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Mapping youth unemployment in the border regions of the Baltic Sea and Barents Regions

DENMARK

National report

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Table of Contents

Executive summary	3
1. Introduction	6
2. General trends in the labour market and educational attainment of the youth.....	8
3. Youth unemployment: research, policies and challenges in Denmark.....	15
4. Youth migration trends.....	23
5. Country specific issues	27
Summary and conclusions	29
Summary and conclusions	30
List of references.....	31

Executive summary

This report aims to provide information about the situation of the Danish youth on the labour market. The following topics are covered: 1) general trends in the labour market and educational attainment of youth; 2) discussion of relevant labour policies and measures provided; 3) discussion of youth migration and its problems in Denmark; 4) relevant country specific issues.

High level of youth unemployment has become a serious challenge to the European Union, and Denmark is no exception. Although in general the situation in employment and educational attainment of youth is better in Denmark than in the various member states of the EU on average, the global economic crisis has changed matters for the worse. As a result active measures were taken to tackle youth educational problems and risen unemployment. In addition, an active approach has been taken at the EU level with “Youth on the move” framework agenda.

As a result of the global economic crisis, the Danish youth employment rates and activity rates have decreased and their unemployment rates, as well as unemployment ratios have increased. When in 2008 the activity rates for youth aged 15-24 reached 73% then in 2012 they decreased to 64%; general employment rates fell from 67% in 2008 to 56% in 2012. It is worth noting that young women have generally higher employment rates after the crisis compared to young men. Young people have lower employment rates and higher unemployment rates than the working-age population. Furthermore, the fall in employment and the rise in unemployment have been greater among young people as economic fluctuations influence young people more. This is also evident when the development of youth unemployment is observed. The youth unemployment rates have climbed from 7,5% in 2008 to 13,4% in 2012 and youth unemployment ratios have increased from 5,8% in 2008 to 9,1% in 2012 among the 15 to 24-year-olds, and from 3% in 2008 to 9% in 2012 among the 25 to 29-years-olds.

Similarly to other countries, young people are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups on the labour market. They are affected the most when changes in economy and in the general economic climate occur. This is due to their little work experience, lack of social capital, employers’ uncertainty about the applicants’ productivity and capability, etc. These are all factors hindering the successful start of work lives of the young people.

Educational attainment is one of the factors that influences strongly the entrance time and employment decisions of young people. The time spent in education system has increased; therefore, it is natural that the employment rates of young people are somewhat lower. It is worrying that when participation in educational attainment decreases, early leavers’ rate, and drop-out rates increase. Danish youth participation in education has grown since the economic downturn in 2008, where female youth have higher participation rates than male, and the total participation rate exceeded 70% in 2011. The share of overall tertiary education among the working-age population reached its high in 2012 (28,6%). Like before, women outperform men, and have higher chances for better educational credentials although activity rates and employment rates are somewhat similar for both women and men. As a result women have higher education and are less employed. The difference occurs when the share of part-time employment is observed. The share of part-time employment reached 75% in 2012 among women, among men it was 55%. In recent years the share of early leavers from education has decreased and is slightly under 10%. The share of early leavers is much higher among the male although the difference between young male and female has decreased. Another worrying subgroup comprises of people who are neither employed nor obtaining any education and training (so-called NEET rates). The NEET rate has increased from 5,7% in 2008 to

8,8% in 2012. Due to obvious problems exasperated by the crisis, governmental programmes were launched.

Initiatives according to the “Act on Active Employment Measures” are in principle the same for all unemployed, irrespective of age, level of education, ethnicity, etc. (these are job dialogues; job plans, mentoring; practical on-the-job training; guidance; up-skilling; subsidised employment; daily cash benefits; cash assistance, etc.), but there are a number of measures that were designed specifically for Danish youth to increase their labour market participation and educational attainment in response to the economic crisis. Among those measures are “More Youth in Education and Work” and “Youth – well underway”. The general ideas behind these programmes and initiatives are that it is essential to create early educational initiatives and employment offers. Education first and then other measures follow. Furthermore, it is important to apply individual approach (that is in making employment offers and in designing educational perspective in co-operation with local job centres). Early activation and targeting are key activities when youth are concerned. Denmark uses various activation measures. Since the crisis, the time period when first contact is made has shortened and the conditionality of various benefits has risen; the time period when benefits and financial assistance are paid has also shortened. The rights and obligations are intertwined due to the principle of mutual obligations. The faster local job centres get in contact with troublesome youth, the better – every young individual is important and therefore none should be lost due to lack of resources, lack of competent personnel and counselling, or due to coordination problems between various public institutions. Special subsidies are provided to local job centres when they are able to reach more under 30-year-olds, who have been receiving benefits for more than a year. The importance of providing writing and reading skills has risen in addition to psychological and individual counselling. When vocational and training system is concerned then companies are supported financially (or reimbursed) by the Employers' Reimbursement System when they take on vocational students (trainees, apprentices). Therefore, various institutions co-operate to enable jobs and training for youth. Due to high drop-out rates from vocational and educational training, system subsidised employment, and work practice have gained importance to provide the first positive work experience.

Despite the 2009 measures and the so called youth packages, the number of young people who received benefits climbed to 100,000 in 2012. This brought about another youth package as a governmental response in 2012, where additional emphasis was on creating apprenticeships. There are grants for companies who hire young graduates, fresh out of the vocational education and training system. Special education groups for long-term, unskilled, and unemployed youth were created. General idea was to build additional bridges between education and employment.

Danish evaluation knowledge on activation measures is quite extensive; however, when young people are concerned, evaluations are still in progress. In general (also evidence from other international studies), evaluations show that when youth are concerned, results are more ambiguous and inconclusive – the expected effects are smaller compared to older population. Furthermore, measures, which were suitable before the global recession, do not yield the same results after the crisis. It is obvious that conditions have changed and will continue to change, which is why the relevance of new measures will rise.

Another important feature that characterises the Danish labour market concerns migrants. Every year more people enter Denmark than leave it; therefore, net migration has been positive for years. As a result several problems have emerged – the educational attainment indicators and employment indicators are poorer when people from non-Danish origin are concerned (immigrants and their descendants). As a result, measures that are similar to the measures targeted to youth of Danish origin are applied. The role of early activation and conditionality has grown. In addition, local

governments are more active participants in integrating immigrants into the local society and providing them the necessary work experience.

There are still programmes, initiatives and their evaluations in progress. The approach taken is quite holistic in nature, combining a variety of measures and individuals trying to account for individual differences and heterogeneity. In general, the Danish government has made serious efforts to tackle youth unemployment, but results and assessments show that there is still work to be done.

1. Introduction

Youth unemployment in Europe has become a serious and acute socioeconomic problem. In addition to the individual long-lasting “scars” and degradation for those affected, there are costs for the society as a whole which may even lead away from democratic values (Eichhorst *et al* 2013: 7-16). It can result in social unrest and a lost generation - damage would be immeasurable.

As a result the European Union has taken action in addition to the activities and steps taken by the national governments to prevent these dire consequences. A framework agenda “Youth on the Move” was proposed as part of the “Europe 2020” strategy containing new key actions, announcing and reinforcing existing activities, and ensuring the implementation of others at EU and national levels. Emphasis is on four major fields: tackling the high level of early school leaving; promoting further participation in higher education; moreover, the quality of higher education must rise; removing obstacles of youth mobility; the improvement of employment situation of young people through public employment services, “Youth Guarantee”¹, and through the support of young entrepreneurs (Youth on the move 2010). These are fields that require co-operation and fulfilment for tasks ahead.

In general, during an economic crisis, young people who are working, or as job-seekers, are the most disadvantaged group on the labour market. This is the result of limited work experience; low social capital; less distinctive company-specific knowledge; short years of service; collective agreements and restrictive legislation that hinder labour market entrance; greater uncertainty about the applicants’ productivity; strong educational requirements by employers. These features in turn lead to relatively low dismissal costs and make them the first to be let go. On the other hand, when hiring personnel, experiences are valued - therefore it is a lose-lose situation for young people (Olofsson, Wadensjö 2012: 6-7; Eichhorst *et al* 2013: 7).

However, compared to other EU countries, Danish youth labour market situation is much better. It is the result of targeted measures and policies which have helped improve the youth transition from education and training to labour market. It is often said that the Danish youth are better prepared for the job market than their counterparts in the rest of Europe (Danish Youth Unemployment ... 2013; Olofsson, Wadensjö 2012). It is true that one of the most active countries in the EU is Denmark when labour relations and active labour market policies are concerned. Denmark has a long history and tradition in implementing active labour market policies – a lot can be learned from them.

Traditional debate on youth unemployment in Denmark is connected to the importance of attaining education. The debate is the most heated and most active when young people neither in education nor in employment are concerned; or when the debate is about the different labour market opportunities and outcomes for the Danes and for the children of non-Danish origin. The rising share of youth with psychiatric problems is another growing challenge - 80% of the group of young people under the age of 30, who receive an incapacity benefit, have psychiatric problems (Denmark: EIRO CAR on ... 2011; Preisler 2010). In general, early experience of unemployment and inactivity can leave a mark on young people for the rest of their lives. Therefore, it is essential to forestall dire consequences and concentrate on core issues responsible for these outcomes.

¹ Youth Guarantee is an approach tackling youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 – registered or not – get a good quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>

In Denmark there is no single youth policy with a concrete aim. Different organisations and fields are responsible for coordinating and implementing measures and initiatives targeted at young people. Education is considered to be the starting point of it all. Denmark is trying to raise young conscious people with democratic values and with an interest in the functioning of a welfare state. Involvement in educational attainment has to enable equal opportunities and give strategies how to successfully transition from education into employment (Danish Youth Policy). Young people are valued in Denmark and are therefore given specific care and attention in all relevant fields.

In September 2009, the Ministry of Employment issued a special report on “Youth education and labour market relation” that stated the following (Denmark: EIRO CAR on ... 2011):

- 25 to 29-year-olds have the highest unemployment rate and have seen the largest percentage increase. Some age groups are more affected than others;
- Youth unemployment reacts more strongly to changes in economic trends;
- Nearly 64, 000 young people were on public assistance in 2008. 7% of the population in this age group²;
- Education strengthens the labour market performance;
- People with vocational education are less often unemployed;
- Educated are less likely to be on long-term public support.

General conclusions can be drawn from the previous section. First of all, emphasis is on education. Strengthening the general educational attainment and its quality will lead to better outcomes in the labour market. Focusing on education will prevent and reduce long-term unemployment and therefore the expenditure on state unemployment benefits and financial assistance. Furthermore, current generations of youth aged 15-29 years have already serious problems in the labour market – it is important to deal with the consequences and take appropriate measures to alleviate their situation (lost human capital, reduced work years, and potential that is lost).

As a result, public measures specific to young people were enforced in 2009, in addition to the universal public employment services and activities which apply to all unemployed people. Another youth package was established in 2012. Furthermore, the aim was also to measure those effects generated by the applied measures and packages; however, this is still a work in progress.

The decisions concerning educational attainment and entering the labour market are very closely related when it comes to young people. The history of educational attainment and results achieved (performance) predict the attainment of further education and success in the labour market. It is all related with the completion of primary, elementary, lower and upper secondary, tertiary, and vocational education. Therefore, it is important to analyse labour market outcomes in relation to education.

International comparative analysis has indicated that the Danish youth have a lower risk of long-term unemployment, poverty, and exclusion from the society than in other OECD countries during economic recession. In addition, the reintegration of youth into the labour market after the economic recession should be easier. Therefore, according to the OECD recommendations in 2010, future focus for Denmark should be on enhancing current policies and measures instead of inventing new ones which is characteristic to number of other OECD member states (Jobs for Youth 2010). The

² In 2012 the number of young people with no education who received benefits increased to 100,000: <http://www.nordiclourjournal.org/nyheter/news-2012/article.2012-09-20.7261518499>

global economic crisis in 2008 changed matters for young people; the response from society, including governmental and public institutions, has been active and quick.

2. General trends in the labour market and educational attainment of the youth

Labour market figures

Labour force participation rates (activity rates) for the general population and for the youth aged 15-24 years can be found in Table 1. The activity rates for the total working-age population are generally quite high in comparison to the activity rates of the EU28: the difference was about 8% in 2012, and about 11% in 2004 in favour of Denmark. The gap has somewhat shrunk. The total activity rates were the highest in 2008 and the lowest in 2012, although during the observed period, they have been relatively stable - near or above 80%. There are differences in activity rates among men and women – Denmark has (again) higher activity rates than the EU28. Men have higher labour force participation rates than women, but the difference has also shrunk from 7,7 % in 2004 to 5,1% in 2012. When in general men have labour force participation rates 2-4% above 80%, then women have labour force participation rates 2-3% below 80%.

The differences are even more pronounced when comparing the Danish youth activity rates to the youth activity rates of the EU28. The total labour force participation rate for youth in Denmark was 64% in 2012. In the EU28 it was 42% - the difference in 2012 is 22% but it was nearly 30% in 2008. It is also noticeable that the discrepancies between the activity rates for the total working-age population and the total youth are smaller in Denmark compared to the EU28. Nevertheless, activity rates in Denmark for youth are still smaller compared to the activity rates of the total working-age population. The difference between these two groups has grown since the start of the global economic crisis in 2008. Another important feature that emerges is that male and female youth activity rates in Denmark are quite similar, and in certain years, for example in 2006, 2011, and 2012, women have even higher labour market participation rates. In addition, since the start of the global economic crisis in 2008, all the activity rates in Denmark have gone down, and what is worth emphasising is that the youth activity rates have decreased considerably - more than the total working-age population activity rates. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that during the observed period, youth activity rates fluctuate more and the total working-age population activity rates are more stable.

Table 1. Labour force participation/activity rates, 2002–2012 (%).

Activity rates (15-64 years)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
EU (28 countries)	71,2	71,5	70,4	69,9	70,1	70,2	70,6	70,7	70,7	70,9	71,5
Denmark	80,8	80,5	81,3	80,6	81,4	81,3	81,6	80,8	80,1	80,2	79,6
Male											
EU (28 countries)	78,7	78,7	77,2	77,2	77,1	77,1	77,3	77,1	77,0	76,9	77,3
Denmark	84,3	84,5	85,1	84,0	84,6	84,4	84,7	83,9	83,0	83,0	82,1
Female											
EU (28 countries)	63,6	64,4	63,6	62,6	63,0	63,3	63,8	64,2	64,5	64,8	65,7

Denmark	77,1	76,4	77,4	77,1	78,2	78,0	78,3	77,7	77,0	77,3	77,0
Youth (15-24) activity rates											
Total											
EU (28 countries)	48,5	47,6	44,8	44,2	43,7	43,6	43,7	43,1	42,5	42,2	42,2
Denmark	69,4	66,3	67,2	68,7	71,0	71,3	72,9	71,6	68,1	67,4	64,3
Male											
EU (28 countries)	51,9	50,7	48,0	47,6	47,0	46,8	47,0	46,2	45,5	45,2	45,0
Denmark	70,6	68,7	69,0	70,1	70,9	72,4	72,9	71,9	68,2	67,3	64,2
Female											
EU (28 countries)	45,0	44,4	41,5	40,6	40,3	40,1	40,2	39,9	39,3	39,2	39,2
Denmark	68,2	64,0	65,3	67,3	71,0	70,2	72,9	71,4	68,0	67,6	64,5

Source: Eurostat [lfsa_argacob]

The employment rates for youth and total working-age population can be found in Table 2. The employment rates for the working-age population are higher compared to youth employment rates in all three cases (total, male, and female), however, the differences are the largest when men are concerned. When approximately 75% of the working-age population is employed, then only about 55% of younger (15 to 24-year-olds) men are employed. Younger women have had higher employment rates than younger men since 2009. As the employment rates had been growing steadily since 2003, they reached their peak in 2008. Similarly to before, after the start of the global economic crisis in 2008, the employment rates have come down, and again the fall has been greater in the case of younger people.

Table 2. Employment rates for Denmark, 2002–2012 (%).

Rates and Year:	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
Employment rate (15 to 64 years)	75,9	75,1	75,7	75,9	77,4	77,0	77,9	75,3	73,3	73,1	72,6
Youth employment rates (15-24)	64,6	60,3	62,1	63,2	65,6	66,3	67,4	63,5	58,9	58,3	55,7
Male											
Employment rate (15 to 64 years)	80,0	79,6	79,7	79,8	81,2	80,8	81,6	78,0	75,6	75,9	75,2
Youth employment rates (15-24)	64,8	62,3	63,5	64,4	65,3	67,2	68,0	62,6	57,7	57,1	55,2
Female											
Employment rate (15 to 64 years)	71,7	70,5	71,6	71,9	73,4	73,2	74,1	72,7	71,1	70,4	70,0
Youth employment rates (15-24)	64,4	58,2	60,8	61,9	65,9	65,3	66,8	64,5	60,2	59,6	56,3

Source: Eurostat [lfsi_emp_a]

A high level of employment among women is characteristic for all the Nordic countries. The reasons are closely linked to major state provided investments through tax schemes into child and elderly care, health care, and education (Olofsson, Wadensjö 2012). The Nordic countries have encouraged and supported the involvement of women in the labour markets.

Due to studies, employer demands, or for other reasons, young people often work part-time. Furthermore, EU member states have encouraged part-time and temporary work for employment reasons (Eichhorst *et al* 2013: 11-16). This also applies to Denmark. When the share of part-time employment in total employment for the general working-age population is less than 25%, then the share of part-time employment for youth is considerably higher – about 65% in 2012. Since the global economic crisis in 2008, the share of part-time employment amongst youth has risen. In addition, the share of part-time employment is more common among Danish women. Since 2008 the share has risen and it reached its peak in 2012, when almost 75% of women worked part-time. In

contrast, about every second male young person works part-time in Denmark since 2009. In general, the share of part-time employment amongst men aged 15-64 has also risen. As for women, it seems that the share of part-time employment amongst women aged 15-64 grew until 2010 but thereafter a fall can be observed. In short, there are large differences between the general working-age population and youth and among men and women when part-time work is concerned.

Table 3. Share of part-time employment in total employment, 2002–2012 (%).

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
General 15-64	19,8	20,0	21,8	21,2	22,8	22,9	23,6	25,2	25,4	24,9	24,7
Youth15-24	51,4	50,5	56,4	56,2	58,4	54,4	57,4	61,1	61,9	62,6	65,2
Male											
General 15-64	10,0	10,4	11,3	11,4	12,2	12,1	12,8	14,1	13,9	14,0	14,6
Youth15-24	39,4	41,9	43,9	45,5	47,7	43,6	46,4	50,7	51,4	52,7	55,2
Female											
General 15-64	30,9	31,1	33,9	32,3	34,9	35,1	35,7	37,4	38,1	37,0	35,8
Youth15-24	64,1	59,9	69,6	67,8	69,5	66,0	69,0	71,7	72,6	72,5	75,5

Source: Eurostat [lfsa_eppgacob]

In general, the unemployment rates for the total working-age population, male and female are lower in Denmark than in the EU28 (Table 3). Since the global recession in 2008 the general unemployment rates have grown. Women have had lower unemployment rates than men since 2009.

The unemployment rates of youth in Denmark are considerably higher than for the general population. The same applies for the EU28. The unemployment rates among youth are approximately twice as high as the unemployment rates for the overall population. Furthermore, compared to 2002 when the youth unemployment rate was about 7%, it has nearly doubled during the observed decade. The total youth unemployment rate in Denmark fell again to 7% in 2007. After the recession in 2008 it started increasing and reached its peak in 2011 – 13,6%. For male youth, the increase in unemployment rate has been more pronounced than for women, reaching its high already in 2010 (15,5%). The female youth unemployment rate has been steadily growing since 2008 and it reached its peak in 2012.

Table 4. Unemployment rates, 2002–2012 (%).

General unemployment rates (15-64)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
EU (28 countries)	7,1	7,6	9,0	8,6	7,9	6,8	6,6	8,4	9,1	9,1	9,9
Denmark	4,0	4,9	4,8	4,6	3,7	3,4	3,1	5,7	6,9	6,9	6,8
Male											
EU (28 countries)	6,5	7,0	8,5	7,9	7,2	6,2	6,2	8,3	9,1	9,1	9,9
Denmark	4,0	4,5	4,4	4,2	3,1	3,0	2,9	6,4	7,8	7,2	7,1
Female											
EU (28 countries)	7,8	8,2	9,6	9,4	8,6	7,5	7,1	8,4	9,0	9,1	9,9
Denmark	4,1	5,4	5,2	4,9	4,4	3,9	3,3	4,9	5,8	6,5	6,6
Youth unemployment rates (15-24)											
Total											
EU (28 countries)	13,1	14,2	17,9	18,4	17,3	15,3	15,3	19,5	20,5	20,9	22,2
Denmark	6,9	9,2	7,5	8,1	7,6	7,1	7,5	11,3	13,5	13,6	13,4

Male											
EU (28 countries)	13,1	14,4	18,1	18,3	17,0	15,1	15,4	20,5	21,2	21,4	22,9
Denmark	8,2	9,3	8,1	8,2	7,9	7,1	6,7	12,9	15,5	15,1	14,1
Female											
EU (28 countries)	13,1	14,0	17,6	18,5	17,6	15,7	15,2	18,2	19,7	20,2	21,5
Denmark	5,5	9,1	6,9	7,9	7,2	7,0	8,3	9,6	11,4	11,9	12,7

Source: Eurostat [lfsa_eppgacob]

The analysis of participation in labour market initiatives has shown that up until 2008 the participation of women aged 16-29 was higher. However, since 2008 the number of young men aged 16-29 involved in initiatives has risen considerably from 2,300 in 2008 to 9,500 in 2010. At the same time, the unemployment rate for youth aged 15-24 increased from 7,5% to 11,3%.

Due to natural reasons of young people aged 15-24 to be in training and in education, Eurostat provides alternative measures for youth unemployment – the so called youth unemployment ratios which take unemployed adolescents as a share of the overall population of the same age group (Eichhorst *et al* 2013: 4). These ratios are lower than the unemployment rates in Table 4. Table 5 shows that before the crisis, total youth unemployment ratio in Denmark was much lower than in the other EU member states. It exceeded the average EU rates for the first time at the end of the crisis, but fell again below them in 2012. The unemployment ratios for Danish men are higher than for Danish women, yet the ratio for women has grown significantly since 2002.

Table 5. Youth aged 15-24 years unemployment ratios, 2002–2012 (%).

Geo/year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
EU28	8,1	8,0	8,2	8,3	7,7	6,8	6,9	8,7	9,0	9,1	9,7
EU15	7,0	7,2	7,5	7,9	7,6	7,2	7,4	9,3	9,3	9,5	10,1
Denmark	4,9	6,5	5,2	5,9	5,4	5,3	5,8	8,4	9,4	9,6	9,1
Male											
EU28	8,6	8,7	8,8	8,8	8,1	7,2	7,5	9,8	10,0	10,0	10,7
EU15	7,3	7,8	8,0	8,4	8,0	7,5	8,0	10,4	10,3	10,3	11,1
Denmark	6,2	7,2	5,8	6,1	5,6	5,5	5,4	9,5	10,9	10,5	9,5
Female											
EU28	7,5	7,4	7,5	7,6	7,2	6,5	6,3	7,5	8,0	8,2	8,7
EU15	6,6	6,7	7,1	7,5	7,3	6,8	6,8	8,1	8,3	8,6	9,2
Denmark	3,5	5,7	4,5	5,7	5,2	5,1	6,2	7,2	7,9	8,5	8,6

Source: Eurostat [yth_empl_140]

Denmark has also taken measures against the high unemployment ratios of 25 to 29-year-olds. Table 6 shows that the Danish unemployment ratios for 25 to 29-year-olds have grown since the crisis, but they are still lower than the average rates in the EU. However, what is remarkable is that the ratios among the 25 to 29-year-olds are in recent years even higher than among the 15 to 24-year-olds. Since 2008 total youth unemployment along with the women's unemployment ratio, has nearly tripled and male unemployment ratio has more than tripled. These are serious and challenging developments.

Table 6. Youth aged 25-29 years unemployment ratios, 2002–2012 (%).

Geo/year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
EU28	9,2	9,3	9,4	9,0	8,2	7,2	7,1	9,5	10,4	10,5	11,4
EU15	8,2	8,5	8,5	8,4	7,9	7,2	7,4	9,9	10,5	10,7	11,7
Denmark	4,0	6,8	6,0	4,6	4,4	3,9	3,0	6,8	8,8	9,0	8,9
Male											
EU28	9,2	9,6	9,8	9,1	8,3	7,2	7,3	10,5	11,4	11,1	12,2
EU15	8,0	8,5	8,7	8,5	7,9	7,1	7,6	11,0	11,4	11,3	12,5
Denmark	3,4	5,7	6,4	5,2	3,8	3,7	2,9	8,0	10,0	8,6	9,5
Female											
EU28	9,2	9,1	9,1	9,0	8,1	7,1	6,9	8,4	9,3	9,8	10,7
EU15	8,3	8,5	8,3	8,3	7,9	7,3	7,2	8,8	9,5	10,0	10,8
Denmark	4,5	8,0	5,5	4,0	4,9	4,2	3,0	5,6	7,5	9,5	8,3

Source: Eurostat [yth_empl_140]

To conclude, youth unemployment has increased significantly after the economic crisis in 2008. The employment rates are also lower than before the crisis. Compared to the unemployment rate for the overall working-age population, the youth unemployment rate is considerably higher. Government has launched several initiatives and programmes for improving their situation in the labour market (see section 3). Nevertheless, numbers show that improvements are slow to come and this means lost years for the youth. The long-run effects are still to be seen.

Educational attainment indicators

One of the most important activities for youth today is the attainment of education. Education is the key to achieve success in occupational field in addition to individual characteristics, like motivation and commitment. Youth participation in education is higher in Denmark than in the EU27 or EU15 member states. When in 2002 Danish youth participation in education was 61% then in 2011 it was 70,2%. It has grown the most since the economic downturn in 2008. Female youth have during the observed period (2002 to 2011) shown higher participation rates in education than male youth. In addition, the difference between them grew in favour of women until 2008, since then the difference has somewhat decreased. Nevertheless, female youth participation reached its highest share in 2011 (72,4%). Male youth participation in education has also increased from 59% in 2002 to 68% in 2011 which is its highest value during the observed period.

Table 7. Youth participation in education, 2002–2011 (% of population aged 15–24).

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total										
EU27	57,5	58,0	59,3	60,2	59,3	59,5	59,8	60,2	61,0	61,5
EU15	57,8	58,2	59,0	59,8	60,4	60,3	60,6	60,9	61,8	
Denmark	61,0	62,8	66,0	67,5	66,7	66,9	66,5	66,1	67,8	70,2
Male	59,1	60,6	63,1	65,0	64,1	63,9	63,5	63,4	65,5	68,1
Female	63,0	65,1	69,1	70,2	69,4	69,9	69,6	68,9	70,2	72,4

Source: Eurostat [educ_thpar]

Denmark has higher overall tertiary education attainment rates than the EU28 and EU15, although the difference has decreased notably during the observed period. When in 2007 the growth in

overall attainment in tertiary education in Denmark dropped and then started growing again, the EU average rates caught up. The overall tertiary education attainment has, in recent years, reached 25% in the EU, and approximately 29% in Denmark.

Since 2002, the overall share as well as the shares for men and women with tertiary education has grown; however, the growth stopped in 2007 when the difference in growth rate compared to the previous year was negative. 2008 was the start of a new growth trend (except for men). The overall tertiary education attainment reached its high in 2006 with 29,3% as did the male tertiary education attainment rate. In contrast, women have had higher tertiary education attainment rates than men and their rate exceeded 32% in 2012. Male tertiary education attainment rate, however, has not exceeded 25% in the last six years. Female working-age population have generally had higher education levels but lower activity and employment rates. Although the differences in unemployment rates are relatively small, men have a slightly higher risk of becoming unemployed in Denmark.

Table 8. Overall tertiary education attainment, 2002–2012 (% of population aged 15–64)

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
EU28	17,4	18,1	19,0	19,6	20,0	20,5	21,2	22,0	22,7	23,6	24,5
EU15	19,3	20,0	20,9	21,4	21,7	22,2	22,8	23,6	24,2	25,1	26,0
Denmark	25,1	27,2	27,9	28,5	29,3	26,0	26,3	26,9	27,5	27,9	28,6
Male	23,5	25,9	26,2	26,3	27,3	23,8	24,1	24,1	24,8	24,4	24,4
Female	26,9	28,5	29,6	30,8	31,3	28,3	28,5	29,9	30,3	31,3	32,9

Source: Eurostat [edat_lfse_07]

In addition to the higher unemployment and lower employment rates of young people, it is important to emphasise the critical share of those who is neither employed nor obtaining education (the so-called NEETs). The higher the share, the greater the potential that is utterly lost: there are no skills, experiences acquired, and no intrinsic knowledge developed. Among the Danish youth, the share of young people who are not in employment and not in any education and training is relatively low –under 10%. The ratio is about two times lower than the average in the EU28 and also in the EU15 member states – about 17%. These are remarkable differences, yet the Danish government and the society are still not satisfied. As a result, further initiatives have been proposed and launched (see section 3).

All indicators have grown since the start of the economic downturn in 2008. The total share of young people not in employment and not in any education and training was the lowest in 2006, 4,6%; since then it has doubled. From 2002 to 2006 the ratio was indeed decreasing but during the period from 2006 to 2012 it was steadily growing. In 2002-2006 young male in Denmark had lower NEET rates, however, since 2007 the situation has reversed (with the exception of 2012) - young male have higher NEET rates. The male share of young people not in employment and not in any education and training reached its lowest in 2005/2006 (4,5%) and peaked in 2010 (9,1%). The female share of young people not in employment and not in any education and training reached its lowest in 2006 (4,7%) and peaked in 2012 (8,9%).

Table 9. Young people not in employment and not in any education and training, (% of young people aged 18–24), 2002–2012 (%).

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
EU28 total	16,8	16,8	16,5	16,2	15,1	14,1	13,9	16,1	16,6	16,7	17,1
EU15 total	14,1	14,7	14,9	15,2	14,4	13,8	14,2	16,2	16,4	16,4	16,9
Denmark											
Total	7,0	7,0	6,4	5,7	4,6	5,5	5,7	7,0	8,3	8,4	8,8
Male	6,3	6,7	6,1	4,5	4,5	5,8	6,0	7,7	9,1	8,4	8,7
Female	7,6	7,2	6,7	6,9	4,7	5,1	5,5	6,2	7,4	8,3	8,9

Source: Eurostat [edat_ifse_20]

The share of early leavers from education and training is notably lower in Denmark than in the EU, although the share of early leavers in the EU member states has decreased considerably. The share of early leavers peaked in 2007 in Denmark with 12,9%. In recent years it has decreased and is slightly under 10%. The share of early leavers is much higher among male, however, the difference between young male and female has decreased. The difference was the greatest in 2007 with about 7%. The gap has decreased since 2007, yet slightly more than 10% of male youth still leave school and training early, while the same rate for women is 8%. As a result, men will have lower education levels and their chances to reach tertiary education attainment, for example, are considerably smaller.

Table 10. Early leavers from education and training, 2002–2012 (% of population aged 18–24)

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total											
EU28	16,9	16,4	16,0	15,7	15,4	14,9	14,7	14,2	13,9	13,4	12,7
EU15	18,6	18,1	17,7	17,5	17,2	16,8	16,5	15,8	15,4	14,7	13,8
Denmark	9,0	10,4	8,8	8,7	9,1	12,9	12,5	11,3	11,0	9,6	9,1
Male	9,9	10,7	10,5	10,5	10,5	16,2	15,0	14,3	14,1	12,1	10,8
Female	8,2	10,0	7,1	6,9	7,7	9,5	10,0	8,1	7,7	7,0	7,4

Source: Eurostat [edat_ifse_14]

Previous data reveals that although youth employment and educational attainment situation is noticeably better in Denmark than in the other EU member states on average, the global economic slowdown in 2008 did change matters for the worse. Although initiatives have been launched, the numbers are slow to decrease and improve. Furthermore, the long-term effects are still to be seen. In addition to the emphasis given to the 15 to 24-year-olds, attention is turned to primary and lower secondary schools. The aim is to increase their quality especially in providing skills in reading, literacy, science, and mathematics. Standardised national tests are applied for performance comparison (Jobs for Youth ... 2010). It is evident that youth education must be improved to reduce youth unemployment (Halvorsen *et al* 2013: 24). The goal of the government is that by 2015 at least 95% of all young people should complete a youth education, at present the figure is about 80% (Danish Youth Policy). It is obvious that the aim is to try to move closer to core issues - to analyse and thereafter improve activities from where it all begins – elementary and primary education system.

3. Youth unemployment: research, policies and challenges in Denmark

Data and figures presented in previous section showed that although the labour market situation of Danish youth is generally noticeably better than the average situation in the various EU member states, there are still worrying features and developments in the labour market and educational attainment - especially after the start of the global economic crisis in 2008 – that demand the attention of researchers, policy makers, and the careful implementation of state intervention. Youth unemployment rates are still about twice as high as the overall unemployment rates. Share of young people not in employment and not in any education and training is growing and about every tenth pupil decides to leave school and training early.

The central part of Danish labour policy is the use of active labour market policies and measures. This means that active measures are also taken with regard to youth unemployment issues. The aim is to get more young people aged 18-30 into education and/or jobs (Preisler 2010). The age range is wider and emphasis is also on the 25+. The so called “Youth effort” (*Ungeindsatsen*) was an initiative introduced in 1996 directed at getting more young people into work (also shortening the period before compulsory activation), and it was renewed in 2009 in the light of the economic recession (Denmark: EIRO CAR on ... 2011). Despite of the steps and active intervention taken in 2009, the situation did not improve much. Therefore, another initiative with focused activities was launched in 2012 (Preisler 2012). Emphasis is being placed on early incentives, close follow-up, and mutual demands and expectations between young people and local job centres; furthermore, education and inclusion in employment through vocational/occupational studies and practice packages are also a priority (Halvorsen *et al* 2013: 23-24).

Institutionally, Danish labour market policy is laid down centrally by the government and the parliament. The minister for labour has the overall responsibility. There are four work regions that monitor the results and work of 91 job centres in Denmark and there is close communication between these work regions and local job centres (Youth Unemployment in ... 2011). After the economic crisis, more responsibility is given to local job centres – local units have therefore a more active role. However, this kind of decentralisation is also seen as undermining social partnership in Denmark (Financing and operating ... 2010) and the role of the central state is weakening.

Initiatives according to the “Act on Active Employment Measures” are in principle the same for all unemployed, irrespective of age, level of education, ethnicity, etc. Due to the economic recession in 2008, however, some youth-specific measures were established. For young people under 25, the general focus is on education: youth without formal qualifications must prioritise education over employment and finish their once interrupted studies (Financing and operating ... 2010; Olofsson, Wadensjö 2012). The 15 to 17-year-olds in lower secondary education have to prepare an education plan in collaboration with their parents, the school, and the youth guidance centre. This plan should lead to further education or describe other activities in which he/she will engage. These could be training, employment, internship, or volunteer work. If pupils do not follow their plan, their parents may be deprived of child benefits (Jobs for Youth 2010: 3-4). The transition to employment is then more effortless. Education first, then other measures and activities are applied. When individuals under 30 are concerned, the focus is on very early activation and contact (Financing and operating ... 2010).

There are initiatives that are targeted specifically to young people who suffered the most after the economic downturn in 2008 (Youth Unemployment in ... 2011). In addition, soft approaches (mentoring) and tougher ones (cuts in child benefit if the attainment of education is not finished; the

removal of children check from parents when the child is under 18) are applied (Preisler 2010). The initiatives are the result of a broad-based agreement that was reached in co-operation (in 2009) by the political parties and gained the title "More Youth in Education and Work". The aim of the initiative was to enhance job possibilities for youth with and without education either through work experience or through the attainment of education. The agreement incorporated the following activities and themes (Youth Unemployment in ... 2011; Denmark: EIRO CAR on ... 2011; Jobs for Youth ... 2010; Räsänen *et al* 2012):

- **Active offers to young people down to 15 years:** it is essential that these young people are not left alone but they are encouraged and supported to engage in the ordinary labour market (provide on-the-job training, counselling, up-skilling, mentoring);
- **Reading and writing tests and reading and writing courses;**
- **Better coordination between work authorities and responsible institutions:** to eliminate the possibility of being lost in the system and the general simplification of rules for youth;
- **"At-once-offers" to 18 and 19-year-olds:** local job centres are responsible for giving early notifications and information on offers (personal, very early, activity based actions);
- **Mentoring support:** if extra support is needed then it must be acknowledged and provided;
- **Establishment of the "National Youth Unit":** The unit is to assist job centres in the preparation of the measures aimed at youth. The unit has established a squad which travels to all Danish municipalities to present good examples and the latest knowledge in that field³;
- **A new chance for young people:** special subsidies to job centres that make an extra effort to get more young people under 30, with more than 12 months on continuous public support, into employment (wage subsidies or on-the-job training).⁴ Furthermore, all young people under 30, who make contact with the job centre and do not have a secondary education, will be tested in reading and writing, and in mathematics if necessary. If deficiencies are observed, additional services and courses will be provided (Djernaes 2013).

In addition, there are specific entitlements and obligations concerning the acceptance of participation in a concrete measure when daily cash benefits and start assistances are concerned. For example, each time a person has drawn daily cash benefits for a total of six months, he is (as a rule) entitled and obliged to participate in a new measure⁵. As can be seen, the obligations and rights of the unemployed are intertwined.

A grandiose sub-project "Youth – well underway" was re-established and strengthened in 2009 to assess and evaluate empirically the consequence and effects of adding extra measures and extra support to the under 30s who are unemployed. It involves 2,000 young people across 14 municipalities who all receive intensive and tailored help, while a control group of 2,000 young people receive the normal help they can expect from their job centre. The changes in extra help versus traditional help involve: 1) reducing the time of the first job conversation (about measures to find jobs) to take place in the first week of unemployment period; 2) increasing the number of conversations and meetings thereafter (from three times a month to weekly, fortnightly); 3) adding the assessment of reading and writing skills; 4) young people with no education will be prioritized and receive an individually tailored activation programme no later than six weeks after becoming unemployed; 5) the assignment of a mentor to young people with no education; the mentor will

³ Nordic Labour Journal: <http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/i-fokus/in-focus-2010/theme-youth-outsiders../huge-youth-education-and-employment-drive>

⁴ Crowley, L., Jones, K., Cominetti, N., Gulliford, J. International Lessons: Youth unemployment in the global context. The Work Foundation: part of Lancaster University. 2013, Pp.1-51; Jobs for Youth/ Des emplois pour les jeunes. Denmark 2010. OECD Multilingual Summaries: <http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/44655627.pdf>

⁵ Nordic Labour Journal: <http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/i-fokus/in-focus-2010/theme-youth-outsiders../huge-youth-education-and-employment-drive>

accompany them to the job centre, the work place, or the place of training; 6) additional help will be provided to young people in need of physical training, nutrition advice, psychological help, and more (Preisler 2010).

As the previous section implies, the stress is on reducing the time between becoming unemployed and the occurrence of public employment services' activities thereafter. Therefore, it is important to get into active contact with young people who have left education or lost their jobs so that they do not get lost. General perception and attitude towards the youth is that every young individual is important and none should be lost.

It is obvious that the measures taken are massive and quite comprehensive, reaching from psychological counselling to vocational and practical training on the work place, including the general financial measures. In addition, accompanying mentors make the approach even more personal and individual. Various aspects of developmental issues are considered, including personal, inter-personal, professional, and educational development.

The most popular activities from 2008 to 2010 were guidance and up-skilling. Furthermore, business-oriented initiatives gained importance among the young unemployed with, for example, wage subsidies and work practice⁶. On the other hand, declining number of internships, apprentices and trainees in companies after the global economic crisis in addition to the high drop-out rate from the first year introductory courses brought up the debate on the further development of the vocational education and training system. The Confederation of Danish Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Employers' Confederation (DA) signed a bipartite agreement in 2009 on the proposed developments of the vocational education system⁷.

Companies are supported financially (or reimbursed) by the Employers' Reimbursement System when they take on vocational students (trainees, apprentices) but this reimbursement system should be easier to participate in. There ought to be more companies and more trainees (especially students in their first year) involved in these agreements. Therefore, this scheme is still under-exploited due to low awareness, and it also has some negative features; nevertheless, with the financial stimulus from the state and the active inclusion of employers' organisations, it is a start. For example, some municipalities and regions have made it obligatory for the employers who win a public procurement to hire a certain number of apprentices in relation to the number of workers⁸.

In 2012 the Danish government launched another youth package for 100,000 young people with no education, who are making use of the benefits. To improve their future, it is essential to find them and to link them to educational institutions (building bridges). In addition, apprenticeship consultant positions are created who will help young people to find apprenticeships. Furthermore, there are grants for companies who hire people in adult education. The establishment of education groups for the long-term, unskilled, and unemployed will help joining people for common goals. The aim is also targeting young people with education and help them gain access to the labour market (so called newly qualified). Job rotation schemes are also strengthened for this reason. In addition, there are grants for companies who hire young people, who are recent graduates of vocational training. The

⁶Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115

⁷Denmark: EIRO CAR on „Helping young workers during the crisis: contributions by social partners and public authorities.“ European Industrial Relations observatory on-line: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1101019s/dk1101019g.htm>

⁸Denmark: EIRO CAR on „Helping young workers during the crisis: contributions by social partners and public authorities.“ European Industrial Relations observatory on-line: : <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1101019s/dk1101019g.htm>; Jobs for Youth/ Des emplois pour les jeunes. Denmark 2010. OECD Multilingual Summaries: <http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/44655627.pdf>

adult apprenticeship scheme is being modified – it will become possible to get a job as a “knowledge pilot” (a highly educated person or academic in a company, who leads a development programme for the staff); as a “trade pilot” (if a person has vocational training) (Preisler 2012).

Other labour market initiatives targeted for the unemployed (including youth)

Individual dialogues, also called job dialogues, are common and widespread. They must take place every time a person receives benefits. The aim is to settle and concord individual wishes and qualifications with the demands of the labour market⁹. There are some activities that demand the so-called job plan. Job plan enables to talk through and analyse all sorts of possibilities that can enhance the probability of gaining a job. This also helps integrating the person more tightly to the job seeking process. One of the possibilities of increasing the probability of gaining a job is to engage in guidance and up-skilling for a short period of time. The aim of these activities is to develop an individual’s professional, social, and personal competencies.¹⁰ For example, when youth aged 18-19 are concerned, a package with this purpose is offered. This package contains intensive contact with the public employment services and activation measures (an educational opportunity or work placement within a month); individual dialogue within a week after applying for welfare benefits; a job-search training course within two weeks¹¹.

Recipients of daily cash benefits may participate in a self-chosen education or training (secondary, tertiary, or higher education) for up to six weeks. For people who have not reached the age of 25, education must take place within the first six months of their unemployment period. For people who have reached the age of 25, education must take place within the first nine months of the unemployment period¹².

Practical training helps build up competencies (professional, social, and personal competencies). They are usually targeted and job-specific and this could be a source of inspiration for the uneducated youth. Subsidised employment is targeted for the unemployed who have been out of work for six months or more. The aim is to get the unemployed into the ordinary labour market for up to a year. This measure enables training, social training and re-training. There is also a measure for subsidising technical aids for example teaching materials and tools. Mentoring enables supporting the individual through counselling with the aim of keeping the individual in the initiatives, activities, and the labour market¹³.

Financial assistance

There are daily cash benefits available for those who have worked full-time for a total of 52 weeks in the past three years, part-time for a total of 34 weeks in the past three years, or completed a vocational training course of at least 18 months. The benefit type and level was specified for youth before 2010. Additional requirements are: 1) registration with the job centre as looking for work; 2) creation, improvement and upgrading, updating one's CV at jobnet.dk; 3) be domiciled and live in Denmark; 4) be able to take on work at one day's notice; 5) actively apply for all work to which one is qualified; 6) participate in meetings and dialogues called by the job centre and the unemployment

⁹ Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115.

¹⁰ Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115.

¹¹ Jobs for Youth/ Des emplois pour les jeunes. Denmark 2010. OECD Multilingual Summaries: <http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/44655627.pdf>

¹² Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115; Räsänen et al. Labour Market Reforms and Performance in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Finland. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Employment and entrepreneurship, 2012, pp.1-105

¹³ *Ibid.*

fund; 7) actively apply for jobs; 8) participate in activities and measures that are stated in one's job plan. The unemployment fund decides whether or not a member meets the availability requirement. Daily cash benefits are payable for two years (4 years before 2009)¹⁴.

Cash assistance is designed for those unemployed who are not insured against unemployment and do not have other means for supporting themselves. In addition, one must exhaust all options of finding work and must accept job and training offers. Youth who are under 25 have lower cash assistance rates to motivate them to engage in education and to reduce youth unemployment rates¹⁵. This measure has no time limit because it is the lowest safety net. People who do not fulfil the criteria of having lived seven years out of eight in Denmark (cash assistance requirement) have the right to apply for start help.¹⁶ This coincides with active integration policy regarding the welfare of immigrants.

The description of other labour market initiatives and activities helps disclose some important developments. It can be observed that the time for paying different financial benefits has shortened, and the benefits for youth are smaller to motivate them to engage more in education or work placement. Furthermore, eligibility requirements have become more strict and explicit. Last but not least, activation programmes are offered more quickly, in a shorter period of time. The number of various forms providing guidance has increased including psychological and social guidance (job dialogues, mentoring, guidance), and professional guidance (practical training, up-skilling, guidance).

Since 2001 the focus of policy has shifted from classical training to active and accelerated job matching. In addition, with financial benefits (in general with passive labour market policies) the relevance of conditionality has risen. The duration of various benefits is shortened, more explicit requirements are added and monitored when job search is concerned and they are digressive in time. It is important to differentiate the situation in the labour market before the global economic crisis, and after¹⁷. Economically good times enable making better use of job matching and counselling. In contrast, when the number of vacancies is diminishing and the number of unemployed is piling up, it is impossible to find occupational activities for everyone. Therefore, other measures take precedence – it is essential to maintain social and learning skills.

The evaluation of various measures

What is commendable is the fact that Denmark is also trying to evaluate the progress and efficiency of youth unemployment programmes. Meticulous assessment helps financially target the right measures and people without over-expending. After the global economic crisis in 2008 the expenditure of governments is under tight scrutiny - programmes and initiatives must be objectively (including financially, socially, and economically) reasoned.

The Danish National Labour Market Authority is developing a knowledge bank in order to systematically collect and analyse the effects and efficiency of various active labour market policy

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Räsänen et al. Labour Market Reforms and Performance in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Finland. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Employment and entrepreneurship, 2012, Pp.1-105

¹⁶ Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115; Räsänen et al. Labour Market Reforms and Performance in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Finland. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Employment and entrepreneurship, 2012, pp.1-105

¹⁷ Financing and operating active labour market programmes during the crisis: Background Paper, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2010, pp.1-21

measures¹⁸. This has become intrinsic to the implementation of various programmes. It is the stated intention that policy changes should now be preceded by the collection of empirical evidence on its likely impacts (Pedersen *et al* 2012: 3). In 2011 Rosholm listed nine such social experiments with a treatment and a control group. The general focus has been on assessing treatment effects of individual active labour market policy measures in addition to their “package” effects and their impacts on adults. Experiments and evaluations on specifically youth unemployment programmes in Denmark are still in progress (Rosholm 2011). Some examples of evaluations are provided and youth characteristics are brought out where possible.

In the 1990s evaluations of active measures were generally positive. As a result the supply of labour and its mobility increased. Furthermore, education and subsidised training had positive effects on employment. A decade later these effects were smaller and problems emerged in job search (Financing and operating ... 2010: 6). After completing youth unemployment initiative programmes in 2009/2010 slightly fewer young people have found jobs than previously (Halvorsen *et al* 2013: 33). It is therefore possible that activation programmes and initiatives that worked quite effectively before the economic crisis do not give as good results in a post-crisis environment. It is obvious that remarkable changes have occurred and using the same measures and programmes would be a rather simplistic approach.

In general, the number of participants (from all age groups) in activation has tripled since 2008, and there has been a decline in the duration of programme activities. Furthermore, the effectiveness of activation is lower because smaller share of people find employment. After the crisis the amount of people who lost their job grew remarkably. This caused the volume of activities and services to grow which in turn meant that additional financial burden was inflicted and time requirements were not met. Moreover, due to the deficit of available jobs, and the current programmes filling up fast, other (less effective) measures were taken into use again (Andersen 2011: 23-25).

Some examples of international micro-econometric studies are also provided. Kluve (2006) and Card *et al* (2010) have analysed activation measures in general, and additional explanations and activation effects on young people are touched. Kluve (2006) has evaluated 140 various active labour market policy (ALMP) studies across Europe, and their treatment effects on post-programme employment probability. In addition to the analysis of adults, specific features of youth unemployment issues are brought out. The main findings indicate that relative to the "classic" ALMP training programmes aimed at human capital enhancement of the adults' estimates show that programmes targeted to young people display negative treatment effects. As a result these classical training programmes work better on adults, but their effects are questionable when young people are concerned. Card *et al* (2010) have evaluated 97 micro-econometric studies (including some studies from Denmark) on active labour market policies differentiating between short-term (1 year), mid-term (2 years) and long-term (3 years) impacts. They found that subsidised public sector employment programmes are ineffective, whereas job search assistance has positive effects especially in the short-term. Classroom and on-the-job training have positive effects in mid-term. With young people as a target group, programmes are less likely to yield positive results. This in turn means that the debate on which measures are the best solution for combating youth unemployment is still open – evidence is inconclusive.

Some studies specifically on measures in the field of Danish active labour market policy are now introduced (relevant findings are brought out where youth are concerned). One of the earliest

¹⁸Räisänen *et al*. Labour Market Reforms and Performance in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Finland. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Employment and entrepreneurship, 2012, pp.1-105; Halvorsen *et al*. Young people on the edge (summary). Labour market inclusion of vulnerable youths. 2013. Pp.1-45.

studies concerning evaluating measures for reducing youth unemployment is the evaluation of the 1996 “Youth Unemployment Programme” by Jensen *et al* (2003), which was directed at unemployed low-educated youth. The results showed that the programme induced participation in ordinary education or vocational education programme (hence reduced unemployment rates), and that the implementation of removing benefits after refusal from the offer (sanctions) forced youth to education or into employment.

Since 2005 and especially after 2008, when the global economic crisis reached its peak, policy changes occurred and thus new relevant analyses emerged. Rosholm (2008) has evaluated the effects of intensified programmes in two counties in Denmark during the period of 2005 to 2006. The nature of the study was therefore experimental. Intensified treatment included, for example, very early participation in job search programmes, more frequent meetings, monitoring and job dialogues, and general increase in labour market policies. The results showed that intensified measures reduce average unemployment duration significantly; however, these positive effects disappear when the time for the implementation of each policy is accounted for. Since individual treatment effects are not important *per se* but the risk of treatment is, then the possible interpretation would be that the intensification policy increases job finding rates for the unemployed. Rosholm and Svarer (2008) have verified for a sample of unemployed Danish men that activation in general creates significant threat effects and reduces therefore unemployment rates. Furthermore, Jespersen *et al* (2008) have assessed the impact of various measures including their costs. They concluded that in the long-run on-the-job training in private and public companies have positive employment effects, but with classroom training the results are insignificant.

Pedersen *et al* (2012) have found in four randomised social experiments conducted in 2008 that very early and more frequent individual meetings (counselling) with a public employment service representative increase employment rates. Early activation induced the so-called threat effects for young Danish men (but not for young women), who before the crisis (when economically good times still prevailed) decided to look for and return to work before participating in the programme. This is due to the mandatory participation requirement.

Findings show that frequent consultations, job counselling, job dialogues have positive impact on employment; on-the-job training in private companies is the most effective tool, and subsidised public sector employment programmes (public wage subsidies) yield low results or no results at all; general and regular training give ambiguous results, but precisely targeted and short-term training provide better results. Additional guidance, upgrading, and participation in courses and projects provide no effects. Positive treatment effects appear in the long-run, thus in the short-run results are inconclusive (Räisänen *et al* 2012: 21-22; Crowley *et al* 2013: 29-30). These findings apply to adults (often including youth), but there is still little evidence on youth unemployment programmes.

There are general guidelines, initiatives, measures, and shared experience to prevent youth unemployment in the Nordic countries (including Denmark), and the following initiatives have received positive feedback (Measures to prevent ... 2010; Preisler 2010):

- Creating early educational initiatives;
- Tailoring the educational system individually;
- Conducting efficient follow-ups;
- Acting early and targeted on individual target groups;
- Combining job seeking activities with other motivating activities;
- Establishing more educational activities;
- Ensuring cross-sector activities.

It can be seen that the previous initiatives are common in Denmark. To sum it up, Denmark uses various activation measures when youth are concerned. The general idea is that the earlier each young individual with education and employment problems is noticed and caught, the better – none should be lost. Danish evaluation knowledge on activation measures is quite extensive; however, when young people are concerned evaluations and knowledge formulation are still in progress. Results show that when youth are concerned, positive effects tend to be smaller (more questionable) than with adults. Moreover, it is difficult to discern between short-term and long-term effects. Yet the most effective measures usually are very early activation; active help on job search/assistance; frequent job dialogues and counselling, and on-the-job training.

4. Youth migration trends

Unlike many Eastern-Europe countries where countries are losing their young people due to emigration, Denmark is experiencing positive net migration in various age groups. The total number of long-term immigrants into Denmark was more than 52 800 people in 2011, and the total number of long-term emigrants into Denmark was about 41 600 people.¹⁹

It can be seen from Table 11 that among the youth aged 20-24 emigration from Denmark grew until 2006 to almost 11 600 people. After 2006 emigration fell under 10 000 people but increased again in 2009-2010. Emigration for the general population is observable for 2009 and 2010 when it reached more than 35 000 people. Emigration among youth aged 20-24 years is more than three times smaller than among the general working-age population in 2010. In addition, emigration among youth aged 15-19 has decreased about two times from 2004 to 2011. Female youth have higher emigration in absolute numbers, but for the general working-age population, emigration is higher among men.

Table 11. Emigration for total working-age population (15 – 64) and youth (15-19) and (20 – 24).

Total	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Youth 15-19	3 332	3 421	3 567	3 440	3 309	2 743	1 852	1 992	1 933	1 902
Youth 20-24	10 795	10 919	11 054	11 279	11 593	10 157	9 784	10 454	11 285	10 189
Population aged 15-64								34 550	35 752	
Male										
Youth 15-19	1 248	1 300	1 364	1 335	1 362	1 143	774	855	823	783
Youth 20-24	4 879	4 884	5 063	5 172	5 390	4 692	4 469	4 663	4 961	4 429
Population aged 15-64								18 617	18 603	
Female										
Youth 15-19	2 084	2 121	2 203	2 105	1 947	1 600	1 078	1 137	1 110	1 119
Youth 20-24	5 916	6 035	5 991	6 107	6 203	5 465	5 315	5 791	6 324	5 760
Population aged 15-64								15 933	17 149	

Source: Eurostat [migr_emi1ctz]

Immigration to Denmark among the youth aged 15-19 increased in absolute numbers from 2004 to 2007; however, after the economic crisis it fell remarkably. Thereafter it has grown since 2009. Immigration among youth aged 15-19 years has always been higher than their emigration. Immigration among youth aged 20-24 years reached its peak in 2007 and its low in 2010 after gradual fall from 2008-2010. Immigration among the general working-age population is more than 3.5 times higher than among the 20 to 24-year-olds, but after the economic crisis in 2008, this rate has also fallen. Immigration was considerably higher before 2009 among women between the age of 15-19, but since 2009 differences have decreased. In addition, immigration among female youth aged 20-24 is also much higher than among men. In contrast, men among the overall working-age population have higher immigration in absolute numbers than women.

¹⁹ Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database

Table 12. Immigration for total working-age population (15 – 64) and youth (15-19) and (20 – 24).

Total	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Youth 15-19			4 215	4 274	4 316	4 815	3 463	3 359	3 565	3 595
Youth 20-24			13 604	15 139	16 142	17 991	12 782	12 007	11 755	12 412
Population aged 15-64							48 162	43 323	43 832	44 579
Male										
Youth 15-19			1 783	1 848	1 844	2 126	1 601	1 681	1 673	1 773
Youth 20-24			6 136	6 834	7 444	8 393	6 058	5 399	5 235	5 522
Population aged 15-64							25 212	21 660	21 982	22 848
Female										
Youth 15-19			2 432	2 426	2 472	2 689	1 862	1 678	1 892	1 822
Youth 20-24			7 468	8 305	8 698	9 598	6 724	6 608	6 520	6 890
Population aged 15-64							22 950	21 663	21 850	21 731

Source: Eurostat [migr_imm1ctz]

All the observed age groups have positive net migration. As a result more people come to Denmark (including youth) than leave it. In recent years there are large fluctuations in net migration. In comparison to other EU countries (for example the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain, France) immigration to Denmark is relatively low. Emigration is also modest in comparison to Spain, UK, France, Poland, and Germany.²⁰

Immigration to Denmark used to be mostly originated from other Nordic countries, the EU countries and the USA, but after the 1990s, increase in immigration from Asian countries (Iran, Iraq etc.) emerged. These are mostly refugees, who have been granted Danish residence permits. Immigration from Poland has also increased significantly. In addition to foreign citizens and refugees, there are also returning Danes. In 2011 and 2012, 30 per cent of all immigrants were Danish citizens returning after a shorter or longer period abroad, or who were born by Danish parents abroad. Emigration statistics in 2012 showed that 43%, and 46% in 2011, of the emigrants were Danes – people who go to study or work abroad for some time. Internal migration is also widespread especially among young people aged 20-24 and 25-29. Population projections for the future are positive with immigration exceeding emigration (Statistical Yearbook 2012; Statistical Yearbook 2013).

When migrants are concerned, another feature characterising developments in the Danish labour market emerges – it is the problem of the noticeably higher unemployment rates of the non-natives. There is a general problem in the labour market with the children of immigrants whose performance is less satisfactory²¹ and obstacles have emerged when trying to integrate young descendants of immigrants from non-western countries into the labour market²². These numbers are relatively high

²⁰ Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database

²¹Jobs for Youth/ Des emplois pour les jeunes. Denmark 2010. OECD Multilingual Summaries. <http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/44655627.pdf> ; Olofsson, J., Wadensjö, E. Youth, Education and Labour Market in the Nordic Countries. Similar but not the same. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. 2012. Pp.1-34

²²Denmark: EIRO CAR on „Helping young workers during the crisis: contributions by social partners and public authorities.“ European Industrial Relations observatory on-line. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1101019s/dk1101019g.htm>; Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115.

compared to other EU member states. The children of immigrants are clearly a disadvantaged and vulnerable group in the Danish labour market (Jobs for Youth 2010: 5-6).

For example, until 2005 the registered unemployment rate for the 16 to 29-year-olds of non-western origin compared with the youth of Danish origin was more than two times higher (17% and 6%, respectively) and the difference was growing. In 2010 the registered unemployment rates were 11% and 6%, respectively (Youth Unemployment in ... 2011: 74-75).

Therefore, the situation for non-Danes did not deteriorate. This may be due to the activities taken by the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs in 2002 when a campaign "We need All Youngsters" was launched. The aim of the campaign was to increase awareness among the young people of non-Danish origin about education and employment possibilities in Denmark. Moreover, one integral part of the project was to attract more young people into education to complete their studies and increase their chances for employment. As part of the campaign the following activities were put into action: a youth hearing for young people of ethnic minority backgrounds; the appointment of four advisors for information exchange and individual counselling; increase in co-operation between counsellors at schools, relevant young people and their parents; the establishment of role model team who have done well in the education system and have agreed to disseminate their positive experience to others. Additional co-operation between different ministries was established for the project "The Sports Guides" for integrating young people from ethnic minorities into local sports life and activities. These projects are considered successful because of the positive feedback and results achieved: the establishment of more than 100 homework aid cafes; inspiring and encouraging effects from mentoring and individual guidance; the creation of internships; the so called Task Force has helped to reduce drop-out rates from vocational education and training through increased and selective guidance to young people from ethnic minorities (Danish Youth Policy; Summary of Evaluation 2007). The project "We need all Youngsters" was resumed in 2011 with emphasis on activation programmes for young migrants (International Migration Outlook 2013). Due to the closure of the Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs in 2011, the integration of refugees and immigrants into the labour market and the educational system, including introduction programmes, is now the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and integration issues in general are left to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration²³.

Another relevant programme "A new chance for everyone" was launched in 2005/2006. It was targeted at immigrants and their descendants, who have already been living in Denmark for several years and therefore do not qualify for the formal integration programme. As for youth cash assistance, it was made conditional on participation in educational activities (similar to natives); family allowance was provided if 15 to 17-year-olds qualified for a course or had found a job. As with natives, local institutions were given a more active role through obligatory activation to people receiving cash benefits or start help. Additional emphasis was put on language improvement of pupils and language improvement in general. The general development of Danish integration policy has moved from voluntary approach to compulsory (Liebig 2007: 19-21).

Amendments in legislation are being made in 2013 according to the situation. Nevertheless, the same relevant challenges and problems have emerged when young migrants and migrants in general are concerned, for example, the need for individual counselling; vocational traineeships in enterprises; subsidised employment; language training. The role of the local government is still crucial when activation is concerned; in addition, integration contracts are signed at the local level. When it comes to natives, benefits and financial assistance have been made conditional on

²³New To Denmark: http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/news/news/danish_immigration_service/2011/oktober/inm-is-closed.htm

participation in different measures. Some integration activities are left to the civil society, for example, teams of role model, strengthening networks, and social capital of immigrants etc. (Integration in Denmark 2013). As can be seen, the Danish integration policy is quite comprehensive and requires the involvement of various public, private, and civic institutions. However, in general the measures applied for enhancing the educational and employment prospects of migrant youth are similar to the measures applied when Danish youth are concerned (activities, conditionality etc.).

Youth mobility and intensive migration in Europe may solve some employment related problems (Eichhorst *et al* 2013: 8). Labour deficit in one region may absorb labour surplus in other, which is why labour mobility is not a bad thing – immigration may help to alleviate ageing and demographic problems. On the other hand, it is essential to control the quantity and quality of immigrants. The society may otherwise experience threat to its stability and social order. It is important to emphasise democratic values and freedom, and to prevent the proliferation of extremist views and radicalisation – these issues can be enhanced through integrative education and employment system (Danish Youth Policy).

To conclude, more people enter Denmark than leave it, therefore net migration is positive in various age groups. Migration is also characteristic to Danes themselves – there are people who go abroad to study or work for a while and then decide to come back. In addition to external migration, internal migration is also widespread, especially among young people. Along with migration issues employment issues also emerge. Young people of non-Danish origin experience more problems in the labour market, whereas their educational attainment is also poorer. However, governmental institutions are applying specific measures which are quite similar to the ones used when Danish unemployed youth are concerned. The intrinsic nature of their problems is essentially the same.

5. Country specific issues

The Danish labour market in general is characterised by the importance of social partners and employers' organisations²⁴ (the so called Danish model). They have the strength and knowledge to lay down the rules and agreements essential for the proper functioning of the labour market. For example, the determination and decision power of market wages is solely in the hands of the collective bargaining system. The Danish model, also called the "*flexicurity* model" has three distinctive features²⁵: a flexible labour market; a social safety net; and an active labour market policy.

Due to the active nature of Danish labour policy, its expenditure on active labour market policy (ALMP) as a proportion of GDP is one of the highest among the OECD countries. In 2008 it was 1,4% but after the global economic crisis, and due to the active measures taken, it has grown to 2,3% in 2011²⁶. This shows that the direction taken – towards a more active involvement and implementation of active measures – is supported financially. The central part of the Danish labour policy is the use of active labour market policies, although passive policies and measures are intrinsic to the system. Active and passive policy measures are quite intertwined and therefore it is difficult to discern them. This is best demonstrated by the rights and obligations of benefit recipients who help to perceive the importance and options of the job seeker.

The principle of mutual obligations lies in the essence of intertwined rights and obligations. This "mutual obligations" activation approach was introduced in the 1990s and reinforced and tightened again in the early 2000s. According to the "mutual obligations" approach, job seekers (including the youth) in exchange for income support, have to participate in training, job-search, or work placement activities (Jobs for Youth 2010: 11-12). In addition, there are signs of decentralisation when labour policy is concerned, whereas local units have gained a more active and important role. In general, public employment services are available for all the unemployed people regardless of their gender, race, age, etc.

Youth transition to employment is influenced by the education system. Education is compulsory in Denmark for everyone between the ages of 6/7 and 16. The initial stage in Denmark is to primarily introduce very young children to a school-type environment. This stage comprises of kindergartens and pre-school classes. Upon completion, children continue in primary education. Primary and lower secondary education comprise of Folkeskole (Danish municipal primary and lower secondary school), private schools (smaller than Folkeskole but receive substantial government funding), and international basic schools (education in other language than Danish). This is the end of compulsory education. Upper secondary education may follow, which is divided into general education qualifying for access to higher education, and vocational or technical education qualifying primarily for access to the labour market. There are four different programmes in general education aimed at young people: knowledge, concentration, seeing things in perspective, and abstraction. There are common subjects, but also specialised subjects and optional subjects. Vocational or technical education comprises of basic vocational education and training; vocational education and training; production schools; international upper-secondary schools. Their content differs depending on the target group

²⁴Ministry of employment: <http://uk.bm.dk/en/Themes/The%20Danish%20Labour%20Market.aspx>

²⁵ Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115; Andersen, T. A Flexicurity labour market in the great recession – the case of Denmark. 2011. Pp.1-28.

²⁶OECD: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/public-expenditure-on-active-labour-market-policies_20752342-table9

and stated aims. Co-operation with employers is essential in vocational education and production schools (The Ministry of Education 2013). There are good opportunities for obtaining education or moving into employment, or combining these two. Nevertheless, young people are found lost in the system. For example, high drop-out rates from vocational education and training system present a continued challenge for Denmark; however, Denmark is at the same time a good example for incorporating more teaching practice and apprenticeships into working life²⁷. The vocational education and training (VET) system in Denmark is quite demanding: it takes about 4 years to obtain a VET degree. It is systematically related to companies and employers through co-operation and therefore results in a high job-readiness. The drop-out rate in VET system is high. After nine years of elementary school, entrance to VET basic course is free for all young people. It is followed by the main course which is more difficult and assumes an apprenticeship contract with a company. The challenge is to find the companies who are interested in internships. Unfortunately this task of finding internships has been solely left to the pupil. About 40% of VET drop-outs are estimated not to continue their education²⁸.

²⁷ Halvorsen et al. Young people on the edge (summary). Labour market inclusion of vulnerable youths. Nordic Council of Ministers. 2013. Pp.1-45.

²⁸Jobs for Youth/ Des emplois pour les jeunes. Denmark 2010. OECD Multilingual Summaries: <http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/44655627.pdf>; Youth unemployment in the Nordic countries. - A Study on the Rights of and Measures for Young Jobseekers. Nordic Social Statistical Committee, Copenhagen 2011. Pp 1-115; Olofsson, J., Wadensjö, E. Youth, Education and Labour Market in the Nordic Countries. Similar but not the same. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. 2012. Pp.1-34; Räisänen et al. Labour Market Reforms and Performance in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Finland. Publications of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Employment and entrepreneurship, 2012, Pp.1-105.

City of Aarhus has within the vocational training created a project for young people; a short description of the project follows:

The City of Aarhus (via the department for Job & Education under Jobcenter Aarhus) has initiated and taken part in developing a unique concept called Vocational Learning Enterprise Centres (VLECs). The concept is a partnership model through which companies, educational institutions and the public system all work closely together on the education of the young people.

VLECs are sector clarification and practise training vocational educations established to help young people, who are not decided about their choice of education, qualify for commencing a basic course on a vocational program in the field of retail or building and construction. The VLECs are targeted towards young people aged 15 to 25 who learn best if they experience a close relationship between theory and practice. For this reason, the VLECs are established as production college workshop located on a building site or in a company in the retail business. VLECs are intended for young people who leave primary school in Year 9 and Year 10, attend production colleges or not yet participate in a youth education program. The capacity is up to 11 students per unit.

Learning in practical communities constitutes the bearing principle of the VLEC-model. The students thus have a set of basic assignments to complete on site. In this way, they are given the opportunity to test themselves in relation to various professions/areas. The teaching at the production college workshop comprises both theoretical elements and sections designed to prepare the students for an education program. The teaching is structured in such a way that it provides the students with a clear view of the actual conditions at a private company and in working life in general. The VLECs thus make the young people attractive to the companies and provides the companies involved with a unique opportunity to recruit the right workforce, to apply CSR and to take more responsibility for the training.

The VLECs feature an overarching formative element and is based on a holistic approach to the students. For this reason, focus is on the professional, social and personal development of the students, partly through follow-up from the associated coordinator and subject teacher, and partly through the group of young people being expected to support one another and encourage one another to develop. The youth environment developed on site promotes the development of friendships and social networks among the students. This helps minimize the risk of students dropping out. The VLECs also provide the students with opportunities to forge strong bonds with their colleagues.

The VLECs have a clear guiding element through the association of a liaison officer who is readily available to the young people and the workplace. The students are offered guidance and assistance with clarification, such that they can formulate goals for their education in their education plan. The guidance also corrects the young people's approach to education on an ongoing basis, and follows up on their learning and development.

Summary and conclusions

The analysis of presented statistical data, relevant policy measures, and research enable to conclude that youth in general, and specifically their educational attainment and unemployment decisions are highly valued and tackled issues in Denmark. When youth are concerned, emphasis is primarily on education. The completion of discontinued studies is one of the most important activities in which the youth should engage, with the help of individual counselling. Despite the measures applied after the economic crisis youth unemployment rates and ratios are significantly higher than before the recession, where the youth unemployment rates remain slightly under 10%. In addition, in recent years the share of young people who are neither employed nor obtaining any education and training (so-called NEET rates) has increased, but also remains slightly under 10%. The share of early leavers from education has decreased and is under 10%. In general, it could be said that the youth were more affected by the crisis – their employment rates decreased more and unemployment rates increased more compared to the working-age population rates. The most vulnerable groups in the labour market are 15 to 29-year-olds with incomplete education and little or no work experience.

The approach taken by the governmental institutions is profound and thorough. It tries to reach every young individual who has educational or employment problems. This is achieved through local job centres which have gained more leverage in recent years. The approach is highly individual and enables general counselling, psychological counselling, mentoring, job dialogues, reading and writing evaluations when necessary, guidance, on-the-job training, up-skilling etc. Very early activation is essential and the key element in policy implementation. The time between becoming unemployed and making the first contact has shortened significantly. Some evaluations have shown that this kind of individual approach yields results. Nevertheless, the post-crisis environment is somewhat different and therefore measures that once worked do not bring the same results.

Despite the risen educational attainment indicators, there is a problem with the high drop-out rates from vocational education and training system where additional measures have been applied in co-operation with employers (more apprenticeships provided, for example). It is vital to engage employers also into the social contract when it comes to youth, assuming the employers have the latest information on labour market needs and future developments. Societal co-operation will help notice problematic youth and improve their socioeconomic situation early.

Additional effort is placed on integrating migrants and their young descendants into the Danish welfare system. Youth from foreign origin are more vulnerable in the labour market than Danish youth. As with Danish youth the approach has become more individual, more dependent on requirements, and most of the work is done at the local level.

Although Denmark is often looked at like a prodigy or a very good example in the field of active labour market policies and their implementations, there is still work in progress. In the future, Denmark will continue tackling youth unemployment and educational issues where enhancement is feasible, and provide empirical evidence (evaluations) about the outcome – youth issues still remain a challenge in the Danish society.

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