

Policy Snapshot

Policy-relevant findings from selected EU research projects

Issue 7 | November 2013

EU policy priority **Inclusive Growth**

Research focus **Social Innovation**

Featured projects

CSEYHP, EDUMIGROM, EUMARGINS, YIPPEE

Research results on:

- Promoting education and employment among young adult immigrants
- Pathways to education for young people in public care
- Combatting social exclusion among homeless young people



Policy Context

Social Innovation in the EU

"Social innovation is for the people and with the people. It is about solidarity and responsibility. It is good for society and it enhances society's capacity to act."¹

-- José Manuel Barroso,
President of the European Commission



While debates over its definition continue, "social innovation" is gaining prominence in European policy discourses. Used only sparingly when the **Europe 2020 Growth Strategy** was being formulated, the term now surfaces regularly in discussions about the strategy, especially in connection with the priorities of smart and inclusive growth. Given its emphasis on new ideas for addressing societal needs, many consider social innovation to be deeply embedded in Europe 2020, if only as a quasi-concept.

Social innovation has gained particular currency in reference to the flagship initiative **Innovation Union**. The European Commission has begun utilising the term to explain the meaning of Innovation Union, suggesting that the initiative means, among other things, "empowering citizens thanks to social innovation"².

Reflecting both the growing importance of the topic and the need to engender a common understanding of it, the European Commission published a **"Guide to Social Innovation"** in

early 2013. The 72-page document features numerous links to Europe 2020 policy initiatives and offers the following thumbnail definition:

Social innovation can be described as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. Social innovations are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals' capacity to act.³

The significance of social innovation in Europe's policy agenda is reflected in the title of a new EU programme intended to help Member States design and implement employment and social reforms. The **Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme** has a proposed budget of € 815 million through 2020. Integrating and extending three existing programmes - Progress (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity), EURES (European Employment Services) and the European Progress Microfinance Facility - it is set to launch in January 2014, just half a year after the European Parliament and Council agreed on it politically.

As far as EU-funded research is concerned, social innovation has been a focus of attention for many years. Related findings from the EU's fifth, sixth and seventh Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation are highlighted in a recently published **Policy Review**.⁴ The subject is being made more explicit in the upcoming **Horizon 2020** Framework Programme. The H2020 chapter (challenge) dealing with "inclusive, innovative and reflective societies" features a section (objective 6.2.2) devoted specifically to "social innovation and creativity".⁵

¹ Speech by European Commission President José Manuel Barroso on Social Innovation Europe initiative, Brussels, 17 March 2011 (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-11-190_en.htm)

² Innovation Union – A pocket guide on a Europe 2020 initiative, European Commission, 2013

³ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/social_innovation/social_innovation_2013.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/social_innovation.pdf

⁵ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st17/st17633.en12.pdf>

Research Findings

From selected SSH projects⁶

▶ **CSEYHP - Combatting social exclusion among young homeless populations**

Identifying a need for “all-encompassing assistance allowing disadvantaged youth to construct their autonomy independently from benefits and housing services”,⁷ the CSEYHP research project found fertile ground for social innovation. The project’s key messages for addressing homeless youth exclusion and poverty transcend conventional boundaries, echoing social innovation’s self-empowering policy thrust.

Generally lacking family support and seriously deficient in social capital, young homeless people are among the most vulnerable members of European society. Reducing social exclusion and poverty among them constitutes a formidable challenge - one that has become no less urgent with the financial crisis and consequent rise in youth unemployment. CSEYHP sought insights into the challenge by examining the life trajectories of young homeless people in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The researchers also looked at the effectiveness of early intervention and reassertion programmes.

In a series of policy briefs addressing specific aspects of homeless youth exclusion and poverty, the researchers repeatedly call for an “integrated” approach that moves beyond provision of compensatory services. For example, on the subject of achieving intergenerational solidarity - a key factor in homeless youth exclusion - the researchers argue that the solution lies in “proactive involvement of society, from local civil society

and communities, to the European Commission”⁸.

CSEYHP’s final policy brief on social exclusion of homeless young people in Europe⁹, offers a series of recommendations that invite reflection on the potential for intervention through social innovation. These include:

Prevent social exclusion by early intervention and family support

Social exclusion of young homeless people starts at a young age and is often rooted in a disadvantaged family situation. Interventions are needed that will be aimed directly at these family problems at an early stage. Family support should ideally consist of an integrated approach in which different domains, like parenting, finances, education and relational aspects are covered.

Assure stable and continuous care and social provisions for youth at risk

A broad network of social services for young people offers chances to surmount their homelessness and social exclusion. Safe and stable social provisions for young people at risk are a prerequisite. Though social services and key working are important, they should not undermine development of individual responsibility. Empowerment can serve as a basis for young people to get a grip on their own lives. By increasing their resilience they are able to fight possible setbacks in the future.

Regarding future research needs, the CSEYHP consortium submitted that longitudinal research on pathways to homelessness and social exclusion could yield policy-relevant insights. The researchers observed that youth homelessness in the four countries they examined is “hardly ever caused by structural factors – like poverty – alone”, adding that “without a negative family background, no young person becomes homeless”.

⁶ For a complete list of SSH projects in the area of social innovation see http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/ssh-projects-fp7-5-6-social-innovation_en.pdf

⁷ http://flash-it.eu/publications/doc_download/266-policybrief-intergenerationalsolidarity

⁸ Ibid

⁹ http://flash-it.eu/publications/doc_download/267-policybrief-social-exclusion

► YIPPEE - Young people from a public care background: pathways to education in Europe

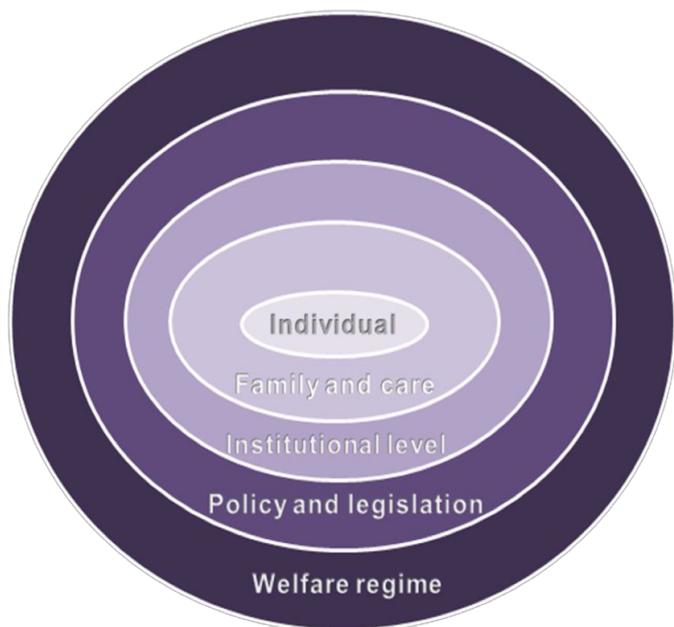
How can young people in state care be convinced to continue their education after the end of compulsory schooling? Are there opportunities here for social innovation? The YIPPEE research project provided valuable insights into both these questions. While the term “social innovation” does not appear in the project’s 97-page final report¹⁰, the findings arguably have potential to support the task of designing social innovation approaches to tackle the policy challenge. The report’s catalogue of individual and systemic barriers and facilitators seems particularly valuable in this regard. Taken as a whole, YIPPEE’s results invite reflection on how “innovative solutions affecting processes of social interactions” can be developed .

YIPPEE’s findings (bolstered by empirical studies in Denmark, England, Hungary, Spain and Sweden) fully confirm that young people in public care are severely disadvantaged educationally. People who have been in care are about five times less likely to access higher education than young people overall, the researchers note.

More significantly, the YIPPEE research results advance our understanding of *why* young people in state care tend to drop through the educational cracks. Drawing on these results, the researchers offer well-founded recommendations that should provide impetus to discussions on how to optimise European policy approaches moving forward.

Selected YIPPEE recommendations

- Collect regular and uniform data on educational participation and attainment of individuals in care.
- Assure that responsibility for care and education lie with the same administrative body at both national and local levels (as in England).
- Give education a more central and prioritised status in relation to care and transition processes for leaving care.
- Provide individual tuition and mentoring support to compensate for gaps in schooling, enabling those in care to catch up with their peers.
- Postpone labour market integration processes and extend the period of education for those in care to equal that of the general population.
- Challenge the assumption that young people in care are more suited to vocational routes and short-term occupational training rather than academic courses.
- Encourage young people in care to aim as high as possible, regardless of their care status.
- Reduce changes of care placement and school to a minimum.
- Assure access adult education to help offset delays and disruptions at earlier stages in education
- Promote leisure and social activities to ensure continuity after leaving school and across placement moves.



Factors influencing educational attainment and participation

¹⁰ http://flash-it.eu/publications/doc_download/452-final-report-of-the-yippee-project-young-people-from-a-public-care-background

▶ **EDUMIGROM - Ethnic differences in education and delivering prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe**

EDUMIGROM explored how ethnic differences in education contribute to the diverging future prospects of minority ethnic youth and their peers in multiethnic urban settings. Studying communities in nine EU Member States (the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), the project found that “children of marginalised groups, especially children of poor families of minority ethnic background, are most at risk of educational exclusion”¹¹, further diminishing their prospects for employment and social integration. In their final policy brief, the researchers warn that ethnically differentiated educational practices are “forging inequalities that challenge the European Union’s fundamental values and chip away at the foundations of social order”.

For policymakers, the EDUMIGROM research presents what the consortium acknowledges is “a rather gloomy picture about the lives, opportunities, and future perspectives of ethnic minority adolescents in Europe”. However, the project’s illuminating “Summary Findings”¹² report provides constructive orientation for those seeking to affect positive change. While not ignoring the potential to reform existing educational structures, the researchers suggest that “the solutions lay outside the realm of education”.

Intimating a need for social innovation, the EDUMIGROM consortium concludes that “it is coordinated policies toward (re)establishing the foundations of multiculturalism on the level of political representation as much as in the day-to-day relations within the communities that might provide the framework and the conditions for schools to attain the still widely-held goals of equal opportunity, equity, and colour-blind inclusion in and through education”¹³.

Selected EDUMIGROM recommendations

- Assure that all children on European soil have access to education, and that expectations on educational outcomes for children with an ethnic background are not lowered.
- Reach out to children of illegal migrants, unsettled groups, and undocumented Roma families who currently face the greatest risk of being “forgotten” by education.
- As children of poor immigrant families are at greatest risk of dropping out of school, promote measures that decrease that risk, including:
 - welfare to assist families in which children are under pressure to contribute to family income
 - out-of-school teaching and training programs
- Promote comprehensive early language programmes among children from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Assure that children from minority ethnic backgrounds take part in early language programmes long enough to attain proficiency in the dominant language of their country of residence prior to school enrolment.
- Encourage community-run extracurricular activities to address needs for specialisation during early phases of education.
- Prioritise desegregation as a focus of European educational policy (mixing by ethnic background and social standing).
- Postpone formalised streaming and tracking until a later phase of compulsory education, and make sure that children from minority ethnic backgrounds represent a fair share in all specialised formations.

¹¹ EDUMIGROM Policy Brief, Ethnic Differences in Education for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe, March 2011

¹² http://www.edumigrom.eu/sites/default/files/field_attachment/page/node-23788/edumigromsummary-findings.pdf

¹³ *Ibid*

► EUMARGINS - On the margins of the European community - young adult immigrants in seven European countries

Seeking to ascertain what hinders or supports inclusion of young adult immigrants in Europe, the EUMARGINS project delineated a host of relevant factors, ultimately concluding that “education is the key”. Education systems and labour markets were scrutinised in urban-metropolitan areas of Estonia, France, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Taking national and EU policies into consideration and looking closely at neighbourhoods, schools, family networks and peer groups, the researchers produced a penetrating portrait of what drives integration and exclusion of Europe’s young migrant communities.

Interviews with 250 young adult immigrants and descendants in the various countries revealed “wide diversity in experiences of inclusion and exclusion”¹⁴. The experiences ranged from “high success in the labour market and private life to marginalisation and exclusion from all major areas of participation”. In light of this diversity, the researchers recommend that policy solutions “take into account the specifics of each national setting” and target the most vulnerable groups in each country. Moreover, the investigation showed that “ethnic and socio-economic segregation often overlap”, resulting in “multiple discrimination” and extreme marginalization.

Helpfully, the EUMARGIN researchers explicitly link their findings to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy, offering contextualized analysis in the form of an EU Policy Report (from which the recommendations opposite are drawn). The report reminds us that “for policy purposes there is no coherent group called immigrants’, but people with different skills, demographic and socio-economic characteristic and cultural and social capital”. The Policy Report also highlights best practices at national level that might lend themselves to cross-border transfer and inspire further thinking toward social innovation.

Selected EUMARGINS recommendations

EDUCATION

- Improve the language skills of immigrant children and their access to education at an early age.
- Strengthen school links with parents.
- Provide training of teachers in diversity management.
- Devote more resources to schools with high amount of pupils with immigrant background.
- Look at the broader picture in school segregation policies, including the connection with urban planning and housing policies.
- Invest more extensively on language teaching for young migrants who arrive in the country after the formal schooling age.

EMPLOYMENT

- Encourage employers to have young migrants in their workplace (e.g. EU or state support, tools to assess the diversity perspective).
- Increase recognition of prior accreditation (vocational accreditation or education) in the labour market.
- Inform immigrant youth about their rights within anti-discrimination policy framework.
- Aim to secure regularised work for young migrants instead of precarious jobs in the informal sector.
- Improve the monitoring of discrimination by employers through field experiments and annual surveys.
- Advocate the use of success stories.
- At EU level, encourage benchmarking and best practice exchange among national agents with a specific focus on young immigrants and descendants.

¹⁴ <http://www.sv.uio.no/iss/english/research/projects/eumargins/publications/policy-report/eu-policy-report.html>

SSH research projects highlighted in this snapshot

The following research projects provided key content for this document. A more comprehensive policy review "Social inclusion of youth on the margins of society" was published in 2012¹⁵. All of these projects were developed within the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) under the theme Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities.

Project	Title	Start	End	Website
CSEYHP	Combating social exclusion among young homeless populations: a comparative investigation	01/05/08	30/04/11	www.movisie.com/cyh
YIPPEE	Young people from a public care background: pathways to education in Europe	01/01/08	31/12/10	tcr.uio.no/yippee/
EDUMIGROM	Ethnic differences in education and diverging prospects for urban youth in an enlarged Europe	01/03/08	28/02/11	www.edumigrom.eu
EUMARGINS	On the margins of the European community – Young adult immigrants in 7 European countries	01/10/08	30/09/11	www.iss.uio.no/forskning/eumargins/

Related FP7 research projects

RUFUS	Rural future networks	01/02/08	30/04/11	www.rufus-eu.de
SELUSI	Social entrepreneurs as "lead users" for service innovation	01/06/08	30/09/11	www.selusi.eu/
GOETE	Governance of educational trajectories in Europe.	01/01/10	31/12/12	www.goete.eu
LLL2010	Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The Contribution of the Education System	01/09/05	31/08/10	lll2010.tlu.ee/
EQUALSOC	Economic Change, Quality of Life and Social Cohesion	01/09/05	31/08/10	www.equalsoc.org/2
SOCIAL POLIS	Social platform on cities and social cohesion	01/12/07	30/11/09	www.socialpolis.eu
GRINCOH	Growth-innovation-competitiveness: Fostering cohesion in Central and Eastern Europe	01/03/12	28/02/15	www.grincoh.eu
WILCO	Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion	01/12/10	30/11/13	www.wilcoproject.eu
TEPSIE	The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe	01/01/12	31/12/15	www.tepsie.eu/
ImPRovE	Poverty reduction in Europe: Social policy & innovation	01/03/12	28/02/16	improve-research.eu/
InnoServ	Social platform for innovative social services	01/02/12	31/01/14	inno-serv.eu/
Localise	Local worlds of social cohesion	01/07/11	30/06/14	www.localise-research.eu
LIPSE	Learning from Innovation in Public Sector Environments	01/02/13	31/07/16	www.lipse.org/
COPE	Combating poverty in Europe: Re-organising active inclusion through participatory and integrated modes of multilevel governance	01/02/12	31/01/16	www.cope-research.eu
DISCIT	Making Persons with Disabilities Full Citizens -	01/02/13	31/01/16	discit.eu/
SocIeTY	Social Innovation - Empowering the Young (SocIeTY) for the Common Good	01/01/13	31/12/15	www.society-youth.eu/
RESL.eu	Reducing Early School Leaving in the EU	01/02/13	31/01/18	www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/resl-eu/
CITISPYCE	Combating inequalities through innovative social practices of, and for, young people in cities across Europe	01/01/13	31/12/15	(not yet available)
COCOPS	Coordinating for cohesion in the public sector of the future	01/01/11	30/06/15	www.cocops.eu

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/social-inclusion-of-youth_en.pdf

About FLASH-IT

FLASH-IT is a European Union dissemination project offering enhanced access to research findings in Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH).

Part of a broader effort to consolidate knowledge resources within the European Research Area, FLASH-IT aims to help bridge the communications gap between Europe's research and policymaking communities.

Using a custom-built IT interface, FLASH-IT provides consolidated results from EU-funded SSH research projects that are thematically linked to the Europe 2020 priorities of smart growth, sustainable growth, inclusive growth and economic governance.

FLASH-IT focuses on five distinctive yet mutually reinforcing priorities, corresponding to those of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the societal challenges addressed by Europe's 'Horizon 2020' research programme.



FLASH-IT strives to accommodate the interests of a broad range of stakeholders – public bodies, researchers, corporations and civil society organisations – and is particularly geared toward serving the needs of evidence-based policymaking initiatives.

For more about FLASH-IT, please visit our website:

www.flash-it.eu

This publication was researched, written and designed by Terry Martin of SPIA UG (haftungsbeschränkt).

info@spia-europa.de

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission.

FLASH-IT has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) under grant agreement number 290431.