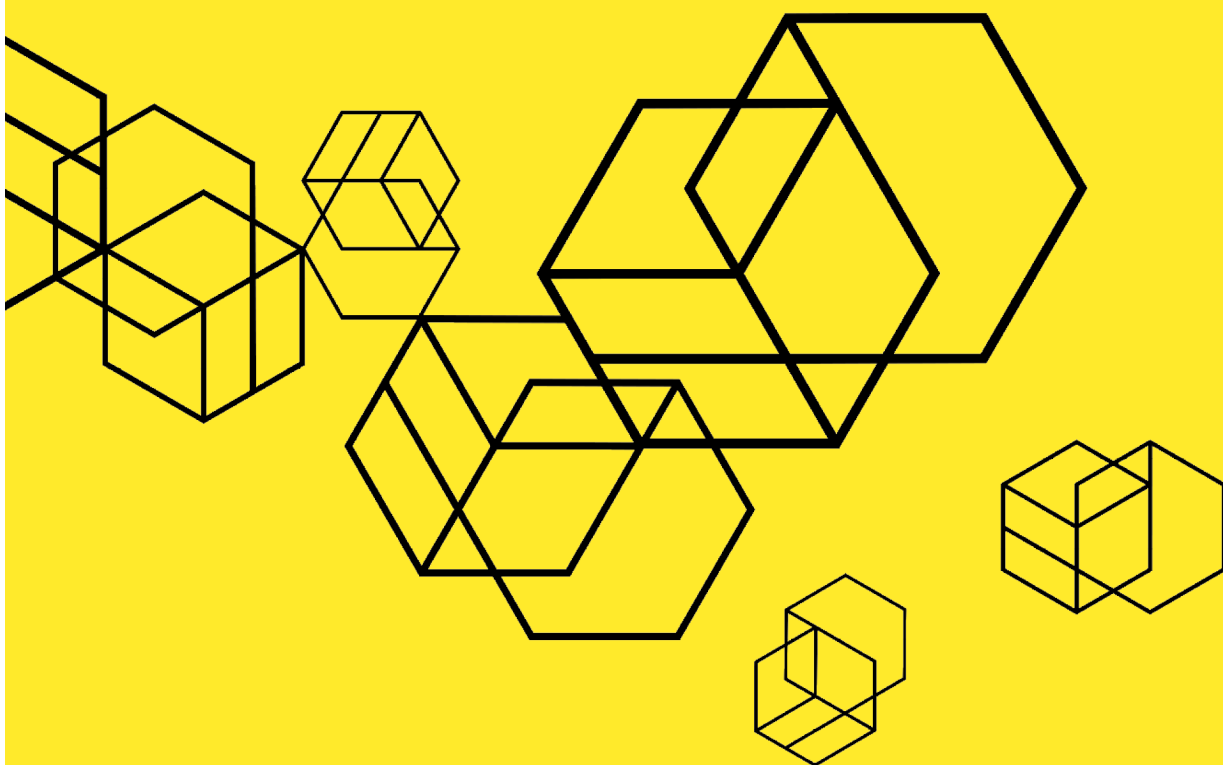


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SIC TRS#2 Youth unemployment and precarious work

Álvaro Luna & Igone Guerra





1. INTRODUCTION

Place, time: San Sebastian, December 13th, 2017: 9:30-13:30

Thematic area: Youth unemployment and Precarious Work

Organizing team: Álvaro Luna (UPV/EHU), Igone Guerra (UPV/EHU)

Main question: How can the challenge of youth unemployment and precarious work be approached from an social innovation perspective?

Overview participants including geographic coverage

Name	Organization/Affiliation	Researchers/practitioner/policymakers/ Civil Servant	Based In
Ainhoa Novo	UPV/EHU	Researcher	SPAIN
Alfonso Unceta	UPV/EHU	Researcher	SPAIN
Aroa Etxburua	Employment Centre Province of Gipuzkoa (Basque Country)	Practitioner	SPAIN
Auxkin Galarraga	UPV/EHU	Researcher	SPAIN
Gaizka Rodriguez	Agintzari Social Cooperative	Practitioner	SPAIN
Gema Gonzalez de Txabarri	Basque Government	Policymaker	SPAIN
Gorka Urueta	UPV/EHU	Researcher	SPAIN
Ion Gamba	Basque Government	Policymaker	SPAIN
Josean Castaño	Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa	Policymaker	SPAIN
Joseba Muxika	Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa	Policymaker	SPAIN
Juan María Juaristi Lizarralde	Musikene Training Center	Practitioner	SPAIN
Juan Pablo Landa	UPV/EHU	Researcher	SPAIN
Karmele Gomez	Zumaia city council	Civil Servant	SPAIN



Garmendia			
Leire Orella	San Sebastian City Council	Civil Servant	SPAIN
Libe Eizagirre Agoues	Self-employed	Practitioner	SPAIN
María Ruigómez	Employment Centre Province of Gipuzkoa (Basque Country)	Practitioner	SPAIN
Miguel Arrieta	NAZARET Employment Training Foundation	Practitioner	SPAIN
Miren Mancisidor	San Sebastián City Council	Civil servant/Practitioner	SPAIN
Oihana Hernáez	Prospektiker	Practitioner	SPAIN
Simon Peña	UPV/EHU	Researcher	SPAIN
Xabier Agizabalaga	Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa	Policymaker	SPAIN
Elizabeth Iriarte	Fundación Secretariado Gitano	Practitioner	SPAIN
Tania Salas Perez	Political Science & PhD candidate	Researcher	SPAIN
Oier Ochoa de Aizpuru	Political Science & PhD candidate	Researcher	SPAIN
Amaia Etxebarria	Cámara de Gipuzkoa (Gipuzkoa Chamber of Commerce)	Practitioner	SPAIN
Paolo Rosso	OECD-Trento Centre for Local Development	Practitioner	ITALY
Berta Barbed	Autonomous University of Barcelona	Researcher	SPAIN
Octavio Medina	World Bank	Researcher	SPAIN



2. BACKGROUND ON THE TOPIC OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

In the last decade, we have witnessed new situations and configurations in the labour market due to the rapid technological, economical and productive transformations that have taken place in western economies, especially after the world economic crisis in 2008. These transformations are embedded in deeper globalized processes where the logics of neoliberal policies and the dominance of free market economies have changed the nature of work and employment. Moreover, these transformations have eroded the foundations of the modern welfare state, in a context in which political disaffection is increasing among younger populations and life-long learning is a must in order to adapt to the new labour context. Younger generations have been highly affected by these processes facing increasing problems to find a stable and well-paid job. Lower wages, precarious labour conditions, and long-term unemployment are challenges that require the restructuration of employment policies in European countries. Whilst younger generations have been a collective that has been generally permeable to change and social transformations, these processes have had a major impact in their living conditions, their values and attitudes, having been one of the more affected and vulnerable groups after the economic crisis. Young unemployment rates rapidly increased in Spain, reaching 55% of the population in 2010. Although this rate has slowly dropped –36% in 2017–, the labour conditions have worsened the living and working conditions of the young, long-term unemployment rates have risen, and the young face increasing uncertainty and fear of the future. This session is focused on the discussion of these problems with younger generations, practitioners and the research community in the Basque Country to find new possible and pragmatic solutions to these challenges from a transformative and socially innovative perspective.

A. Main questions and sub questions

How can research and practice interact together to increase societal and scientific impact in the field of young unemployment and precarious work from a social innovation perspective?

- What are the existing social and economic challenges in the field of young unemployment and precarious work?
- What are the needs, values and attitudes of the 'young' towards these challenges?
- How are public policies answering to these challenges at different levels –European, national and regional?
- How can social innovation contribute to solve these challenges?

What are the barriers to innovation in public policy design to address young unemployment?

- How can the research community, civil servants and practitioners work together to overcome these barriers from a innovative perspective?
- How can bottom-up tools and methodologies for the co-creation and co-design of new public policies in this arena contribute to influence, scale-up and sustain these approaches at different



levels when there is a clear asymmetry in the labour conditions of European countries and regions?

- Are new public policy design methodologies enough to address these issues or do we need a structural change in policy at European level?

B. Why is it relevant for social innovation research and practice?

Young unemployment is one of the major social problems in today's society and has been aggravated after the world economic crisis in 2008. The International Labour Organization has repeatedly denounced this problem, which affects millions of young unemployed between 15-24 years old worldwide, many of which have given up in their fight for new decent jobs and labour conditions. If we don't address this challenge we risk of losing an entire generation in participating and contributing to this society. Social innovation can help solve this problem by creating an ecosystem capable of taking the time, the resources and applying new tools and methodologies to address this problem, from a co-participatory approach with the private sector, the academic community, public authorities and younger generations. This is key if we want to find a new entrepreneurial, social and political model that correctly addresses this problem in the near future.

C. Why is it relevant for the specific thematic areas/SIC networks?

The transformative research session was aligned with the policy challenges we are addressing through the Public Sector Innovation Network that we, as UPV/EHU, coordinate in the SIC project with the purpose of examining the role of research in this particular arena and how it can improve public policies. The session serves as a perfect opportunity to create new spaces of interactive learning and engage in new networks with the local and regional communities that are working on this socioeconomic problem. This will strengthen the needs of our network and could potentially help build new synergies between our network and others involved in this project through the identification and exchange of pertinent research that could improve local and regional public policies in the Basque Country, thus serving as an example for other networks and contexts.

3. DESIGNING THE WORKSHOP

A. Overview of the program

The design of the workshop had different goals that we tried to reflect in the program. We felt it was important for the participants to be correctly introduced to the SIC project and the purpose of a transformative research session in the context of the PSI network we are coordinating. We also considered important to introduce the problems young generations face from both an external academic research and policy perspectives, and we therefore invited three speakers –Paolo Rosso (OECD, Trento Local Development Centre, Italy), Octavio Medina (World Bank researcher) & Berta Barbed (Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona)–, who briefly gave us their approach on this social problem. These presentations were focused on a Backcasting methodology where the described speakers



presented the main challenges in young unemployment, their context, the kind of changes that were needed, how can they could be approached. We then proceeded to develop a workshop through the world café methodology with all participants, followed by a collective reflection exercise at the end of the morning presentation discussion different ideas and results. We selected the backcasting methodology and the world café approach to ensure a reflexive knowledge exchange and fruitful discussion of the different approaches in the session, most of which were very local context defined.

B. One morning workshop program

One day workshop program

9:30-10:00	Welcome and coffee	
10:00-10:15	Icebreaker exercise of participants, quick introduction to SIC and the TRS session	<i>Short presentation by Álvaro Luna</i>
10:15-10:50	Challenges in young unemployment: a OECD perspective	<i>Paolo Rosso- LEED TRENTO OECD</i>
10:50-11:30	The Young and Employment: Present and Future Challenges	<i>Shared presentation by Octavio Medina (World Bank reseracher and Berta Barbed (Pompeu Fabra University- Barcelona). Both are member of POLITIKON</i>
11:30-12:00	Backcasting discussion and questions with participants	<i>Moderator: Álvaro Luna</i>
12:00-12:15	Coffee Break	
12:15- 13:00	World Café. Future policy approaches to young unemployment Drivers and Barriers	3 tables with Table Host
13:00-13:30	Wrapping up- Presentation of results and final discussion	



Workshop design

Facilitation method	Explanation method and its application in this TRS	Goal/aim of the method	Be aware
Icebraker	<p>Each participant in the room had to present themselves to the main audience answering to three main questions:</p> <p>Who are they representing? What are they working on? What do they expect from the workshop?</p>	Interaction	
Backcasting	<p>This methodology is based on the definition of a desirable future in work and employment and then trying to think backwards with participants on what could be done to face or achieve that expected situation/goal.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do we expect it will happen with young unemployment and the future of work? 2. What changes are need to face this future situation? 3. How can we prevent it from happening from a policy approach perspective 	Reflexivity, creative thinking, knowledge interaction	Be aware of the time, we thought this exercise would take less time and it is hard for participants to get into it fast. It has to be very well planned in order not to consume time from the rest of activities.
World café	<p>The purpose of the world café is to engage participant into small groups discussion where they get jointly reflect on a series of questions. We developed three different tables with one question each. Then we asked a member of each table to present their main conclusions to be discussed in the closing session.</p> <p>(PROBLEM) What are the main dirvers and barriers faced by the young when accessing a job in the</p>	Knowledge exchange and collective reflection	Questions have to be very specific in order for participants to cooperate accordingly



current socioeconomic context? How are these problems related to formal education and training?

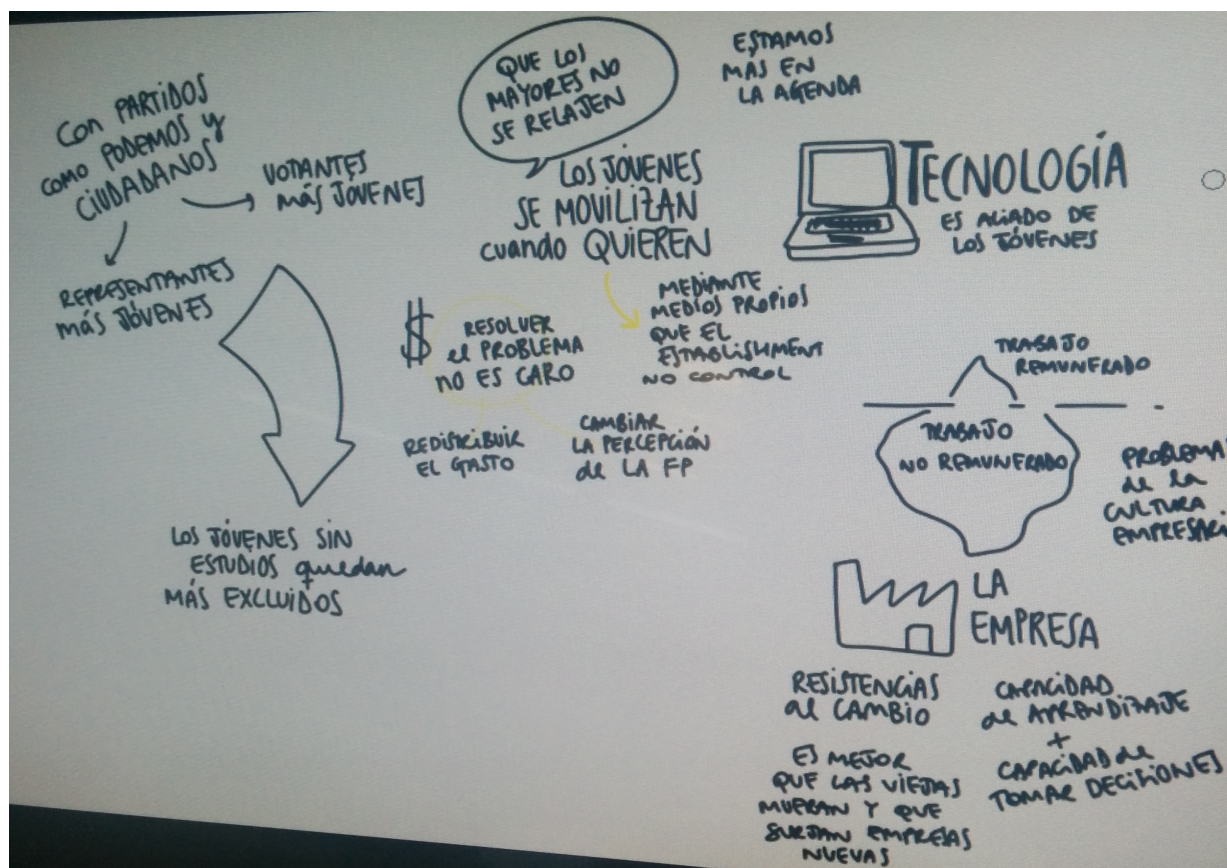
(SOLUTION) How can knowledge and practice best interact to produce innovative solutions which can contribute to joint design policies to face young unemployment?

(FUTURE VISION) Based on the previous backcasting exercise, how would the future generational gap be broken in order for younger generations to have a say in the future conditions of work? Is this dependant on value creation, ethical debates, increased self-identity and self consciousness of the young? What role will ICT play?

Recommendations

The major concern during our morning session was to have enough time to run the whole TRS workshop covering all its planed stages without rushing through the topic. We tried being as direct and concise in the topics and questions as possible. We found this task to be very hard and realised participants would've needed a whole day or two entire mornings to be creative and really get into the workshop dynamic. As we reached the end of the session, ideas were getting better and better, and at this point the session was on its final stages.

Also, most insights on the problem of youth unemployment exposed by participants were focused on the local and regional policy contexts of the Basque Country and some of the Spanish regions. Although there were some general ideas that were common to what is happening at European level, major emphasis was made in the asymmetrical situation between northern European countries and southern Europe (Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain) in achieving a common policy change. The path dependant context of social innovation, and the different approaches towards its comprehension was reflected by participants during the whole session, with an sceptic view of its transformative capacity in policy and research. How do we provide answers to this social challenges from a transformative and socially innovative perspective, when there is a significant difference between salaries, unemployment rates, legal frameworks, multidimensional approaches to the connection between education and work, etc.?



Picture 1. Live note design scheme during workshop

The backcasting approach is very useful but it is hard to come with specific insights in half an hours' time. Most participants had to rush through their contributions. Another major concern we had is that the two methodologies that were used –backcasting and the world café– were fluid and connected with regard to the chosen topic questions. In this case we found the workshop to be very successful.

4. OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP

The main insights related to the questions and subquestions included in section two of this report and which are structured around the main question: *How can research and practice interact together to increase societal and scientific impact in the field of young unemployment and precarious work from a social innovation perspective?* Are summarized in five main observations:

- Alignment of the educational system with the socioeconomic needs of the labour market, having in mind the changes we will experiment in the workplace and the impact of new technologies at social and labour levels in the future
 - Development of educational programs based on working practice of future job needs and opportunities.



- Major involvement of employers in the educational system specially directed to the future condition of work
 - Revise education and professional training programs by improving the inclusiveness and quality through the incorporation of cognitive, social, and emotional skills of students.
 - Development of a system of social assistance and funding opportunities for people with scarce training and economic resources that is able to relate the educational needs of marginalized sectors of the population with new market needs. This would relate to some sort of policy which involves major recruitment of talent in excluded segments of the population through different funding measures: scholarships, foundation support, social entrepreneurial initiatives, new policy impacts, etc.
 - Improvement of the professional orientation in all educational levels based on the evaluation of the returns of different job/market positions.
 - Support through different funding and policy programmes of circular economy and digital initiatives in the field of young unemployment.
- Harmonization of the transition between school and work.
- Development of solid institutions in the labour market and fiscal policies to favour the employment of the young with poor qualifications, especially in their transition from basic education to the job market.
 - Reduce in labour legislation, the gap between temporary and undefined labour contracts.
 - Development of specific research on how to develop programs for students in risk of facing difficulties in their transitions from school to work.
- Help young generation which “don’t study nor work” re-compromise/re-engage with education or the labour market.
- Introduce a system of mutual obligations between the young and the institutions at different levels (regional, national, European, international)
 - Adopt a strategy where “work comes first” which generates new employment opportunities through the efficient assistance in the search for employment and capacitation, monitoring strategies and fiscal incentives.
- Limit the gap of technical and educational abilities to make a more efficient use and adjustment between both.
- Remove the barriers to geographical mobility to allow for the alignment of local jobs and abilities.
 - Development of national and international rating frameworks to facilitate hiring processes or marginalized sectors of the population (ie. Refugees, immigrants, the poor, etc.)
 - Development of a program, which recognizes the acquired abilities through formal and informal training.
- Remove the barriers to entrepreneurship at the social and cultural levels, especially inside the third sector or social innovation oriented activities



- Integrate education with high quality entrepreneurship most prominent way in all levels of education.
- Encourage the development of various forms of cooperation –public and private– to develop networks or shared facilities where socially innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives in the field of unemployment, share common spaces of interaction with other entrepreneurial activities.
- Design of institutional and policy supporting programs for social entrepreneurs and social innovators at national and international level, integrating research and practice in shared institutional frameworks of interaction.

Other insights related to the topic of young unemployment and precarious work

With respect to the role of the different stakeholders that can work together to improve the future employability of the young, different observations were made for each of the players in this shared process:

- **Governments:** credible commitments to improve results of policy actions that are convincing to young people and backed by concrete actions involving other relevant actors/agents
- **Social intermediaries (employers, unions, third sector, social entrepreneurs):** represent a crucial role that needs to be aligned with the future needs of the young, prioritising future job opportunities over the economic growth of companies.
- **Educational institutions at all levels (primary, secondary and superior education):** strengthen the employability of its students concentrating their efforts in developing the full range of skills



Other final considerations during the workshop emphasized the following ideas:

- Role of a local catalyst - anchor institution - facilitating the process of systemic innovation, adapted to the local context of the conditions of work.
 - Need to develop a long-term perspective to achieve effective and sustainable results
 - The local context includes both tangible and intangible factors.
 - You need to work from the side of the supply of skills and also qualify the demand.
- Leadership is essential to foster innovative processes, specific skills are required.
 - Convergence of efforts and commitment between public actors and private, according to a multi-level logic.



5. LESSONS LEARNED

What participants learned

The most prominent contributions made by participants in terms of the lessons learned emphasized the need to promote the following integrated perspectives that involve the following ideas:

- More knowledge exchange between researchers and professionals especially in this specific topic is needed. As remarked by one of the participants to the workshop:

“Social Science Research is often not taken seriously by many companies, research profiles and practices are seen by many employers as completely distanced from the real economic and cultural challenges companies face when hiring new employees. There is some sort of elitist approach on how many universities design research in the field of workplace innovation, for example, where their research proposals are always focused on the needs of the unemployed or the workers instead of building a balanced approach where the hiring needs of companies and employers are equally important. Not all companies have the innovative capacity and/or skills to face the future challenges of a rapidly changing economy and/or uncertain working opportunities, nor have the ability to face the technological challenges or future training needs required by their employees”.

- More reflection between research and practice is needed, particularly when addressing the pragmatic use of research studies in SI.

“On the topic of young unemployment, from a transformative perspective, most research studies at national and European level pretty much reflect the same things. Specially when connecting the educational system with the socioeconomic needs of the labour market. These reflections are ok, but they often define the problem very well without giving any particular space for the development or experimentation process that would involve a pragmatic solution; and even in doing so, they never follow the next step, which involves the adaptation and future scaling process of this solution to a defined context and/or institutional policy framework. This seems to be the problem with social innovation in general, researchers and all these intermediaries which rarely provide any value, fill their mouths with the importance of SI, its transformative capacity, etc., but very little have we advanced on the tangible impact of SI, other than its capacity to fill the space dedicated to the privatization of public policies and the increasingly ephemeral regulatory role of the State. We have been imposed an Anglo-Saxon vision of social challenges and the way to solve them, especially in the field of SI. What we have discussed this morning about the topic of young unemployment and its connection to SI has been for decades the space of work inside Third Sector organizations, which have been always working very closely with public institutions. Now we learn this is called social innovation, and our fields of expertise are being invaded by these two combined words –social innovation–, which let us be honest, are not backed by serious empirical projects.



Social innovation research is not serious research. The epistemological and conceptual roots of SI are still fuzzy and undefined in a consensual manner”.

- These contributions were also reflected in a major claim for action-research methodologies, especially in the field of the social impacts of digitalization processes in the workplace.

What we learned as coordinators of the TRS workshop

A comprehensive and coherent approach is needed to increase the youth skills and the employability of young people. Countries must develop a strategy that involves all instances of the government to establish more coherent policies. It is necessary to strengthen education, the labor market, tributary and social institutions with greater emphasis on the implications of such reforms in the development of youth skills and employability, specially when discussing the connection between research and practice is this topic.

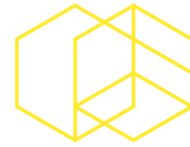
More research needs to be developed with respect to the decline of the welfare state; a welfare state that answers to the socio-economic challenges of another time. The inter-generational agreement has been clearly broken and there is an uneven protection of younger generations.

With respect to the employment conditions of the young we need to brake the vicious circle which involves:

- That regulation and productive structure interact with each other (which partly explains the Basque differential).
- There is a need to close the gap between indefinite and temporary contracts to break the vicious circle - single contract.
- A lower duality, fewer incentives to start businesses focused on temporary jobs (and fewer incentives to adjust via young / temporary employment in times of crisis).

The strong impact of the world economic crisis in southern European countries has had a strong impact in younger generations, especially with regard to countries like Germany, The Netherlands or England.

There has been an unequal impact of the crisis with a brutal fall of employment opportunities in southern european countires, having a major effect on the decrease in income and increase in child and youth poverty. Prices have been adpated to the northern european economies with regard to inderect and direct taxes, but salaries have remained the same and even lowered. Housing prices have increased in the last three years. Emanicipation from familiy households has become increasinlgy difficult and the support of national and regional public policies in these areas decresed considerably. Few research or alignment of european programmes in these arenas has been done.



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