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for Public Employment Services**

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

**THE NETHERLANDS**

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## **CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>COUNTRY SPECIFICS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – RISKS FOR LOW-SKILLED YOUNG PEOPLE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>PES ORGANISATION AND SERVICE PROFILE.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>ENSURING ACCESS TO PES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>PES SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE PES MEASURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>ASPECTS OF TRANSFERABILITY AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

# 1 COUNTRY SPECIFICS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – RISKS FOR LOW-SKILLED YOUNG PEOPLE

The unemployment rate is relatively low in the Netherlands. During the crisis the highest level of overall unemployment was 6%, for youth unemployment the highest level was 13.3%. It is remarkable that now the youth unemployment rate is less than double the overall rate. As the table below shows, unemployment rates (both for the workforce overall and for young people) have declined again since the peak of the crisis.

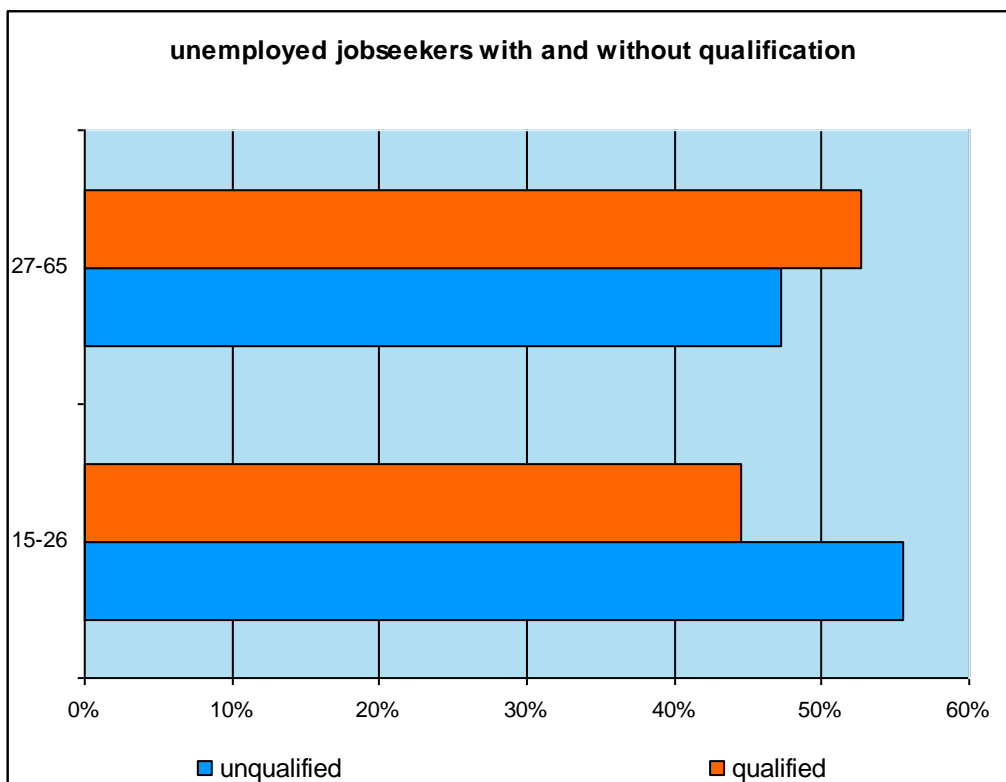
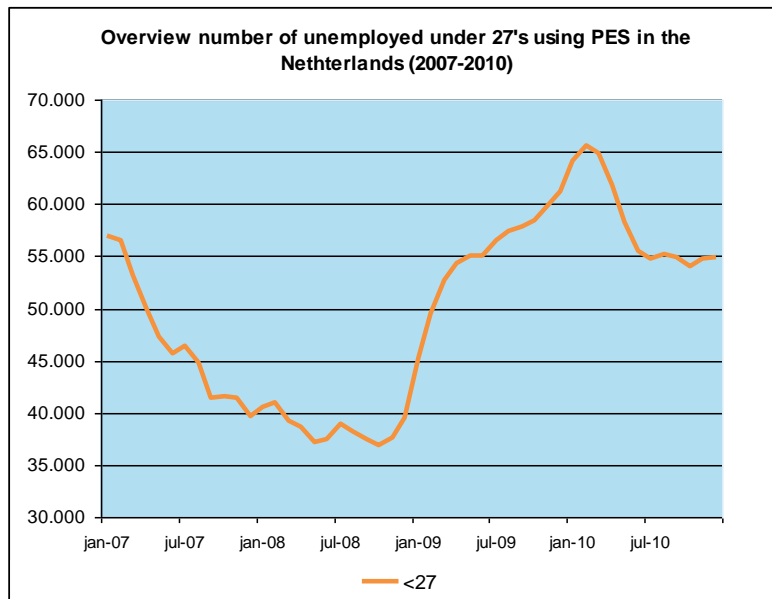
<b>unemployment in the Netherlands (source CBS)</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>15-25</b>	<b>15-65</b>
<b>1st quarter 2009</b>	10.0%	4,4%
<b>2d quarter 2009</b>	11,3%	4.7%
<b>3d quarter 2009</b>	11.5%	4.9%
<b>4th quarter 2009</b>	11.3%	5.2%
<b>1st quarter 2010</b>	13.3%	6.0%
<b>2d quarter 2010</b>	12.9%	5.6%
<b>3d quarter 2010</b>	11.1%	5.5%
<b>4th quarter 2010</b>	9.3%	5.0%

According to our national Statistics Bureau there are 130 000 young unemployed people at this moment in the age group 15 to 25. This figure includes all students that seek jobs for a few hours a week.

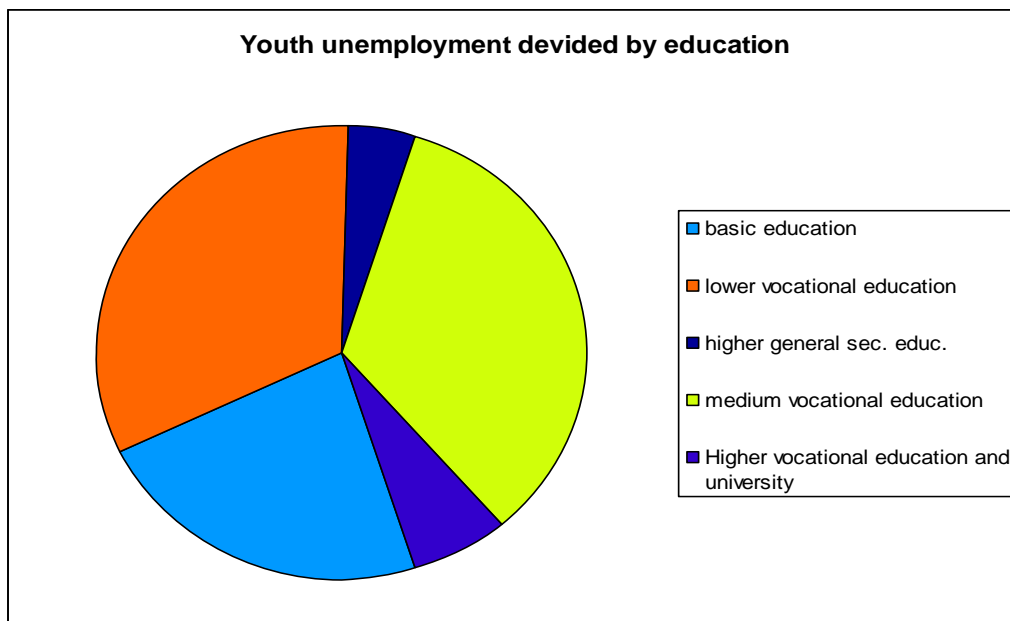
55 000 unemployed young people under the age of 27 are registered at the PES at this moment.

The difference in numbers is:

- that the PES does not register students who seek jobs for a few hours a week
- there are young people under 27s who receive social assistance benefits who are only at their municipality (this differs per region), which is responsible for their integration.
- there is an unknown number of young people who are not registered with any agency. Their number is estimated between 30 000 and 50 000.



55% of the registered young jobseekers are unqualified, whereas 45% of all jobseekers are unqualified.



In the Netherlands the government organised a programme to tackle the problem of young people leaving school without qualifications.

They introduced a new law, which stipulates that you cannot leave school without a qualification under the age of 18.

They organised cooperation between all institutions involved and made 39 central municipalities responsible for decreasing the number of school leavers without qualification. This co-operation involves all responsible institutions as well as parents.

The message in this was zero tolerance and young people's attendance in school is controlled very strictly.

There is a peer-group of young people who left school with qualifications who visit the schools to spread the message why it is so important to get a diploma.

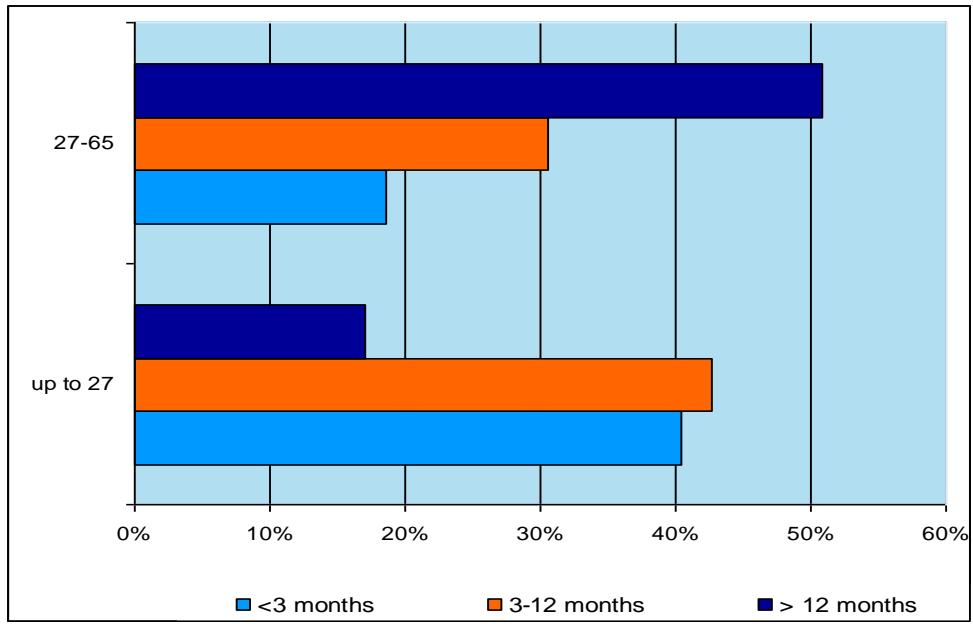
There are different projects in the regions to keep young people longer in school. For example classes with extra care and structure, parent participation, tailor-made training etc.

This resulted in a major decrease from over 70 000 to less than 40 000 school leavers without qualifications.

### Duration of unemployment

Of our young jobseekers, 65% find a job in less than half a year and 83% find a job in less than a year.

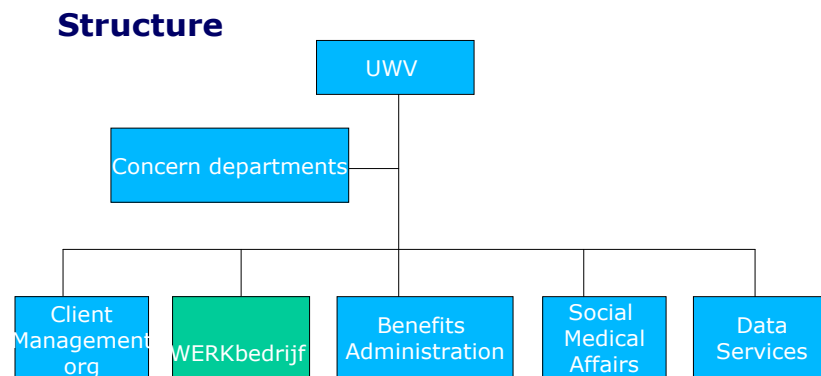
duration of unemployment	up to 27	27-65
<3 months	40%	19%
3-12 months	43%	31%
> 12 months	17%	51%



## 2 PES ORGANISATION AND SERVICE PROFILE

### UWV

UWV WERKbedrijf is part of an independent administrative institution: the UWV.  
Institute for Employee Benefit Schemes



Non Governmental Organisation



### Benefits

Employees' insurance benefits (unemployment, disability and sickness):

- administered by UWV: financed by employers, employees and government.

Social assistance benefits:

- administered by the municipalities: financed from taxes.

### Budget/Resources

UWV gets additional budget – mostly from the Ministry (taxpayers' money) and sometimes also from the employers' organisations - for special measures and often for special groups.

Specifically for young people (up to age 27) we now have the Actionplan Youth Unemployment (2009-2011), financed by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

This Actionplan is a partnership with the municipalities and several other organisations in the field of education. The total amount of the budget is € 250 million.

The budget for UWV is € 15 million for a period of 2 years. We have about 35.000 young jobseekers and 250 youth advisors from PES. So they have a caseload from 140 each.

### Service offer

UWV WERKbedrijf offers services for jobseekers as well as for employers; the services offered are largely provided in house. Most of our offices (120) have a special youth desk and that also means a special youth team. We are working together closely with the municipality and education providers. Every young person is entitled to help from the dedicated counsellors from the youth desk, whether they are short- or long-term unemployed, belonging to a special risk group etc. If necessary we can redirect those who need more care than we can give to one of the stakeholders.

And we have a lot of stakeholders surrounding us. This is the network we are working with together, in order to achieve our goal: more and more people at work.





### 3 ENSURING ACCESS TO PES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Access for school leavers:

Part of the Actionplan Youth Unemployment is the School Ex program for school leavers of vocational training. This program has two parts. The first part of this program is to keep young people in secondary vocational education in school for one more year to get a higher level of qualifications and to keep them away from the labour market for one more year. And the second, if they are determined to leave school, is to give them a smooth transition into the labour market. The PES was responsible for the second part.

We invested a lot in contacting the vocational training schools, to give information to professionals and to classes of school leavers about the labour market, about UWV WERKbedrijf and about job-application etc. Also there were a lot of school groups that visited WERKbedrijf.

We also have, together with the municipalities, programs for drop-outs. They are detected by the municipality and lead through to the Youthdesk for reintegration (both working and learning)

#### Access for young people:

For all youth we exhibited our services in VET fairs, such as Skills Masters.

We developed the Be Smart campaign which meets more the look and feel of young people than our overall campaign for [www.werk.nl](http://www.werk.nl) On this site you will find our vacancies, tests tests, labour market information, application tips and tricks, information about working abroad etc.



Our services differ across the regions and are related to the collaboration we have with the municipalities, because the municipalities have the budget for youth-employment (the budget for the action plan is youth unemployment is 153 million for the municipalities and 15 million for PES. This is additional budget). They are autonomous and have their own priorities and target groups. Therefore we cannot speak of a uniform approach on the issue of youth unemployment.

There are regions where the youth desk has, together with the municipalities, developed their own E-services. For example [www.hoewerkjijaanjetekomst.nl](http://www.hoewerkjijaanjetekomst.nl)

(translated: how do you work on your future), a site on which you can chat with other young people and with professionals.

There are regions where the youth desk reaches out to the community, to immigrant groups and disadvantaged young people.

We developed mobile stands to go to fairs, schools etc. On these cars we can place 3 laptops. On these laptops people can do competence tests, interest tests, entrepreneurs' tests etc. These tests help start the conversation with young people, about their future.

In April we have our yearly action week for school leavers and other young people. This gives a boost to our contacts, both with the professionals and the youngsters. We organise job fairs, speed meets and other activities



## **4 PES SERVICES AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

In chapter 2 you saw an overview of our stakeholders.

A very important partner for us is the municipality. We are not only working together, but we actually have – as we call it – an integrated cooperation. Employees of UWV WERKbedrijf and from the municipality are working together in integrated teams, so that we do not have to redirect the jobseekers from one organisation to the other. That is also the philosophy of the youth desks (Chapter 2).

### **Legal rules**

Young people who have had a job can get unemployment benefit for 3 months maximum. There is no minimum period.

If they are still unemployed after 3 months, they can no longer apply for social benefit. Instead of social benefit the municipality has the duty to offer the young person a work place with training. This is often an apprenticeship, but not necessarily. The learning component can also be about how to find your attitude in an organization being an employee. If the young person is willing to accept such a place, he can get a benefit. This is a benefit from the municipality. So: work before income.

School leavers can also apply for a work place with training.

### **Commitment UWV**

- All school leavers will have a job within 3 months, or are actively seeking work: reintegration, training on the job
- Working closely together with employers, industry organisations and SMEs
- All kinds of activities: job fairs, speed-dating with employers, a working-learning bus to take young people to events, e-community (under construction) etc.
- Follow-up after having received a work placement
- Special youth coaches and trainers

### **Types of services for young people**

In most of our offices we have special youth desks, where we have integrated youth teams with the municipalities and where we have intensive cooperation with the schools and other organisations who are supporting young people in different ways, for example, youth care welfare and so on. In the Netherlands we have all kinds of institutes to support young people when they have psychological problems, drug- or drink problems, financial problems etc. and we need to work closely together with them.

The young people can subscribe to UWV WERKbedrijf through the internet and then they will be invited for a group meeting.

If they are self-reliant we support them only by e-counselling for the first 3 months. If not, we support them individually and face-to-face. Whether the young jobseeker is self-reliant or not, can be determined at a group meeting as well as in an individual meeting with the PES counsellor.

Our support is custom made, so what we do varies for each young person depending on his/her needs.

We support them in getting a job, a working- learning place, they can make a career test, we have different workshops they can follow, we have special sectoral weeks and an action week for youngsters. And so on. A sectoral week is a business week where special sectors are placed in the spotlights. We organize special events for employers and (young) jobseekers to learn more about available jobs and about working in that special sector.

Most of the time PES takes the lead in planning actions aimed at integrating young people.

Under the Action plan Youth Unemployment we have employed 2 x 100 trainees. These trainees are young highly educated school leavers who can help us by helping the young jobseekers to get a job, by inspiring us to develop unorthodox methods for reaching out to the youngsters and to find other ways to approach employers. For example the social media is still a virgin territory.

And in this way we offer them work experience. We also support the trainees in their own development. We help them to discover and develop their talents, so that they are capable to find another job afterwards, because we only hire them for 1 year.

With the temporary employment of the trainee group we hope to establish a culture inside PES of trial and error .It means learning by doing and not being afraid of making mistakes (you learn the most from what went wrong)

Providing labour market information:

PES is responsible for transparency of the labour market. Therefore we supply labourmarket information via our website [www.werk.nl](http://www.werk.nl) .

For youth we developed a special edition of labour market information on youth (un)employment per labour market region. Together with the organisation which is responsible for apprenticeships we give information on possibilities for young people in the region for education, apprenticeship and work. And for employers the possibilities to hire young people. This edition comes every 4 months on paper as well as on the internet. It is evaluated as a very useful tool for all our partners.

### **Cooperation with employers and employers' organisations**

We have special business consultants, who are in contact with SMEs as well as large business organisations. With the employers' organisations we make covenants

in order to place young jobseekers in (working-learning) jobs, these are often partly paid by the employers' organisations. Many employers' organisations have their own education fund, that can be used to support the jobseeker on the job. Sometimes it is not possible to get an apprenticeship because of the rules or because there is just no formal training.

And of course we visit the employers individually in order to find a job for our youngsters.

A few examples of support in cooperation with the employers (organisations)

- vouchers (€ 2500 the young person can give to an employer who is willing to employ them)
- covenants (deals we make with employers' organisations), with all kinds of sectors
- several branch servicepoints in health care, transport, crafts, construction etc. in our offices
- jobhunting
- mentoring

## 5 EFFECTIVE PES MEASURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Some figures:

### **The effect of our matching offensive:**

By focussing on our goals with dedicated staff we managed last year to place about 70 000 young people in jobs and that means 23% more young people in jobs. 36% of our vacancies were filled with job seekers aged under 27. There is no “creaming” of the most qualified young people. About half the jobs are filled with unqualified and half with qualified young people.

During 2010 we registered 160 000 under 27s as unemployed in our caseload.

The crisis budget for youth unemployment in total for two years is € 250million, of which the PES got 15 million.

### **The effect of the School Extension campaign:**

In two years of our action plan, 22 000 more students decided to stay at school one more year to reach a higher education-level.

For the school leavers we set up a program to reach them, last year we reached over 10 000 people and we supported about 4 000. We monitored the 10.000. In October, 52% had a job for more than 26 hours a week and 25% had a job for less than 26 hours a week.

Together with our partners we decided that for young people  
'doing nothing is no option'

To help them to be active and participate 'all means are permitted', less rules, more creative solutions. So there was a lot invented in the regions, such as the vouchers, a limousine tour, events with employers, green and grey on the workfloor etc. Green and grey means old(er) employers and young jobseekers to learn from each other. And by extension we try to find young jobseekers for taking over the company from the employer who is going to retire.

For young people without qualifications our aim is to send them back to school, either fulltime or in combination with work. Last year, through our efforts, 4400 of the unemployed young people went back to school (fulltime) and a lot more decided to work and learn.

Our success factors:

1. Cooperation: use each others' skills and network. Youth desks in which all parties work together.
2. Focus on action and results, with staff that are dedicated to this target group.
3. Find and use new ways. Hire young people as coaches for the unemployed. WinWin situation. You give opportunities to young people, you have extra

resources, you create a new culture of movement, inspiration and you have a group that is familiar to all new developments.

#### 4. Employers: Make employers part of the solution:

- branches of employers promised us 13 000 extra training jobs and jobs for young people during the crisis
- Employers who hire a young jobseeker get a voucher of 2500 euros. Easy to realise. The entrepreneur is happy, because it is a simple not bureaucratic measure.
- Job-acquisition together with other players on the same market (for example,. local job agents, schools, municipalities)
- Money makes the world go round, You can not fight the problem of youth unemployment if there are no extra resources to solve it. “put your money where your mouth is!”
- Pay attention to soft skills. Make young people responsible for their own success. The PES does the coaching. Short training and workshops on behaviour, presentation, application, etc.
- Mentor projects: especially disadvantaged young people need role models and they need networks of employers and employees. For example the Wheelbarrow project, in which an employer uses his network to place a young unemployed person.
- The PES coach as professional. Train and inspire the coach to improve the PES service. The initial training of our trainees is a basic training of six weeks for all our professionals. Beyond that we have training on how to cope with young people, for example what is ‘streetculture’ and what is the best way to communicate with young people, what are their motives and their dreams. We organise ‘inspiration days’ for our professionals, also for our partners. On these days we have workshops, we share new ideas and methods, we network etc.

The key obstacles:

- Reaching young people who are not known by any agency
- No shows on appointments and events
- Decrease of the standard budget for PES
- Decrease of the reintegration budget

The measures that aim to integrate through training and qualification are installed by the government. All these measures help to keep our youth unemployment rate relatively low.

- No school leaving without qualification. Extra effort and money to prevent young people from early school leaving.
- No social benefit without cooperation in one’s learning and working plan
- A school system in which work experience is very important. Apprenticeship is socially accepted and well implemented. School leavers often get their first job through their last apprenticeship.

The monitoring is on the total of the results in terms of numbers of placement and duration of unemployment and also on claim reduction.

The effect of the mentioned projects is not generally monitored. Of course, in the different regions, managers are very cost-conscious and will not allow a project to continue if there is no effect on the outcomes for young people.



## **6 ASPECTS OF TRANSFERABILITY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Aspects that might be transferred from Austria to our country**

- Previously, we visited schools and offered services like presentations and the possibility of a career test. Just like in Austria we had to minimize that support. But Austria has its BIZ and that has proven to be very successful. But this also seems to be very costly. How effective are the BIZ's? We are looking for an instrument through the internet to reach the same goal. Maybe you can help us? We consider to teach the teacher, rather than the student, as part of our cost reduction. By coaching the teachers to help their students themselves, the costs will stay lower.
- Working together with institutes based on religion, in order to find the young people not registered anywhere. As in the host country, the mosques and the Catholic Church.
- Involving the parents in our activities.
- Online counselling? (we need to learn more about what the Austrian colleagues do)
- We also have the opportunity to track the young people in comparing our data with the data of the social security agency. We might do that more often and better.

### **Conclusion/comment on most effective practices and key issues**

- All decision makers and partners involved are dedicated to this mission.
- The rule is: investing now is saving money later on. A wise principle.
- The apprenticeship training is very well organised and gets full attention in all the measures that is a big part of the success.
- Measuring is knowing: sometimes it is difficult to prove whether a measure is successful or not. We are very anxious to know more about the results in figures.
- Are there any measures that are based on "trial and error?"