agencies, individuals with learning disabilities and their families, that only 5% of the target group actually move into stable employment. The project has developed a transition programme based on a consortium approach. It links education and training providers, curriculum development and employment agencies, health and social services, commercial organisations and employers. This inter-agency co-operation provides a spectrum of services and support to young people at the various stages in their transition from school to employment.

The YOUTHSTART project has adopted an individual, client-centred approach, based on the young people’s identifi-

cation of their own skills and work aspirations. Information on local employers’ requirements, combined with job-sampling and work simulation opportunities, enable the young participants to make informed vocational choices. The project provides an accredited pre-vocational qualification which, in turn, constitutes a bridge between school and entry into mainstream training provision. Participants monitor their own progression within the programme, which comprises various core skills units. The programme has been developed in co-operation with employers, the young people and their parents and, in order to further motivate the young people, each unit is accredited separately.

The project’s collaborative approach provides individuals who would otherwise be excluded from the labour market with the chance to establish their own action plans to obtain a job.

Preventive approaches

Preventive actions in most Member States offer support to the young unemployed before, or on reaching, six months of unemployment, usually through training, guidance or a combination of both. Some countries have special programmes for these young people, such as the Young Person Traineeship in Belgium, or the Trace programme in France, or have announced an enhancement of existing measures. Two countries mention early intervention with young people at risk, or ensuring that all young people have “a basic education of good quality”.

Individual action plans

The establishment of an individual action plan is seen as the starting point of preventive labour market strategies in a large number of Member States. In fact, 13 of the 15 NAPs describe actions of this kind, many in the form of major programmes, such as the United Kingdom’s New Deal Gateway, The Young in Active Life in Greece, the Youth Progression Programme of Ireland or the Piani di Inserimento Professionale (vocational insertion projects) for young people in areas of Italy. Where specific programmes are not mentioned, the NAPs describe, for example, “guidance, screening and skill mapping” for young people with low levels of formal qualifications, or “personalised guidance” for young job seekers in training. YOUTHSTART pioneered this approach in the 1995 round of projects, leading to the publication of *Unlocking Young People’s Potential*, an analysis of the comprehensive pathway approach to provision for disaffected young people. As a result, YOUTHSTART projects can offer their regional or national authorities a range of examples illustrating a variety of approaches to the development of individual action plans.

The Comprehensive Pathway Approach

In YOUTHSTART, the comprehensive pathway approach refers to customised, or individualised routes to employment for young people based on an integrated series of services in areas such as guidance, counselling, mentoring, training and pre-training, certification, work experience and job placement.

Key stages

Four key stages in each individual's comprehensive pathway have been identified:

- **Engagement**, which involves making initial contact with the individual, together with induction and acclimatisation activities;
- **Empowerment**, which concerns the initial identification of each individual's goals and action plan and work to ensure that the young person takes personal responsibility for its implementation;
- **Learning**, when vocational and / or core skills are acquired, together with work experience;
- **Integration**, when the young person takes up stable employment or another productive activity.

Each of the stages of the pathway marks a significant shift in the values and motivation of the young people, their skills and abilities and in their interaction with the wider environment. The overall objective is to move the young person from a position of alienation and distance from social and economic reality, to a position of social integration and productive activity.

How does it work in practice?

The first step is when the **local agencies** involved, together with young people, agree on the definition and precise needs in their area, and identify the range of support mechanisms needed to meet these needs. In parallel, the requirements and opportunities of the local labour market are identified so as to ensure that realistic solutions are available to the young people.

A range of **individualised activities** are provided following a joint definition of each individual's needs. There is often an exploratory stage, during which a range of sample activities are offered to each young person. Because activities involve both group and individual work, they provide for the possibility of peer support and group cohesion and, at the same time, a sense of individual achievement.

Inter-agency working is the foundation on which young people's comprehensive pathways are built. It ensures that a range of referral and support mechanisms are available to young people to meet their personal and work-related needs at all stages along their pathway.

All forms of comprehensive pathway provision build in **monitoring and evaluation** procedures to ensure continuous monitoring of each participant's progress. These procedures take account of their starting point and reflect changes in both aspirations and external factors. This process charts individual progress and achievements and provides recognition and rewards along the pathway and, especially, when participants are passed on to other agencies or complete the pathway.

Progression

Each individual's progress along the pathway does not always take place at a steady pace, and will often depend on

the impact of external factors which may undermine the young person's confidence and ability to participate. Young people may 'step on and step off' the pathway if, for example, problems arise which mean they are unable to continue with a chosen activity. In some cases, they may also need to 'backtrack' through a stage - if they need to undertake more work on motivational aspects over time. Loops backwards and forwards between stages or component parts may also be necessary, if individuals feel they have chosen the wrong option and wish to pursue another career route or vocational direction.

The **essential characteristics** of the approach are:

- Recognising and respecting the complexity and interdependence of all of the elements influencing the individual's choices and actions;
- Linking agencies concerned with preventing problems with those providing direct support;
- Ensuring the local design and delivery of activities, so as to maximise available expertise and to ensure the co-ordination of provision;
- Focusing clearly on outcomes, from school to full integration into working life.





UK The New Deal Gateway

The New Deal for 18-24 year olds

The New Deal for 18-24 year olds is the first element in the UK Government's Welfare to Work Programme. The programme aims to provide young people who have been claiming Job Seekers Allowance for six months or more, with an opportunity to find work and to improve their prospects of remaining in sustained employment. It involves local partnerships working to achieve a sustainable reduction in the levels of long-term unemployment by improving the employability of the young people in their area. The programme started in 12 pathfinder areas, in January 1998 and the full nation-wide launch took place in April.

The New Deal is tailored to each individual's needs and circumstances and includes the following main elements:

- **The Gateway** – this first stage can last up to 4 months. It aims to get young people into work and includes help with job search, careers advice and guidance, and preparation for the range of options in the second stage described below.
- **Four Options** – each of the first three options includes an element of education or training and can last for up to six months: a subsidised job with an employer (or self-employment); work on the Environmental Task Force; or work with the voluntary sector. The fourth option, of full time education and training, can last for up to a year.
- **Follow-through strategy** – throughout their participation in one of the four options, participants are helped to progress towards finding a permanent job and are given further assistance if they return to unemployment. Those who remain unemployed for a further six months will be able to re-join the programme.

The New Deal Gateway

All young people when they enter the Gateway have an initial interview with an Employment Service Personal Adviser who will remain their point of contact throughout their involvement in the programme. This is followed by help to find an unsubsidised job and regular advice and guidance to identify the action needed for them to find work.

When needed, individual young people are offered a range of additional measures designed to improve their employability. These include pre-vocational activities such as job search techniques, confidence building, basic skills provision, and "tasters" of the various options. They also have access to a mentoring service and, for those with pressing personal problems such as debt, homelessness, or drug dependency, help is available from specialist agencies. Throughout their time in the Gateway, young people have access to support and guidance from a number of sources in addition to their Employment Service Personal Adviser.

YOUTHSTART and the New Deal Gateway

YOUTHSTART projects have a great deal of knowledge and experience which can be fed into the New Deal Gateway and can help ensure that young people are provided with the most appropriate opportunities. Some first round YOUTHSTART projects in the UK have influenced the development of the New Deal in their local area and a number of second round projects are also working closely with their local programme. The UK authorities intend to identify the best practice from all YOUTHSTART projects and to continue to feed this into all aspects of the New Deal. A special effort will be made to target those responsible for the delivery of the various options and activities to help them in their quest to give all young people a chance of gaining and sustaining employment.



Guideline 4: Encouraging a partnership approach

Involvement of the social partners at local level

Most of the emphasis in this section of the NAPs is on the creation of agreements on training or wage policies at national level. For YOUTHSTART, those NAPs which mention actions at local and regional levels are more relevant, since these would be closer to the level of activity of projects. Many projects have operated as part of local consortia or other groupings, often involving the Social Partners. In Sweden, for example, the regional competency councils are described as a "meeting place between the Social Partners and organisers of education with the aim of better adapting labour market training and regular education ... to demand in the local and regional labour markets". YOUTHSTART projects throughout the European Union can offer innovative methods which better reflect the expectations and needs of the target group in this process.



Project Example: "Practex"

Co-operation between school and industry helps to relate vocational training provision to the demands of the job market and so eases the transition of disaffected young people from school to working life. To adapt youth training more closely to national labour market needs, the Lycée Technique des Arts et Métiers in Luxembourg, set up the **Practex** project within an existing "school and enterprise" partnership, which promotes co-operation with some thirty companies in Luxembourg, as well as with the Chambers of Commerce. Awareness-raising amongst national enterprises of the project's objectives was a key activity, as was the systematic identification of pupils who were failing at school or who lacked practical training.

The project placed an emphasis on hands-on training in the building sector, and the practical nature of this training motivated the young people to stay on the scheme. The training

alternated between school and the seven enterprises in which the participants were placed, in order to match their theoretical training with practical on-the-job experience.

The project offered training "à la carte" to young people who would not normally be interested by the standard curriculum. The school-enterprise partnership focused on the content of the training, and the mentoring and guidance of the young people. Within companies, supervisors were assigned to the individual participants and the motivational and practical support which they provided was essential for the success of the project, as was liaison with the parents of the participants.

The strengthened co-operation between school and industry enabled the young participants to obtain a vocational qualification (certificate) which is recognised by national employers and this facilitated their access to employment in an economic sector in which there is a shortage of qualified workers.



Guideline 6: Easing the transition from school to work



As might be expected, all Member States have identified the problem of young people leaving initial education and training without adequate formal qualifications as a high priority. In the context of YOUTHSTART, three areas of particular relevance to project activities have been identified: specific groups of young people; the development of guidance and support services; and system development in the area of initial vocational training.

Specific groups

Twelve Member States mention specific groups of disaffected or at-risk young people to be targeted by priority actions. These include migrants, travellers, persons with learning difficulties, socially excluded, "those in areas which are economically and culturally disadvantaged" known as "ZEP" areas in France, and young people from particular geographical areas, such as Southern Italy. Early school leavers, or those at risk of early leaving are mentioned by five countries. While, a priori, disaffected and at-risk young people are the overall target group of YOUTHSTART projects, migrants and ethnic minorities have been identified as the target groups of almost 20% of all projects. Similarly, disadvantaged and early school leavers are also identified as specific priorities by a significant number of projects.

Project Example: "Drop In / Jasa"

The city of The Hague set up the Dutch project **Drop In/Jasa** in order to respond better to the needs of young refugees. The city provides a centrally co-ordinated "Entry" course for young refugees who have recently arrived in the Netherlands. The main aim of the course is to enable young people of compulsory school age to acquire the necessary skills and competence to enrol in mainstream education or training. Since the transnational partners, in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Portugal, worked with comparable, but dissimilar target groups, this enabled the project to capitalise on the best practice from a number of different approaches. As a result, the project adopted a more responsive approach, in which health issues and interactive methods play a prominent role.

Some one hundred different nationalities are represented in this introductory programme to Dutch society and language and vocational guidance. Many of them come from countries experiencing conflict and civil war and, over time, it emerged that the initial course did not respond sufficiently well to their physical and psychological problems. As a result, the city authorities in The Hague are now piloting changes

in the organisational structure of their "Entry" course. A more comprehensive approach will be adopted, in which particular attention will be paid to:

- the life situation of the young refugees, involving families and ethnic groups as much as possible;
- the health situation of all participants, by extending the co-operation with the municipal health services;
- individual support networks, which involves working with volunteers to foster the integration process;
- a wide range of creative methodologies to foster social skills and key competencies, in particular through group work;
- a 'buddy' system, in which a participant will be linked to a successful older student or graduate of the course;
- changing the ways companies are approached with requests for placements and job opportunities;
- upgrading trainers' skills through continuous training.

This new approach for the integration of young refugees is being disseminated to other municipalities in the Netherlands, through a second-round YOUTHSTART project.

Guidance, counselling and placement

Eleven countries are launching actions to enhance guidance and counselling provision, in some cases involving an overall re-focusing of national guidance and employment services. In addition, several also refer to the need to re-train guidance and placement personnel to meet new challenges. The development of new forms of guidance and counselling is a main theme of over 70% of all YOUTHSTART projects. Many of them are concerned with the provision of guidance and support in non-formal settings for young people not currently being reached by the formal systems and the employment services. Of these, a number have also developed new forms of training for the personnel concerned.

Improving initial vocational education and training

All countries indicated in their NAPs that they planned or were making improvements in their systems of initial vocational education and training in order to reduce the incidence of early school leaving and to enhance the attractiveness of these programmes for young people. Belgium, for example, is undertaking a modularization of initial vocational education, and other countries aim to "strengthen the practical training element of vocational training", or to "adapt curricula and make them more varied". France is breaking certain diplomas into separate units in order to make them more accessible to disaffected young people. In addition, several countries specifically mention actions to promote the training and re-training of vocational trainers.

Project Example: "Hand"

The **Hand** project in Innsbruck, Austria has provided counselling and guidance to address both the vocational and non-vocational needs of disaffected young people, who, due to social and educational difficulties, could not enter mainstream vocational training. It focused on guidance linked to training, and also guidance in the context of finding job opportunities in clearly defined occupational sectors.

The project used an open learning model with three basic elements: modular learning; practical training in environmentally friendly building techniques; individual guidance and social counselling - the first model of its kind in the region of Tyrol. The modules were combined in a flexible manner to meet the different needs of each group of young people as well as the requirements of the local economy. Individual action plans were produced in collaboration with each participant. Vocational guidance within the project was organised as a continuous process, providing young people not only with infor-

mation about potential careers but also with an assessment of their personal and vocational skills. The young people also had the opportunity of a period of practical experience in a real working environment.

An essential part of the project's policy was its close co-operation with vocational guidance counsellors from the regional labour market service and placement personnel in the enterprises. This co-operation made it easier to find work experience placements and, subsequently, real jobs.

Through being offered choices and evaluating vocational options with the support of flexible guidance and counselling, young people began to see employment in the ecological building sector as a long-term career option. As a result, some 90% of the 69 YOUTHSTART participants have found permanent employment or are continuing in related vocational training courses. This new guidance and induction concept will be introduced as part of mainstream training, in co-operation with the regional labour market service.

Project Example: "Building Future Success"

In the Flemish community of Belgium, it normally takes four years to complete vocational training within the mainstream education system. This proves to be too long for many young people, and often they drop out of the programmes. As a result they have no occupational qualifications and, equally, have little chance of finding re-entry mechanisms into training provision which would suit their individual pace of learning.

Through the YOUTHSTART project **Building Future Success**, the Flemish Ministry of Education is developing a system which will introduce a modularization of initial vocational training within mainstream education. Initially, the modular structure of training pro-

grammes will be piloted within a limited number of sectors. The overall design of the structure and the content of the individual training modules are intended to pave the way for organisational changes which could promote a further implementation of modular training. Other key activities include co-ordinating the training of trainers and examining the transferability of vocational qualifications at European level.

The modular approach to vocational training anticipates possible problems of demotivation of some young people and makes initial training more attractive generally. It also makes it possible for more young people to acquire a (partial) qualification and to be initiated into the process of life-long learning.



Guideline 7: Providing young people with relevant skills

Project Example: “Surf- in”

‘Surf-in’ Internet café für Mädchen in Kiel, Germany, is a pre-training, work induction project initially targeting ten young women who have no vocational qualifications. It seeks to make learning interesting and attractive by using Information Technology (IT) as a learning medium. Technical training in computer skills and programming is provided over a two-year period and is complemented by work experience, leadership techniques and personal skills development.

Long-term work placements and support for job search promotes job prospects in the IT sector and enables the young women to progress to further training, employment or to start their own business.

Their motivation and interest are retained at a high level by involving them in co-defining and co-managing the operation of the project. For example, the young women will set up an Internet café in Kiel. Peer leadership is key to the YOUTHSTART activity. Subsequently, the participants will be responsible for peer education and mediation within the project, using their newly acquired skills in training other young women. They will also provide coaching, counselling and guidance to them, guiding them towards education and future employment. Information activities are carried out in primary and secondary schools to sensitise children and young people to the new technologies.

Project Example: “HORUS”

The challenge to the British project HORUS, in Ipswich, was to prepare 50 jobless young people for employment in the environment sector. Trainees were recruited onto a 15-month training programme, which combined college study with work placements. The project provided vocational training and an upgrading of basic skills leading to a recognised qualification. It developed flexible methods, supported by interactive teaching materials, in order to make training more responsive to the needs of young people and to enable them to learn at their own pace.

The success of the project has been due to a local partnership with other training providers and strong links with industry. Together with its partners, the project promoter, Otley College, has examined in detail the needs of the client group. In this way, it has been able to strengthen all aspects of its vocational education and training provision. The College developed and delivered a training package which was linked to industrial work experience in enterprises, supported by mentors in the workplace. By adopting a common

approach, the project and its partners were able to focus and co-ordinate their efforts to address both the needs of young people and local employers. This practice has now been reflected in the mainstreaming of training and workplace opportunities for young people through The National Traineeships, which are a high-quality route to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2, covering more than 25 sectors. This type of work-related training is only now gaining general recognition and is being reflected in national programmes like Youth Training and Modern Apprenticeships, which incorporate NVQ qualifications.

By developing effective teaching and support methodologies, the project has ensured that young people described as “low achievers” have been given experience and guidance which have enabled them to enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem. This, in turn, has led to higher levels of achievement, motivation and aspiration. The result was that more than the expected number of the project participants achieved NVQ level 1 or have continued their studies for the next level.

Member States’ priorities under Guidelines 6 and 7, in so far as they relate to the YOUTHSTART target group, often overlap, especially in the area of reform of the systems of vocational education and training. Two countries identify the need to increase the participation of young women in vocational training, an issue which a number of YOUTHSTART projects are tackling, especially in relation to those who are more isolated.

Adapting initial vocational education and training

New or improved forms of apprenticeship are mentioned by all Member States, often associated with new forms of qualification. Three countries refer to the need to improve or expand the training of trainers. Others mention this priority in relation to Guideline 6, and are attempting to create closer links between training and the practical realities of the labour market. Building partnerships and other forms of close relationships between training providers and business and industry are also seen as a priority, especially in France and Austria. Central to the comprehensive pathway approach is the development of effective partnerships of local key actors and there are, consequently, many examples from YOUTHSTART projects of how such links have been established. Many projects have also experimented with work-based training or with training in the new emerging growth sectors such as the environment and information and communication technologies, since these can be particularly attractive to disaffected young people.



Guideline 9: Encouraging the development of self-employment

Promoting entrepreneurship

Nine countries mention actions to promote youth entrepreneurship, eight of which include education and training measures. Two principal forms of action can be identified in the NAPs: direct training and support programmes for young potential entrepreneurs, or more general programmes in mainstream education and training to promote a spirit of enterprise. Almost 60% of YOUTHSTART projects identify employment creation and support as one of their themes or activities, reflecting a wide-spread recognition that young people in the target group will often have to create their own opportunities for employment, especially if they want to work in their own local area.



Project Example: "Une Europe"

The Italian project **Une Europe des jeunes en mouvement vers l'emploi** (A Europe of young people moving towards employment) was established to increase the job opportunities for young people in socially and economically disadvantaged areas of Sicily. The ultimate objective was to create local work opportunities in green tourism, within the nature reserve "Parco delle Madonie". Some sixty young people received job-specific training in habitat conservation, cultural heritage and tourist activities generally. Simulation and project work during the training course centred on the skill requirements of enterprise creation and self-employment. The young people learned how to define business plans for SMEs, and familiarised themselves with management and marketing techniques. Work placements in other parts of Italy and in Greece complemented the local activities.

The project resulted in the creation of a co-operative, providing direct employment for almost 20 young people. They now run the tourism services within the nature reserve and act as nature and cultural heritage guides. Other young people from the course have become self-employed or have found local jobs linked to tourism.

To assist the young entrepreneurs in their work, CD-ROM tourist guides have been designed, containing maps of designated walks. Audio-visual material and an Internet site are other products of this YOUTHSTART project. A permanent observatory has been set up to monitor local labour market demands and trends, and this information is used to make young people more aware of current and future job opportunities.



Guideline 10: Exploiting the opportunities for job creation

Project Example: "Citylife"

Sunflower Recycling, a local community organisation, is running the Irish YOUTHSTART project *Citylife* for disadvantaged and long-term unemployed young people from the inner city of Dublin. In this urban renewal area, there is a lot of emphasis on the creation of jobs in the social economy but, to date, this has not tended to include young people under 20.

The project will train local young people in a variety of skills associated with waste disposal and estate management. This is a growth sector for jobs, which will offer sustainable employment to the young people in their own communities, while simultaneously improving the local environment.

The project aims to create a pool of environmentally aware workers from the northern inner city area so as to develop innovative recycling businesses within, and potentially beyond, the city. The objectives are:

- to improve the quality of the urban landscape through community involvement;

- to design and deliver appropriate training to the young people in the area;
- to create employment opportunities for participants;
- to work with industry and local government to promote environmental awareness;
- to encourage participants to gain further qualifications at college or university.

Core modules are provided in community and personal development, landscape design and maintenance, building technology and environmental awareness, and "on-the-job" training. On successful completion of the course, participants are awarded a certificate which gives them a real chance of a job in related trades.

Through co-operation with German and French partners, a transnational model will be developed to reintegrate excluded groups of people into the labour market, specifically in the environmental engineering sector.

Jobs in the social economy

While the local economy is emerging as an important source of new jobs, especially for at-risk groups, there is a danger that promoting employment opportunities in the local economy could be seen as creating a 'second tier' of low pay and low status jobs for disadvantaged persons, rather than a means of responding to unfulfilled demand. This issue is a sensitive one, though individual examples of YOUTHSTART projects can be identified that demonstrate that there are unmet needs in local communities for certain types of facilities or services, which provide opportunity for employment creation. In addition, some 21% of projects indicate that they operate in the social and personal services sector.



New areas of work

While a number of the NAPs refer to job creation in new areas of work, only in one or two cases are specific "new jobs" areas mentioned. By contrast, a significant number of YOUTHSTART projects are operating in the employment growth areas of tourism, environmental protection, new information technologies, recreational activities, arts and cultural heritage. As several of these areas are closely linked to job creation at local level, the experience of the projects is of particular relevance to those countries prioritising local employment development, including the territorial pacts.

Project Example: "Tracto-décibel"

As part of its NAP strategy to reduce youth unemployment, the French government is introducing a new programme "Nouveaux services - nouveaux emplois" (New services - new jobs), aimed at supporting the creation of new occupations which meet emerging needs not yet satisfied by the market. Typical areas for such activities are sport, culture, education, the environment and community services.

The YOUTHSTART project **Tracto-décibel** is piloting activities to demonstrate that the arts have a positive and long-term role to play in developing new skills which enhance the employability of young people.

The project provides a mobile unit for music performances – a stage with all the necessary technical and electronic equipment - to give young people in geographically and otherwise disadvantaged areas a possibility to form and, more importantly, to promote their own bands. It is intended that the

mobile unit will tour the Maisons des Jeunes (youth centres) throughout France. At the project base in Montluçon, a group of 15 young people with no vocational qualifications are building the mobile unit as part of their innovative training course.

The methodology is based on the principle of 'learning by doing' and the young people themselves identify specific training needs, both theoretical and practical. As the young people progress through the 18-month course, they map out their individual training and integration pathways. The role of the trainers is to support and advise the young people in this process.

The participants will acquire skills and qualifications in amplified music such as rock, pop and jazz. Interest in amplified music is growing and, consequently, job opportunities in this particular music sector are expanding and the project promoter believes that it will become an important source of employment for disadvantaged young people.





Territorial pacts

Several NAPs refer to the importance of the Territorial Employment Pacts and similar approaches in establishing effective mechanisms and structures to co-ordinate and improve local services for both adult and young unemployed persons. YOUTHSTART projects are experimenting with different models of partnership at local level as support for the comprehensive pathway, or individual action plan approach, which is at the core of the YOUTHSTART process.

Typically, projects are developing wide, community-based networks which normally involve the whole range of representatives from public authorities,

education and training providers, guidance and employment services, social and health services, employers and other labour market actors. They also involve more informal actors such as voluntary and charitable organisations, youth and community groups and parents.

These networks provide a forum for analysis and discussion of the various factors underlying the difficulties faced by young people. They allow policy makers and practitioners to find appropriate and sustainable solutions which build on, and bring together, the different fields of expertise of the relevant actors. In this way, the networks ensure that the totality of the issues are taken into account, all possible solutions considered and the agreed actions are those best suited to meeting the needs of the young people. Through joint action and co-ordination of efforts, these networks are also able to respond to the requirements of funding agencies in terms of cost-effective solutions, which avoid duplication and gaps in provision.

YOUTHSTART projects participated in earlier European thematic work on local approaches and over 60% of projects highlight the development of these approaches as one of their principal themes.

Project Example: "Orientación"

The Spanish project **Orientación de jóvenes con deficiencias formativas en el Vallés Occidental** (Guidance for young people who lack adequate training) operates in Catalonia, and concentrates on producing new operational models for the restructuring of training and employment provision. The project developed an integrated regional partnership, bringing together some thirty-four local authorities, Social Partner organisations, education and training institutions, social, legal and employment services and research institutes. Within this partnership, local networks were established to help the transition of school drop-outs and young people with low qualifications to active and working life.

To improve young people's employability, individualised training modules in specific job sectors have been developed and individual action plans are drawn up for each young person. Support mechanisms have been created through the networks, which allow for personalised guidance and coun-

selling and provide individually paced learning. The involvement of employers in this regional partnership, has raised their awareness of the needs and abilities of young people and created a new dynamic in which the business world, local administrations and the target group work towards a common goal.

The inter-agency approach has enabled the project to develop strategies and methodologies to implement the equivalent of a Social Guarantee Programme, which had previously not existed in the area. The success of the project has meant that its outcomes are being widely disseminated in the region and similar approaches and activities are currently being implemented in some eleven other municipalities. In establishing a regional approach to tackling the problems of disaffected young people, the YOUTHSTART project laid the foundations for the creation of a Territorial Employment Pact for all people in the area, involving both the public and private sector.

The responses of the Member States constitute real progress towards the development of the European Employment Strategy. Nevertheless, as the Commission has described in its initial analysis of the NAPs, the information provided by several Member States on some areas of the Guidelines lacks precision or an indication of targets to be achieved. In addition, the experience of projects working with young people shows that some innovative labour market integration activities pioneered by those projects are not yet recognised by Member States. Some of these "missing" areas are identified in following Section.

YOUTHSTART action paving the way for future NAPs

The European Employment Strategy is being implemented in two distinct, but complementary ways: through the preparation and analysis of the National Action Plans and through the setting of agreed standards of performance for national labour market systems.

The NAP Guidelines set out common lines of approach to the problems, while the agreed standards, or “benchmarks”, to use the jargon, describe the expected outcomes of these approaches in terms of how they relate to best practice across the Union.

So far, this publication has reviewed the European Employment Strategy, what Member States have determined as their employment policy priorities in their NAPs, and then identified what YOUTHSTART has to offer in these respects. However, from the perspective of the Community Initiatives, with their emphasis on the development of innovative ways of tackling long-standing problems, it is possible to detect some lines of YOUTHSTART action which are already showing positive results but have so far not been reflected in the Member

States' NAPs. This issue, of **what's missing from the NAPs**, is examined in this chapter, together with current work to develop appropriate **benchmarks** and **indicators** to monitor the effectiveness and outcomes of the approaches and policies described in the NAPs.

What's missing from the NAPs?

The NAPs demonstrate that Member States have recognised that there is a need for a more balanced combination of both supply-side policies, which adequately equip young people for the labour market, and demand-side policies, which create more jobs.

Central to the success of supply-side policies is the need for preventive and remedial action and also a recognition of the fact that different groups of young people require different forms of training and support. A number of significant advances in this respect have been piloted by YOUTHSTART projects but have not yet come to the attention of national policy makers. These projects offer new

and successful ways of bridging the gap between disaffected young people and mainstream training and employment provision.

Developing preventive measures

The table on page 7 shows that a number of Member States have identified the need to develop or improve measures for young people before, or when, they have been unemployed for six months in order to prevent them falling into the trap of long-term unemployment. These measures mirror the reality of many YOUTHSTART projects, which have demonstrated the necessity of tackling the causes of unemployment as early as possible by targeting young people at risk while still in school or in initial vocational training. While a number of Member States' NAPs refer to the need for measures to prevent youth unemployment, there is a need for a sharper focus on what education and training institutions can do to enhance the chances of their “clients” finding a suitable job.



Project Example: “Moi, quoi demain”

The Mission Locale (local youth career guidance centre) in Forest, a disadvantaged area of Brussels, has received a YOUTHSTART grant from the French-speaking community of Belgium for the project **Moi, quoi demain – ça commence aujourd'hui** (Me, what about tomorrow – it starts today) which is developing career guidance and counselling modules for secondary schools.

The modules cover labour market issues, the social and economic situation in Belgium, early school leaving and youth employment. They are directed at young people out of full-time compulsory education, who have repeatedly failed at school. The project is seen as constituting a preventive action aimed at helping young people to successfully make the transition to working life.

The modules are provided in the schools by staff from the Mission Locale and work is in small groups over 6 afternoons in order to encourage the active participation of the young people. For those interested in more individual counselling, appointments with the employment services will be made at the Mission Locale. Teachers from the school also attend the sessions so they can become involved in the follow-up.

This new approach to providing career guidance will also stimulate contacts and the exchange of views and experience between the schools, the employment and guidance services, Social Partner organisations and local enterprises and contribute to building a stronger local community.



Project Example: "Sofia Giovani"

Sofia Giovani is an Italian multi-regional project setting up a monitoring and anticipation system for school drop-outs in the regions of Umbria, Piemonte and Veneto. This means following up young people who have dropped out, or are at risk of dropping out of mainstream provision, through observatories and related guidance provision. The observatories make a typology of school drop-outs so that monitoring and guidance techniques are upgraded to match the profiles of different groups of young people. The emphasis is on interactive and sustainable advice and support mechanisms, as well as the continuous training of service providers, using multimedia tools. Networking between social services, schools and enterprises has produced a shared understanding of the profile of the project's target group.

In developing this integrated preventive approach for young people who are at risk of marginalisation, the project has introduced customised learning which integrates individual counselling and

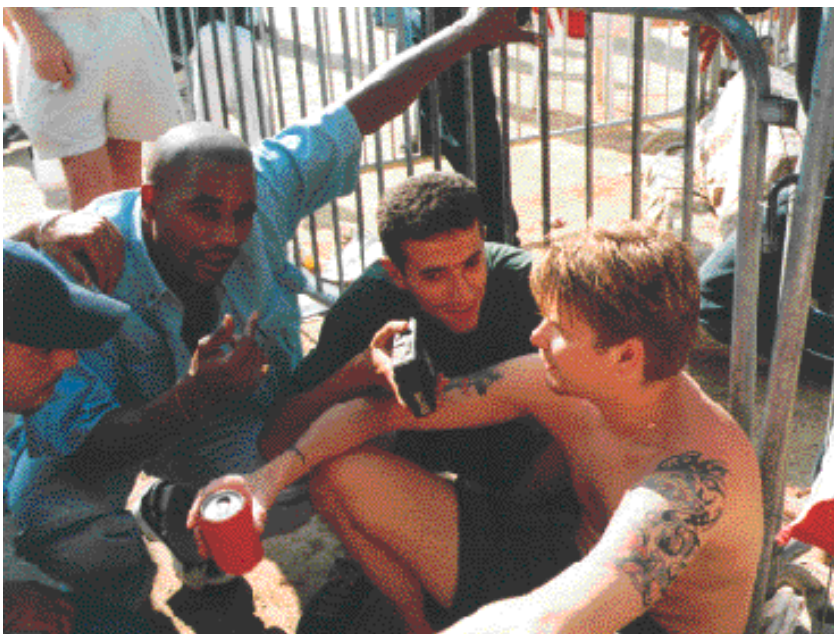
guidance activities with alternance-based training. Personalised guidance includes the formulation of individual action plans and, in this way, it empowers young people to take responsibility and control of their own pathway to working life. Short intensive courses have been developed to re-involve those who have dropped out of training. Work taster opportunities in clearly defined occupational sectors such as building restoration, electrical engineering and horticulture are used to test the young people's vocational aptitudes and career preferences. The project has, so far, helped some 500 young people in their transition from school to work. Most of them now have a work contract while others have enrolled in mainstream training courses.

The YOUTHSTART project has contributed to a review of training provision undertaken as a result of recent national legislation on employment promotion. The training centres involved now serve as 'second chance' providers, offering comprehensive progression pathways to employment.

Working with the non-formal sector

Almost 30% of YOUTHSTART project promoters are non-governmental, voluntary or charitable bodies, and organisations working in the non-formal sector. Many of these projects are the most successful in reaching and motivating disaffected young people. A number of authoritative studies have shown that the formal or public guidance and support services are only used by a small fraction of young people as a means of getting jobs. Most try to find employment with the help of their parents, friends or other people they know, but in current, fast-changing labour markets such advice is often unreliable. Non-formal community groups, youth services and sports and recreational groups can be more effective intermediaries. They can either develop their own expertise in guidance and counselling or can build on the trust which they have established with young people in preparing them for, or accompanying them during, interviews with formal guidance services.

YOUTHSTART experience has also shown that one of the keys to successful provision for young people is multi-agency working, especially at local level. Since non-formal organisations are often in direct contact with disaffected young people, such networks should always involve these organisations as equal partners in all aspects of the planning and delivery of services.





Project Example: "Equilibrium"

CIMO - The Finnish Centre for International Mobility implemented the project **Equilibrium - Formal and Non-Formal Methods in Guidance** to find more effective methods of non-formal guidance for young people who are socially excluded and who have not been reached by the formal vocational guidance services. The concentration of activity was on the life situation of the young person, giving general support and counselling and delivering life management skills. The project provided a number of out-centres for disaffected or marginalised young people in the community of Kemi, Lapland, to which they could come for support when experiencing personal or family difficulties.

To achieve the integration of young people into mainstream education and the job market, the project created an unofficial guidance and support network in both formal and informal settings. Through this network, interested persons from a wide range of backgrounds and with a range of occupational and other skills participated in the work of the project, on a vol-

untary basis, outside the official guidance system. These "mediators" were local people who are in close contact with the target group for a variety of reasons, such as youth and social workers, police and probation officers, teachers, pub owners and peers, as well as volunteers involved in churches, youth organisations, music associations and sport clubs.

The project developed and evaluated a new kind of training programme for mediators, exploring new ways in which they can help young people without any qualifications through educational, vocational and personal guidance. The purpose of the training was to raise the mediators' level of knowledge, to develop their working methods and to support their personal strengths. The training programme was built around a series of modules embodying non-traditional approaches. These included case work, mentoring, experimental methods, group work and discussions and co-operative learning. Evaluation and self-reflection were constant elements in the project and have given rise to many beneficial changes.

Project Example: "Jiva"

The Portuguese **Jiva** project, located in a very disadvantaged area of Lisbon, was run by a church community centre and aimed to regenerate the locality by mobilising local residents to solve its problems. Young people were seen as the key to the success of this process, and the project provided them with the skills and the motivation to play an active role in community life.

Specifically, the project developed flexible training curricula and vocational preparation in the areas of multimedia and catering, adapted to the needs of young people at serious risk of social exclusion. It also established the profile and role of a group monitor who acted as a reference person for the young people throughout their social reintegration process and who provi-

ded links to the various institutions involved and the local community.

The training activities of the project were organised as small service enterprises serving the local community, where the young people produced marketable goods while learning. One such enterprise was the multimedia centre and another, the kitchen workshop, prepared food products using the traditional recipes of the community's different ethnic groups.

The multimedia centre was at the core of the project's transnational work and developed an on-line school for English language learning, jointly operated by the partners. Another product of the partnership was World Tune – a loud-speaker sculpture transmitting digitally stored sounds of everyday life in each of the participating communities.



Actively involving the young people themselves

From the beginning, it was recognised that to make YOUTHSTART work it had to be a 'pact with young people'. The clear message from many projects is that the success of actions within the programme depends not only on Member States' use of project experience to explore new solutions to the continuing problem of skills' deficits and youth unemployment, but also on the degree of young people's involvement in the YOUTHSTART process itself.

In practice, active youth involvement within projects takes two forms: involvement of the individual young person at the project level as a pedagogical approach, and the collective involvement of young people as a policy priority, at local or national level. Neither form of involvement is exclusive. Each creates an awareness among young people of their own capabilities and how these can be used collectively both in the workplace and in society, in general.

A significant number of YOUTHSTART projects throughout the European Union actively involve their participants in the practical management of the projects, in information and awareness raising actions, in the delivery of activities and in the mainstreaming of outcomes. In this way, projects do not merely end up as test beds for new materials or programmes for young disadvantaged people but, rather, become places where learning and innovation is happening in partnership with the young participants themselves.

Project Example: "Advance"

The **Advance** project has developed systems for local authorities and services, which will facilitate the access and transition of young people to higher education or the labour market. The project operated in the county of Norrbotten, a sparsely populated region in the far north of Sweden but was still able to develop co-operation between all the different actors despite the great distances involved.

The project worked to raise the level of know-how among people working with youth issues at local and regional levels, through the dissemination of information and, more importantly, by bringing them face-to-face with the young people concerned. In seminars and workshops throughout the region they discussed the background to the situation and how best to improve it.

In order to enhance the dialogue between the young people and decision makers, the project developed the use of two methods:

Policy Delphi is a method in which people's attitudes towards a range of issues are investigated. Each time this technique was used, approximately 50 young people were asked to respond to a series of questions and between every round of questions, the answers would be compiled and presented to

the participants and other people involved, such as politicians and civil servants. These reports showed the synergies in views which occur and the problems that might exist. For each round of questions, the problems were explored more deeply, and the commitment increased.

The Future Factory was a "brainstorming" over one or two days with 25-30 participants. Special techniques were used to guarantee that everyone's voice was heard, and nobody held the upper hand. Each Future Factory ended with a strategy phase in which the groups designed a programme for the more realistic ideas which had emerged. The benefits of this method were the speed, the concentrated activity and the fact that all participants very quickly reached the practical, realisation phase.

Through **Advance**, the creativity and responsibility of both young people and decision makers have been enhanced, and as a result local policy development has gained fresh impetus from the involvement of young people. In one municipality, young people were responsible for drafting a labour market policy-programme, which was presented to the politicians and who subsequently implemented a number of their recommendations.

Projects have shown that for those young people who, to a large extent, have rejected many of the values of mainstream society, only programmes which recognise their needs and expectations and for which they can have a sense of ownership have proved to be effective. This is, of course, a difficult message for mainstream providers, especially of initial vocational education and training, to accept. It makes it even more important that there is a recognition, at national policy level, that the active involvement of the target group is a prerequisite for the success of labour market integration programmes for disadvantaged young people.

To provide an impetus for the further development of policies and practices which engage young people in the decision-making process, The Active Involvement of Young People has been chosen as the focus for current YOUTHSTART thematic work at European level.

Project Example: "Diktyo"

The Labour Institute of Greece's General Workers' Confederation ran a multi-regional YOUTHSTART project in partnership with young people. The project, *Diktyo periferiakon monadon proothisis eterikon sheseon ya tin kinoniko-ikonomiki entaxi ton neon* (Regional networks promoting the integration of young people into working life), aimed to provide support systems which addressed the needs of young people facing educational difficulties. The underlying philosophy of the project was to encourage the active involvement of this target group in the information and awareness-raising processes, in order to gain support for local employment initiatives and self-employment.

Some 20 young people teamed up in each region to identify their training and employment needs and to look for solutions to the barriers to their integration on the labour market. As a team, they made contact with key play-

ers in the local economy and regional decision makers to sell their ideas. In the region of Thessaly, for example, the YOUTHSTART beneficiaries succeeded in demonstrating the need for training and job creation in new growth areas such as the environment. Their lobbying led to the provision of an open green area by the municipality of Larissa. An action plan for the acquisition of new vocational skills related to nature conservation and the maintenance of green areas was developed by the young people.

They have also been able to explore vocational options as a group, developing specific skills and improving their employment prospects. This experience gave them the confidence to head up peer information activities for other young people at risk of failing to make the transition to employment, which resulted in these others becoming involved in social or recreational activities in their local community.





Benchmarking the Employment Strategy

Benchmarks are primarily a way in which performance can be improved through analysing the success of the best performers. Using benchmarking to set standards or reference points for tackling unemployment involves seeing which countries are most successful in tackling these problems and setting their achievements as the benchmark, or standard, against which the performance of other countries can be measured.

Three kinds of benchmarks are particularly relevant to tackling problems of youth unemployment:

- **Participation benchmarks**, dealing with who takes part (target groups), how they are attracted or recruited, and indicators or policies on access.
- **Process benchmarks**, dealing with what is done, how it is provided, how it is organised or administered, and how it is evaluated.
- **Achievement benchmarks**, about goals and the extent to which they have been achieved.

Recent work across the Union on new types of benchmarks which reflect the real nature and extent of youth unemployment has led to a recognition of the need to pay more attention to the processes by which young people move through the education and training systems and the impact that success or failure at any point can have on their future integration into the labour market. In the light of the decline in the absolute numbers of young people across Europe and their low employment rate relative to those in the USA and Japan, it is particularly important to ensure that as many young people as possible are active on the labour market so as to preserve the Union's competitiveness and capacity for growth in the future. In order to maximise participation, best practice must include effective provision for all young people and, as a result, indicators need to reflect the reasons for drop-out and non-participation as well as successful ways of tackling these problems.

Good practice examples in YOUTHSTART can help developers of benchmarks to identify the types of actions which lead to the achievement of the outcomes to be measured by the indicators and can help to promote those actions which have been shown to be effective in tackling the real causes of youth unemployment. In addition, since all the projects work transnationally, they have been able to compare the experiences and solutions of their transnational partners and, in this way, European best practice can be identified and replicated.

Because most YOUTHSTART projects are concerned with developing new techniques or innovative programmes to tackle the problems of the young unemployed, their greatest contribution is to the identification of key indicators for use in the development of process benchmarks. In fact, the comprehensive pathway approach (see page 10) provides a potential framework for much of this work and, in this way, can provide the link between Member States' and EU youth employment policy development and the reality of good practice 'on the ground'.

Some of the areas where projects can help identify indicators leading to the development of effective youth employment benchmarks are the following:

- As has already been described, the comprehensive pathway approach to the integration of young people into the labour market is the core activity of YOUTHSTART projects across the Union. Good practice from these projects can form the basis for identifying the key steps in the transition between school and employment;
- related to this, the development of individual action plans has been a feature of a large number of YOUTHSTART projects in both the first and second rounds. As a result, project experience can provide a basis for benchmarking this process;
- successful actions to combat drop-out must include preventive measures for young people still in education and training and their teachers or trainers.

Over 25% of YOUTHSTART projects place a priority on such measures and have relevant experience to offer;

- benchmarks concerned with active, as distinct from passive, measures reflect the need to ensure that young people understand and have access to the programmes being provided for them. Mentoring actions are central to this process and new forms and ways of delivering support services of this kind are being developed by almost 80% of YOUTHSTART projects;
- the primary indicator of success still has to be the extent of the reduction in the number of young people unemployed. As stated in the European Employment Strategy, too few jobs are being created in Europe, so there is a need to promote self-employment and a spirit of enterprise, especially amongst young people. Because more than half of the projects are exploring new ways of promoting job creation and entrepreneurship for young people, employment creation benchmarks for young people can be based on the wealth of good practice within YOUTHSTART.

FINAL WORDS

The European Employment Strategy represents a commitment by the Member States to co-ordinate their employment policies and to agree targets for these policies, based on best practice across the Union. Since its launch in 1994, EMPLOYMENT-YOUTHSTART has been instrumental in the development of new and innovative ways of tackling the deep-seated problems of youth unemployment throughout Europe. This publication demonstrates that YOUTHSTART has a central role to play in helping Member States to develop new and realistic approaches to these problems. The challenge now is to ensure that the good practice identified in YOUTHSTART results in real change for the better in mainstream programmes for young people.

Annex: YOUTHSTART Fact Sheet

Introduction

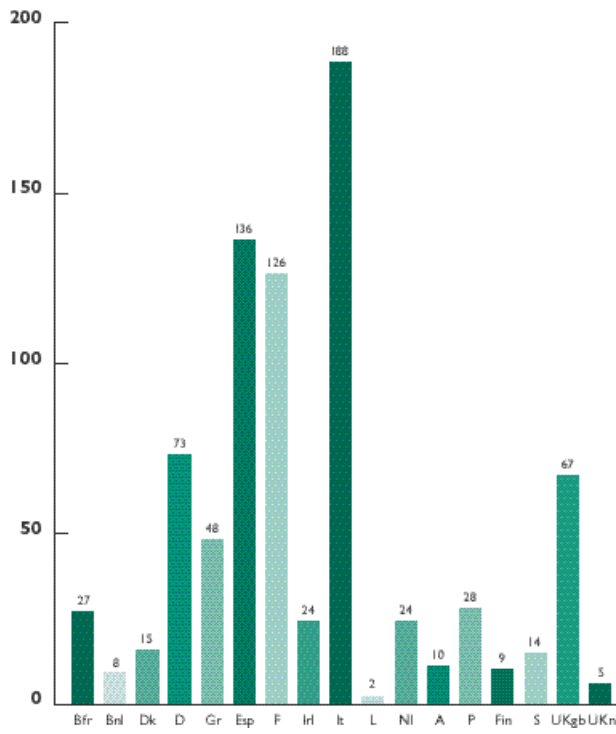
EMPLOYMENT is one of a package of 14 Initiatives adopted by the European Commission for the period 1995-1999 and within this package, EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT are the two Human Resource Initiatives which are led by the European Social Fund. The total budget for the five years of the EMPLOYMENT Initiative, including both European Union and Member State contributions, is almost 3.5 billion ECU.

The EMPLOYMENT Community Initiative aims to help people who have specific difficulties in finding or keeping a suitable job or career: EMPLOYMENT has four different strands: YOUTHSTART (for disadvantaged young people; NOW (for women); INTEGRA (for the socially excluded) and HORIZON (for people with disabilities).

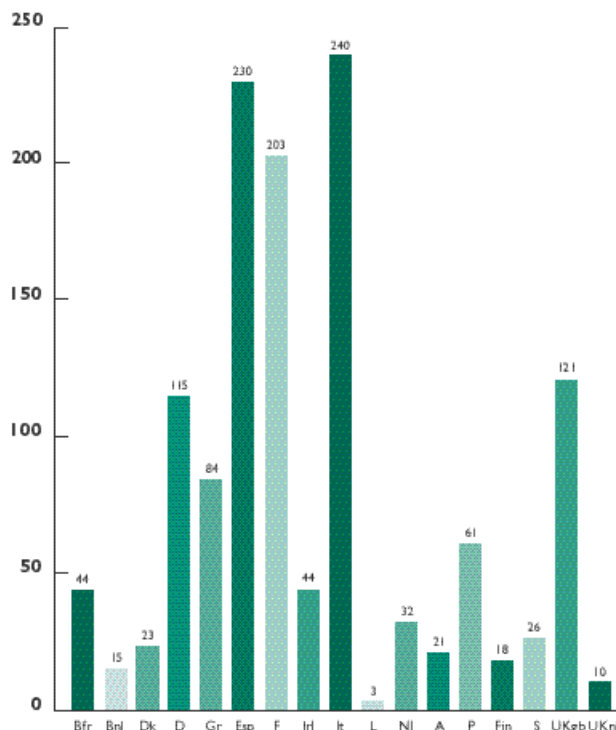
Project numbers

In the second selection round in 1997, Member States chose 804 projects to participate in YOUTHSTART. This was considerably more than in the first round, in 1995, when 495 projects were selected. Italy has many more projects this time: 188 compared with 53, in 1995. In other countries, the percentage increase in the number of projects is more or less in line with that of the overall programme, namely around 55%. The first chart shows the distribution of projects by country for the 1997 round, while the second shows the total of 1299 projects over the life of the Initiative, again, by Member State.

Project Numbers 1997



Overall Project Numbers

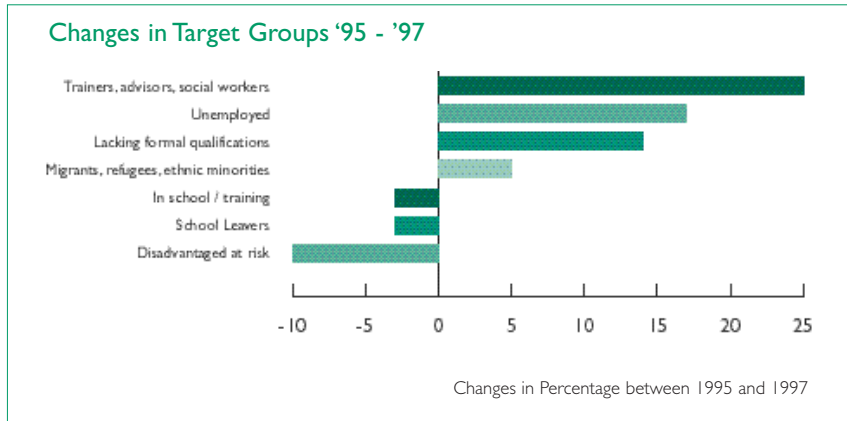




Target groups

Over the two selection rounds, considerable changes of emphasis occurred. There was a 25% increase in the number of projects which indicated that they were concerned with trainers, social workers, and others who work directly with young people.

There was also a significant increase in the numbers of projects targeting unemployed young people, or those lacking formal qualifications.

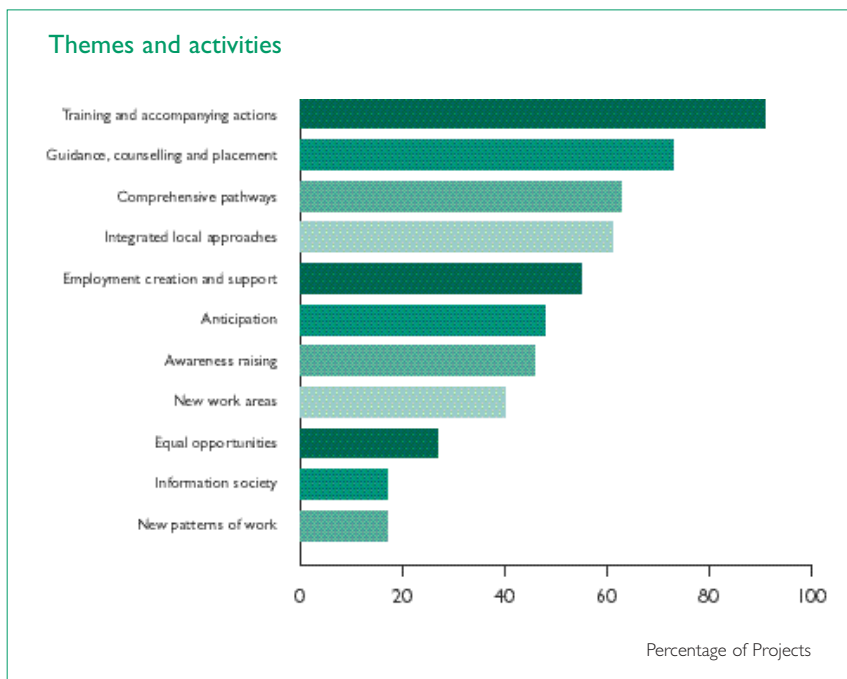


Themes and activities

An analysis of the projects, based on the main thematic areas, is shown in the next chart. Since the EMPLOYMENT Initiative is, primarily, a training and job creation initiative it might be expected that almost all projects report activities in one or both of these areas.

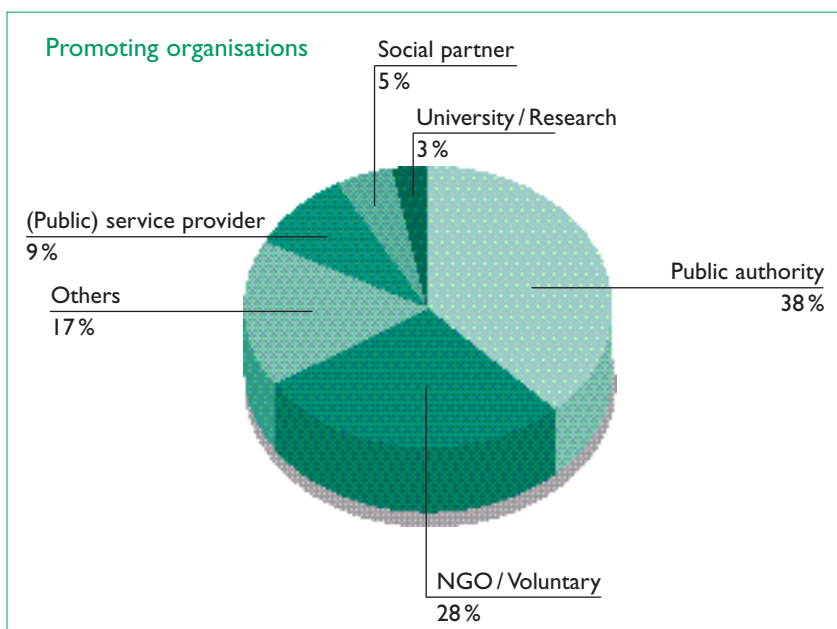
The development of interest in actions linked to the comprehensive pathway approach is reflected in more than 60 % of projects which are concerned with guidance, local or pathway approaches. Reflecting the interest in self-employment and employment creation, almost 60% of projects are concerned with these areas, while over 40% of projects are working with young people in the EU new work areas and in anticipation actions.

The number of projects concerned with the New Patterns of Work theme more than tripled between the 1995 and 1997 rounds, and those concerned with Anticipation and Equal Opportunities more than doubled.



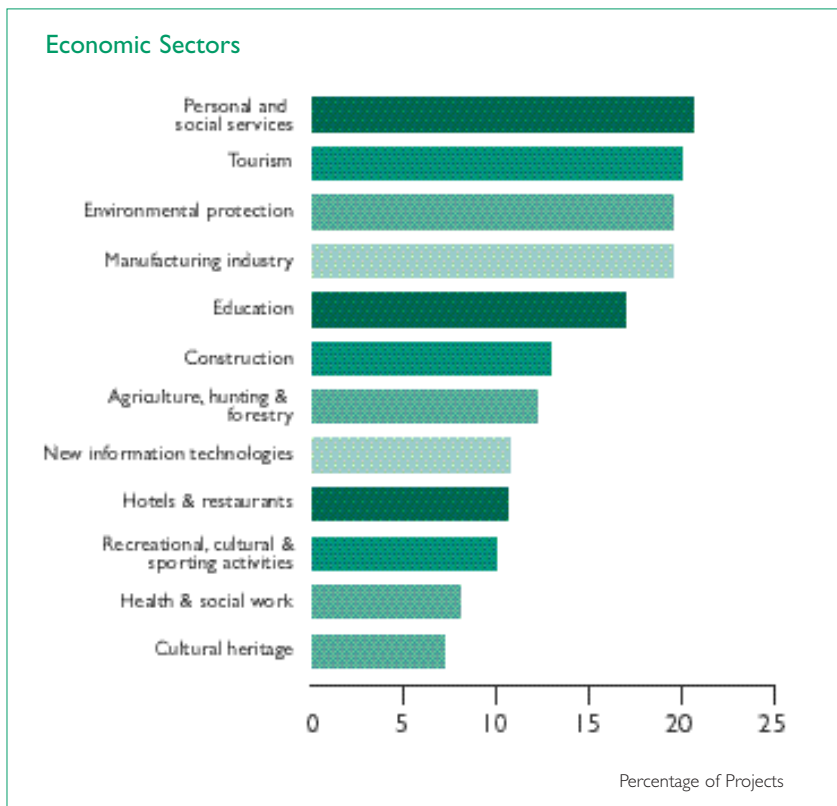
Promoting organisations

As the chart shows, public authorities are the most common promoters of YOUTHSTART projects, followed by NGOs and voluntary organisations. In fact, the number of projects promoted by public authorities increased between 1995 and 1997, while the percentage of projects promoted by NGOs dropped. The percentage of Social Partner organisations promoting projects is disappointingly low.



Economic sectors

The economic sectors in which YOUTHSTART projects operate are shown in the following table. It is significant that a number of the most frequently mentioned sectors are also those which are identified by the Commission as experiencing the most rapid rate of increase in employment over the last seven years. These include business and personal services, environmental protection, and recreational activities. It should also be remembered that, given the low levels of formal qualification of YOUTHSTART participants, a number of the rapid growth sectors would not be directly relevant to the skills or aspirations of the target group. As can be seen from the table, several of the EU New Jobs areas are also well represented, most notably tourism, new information technologies and cultural heritage.





Annex 2: Addresses of ESF National Administrations and YOUTHSTART National Support Structures

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