## G8WAY: Web 2.0 Enhanced Gateway to Educational Transition
(Grant Agreement Number: 505596-LLP-1-2009-1-DE-KA3-KA3MP)

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1. Introduction

A major characteristic of European societies might be seen in the rapidly growing differentiation of educational pathways, opportunities and biographies. This increase in complexity from learners requires great effort into initiative taking, creativity, problem solving, risk assessment and decision taking. G8WAY builds on the concept of web 2.0 and develops learner centered and connective approaches, in order to effectively manage educational transition. Web 2.0 refers to a new understanding of the internet as a means of distributed and self-organized vs. centrally and linear organized processes of content production, editing and delivery.

Educational transitions are biographical key passages that have significant impact on future live paths. The transition to employment is one of the main tasks in youth life and places high demands on the young learners. In the past there have been enormous efforts in European countries to build up complex support structures for the needs of young people entering employment. However, individual learning experiences and new opportunities of technology enhanced learning still are neglected.

G8WAY aims at making use of the web 2.0 in favour of successful transitions of youngsters, following a learner-centered and connective approach. The main product will be a platform that combines different methods and tools, allowing users to follow their preferred learning ways.

During the first phase of the project, partners exchanged, discussed and produced a joint perspective on the key issues of educational transition in the participating countries. The main conclusions of this phase are compiled in this report, which has particular regard to the different options emerging from ICT, web 2.0 and social software to making visible and supporting the development of transitional skills. Thus, in order to have a common theoretical framework for the project, a wiki and e-glossary were developed on the crucial issues and topics: these tools allow the sharing our knowledge and continuous update of our understanding of the key issues of the project, and offer a set of definitions and standards in a searchable format.

With the joint report at hand, partners intend to examine key issues of transitions and the national contexts as well as central questions regarding the links to learning and ICT. Thus, the report is thought as part of building “common ground” among the project partners as well as a theoretical foundation for further work steps.
After this Introduction, this report is structured into the following Sections:

- In Section 2, the state of current transition research will be reviewed, focusing on learning processes taking place in transitions and exploring questions around challenges and required competencies in transitions to employment. Still in this chapter, we take a closer look at country-specific conditions that frame these transitions - a matrix will highlight the main features around the topic in the partner’s countries, followed by more detailed reports on national contexts such as labour market situation, educational system, support systems and challenges.

- In Section 3, in order to create a concrete link to the project’s aims, the report will close with creating a link to web 2.0 and its application to learning processes in transitions.
2. Transitions

2.1 Transitions – key passages in biographies

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✓ Transition characteristics

There are passages in biographies that set pivotal course on the future life paths of individuals. Transitions are seen as such biographical key passages. „They are the needle eye for success in society, but at the same time stations of failure“ (Kutscha 1991: 113). Transitions mark status changes, which are not to be understood as being sudden changes of condition, but as more or less protracted processes, embedded in societal transition structures (cf. Kutscha 1991: 117; Elder 1985: 31 quoted in: Sackmann/Wingens 2001: 19). In anthropological and cultural studies it is spoken of “rites-of-passage” (see Gennep 2005).

Within G8WAY we will look at educational transitions of young people which are being marked by a principal change of basic living, working and learning conditions in the course of a person’s life journey. Stations in these transitions can be for example:

- early advice, guidance and counselling for young students in schools who start to think of their occupational future,
- vocational orientation (by a traineeship or a school-integrated programme) in the last year of secondary school,
- applying for a traineeship or employment after having finished school,
- a vocational preparatory course after school in order to enhance chances on the labour market, after previous efforts to find a training or employment have been unsuccessful, e.g. due to bad records or poor local conditions;
- entering a university after having finished secondary school;
- entering a masters program at a foreign university after graduation from the home university,
- entering a short-term job at a factory after a short experience of university studies or leaving a temporary position at a hospital and entering a program for higher employability arranged by the Ministry of Labour.

Following a holistic understanding, within the course of the project we will look at learning activities and support systems that are taking place over the whole course of transitions,
thus taking in account the initial position and the targeted status as well as the situation in between. This could mean for example not only to look at young people after having finished school or university, looking for a job, but also to look at young people who are still involved in educational processes and are anticipating their transition e.g. by taking part in vocational orientation measures – or to examine those who have passed different transition stations in a non-linear sequence, still trying out options and looking for “their way”.

Today’s educational transitions feature a certain openness regarding the new position which shows in a broader spectrum of job related latitudes. At the same time, longitudes widen and young people undergo extended periods of finding individual conceptions of working life. However, national and institutional structures remain major framing contexts of these individual paths. Individual latitudes are considerably delimited by determinants such as educational possibilities, the demand and supply situation at the labour market, sociostructural contexts and institutional norms. In European Societies, there are great differences according to these parameters, leading to different social and individual trajectories.

The concept of “transition regimes”, developed against the backdrop of the institutionalization of life paths, helps to identify different national contexts of transitions. This concept looks at structures such as social security, education, and employment that regulate transition processes. The countries represented by the G8WAY partners can be assigned to all five of the identified regimes (Pohl/Walther 2006: 35 et seq, Walther 2000: 247 et sqq.):

- **Germany**’s employment-centred transition regime understands youth as a phase of vocational and social positioning, consequently indicating a differentiation in educational and occupational opportunities (selective school system, standardised vocational training system). Failure in the transition process is ascribed to individuals as being disadvantaged who are asked to take up compensatory measures (e.g. vocational preparation courses) within the so called „Übergangssystem“ (Transition system).

- **Greece, Portugal and Italy** have a sub-protective transition regime, marked by relative high work and life insecurity and emphasising the importance of family as well as informal work. Although the educational level is high, transitions to work are extensive search processes going along with a high youth unemployment rate, while reliable educational and support structures are lacking.

- **Romania**’s post communist transition regime shows different aspects of western transition regimes but cannot be clearly allocated to one of them. Tendencies of strong
individualization and sub-protection go along with a high range of risks and opportunities especially for young people who have been strongly affected by the restructuring of the labour market and welfare system.

• **Sweden** represents a universalistic transition regime, characterized by understanding youth primarily as a phase of self-development (becoming visible in the comprehensive school system, choice options in transition processes, holistic consultancy, independent right of youth to social benefits within a well-developed welfare system that supports transition agility).

• In the **UK**, we find a liberal transition regime stressing on individual rights and responsibilities as well as early economic independency of young people. This is expressed by pressure on job seekers, flexibilisation of work and education, manifold access opportunities as well as precarious careers and individualised risks.

It needs to be mentioned that this is not an exclusive allocation since all national systems comprise elements from different regimes.

Looking at Europe as a whole, the first European Youth report draws an alarming picture of the situation of labour market newcomers (see also Commission of the European Communities 2009): “More than one third of young people aged 15-24 are NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The unemployment rate (15.3% in 2007, 15.4% in 2008) of young people aged 15-24 is nearly twice the percentage observed among the whole working population. 26% of unemployed 15-24 year-olds and 35% of unemployed 25-29 year-olds have been unemployed for more than 12 months”.¹

Transitions to work are part of growing up, of looking for a place in society. They are a very sensitive and decisive phase in the life course (see for example Blossfeld 1985). The success in taking up employment in order to be able to earn a living is seen as one of the key developmental tasks in the youth age (Hurrelmann 2007). This junction between education and work has faced major changes over recent decades. Smooth, direct transitions and predictability of career options deriving from certain educational attainments belong to the past and make room for lifelong and life-wide learning and changeful biographies. In today’s European societies, the transitions to work show a tendency to extension on the one side, which requires to focus not only on youth, but also on young adults; and de-standardisation on the other side, which makes it difficult to provide models for vocational orientation. For

the young learners in focus, this goes along with a loss of external orientation structures and securities.

✓ **Learning in transitions**

Transitions are unique learning situations that are scarcely addressed as such. Against the background of the characteristics of transitions described, how can learning in educational transitions in youth life look like?

In order to identify learning situations of young people in transitions to work it is helpful to further analyse the changes and challenges they face in these periods, as are being described in the country-specific parts in 2.3. Apart from very specific sets of problems arising in the different transition periods in focus (transition from school to work and from university to work), there are overall challenges:

- **Lacking job perspectives.** Unemployment rates show that newcomers at the labour market are an especially strongly effected group.

- **Destandardisation and Fragmentation.** Life and career paths are becoming more diverse. Old biographical patterns lose their dominancy without other structures being in place already (Walther 2000: 54 et sqq.) Young people find it increasingly difficult to estimate how successful management of transitions can look like (vgl. Stauber et al. 2007: 7). They are faced with high expectations and calls for action, but at the same time are offered with less and less orientation for the arrangement of their job life entrance (standards, desirable status, time slots to keep in mind, interim solutions...) Instead of being able to follow predefined paths, they struggle at the sight of the diversity of options and their access restraints.

- **Lack of knowledge on structures and opportunities.** Support systems, learning and working opportunities are partly rich in the observed societies but lacking structure and transparency, while partly they have been found incomprehensive and fragmentary. Individuals in educational transitions struggle to have access to information and to assess the information flood. This hinders the full exploitation of options.

- **Barriers.** Individual options are restricted firstly by external barriers such as different institutional standards and procedures (e.g. access, accreditation, interference of responsibilities). Barriers occur for example where access is restricted depending on the age, the place of residence, or the income of learners. Apart from external boundaries, there are individual barriers such as early dropouts, low education level,
low resilience/ tolerance to stress and social disadvantages that limit the scope of choice.

- **High competition level.** The competitive situation on vocational and employment markets aggravates the integration for disadvantaged youngsters. In times of rising levels of education (education inflation) and narrowing chances even for graduates with the highest possible certificates, young people with low educational achievements are likely to be dispossessed by better qualified competitors, even if their own educational attainment is sufficient for the desired position.

- **Dramatic changes in live spheres.** Young people in transition are in a volatile situation: In order to take up a new education/job opportunity, they often move out from their parents and relocate to another town (which amongst others is complemented by dissolution of conversant social settings) and face the requirements of a new stage of learning/working quality.

- **Extended influence of technologies** (on all levels of life). Learning opportunities are increasingly linked to new technologies, but at the same time there is no equal access to them.

- **Divide between formal education curricula and labour market requirements.** When learning achievements from school/university are not sufficient for the job entrance, this might not only lead to hindrances in the transition period but also to inadequate employment (discrepancy of qualifications and the first job)

- **Individualization of decisions and risks.**

Looking at these challenges, following we will try to draw conclusions on the exigencies towards learners in transitions. What do young people need to acquire in order to cope with this situation?

One of the key symptoms of modern societies is that learners have to take over responsibility for their future life paths (and, thus, their transition management) to a much higher extent than generations before (Struck 2001: 29). In their efforts to finding a job they have to go to great lengths: They have to look for alternatives for common paths. They have to weight options against each other, assessing their specific advantages and disadvantages and judging their usability regarding their vocational targets. In result, they have to refrain from some options that in the long term could turn out as being hindrances but also might have to accept loop ways. At all times, they have to keep in mind the big picture in order to prevent failures. They have to adapt existing, often segregated opportunities to the own
individual learning, living and working sphere. In the light of destandardisation of biographies, there is a necessity to self-design own paths.

All these steps imply that learners have concerned themselves with their wishes and their abilities as well as the status quo at the labour market and have drawn up realistic plans.

Within this, information is a key element for success. If the conventional orientation models (family, peers, societal standards) are not sufficient any more, young people in transitions need to look for alternative orientation models, e.g. by using web 2.0 resources, by asking for help from experienced adults outside the family and by actively looking for newly emerging institutional support offers.

Facing a high competitiveness, young people need to present themselves self competent at the vocational and labour market, pointing out own advantages. Within this they need to find a balance between developing a unique selling point and adapting to generally and commonly acquired standards.

Shortages at the vocational and labour market cause problematic situations for the newcomers. They experience disappointments and rejections, are forced to change plans and at the same time, have to deal with societal pressure and expectations.

In their efforts to enter the job life, learners might find a need of enhancing their knowledge and abilities. If the standard education has not provided them sufficiently, they have to look for relevant learning possibilities, alternative (often non formal) learning settings and new learning methods. Self-directed learning plays a major role in order to complement formal studies.

✔ Transition competencies

Many of our established educational institutions and work places have rather well-defined and delimited curricula, focusing on certain skills and competencies and intended to lead to a specified profession. But as working and living stages become more and more dynamic, the requirements change, too. „Individuals need a wide range of competencies in order to face the complex challenges of today’s world“ (OECD 2005: 4). Learning in times of educational transitions is strongly attributed to the acquirement of (occupationally exploitable) key competencies.

Competencies are understood as individual dispositions or, more specific, “self organization dispositions” (Erpenbeck/Rosenstiel 2003: XI; Hartig/Klieme 2007: 7). Competency concepts
differ according to the questions on how strongly competencies are linked to their practical implementations and whether they are rather stable individual conditions or object to development and, thus, learnable. A definition that is appropriate to our context is to be found at Dohmen, who describes competencies within the framework of informal learning as „behaviour-regulating personal potentials and dispositions that are mainly developed from the reflective management of practical experiences and that can be mobilized and updated in order to tackle different demand situations” (Dohmen 2001: 42, referring to Bootz/Hartmann 1997).

When looking at the previously mentioned demands regarding learning in transitions, one finds noticeable parallels to the model of key competencies – competencies that are uncoupled from concrete activities (which would be, for example, the knowledge of a welder regarding different welding technologies), but have comprehensive character (e.g. flexibility or self-direction).

Many competencies described in existing key competency models can be identified as being “transition competencies” – as core competencies needed in order to manage transitions. The “21st Century Skills” as well as key competencies developed by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) mirror an economic perspective on requirements in order to manage employment in today’s societies while the reference framework of the European Union on “Key competencies for lifelong learning” is driven by a more learning oriented approach. All models show a high awareness for multicultural perspectives.

Without claiming to be complete, the following competencies from these models can be identified as transition requirements/transition competencies:

- Creativity (creating own education and work paths);
- Critical assessment (of vocational education and employment options);
- Coping with boundaries (disappointments and failures in transition efforts);
- Communicating with others (peers and more knowledgeable others: Looking for and collaborate with supportive individuals, entering new, heterogeneous social spheres);
- Information literacy (ability to find appropriate information, awareness of diversity of job and training options);

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2 http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/P21_Framework.pdf
• ICT Skills (ability to discover and make use of ICT tools in favour of the own transition process);
• Flexibility and adaptability (in vocational choices and decisions);
• Proactivity and responsibility (regarding transition steps and related learning processes);
• Openness (towards alternative educational and job paths that match one’s profile);
• Decision taking;
• Acting within the big picture (keeping in mind the own desired professional position);
• Conducting realistic life and career plans (reflecting own achievements and abilities against labour market conditions);
• Activating social and institutional resources;
• Learning to learn (look for new learning ways e.g. in informal settings in order to building up relevant key competencies);
• Cultural competencies (in order to exploit the potentials of globalizing educational and employment markets).

The learning procedures leading to the achievement of these key competencies differ greatly and depend on individual learning types, learning experiences and structures. Moreover, as has been described in part 1, the support structure for learners differs greatly according to national conditions, the transitions and the learners in focus. For G8WAY, these are pupils that move from school to work, amongst them a key sub-target-group are disadvantaged youth that do not profit from relaxations on the employment market; and young university graduates facing difficult start conditions on the employment market that previous generations did not know. With this, we address groups whose increasingly precarious situations are subject to active public discussions but are insufficiently reflected in existing support structures.

The limits of G8WAY in its efforts to support transitions are on the level of legal regulations and administrative procedures regarding education and of course on the level of the labour market situation. However, its potentials lie on the level of individual learning processes:

• the exploitation of the potentials of web 2.0 tools for learners in transitions,
• contributing to transparency on information and support systems,
• supporting the development of “transition competencies”,
• opening up classical ways (which often are limited by norms of immediate vocational usability)
  o by international exchange on innovative support and learning practices
  o by being more critical, but constructive, concerning currently established positions and
  o by being more curious about the future students capacity to create their own positions,
• creating space for individual paths, aimed at social integration and directed by learners as subjects of their own transition process.

With this, G8WAY can contribute to widening biographical latitudes.
References


http://www1.bpb.de/publikationen/W8UOKP,0,Benachteiligte_Jugendliche_in_Europa.html (02.03.2010).


## 2.2 Transitions in the countries of the G8WAY project partners (matrix)

The following matrix compiles the main information about transitions in the countries of G8WAY project partners. More detailed information is provided in the following chapters: Country Reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>TRANSITION PERIOD &amp; LEARNERS</th>
<th>NATIONAL CONTEXT</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>EXISTING SUPPORT SYSTEMS</th>
<th>IDENTIFICATION OF FURTHER NEEDS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>School to work</td>
<td>- School education: responsibility of the Länder – wide variety of educational pathways, school types and certificates. - “Dual System” (vocational training combining school and work) is very popular, but lack of places esp. for disadvantaged youth.</td>
<td>- Übergangssystem (transition system) is used not only to enhance competencies, but to regulate the shortage of vocational opportunities. - Insufficient effectiveness of support measures. - Lack of information on options. - Lack of key competencies. - Lack of individual-centered support.</td>
<td>- Übergangssystem provides support structures in all transition periods (early support and prevention in schools; preparation for work; vocational training for disadvantaged youth).</td>
<td>- Support disadvantaged young people in making use of new media in favour of mastering their own transition. - Enhance competency of using the media “internet” and the accessibility of online support use the potentials of older peoples’ life and work experiences for young people.</td>
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Table 1: Summary of transitions in G8WAY countries
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td><strong>School to work</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Tertiary Education (i.e. universities, universities of applied sciences/polytechnics [TEI]) to the Labour Market&lt;br&gt;- Students in Tertiary Education (e.g. Bachelor students, Master students, graduates, post-graduates, PhD holders).</td>
<td>- Greek Educational Systems and Transitions.&lt;br&gt;- Current economic situation in Greece.&lt;br&gt;- Demographics of students in Tertiary Education.&lt;br&gt;- Enrolment rates in Tertiary Education.&lt;br&gt;- Unemployment rates of Tertiary Education degree holders.</td>
<td>- Bringing Tertiary Education closer to the world of work.&lt;br&gt;- High transitional unemployment.&lt;br&gt;- Oversupply of Tertiary Education graduate holders.&lt;br&gt;- Decreasing demand from the public sector due to the economic crises not compensated by the private sector.&lt;br&gt;- Decreasing competitiveness of the Greek economy and prevalence of low added-value services in all sectors.&lt;br&gt;- Downshifting of competences and increased competition on jobs e.g. between Tertiary and Secondary Education graduates (leading to rise in unemployment of high school students).</td>
<td>- Career Services Offices of Universities and Technological Educational Institutions.&lt;br&gt;- Entrepreneurship Support Offices of Universities based on Structural Funds of the European Union, here European Social Fund (ESF).&lt;br&gt;- Alumni Networks.&lt;br&gt;- Public and Professional Bodies (e.g. Employment Organizations [<a href="http://www.oaed.gr/">http://www.oaed.gr/</a>], Technical Chamber [<a href="http://portal.tee.gr">http://portal.tee.gr</a>]).&lt;br&gt;- Community funds supporting the employment of new research staff in enterprises.&lt;br&gt;- Specialized programs supporting the acquisition of professional experience through internships (STAGE Program).</td>
<td>- Long-term: re-engineering the Greek economy.&lt;br&gt;- Mid-term: increase quality of school education e.g. competence based education, teaching soft skills and key competences increases future employability.&lt;br&gt;- Short-term: Identify new support measures e.g. (intergenerational) mentoring.&lt;br&gt;- Short-term: Make existing support measures for transition period e.g. dual education at university and in the company ('sandwich courses'), incubators/spin-offs work more effectively and efficiently.&lt;br&gt;- Short-term: Integration of Web 2.0 technologies in transitional support measures (see as well high digital literacy of Tertiary Education students).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Summary of transitions in G8WAY countries (cont.)
### COUNTRY | TRANSITION PERIOD & LEARNERS | NATIONAL CONTEXT | CHALLENGES | EXISTING SUPPORT SYSTEMS | IDENTIFICATION OF FURTHER NEEDS
---|---|---|---|---|---
Italy | School to work - Vocational training to job-market. - Job-market to vocational training. - To more qualified employment. - Unemployment to employment. - Young learners who finished the vocational education or training/ didn’t finish any vocational experience/ are currently unemployed and are looking for a new job/ are getting back to training in order to get a more qualified position. | - Italian educational and training system. - Italian Labour Market. - Transition from the current educational and training system to the education reform. - Internship system before being employed. | - Bridging the gap between education and work. - Increasing transition periods in personal and professional life a → importance of lifelong learning need of specific competences and knowledge (self management and problem solving) in order to design own personal and professional plans need of integration of formal, informal and non formal learning as the main key to face changes and transitional periods. - Need to modernize the Information, educational and vocational Guidance Offices and Employment Offices to the new requirements. | - Education and vocational guidance offices at local and national level (public and private: Informagiovani, Job-Orientation Agency). Employment Offices (public and private). - Stage and tutorial-training organisations. - Mentoring and intergenerational activities with enterprises. | - Update and modernise orientation practices for a better access to the job market. - Increase the quality of education and training experiences. - Improve web 2.0 and ICT skills. - Design new strategies for supporting people involved in transitional periods. - Recognize the value of intergenerational learning as key action for understanding changes and improving problem solving competences. - Implement strategies to integrate formal, informal and non formal learning in a common framework by public and private organisations and enterprises. - Frame and implement a certification of non formal skills and competences.

Table 1: Summary of transitions in G8WAY countries (cont.)
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</table>
| Portugal | Higher Education to work  
- Universities, polytechnics (public/private) to the labour market.  
- Recent graduates from university courses that are looking for the first job.  
- Students in Higher Education (e.g. Bachelor students, Master students, Postgraduate students). | - Poor performance at the school level.  
- Low level of education: only 20% of the Portuguese population frequents Higher Education Institutions.  
- High unemployment rates among graduates.  
- Internet usage consistently under the European average. | - To promote more practical courses, connected to the needs of the labour market.  
- To create adequate job opportunities for highly qualified recent graduates.  
- To reinforce the importance of education and training, to conciliate school curricula with the entrepreneurial world.  
- To support transition from higher education to the labour market.  
- To support the usage of internet, web 2.0 and social media to reinforce the development of skills and the interaction between graduates and companies (e.g. http://www.recemlicenciados.com/). | - Higher education institutions: Career Services Offices of Universities.  
- Employment centers.  
- Job fairs organized by education institutions or by municipalities.  
- Websites and portals especially for job search. | - To reinforce the connection between the labour market and the competences developed in higher education.  
- To support the transition from higher education to the labour market through new aspects, such as: how to behave in an interview or how to make the transition to active life.  
- Use of Web 2.0 technologies to support the shift to a different city. |

Table 1: Summary of transitions in G8WAY countries (cont.)
### Romania

**Transition Period & Learners**
- Transition from higher education to work in one university in Bucharest: the National School for Political and Administrative Studies (NSPAS).
- The group of learners in focus consists of students in the last 2 years of their studies that are preparing themselves to get a job in the field of political sciences, communication sciences and sociology.

**National Context**
- Romania witnessed in the last decade one of the biggest increases of the participation rate in university education in Europe, while new private and public universities were established.
- Most of the universities were oriented on a huge demand of students entering in the university, very often ignoring real needs on the labour market.

**Challenges**
- In the case of the young graduates up to 25 years old, the employment rate was 58.8%. For graduate newcomers at the employment market in Romania, the starting conditions are much more challenging than for the academic generations before.
- A recent study in 2009 has unfolded an additional work integration issue: almost 20% of the graduates are getting their first job in a totally different domain than that they had specialised during their university studies. In the case of students graduating communication sciences, this percentage was even higher, approaching 27%.

**Existing Support Systems**
- Difficult to speak about a real support system for students regarding their transition to work. The responsibility of their future employment usually being seen solely at learners themselves, universities at the moment show a low interest in supporting students to prospect their career and find a job.

**Identification of Further Needs**
- Development of a set of specific skills and competences for students in order to register, develop and present their learning and work experiences, using Web 2.0 might help students to easily manage and present their learning experiences anytime and anywhere, being easily to be transferred and visualized in different contexts.
- Web 2.0 has a high potential to contribute to equal access regarding the support system.

**Table 1: Summary of transitions in G8WAY countries (cont.)**

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<td>Higher Education to work</td>
<td>Romania witnessed in the last decade one of the biggest increases of the participation rate in university education in Europe, while new private and public universities were established.</td>
<td>- In the case of the young graduates up to 25 years old, the employment rate was 58.8%. For graduate newcomers at the employment market in Romania, the starting conditions are much more challenging than for the academic generations before.</td>
<td>- Difficult to speak about a real support system for students regarding their transition to work. The responsibility of their future employment usually being seen solely at learners themselves, universities at the moment show a low interest in supporting students to prospect their career and find a job.</td>
<td>- Development of a set of specific skills and competences for students in order to register, develop and present their learning and work experiences, using Web 2.0 might help students to easily manage and present their learning experiences anytime and anywhere, being easily to be transferred and visualized in different contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTRY</td>
<td>TRANSITION PERIOD &amp; LEARNERS</td>
<td>NATIONAL CONTEXT</td>
<td>CHALLENGES</td>
<td>EXISTING SUPPORT SYSTEMS</td>
<td>IDENTIFICATION OF FURTHER NEEDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Higher Education to work</td>
<td>- Sweden with focus on Scania region in Southern Sweden.</td>
<td>- To avoid unsuccessful transitions that lead to long term unemployment.</td>
<td>- Career services and study guidance at university.</td>
<td>- Better market making services for student-to-job matching and vice versa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Final years of higher education.</td>
<td>- Swedish part of Öresund - Science Region with triple helix alliances to support economic growth close to academia in both Sweden and Denmark.</td>
<td>- Scattered and invisible opportunities for working or further education in the region.</td>
<td>- Services for labor market entrance with public job postings etc.</td>
<td>- Better instruments to show and demonstrate student competencies (ePortfolio).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Student internships and trainees.</td>
<td>- High costs involved in transports and change of residence within the region.</td>
<td>- Different admission systems to learning and working in Sweden and Denmark.</td>
<td>- Dedicated services to help shrink time in unemployment.</td>
<td>- Better instruments to make early and experimental project arrangements to test possible life paths for students and possible new staff for companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Some focus on AIESEC member profiles.</td>
<td>- Very heterogeneous ICT systems to support different transitions.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- A student organization with local, national and global services for internships and similar (AIESEC).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Change of living conditions and partner relations.</td>
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<td>- Better market making services for student-to-job matching and vice versa.</td>
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<td>- Better instruments to show and demonstrate student competencies (ePortfolio).</td>
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<td>- Better instruments to make early and experimental project arrangements to test possible life paths for students and possible new staff for companies.</td>
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<td>- Better market making services for student-to-job matching and vice versa.</td>
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<td>- Better market making services for student-to-job matching and vice versa.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Better instruments to make early and experimental project arrangements to test possible life paths for students and possible new staff for companies.</td>
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Table 1: Summary of transitions in G8WAY countries (cont.)
2.3 Country reports

2.3.1. Germany

Author: Tabea Schlimbach, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Germany

✓ Transition period and learners in Focus

In Germany, the focus within G8WAY will be placed on the transition from school to work.

At the German Youth Institute (Deutsches Jugendinstitut, DJI), there is a long tradition in researching this transition phase. The great significance that is attached to the topic is demonstrated by the implementation of the research unit “transitions in youth life”, examining the life situation and the life courses of disadvantaged young people in the educational system and on the employment market (see for example the transition panel (Übergangspanel), Gaupp/Lex/Reißig/Braun 2008).

The results of the National Report on Education (Deutscher Bildungsbericht, Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2008 pp. 163-165) shows that it is especially the group of pupils from Hauptschulen (secondary modern schools) who find it extremely difficult to manage the entrance to vocational training and job life and who show a significant lack of success in doing so.

Within G8WAY, DJI will focus on pupils and graduates from Hauptschulen on their way from school to work. In order to gain an impression on typical trajectories from school to work in Germany, it helps to look at the findings of a survey where the transitions of young people from all regular school types of a single town have been traced (Schuhmann 2007: 135). The following quantification can be made regarding certain trajectories after 30 months:

• 48% of the school-leavers succeeded with a direct transition towards an apprenticeship,
• Every 8th youngster was “locked in circles of support measures”,
• 7% of the same cohort ended up in casual jobbing,
• a share of almost 1/5 of pursued trajectories leads to several forms of youth unemployment and
• 13% of young people pass through more or less erratic trajectories which cannot be categorized among the ones mentioned above.
But also regarding the question which strategies are needed for successfully entering the German employment market, scientific findings providing helpful information. The following examples just give a first impression:

- The later the choice of a profession, the better (The transition panel proofs that young people who have taken on their vocational training at a later date, tend to be more satisfied with their professional situation since they have undergone a prolonged period of vocational orientation and, thus, have a more elaborated knowledge on their choices (Tillmann 2007: 80ff). Disillusions in job experiences are less likely. Moreover, they can use the time inbetween to invest in educational improvements.

- From a point of view of game theory, vocational choices are decision problems (Sorger 2000). In such a situation it is helpful for young people to invest in widening vocational options e.g. by achieving higher school certificates, especially if there has been little vocational orientation (Bäumer 2005).

- The orientation on adults (parents, others) to get ideas is a common and important part of vocational orientation strategies. However, certain mental models such as the one of a “lifetime job” have lost their relevance in today’s employment markets.

**National Context**

Main influence factors of the transition processes from school to work are the educational systems of the different Länder, the vocational market and the so called Übergangssystem (transition system) – a synonym for the support structures and offers built up in order to foster the integration of young people at the threshold to employment, who are overstrained with managing this step alone.

Another important aspect that needs to be considered within the framework of G8WAY is learning with new media.

**Educational system**

Grounded on the principle of federalism, in Germany, school education lies in the predominant responsibility of the German Länder, the different federal states. This explains the variety of educational pathways, school types and certificates in Germany. Detailed regulations are laid down in the constitutions of the Länder and their supplementary laws regarding certain education fields, all in accordance with the overall principles of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz).
The general structures of the educational system in Germany comprise pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, tertiary education and continuing education.

The secondary school system is characterized by a variety of educational paths, leaving certificates and qualifications. Main school types for this stage are:

- **Hauptschule** (lower secondary school, providing basic general education);
- **Realschule** (lower secondary school, providing more extensive general education);
- **Gymnasium** (lower and upper secondary school for intensified general education);
- **Gesamtschule** (comprehensive schools).

The majority of the targeted youth described before attend, or are alumni, of the lower secondary schools at Sekundarstufe I (ranging from grade 5 to 9/10), mostly the Hauptschule (leading to the first and lowest general education qualification). After leaving school, most of them wish to enter and finish a vocational training before looking for a job.

A school leaving certificate as well as the completion of a vocational training are seen as minor requirements for successful integration into the employment market.

There are different types of vocational education: full-time vocational schools and vocational training in the Duales System (dual system). The latter is often described as the “King’s Way” to job life and enjoys high popularity among young people as well as employers. In this format, vocational training takes place in two learning places: at the workplace (on-the-job-training) and in the Berufsschule (vocational school) (Lohmar/Eckhardt 2008). By far not all young people who aim for such a training form succeed in getting a place. The strained vocational market offers this chance to only 1/5 of young people without a school leaving certificate, to 2/5 for those in possession of such a certificate and for those having graduated from the Realschule to nearly ¾. The statistics for current school leavers are lower which means that many are not able to realize their plan to enter the dual system immediately after school. This data reveals that „the dual system is gradually losing one of its big strengths; the job integration of children from low educational backgrounds“ (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2008: 159).

**Current developments of the vocational market**

Up to the 1970th, full employment and, thus, sufficient vocational education opportunities were secured thanks to economic expansion. However, the oil crisis in 1973 ended this and lead to structural unemployment (Van der Wee 2005). The number of vocational training
positions was cut in half and, at the same time, demographic changes lead to a demand growth. Young people with low educational levels and drop outs, personal or social handicaps were the losers in the vocational market competition. This development was counteracted by an enlargement of vocational preparatory courses, the implementation of full-time vocational schools and the development of programs for disadvantaged youth. Parallel, the educational level of applicants for training positions increased due to educational reforms. Access chances changed and lead to the development of new groups of disadvantaged, among them migrants and graduates from the Hauptschulen that prepare for the lowest educational attainment (Kühnlein/Paul-Kohlhoff 1991).

Current developments mark a numeric decrease in importance of the dual vocational system (although, as mentioned before, there is a high acceptance of this training format amongst young people and employers). Furthermore, over recent years, supply and demand have advanced each other again due to economic developments and the demography-related fall in demand. However, disadvantaged youth do not profit from the détente on the vocational training market and find themselves disproportionately high in preparatory vocational courses (BMBF 2008a pp. 13 et seq.).

Übergangssystem – support system for learners in transition from school to work

The design of the Übergangssystem was developed for young people who did not succeed in entering the vocational training market directly after school. The main aim is to enhance their competencies needed for such training and, thus, their employability.

Support is offered to young people in different stages of their transition process.

a) **Early support and prevention in schools.** Key aims of support of pupils in schools is to prevent early dropouts (e.g. by individual case support and remediation) and to provide vocational orientation possibilities (e.g. by traineeships or in practical oriented classes).

b) **Preparation for work (in the stadium between school and vocational training).** During this period, activities are directed to enhance and broaden competencies and, above all, to support the successful integration in vocational training and employment (e.g. by vocational preparatory classes, basic qualification).

c) **Vocational training for disadvantaged youth.** Special offers are provided for disadvantaged youth who for different reasons do not meet the demands of a
standard vocational training. Instruments are for example vocational trainings at external educational organizations or assisting support during vocational training.

Providers of these measures are mainly non-profit organizations (e.g. charities, associations, foundations), whereas their activities are embedded in the (financial) support structures of the Federal Employment Agency, the Youth Welfare Service and other public services, depending on the focus of the activities (education oriented, labour market oriented). The Länder are in charge of school integrated schemes while out-of-school vocational training and continuing education is in the responsibility of the Federal Government. Additionally, there are various model programs set up by the Federal Ministry of Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, by the Länder Governments and the European Union in order to support integration into the vocational and labour market.

One the one hand, the schemes of the Übergangssystem are supposed to cushion challenges and problems in transition and to provide useful preparatory qualification. On the other hand, they are controversially discussed according to their effects and their recognition, esp. by employers. One problematic issue is the lack of coordination and synchronization of the different measures, partly due to intersecting or non-distinctive responsibilities.

Therefore, growing attention is given to “transition management” on a local basis (directed to structure and making accessible the wide variety of support instruments to the young people in need) and on an individual basis (e.g. by personal, one-to-one assistance like mentoring). The aim of local and individual “transition management” is to provide custom-fit, needs-based support in order to develop “transition competencies”, enhancing the accessibility and to help young people selecting those offers who lead on a fast track to successful transitions.

Learning with new media

Since October 2001, all schools in Germany are in possession of internet access. Basic principles of information technology are embedded in the curricula of all schools in general education since 1994 as the competency to deal with digital technique is considered as crucial. Moreover, pupils themselves are strongly linked via the internet in their leisure time. Online communication and information is part of the everyday life of almost all adolescents in Germany. 73% of all private households have internet access (Destatis 2009). However, ICT competencies are to find more among better educated youths who at the same time have easier access to the Internet.
Learning with new media is strongly connected with the idea of easy information accessibility, of a rich set of options and tools and of self-directed learning. Living in an information society, the competency to gain and to deal with information is crucial. Compared to this, media are still used insufficiently in schools. At the same time, the access is cause of new inequalities among youngsters (depending on financial resources and ICT competencies). Those who would benefit most of it (disadvantaged youngsters who find it hard to learn in formal settings) use it the least.

**Challenges**

As described before, there is a considerable rich support system for the young people in focus. However, critics address the insufficient effectiveness, a lack of coordination and counteractive effects of the Übergangssystem and its schemes. The original idea of the Übergangssystem was to enhance young peoples’ employability. However, offers of the Übergangssystem are increasingly used to regulate the shortage of vocational opportunities for young people and, thus, as holding patterns that hide labour market problematics behind the curtain of individual disadvantage. Often, the measures take lead not to integration but to loop ways, one way roads or breakages in biographies.

The transition from school to work is marked by destandardisation and a loss of security. Core vocational competencies are key to successful transitions, as well as the knowledge about aid structures, the variety of support schemes, there opportunities and threads. Self-directed learning, learning in informal settings and intergenerational learning (e.g. the assistance of an elderly person working as transition mentor) become increasingly important in this context.

Against this backdrop, key problems for the young people in focus are:

- a lack of information on educational and vocational opportunities as well as on the measures the Übergangssystem provides (its opportunities and threads),
- Unequally distributed access to the different educational and vocational pathways, which are increased by
- the difficulty to access and intransparency of information about possibilities,
- a lack of personal competencies of disadvantaged young people required to tackle challenges of the transition process (risk management, to act on own initiative, competency to use the opportunities in favour of their transition processes e.g. online learning tools and information),
a lack of individuum-centred support (e.g. by people who have experience in entering the job world). These problems form additional social exclusion potential.

✓ Identification of further needs

Via G8WAY, the intention at the German youth institute is to support young people in making use of new media in favour of mastering their own transition. This can mean to use online information sources, and to discover web 2.0 surroundings as learning environments in order to develop “transition competencies”. Accessibility and transparency are key elements to be considered, as well as examining the learning opportunities of web 2.0, finding out about the pedagogic characteristics of e-tools and providing a learning platform that combines different useful methods and tools at one place.

In short, emphasis will be put on:

• the potentials web 2.0 assisted tools have in supporting transitions from school to work,
• how to make use of the learning opportunities of web 2.0 enhanced tools in order to smooth the transition processes of the group described,
• enhancing the competency of using the media “internet” and the accessibility of support available online.

Another necessity discovered is using the potentials of older peoples’ life and work experiences for young people which will be addressed by an intergenerational approach.
References

- Sorger, G. (2000); Entscheidungstheorie bei Unsicherheit; UTB; Stuttgart.
2.3.2. Greece

Authors: Thomas Fischer, MENON Network EEIG, Belgium; Nikitas Kastis, Spiros Borotis & Nikos Zygouritsas, Lambrakis Foundation, Greece

✓ Transition period and learners in Focus

The heated debate about the economic crisis of Greece and its possible impacts on Europe in general and the European Union in particular is still ongoing and the effects of the suggested and partly implemented austerity measures of the Greek government to combat the national debt remain still to be seen. These measures include reduced wages and a hiring freeze in 2010 for the public sector, the increase of Value Added Tax (VAT) and related taxes e.g. for alcohol, tobacco, gasoline and luxury goods.

It can be predicted that these austerity measures will have substantial effects on future public and private spending. Further grounded predictions are difficult and often biased by particular stakeholder interests, but it can be nevertheless assumed that the generation, which will be mostly affected by these measures, are those cohorts currently in Education & Training (E&T) or on the brink to the world of work. About 10 ago the term ‘700-Euro-generation’ was created, but today some commentators and columnist in Greece speak about the ‘500-Euro-generation’ or even about the ‘lost generation’ of 15 and 25-year olds.

In average of all 25 to 64-year old Greek citizens 21% have attained in Tertiary Education. The figures are slightly higher when looking to the 25 to 34 or to the 35 to 44 year-olds where 25 or 26% respectively have attained Tertiary Education (data from 2004). Similar numbers can be obtained by analysing the graduation rates in Tertiary Education. 12.2% graduated in 2005 from Tertiary-type B programmes (first-time graduation), 24.9% graduate from Tertiary-type A programmes (first-time graduation) and 0.7% from advanced research programmes (Ph.D. or equivalent). The enrolment and graduation rates are expected to further increase towards the end of the first decade of the new millennium.

More details on Tertiary Education in Greece can be obtained from the following selected set of Tables:
Furthermore the unemployment rate in Greece stood in 2009 at 9.5, furthermore 8.3% of Greeks older than 25-years were unemployed, but 25.8% of all Greeks 25-year old and younger were temporarily or permanently unemployed. The long-term unemployed rate (i.e. of 12 months and more months of unemployment) in 2008 was at 3.6%. In addition 155,200 Greeks are employed persons with a second job.
The detailed unemployment figures i.e. the percentage of unemployed in the total labour force per level of attained education are displayed in the Table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD or post-graduate degree</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Degree</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Education Institute Degree</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education Certificate (compulsory and non</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compulsory)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education Certificate (only compulsory)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education certificate</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than primary education</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has not attended school at all</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EYIYE/ESYE, 2008

Table 5: Percentage of unemployed in the total labour force per level of attained education

The relevant figures for G8WAY are:

i) Ph.D. or post-graduate degrees,

ii) university degrees and

iii) Technical Education Institute (TEI) degrees.

The unemployment rates for Tertiary Education graduates in the total labour force and for the above mentioned three types are ranging from 5.4% to 7.9%. It can be furthermore assumed that the figures should be higher as not all unemployment is reported to the Greek job agencies.

These cohorts of the Greek population and work force will most likely have less career possibilities and economic prospects than previous generations. It seems therefore indicated to support the transition from Higher Education to world of work through the services of G8WAY e.g.:

- The potential of Web 2.0 assisted tools and services in supporting the transition from Tertiary Education to the world of work;
- The usage of Learning 2.0 opportunities in order to smooth the transition processes of university graduates;
- The enhancement of respective Digital Literacies and the accessibility of Web 2.0 based support measures available online.
National Context

Education in Greece is compulsory for all children from 6 to 15 years old. It includes Primary (i.e. Dimotiko) and Lower Secondary (i.e. Gymnasio) Education. The school life of the students, however, can start from the age of 2.5 years (with pre-school education) in private or public institutions called Vrefonipeiakoi Paidikoi Stathmi (i.e. crèches/cradles). In some Vrefonipeiakoi Stathmoi there are also Nipiaka Tmimata (i.e. nursery classes) which operate along with the Nipiagogeia (i.e. kindergartens).

Attendance at Primary Education lasts for six years, and children are admitted at the age of six. Along with the regular kindergartens and Primary Education, all-day primary schools are in operation, with an extended timetable and an enriched curriculum.

Post-compulsory Secondary Education consists of two school types: i.e. Eniaia Lykeia (i.e. Unified Upper Secondary Schools) and the Technical Vocational Educational Schools (TEE). The duration of studies in Eniaia Lykeia (EL) is three years and two years (A-level) or three years (B-level) in the Technical Vocational Educational Schools (TEE). Mutual student transfer from one type of school to the other is possible.

Along with the mainstream schools of Primary and Secondary Education, special Nipagogeia, Dimotika, Gymnasia, Lykeia and upper secondary classes are in operation, which admits students with special educational needs. Musical, Ecclesiastical and Physical Education Gymnasia and Lykeia can be found as well.

Post-compulsory Secondary Education also includes the Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), which provide formal but unclassified level of education. These institutes are not classified as an educational level, because they accept both Lower and Upper Secondary Education graduates according to the relevant specializations they provide.

Public Tertiary Education is divided into universities and Technological Education Institutes (TEI). Students are admitted to these institutes according to their performance at national level examinations taking place at the second and third grade of Lykeio. Additionally, students are admitted to the Hellenic Open University upon the completion of the 22 year of age by drawing lots.

The following Figure presents the structure of the Greek education system, as it consists of institutions of the formal, classified or unclassified education.
Formal education is characterized by the fixed length of study, the possibility of repetition and the award of a formal school-leaving certificate which is the official authorization. As a consequence of the classification of the education institutions, a title (school-leaving certificate, degree etc.) is compulsory for students at each education level in order to continue to the next.

It should be outlined that the graph offers a general overview of the education system with its main aspects being supervised by the Ministry of Education and which form the major part of it. However, a broader analysis shows that the total of the education services provided for in Greece form a much more complex, multilevel and differentiated infrastructure. Moreover, many other educational services, classified or unclassified, are provided for in the formal education system, either in co-operation with it or completely independently.
Support services

Support systems for Tertiary Education graduates in Greece are characterized by the lack of a coherent strategy but the co-existence and operation of various different actions and organizations. Generally, their aim is to enhance individuals’ competences so as to facilitate the employability and bridge the gap between the supply and demand sides.

In the governmental level, the Greek Employment Organization (OAED) undertakes particular actions towards the occupational guidance, and the continuing and vocational education, focusing mostly in unemployed people, new incomers, and people with disabilities. Last years, there were also particular Programs that funded the employment of new research staff to the market, either through financing PhDs focusing on market needs, or through the HRWN program of the General Secretariat for Research and Technology which was focusing on the employment of new research staff in the market.

The transition of individuals from tertiary education to the labour market is also facilitated by actions originated from ‘both sides’, i.e. the educational organizations and professional bodies. As far as it concerns the ‘supply’ side, the vast majority of Universities and Technological Educational Institutions operate Career Services Offices which provide guidance to the alumni varying from composing their CVs to skills’ self-assessment and information on job-openings through their public relations networks. Some of them have also initiated the Entrepreneurship Support Offices, supported by EU and Structural National Funds. These offices focus on the establishment of an entrepreneurship culture to the alumni, provide guidance on the respective activities for starting a new business and information on funding opportunities; some of them also conduct focalized workshops. There are also some initiatives focusing on incubation facilities for supporting innovations emerging from the national research centres, which typically include limited training activities.

The ‘demand’ side is usually covered by professional bodies as well as public and private organisations’ internships. While the former conduct training programs focus both in the new incomers and current employees – based on the needs of their market sectors – the latter offer mostly internships for limited time for new incomers. Most of these programs were implemented the last years through the “Stage” programs with a mean employment time of 18 months for each delegate.

Last, there are various alumni associations which provide guidance and inform their members about job openings with promising results. These unofficial networks, take
advantage of the experience and public relations of their older members in order to facilitate new incomers and surface young talents.

In summary the following support systems for the transition from Tertiary Education to the world of work exist in Greece:

- Career Services Offices of Universities and Technological Educational Institutions;
- Entrepreneurship Support Offices of Universities based on Structural Funds;
- Alumni Networks;
- Public and Professional Bodies e.g. Employment Organizations (http://www.oaed.gr/), Technical Chambers (http://portal.tee.gr);
- Community funds supporting the employment of new research staff in enterprises;
- Specialized programs supporting the acquisition of professional experience through internships (STAGE Program).

✅ Challenges

The main challenges regarding the transition from Tertiary Education (TE) to world of work can be characterised as follows:

**Bringing Tertiary Education closer to the world of work: high transitional unemployment**

Recent studies are well documenting the already prevailing common understanding that TE graduates in Greece are facing relatively to other EU countries’ peers increased difficulties to find a job. In simple words the figures show an increased, in relation to other EU member states, unemployment for the Tertiary Education graduates, especially in the period for up to five years after their graduation. This is certainly varying among the graduates from different faculties, with the Medical, Engineering and Law graduates showing a much better employability profile. It seems that we are facing a ‘typical’ transition to work structural deficiency of the system.

**Oversupply of Tertiary Education graduate holders**

Before referring to the main cause of this structural deficiency, one should also mention the fact that this relatively increased unemployment figures for the HE graduates have been driven even higher due to the impressive increase of TE institutions in Greece, during the last 15 years, which have almost double the figures of enrolments for the Education grade (ISCED
The obvious impact of this is the oversupply of TE graduates entering the labour market. The increase of graduates, as a percentage of working population, has been increased by 86%, from 1995 to 2006.

**Decreasing demand from the public sector due to the economic crises and long term trend for “limited” but effective public sector - not compensated by the private sector**

Yet, what has been defined as the generic problem – to refer to the structural deficiency of the labour market – corresponds to the relatively much lower increase of the demand of labour. This is due to the decreasing demand from the public sector, which is especially affecting the Humanities’ graduates, as well as to the limited increase of demand from the private, with a total of marginal increase of the demand for Tertiary Education graduates (skilled) labour in Greece.

**Decreasing competitiveness of the Greek economy and prevalence of low added-value services in all sectors**

This leads us to the most important problem of the systematically creeping competitiveness of the Greek economy, which corresponds to low productivity and the limited increase of high added-value output (products and services). This is the main cause of the longitudinal lowering of demand of labour, for jobs usually taken up by TE graduates, which in turn is leading to the gradual substitution of the secondary education graduates by their TE peers for the low added value work (lower corresponding knowledge and skills). Thus, it is expected a rise in unemployment of secondary education graduates in the years to come.

**Downshifting of work-oriented competences held by the TE graduates**

Finally, the ‘transition’ problem – both from education to work and vice versa - is being intensified by a well documented lack of competences, as is being assessed by a recent extended field research, among employers and (graduate) employees, from almost all industry sectors. The study has manifested the lack of the so-called key competences, characterising the TE graduates, which is mainly assigned to the quality of school education being offered to them and which make their adoption to work period rather prolonged and costly.

**Identification of Further Needs**

From a long term perspective the re-engineering the Greek economy and the subsequent increase in the in employability of Greek citizens needs to be in the focus of all state
Measures. Mid-term approaches should include the increase quality of school education e.g. competence based education, teaching soft skills and key competences in order to again increase the future employability of young Greek citizens at home and abroad.

From a short-term perspective the centre of attention of the Greek government should be:

- Make existing support measures for transition period e.g. dual education at university and in the company (‘sandwich courses’) and incubators/spin-offs work more effectively and efficiently;
- Identify novel and innovative support measures e.g. (intergenerational) transitional mentoring;
- Integrate Web 2.0 technologies in transitional support measures as the Digital Literacy of Tertiary Education graduates can be regarded as high.

Within G8WAY the support of the latter described short term measures is envisaged. To this respect the Lambrakis Foundation (on behalf of the MENON Network EEIG) will i) either integrate the G8WAY tools and services in the approaches of the Greek Employment Organisation OAED or ii) run a specific transitional experiment for a selected set of graduates at a Greek university involving at the same time future employers and intergenerational support mechanisms.
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2.3.3. Italy

Authors: Isabella Ramenghi, Mariarosa Di Nubila, Il Filo d’Arianna, Italy, Germany

Transition period and learners in Focus

Il Filo d’Arianna will focus on the transition from school to work. This will be approached by intergenerational learning. The purpose is to achieve an insight into the current situation of the elderly and the ways they can support the young in their transitions from school to work using their resources, especially in terms of working experience and time.

Il filo d’Arianna is a cultural association with 15 years of experience in the field of adult education. The average age of the participants to our activities is between 35 and 45 years. However, Il Filo plans and manages courses and activities specifically for the elderly and for the schools.

Through the intergenerational approach Il filo d’Arianna will work with two learners: elderly people before or after their retirement and young people in the transition between school and work.

Il Filo will focus on learners in transition, on the one hand on the group with people aged “over 50” and on the other on youngsters aged over 16. The group over 50 will include either people still in employment, in their transition to retirement, or already retired. The youngsters we will deal with are in their transition between school and work placement. They are either pupils still at school or disadvantaged youngsters with problems to pave their way into the labour market.

The learning activities Il filo means to implement will aim at facilitating young learners in their employment integration process and in parallel at creating new opportunities for the elderly in terms of voluntary work.

Intergenerational approach

Intergenerational learning exploits both social capital and new learning strategies which can benefit young people in transition:

- Intergenerational education offers new chances for participation in society. Mutual learning processes contribute to supportive networks (social capital)
• Young people learn by assimilating strategies from elderly people and using them to seek their own problem solving strategies for difficult situations throughout life

• Dealing with the experiences and views of other generations is helpful to identify alternative learning opportunities.

With their long-term experience in working life and their softer attitudes if compared to parents, teachers or other professionals working with young people in transitions, the elderly are extremely valuable people in supporting the young to seek a suitable employment.

Furthermore, learning turnouts of intergenerational settings is valuable not only for the young but brings benefits to both groups.

From the elderly’s perspective:

• the exchange of resources and learning with younger people creates a general feeling of usefulness and integration in the society, encouraging them to become active and innovative members of the citizenship.

• in the intergenerational exchange, the elderly experience appreciation in conveying their knowledge and skills to the younger.

• by supporting the young, elderly people themselves undergo learning processes that can be profitable for their future pathways.

Some relevant international project examples in this field are provided in the Grundtvig Project 2008 report featuring “Showcase on Intergenerational Activities” (http://www.matesproject.eu/mates_files/2C_Showcases.pdf) as well as in the European project “EAGLE” (European Approaches to Intergenerational Lifelong Learning).

An interesting example of educational transitions presented by EAGLE is the TANDEM project from Germany (see http://www.eagle-project.eu/welcome-to-eagle/final-report.pdf/view). In this project great emphasis was given to the development of sustainable vocational qualifications for long-term unemployed young people and to foster the re-employment of long-term unemployed. This was carried out by using the skills and competencies of the elderly to vocationally train young people in real life settings, such as car repairing, carpeting, plumbing, electronics, metal work and gastronomy.

EAGLE has identified actual cases of intergenerational work in Italy. Two projects with relevant linkages to the profile of G8WAY are:

• The project “Obiettivo Formazione”: it aims at creating an intergenerational bridge by
exchanging experiences between old people and children. Topics focused on skills disappeared from many jobs today, and on skills and knowledge in ICT.

- The project PARI (Programma d’Azione per il Re-Impiego di lavoratori svantaggiati) whose goal is re-employing people at risk of social exclusion such as immigrants, prisoners and people over 50.

Despite these few examples, the exploitation of an intergenerational approach specifically meant to support learners in transition is still a relatively new issue in Italy. Italy does not have a specific legislation on intergenerational learning: every action is approached and managed separately and the resources allocations are also very different. Policy documents do not indicate clearly “intergenerational learning” as a major objective.

✓ National Context

When we contextualize the situation of the learners in focus in Italy, three cornerstones must be considered:

- The educational and vocational training system
- The labour market
- The demographic ageing and the situation of the elderly

The educational and vocational training system

General education in Italy is regulated by the Ministry of Education. Compulsory education has recently been extended from 8 to 10 years by including the first two years of upper secondary school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPULSORY EDUCATION</th>
<th>ATTENDANCE</th>
<th>AGE OF PUPILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary school (scuola elementare)</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>From 6 to 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary school (scuola media inferiore)</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>From 11 to 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary school (scuola media superiore)</td>
<td>First 2 years: compulsory</td>
<td>From 14 to 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Compulsory education in Italy

This year the Ministry of Education has reformed the upper secondary education system, redefining the subject areas and sub-areas of the schools. Namely, the Italian students can
opt for liceum (liceo), istituto tecnico (technical school) and istituto professionale (vocational school).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>SUBJECT AREA</th>
<th>SUB-AREAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liceum</strong></td>
<td>1. Arts</td>
<td>1. Finance and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance 5 years</td>
<td>2. Classics</td>
<td>2. Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(age: from 14 to 19)</td>
<td>3. Languages</td>
<td>1. Transport and logistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Music</td>
<td>2. Electronics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Human science</td>
<td>4. ICT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Graphic des.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Civil engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Istituti tecnici</strong></td>
<td>1. Economics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(technical schools)</td>
<td>2. Technologies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance 5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(age: from 14 to 19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Istituti professionali</strong></td>
<td>1. industry and manufacturing</td>
<td>1. industry and manufacturing productions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vocational schools)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. maintenance and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attendance 2, 3 or 5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Subject areas of the upper secondary system (cont.)

Until 1968 only students who had attended Liceum had the right to enrol university. In 1969 access to university was also opened to graduates from secondary technical and vocational schools.

Il filo d’Arianna’s target group will be graduated students mainly from technical and vocational schools whose goal is not to study at university but to enter the employment market directly and to find a job complying with their educational path.

The central government has delegated the policy to support job searching to the single Italian regions in order to feedback the offer according to the actual demand and needs of
the area. The obsolete “Employment Agency” (Ufficio di Collocamento) has been re-organized and re-named as “Employment Public Service” under the supervision of the Provinces. Since 2003 other public and private institutions have been legally acknowledged as intermediaries to meet the job offer/demand and provide a quality service: the local Chambers of Commerce, the private employment agencies, the universities, the job counsellors etc.

In the region Emilia-Romagna, the Province of Bologna offers various opportunities to people seeking employment. One of the most successful institutions is the Centro di Informazione e Orientamento Professionale (CIOP) which addresses in particular the youth. These centres provides support, counselling and information on an individual basis and organize workshops for groups on relevant topics (e.g. writing a CV, dealing with a job interview, researching data, opportunities abroad...)

Other regional and local institutions offer activities to improve the individual competences and qualifications (e.g. foreign languages, ICT courses, set-up of a business, special trainings to become skilled workers).

**The labour market situation**

The 2009 ISTAT Employment Report ([www.istat.it](http://www.istat.it)) show the following figures:

- Population: 59.877.000
- Residents employed: 22.922 (38,3%)
- Residents unemployed and actively in search of a job: 2.145.000 (3.6%)
- Residents non-employed: 16.941.000 (24.7%)
- Residents out of working age: 20.014.000 (33.4% of which 14.1% are under 14 and 19.3% over 65)

This chart does not reflect accurately the actual labour market situation as Italy is burdened by a high number of workers “off-the-book”.

The global financial crisis, as everywhere else in Europe, has resulted in a recession time in Italy and has affected greatly the Italian employment situation. This is shown by a limited employment growth (although not negative, but less than 0,5%) (European Commission 2009: 17 et sqq.).

As many other European societies, Italy is marked by a growing market flexibility which comes along with an increased individual employment insecurity (reduction of permanent
employment rate, increase of precarious employment forms, erosion of employment protection measures).

This affects some groups in particular, such as the newcomers on the labour market. “Italian youngsters seem to be particularly exposed to the new forms of insecurity brought about by the globalization process” (Bernardi/Nazio 2005: 351). Italy is identified as a country with greater transition difficulties in European comparison (Schomburg 2007: 145). High youth unemployment, extended transition phases and brain drain are key challenges in this context (Morani-Foadi/Foadi 2003).

Italy has the third-highest youth unemployment rate (24.9%) and the greatest gap between the latter and the total unemployment rate of 7.4%, a relatively low figure in the European scene (Eurostat 2009). At the same time, the education level in Italy has risen remarkably in the past few years.

**The Demographic Ageing and the situation of the elderly**

When including elderly people in the transition process of youngsters, it is important to gain an insight into their situation against the backdrop of demographic ageing.

Currently Italy is the 5th European country as far as population but demographic surveys show that it has the highest rate of people over 65 (19.4%). This number is envisaged to rise: by 2020 one person in four will be over 65 (23.5% of the population). At the moment most of the population in Italy is aged between 45 and 65.

In Italy more than 30% of the residents retire before turning 65. The Italian welfare system is more and more burdened by this issue, which turns to be even more problematic as the majority of the retired is still in good health and fit for work.

Italy has experienced a change concerning national policies with regards to workers aged over 50. Until the end of the ‘90s the Italian legislation encouraged people to an early retirement in order to improve young people’s employability and facilitate their entrance in the labour market. Then, the trend turned toward the opposite direction as policy makers realised that pulling older workers away provides just short-term advantages: facts showed a lost of workers’ experience and expertise and increased costs in the welfare and retirement system.

According to recent investigations, lots of the best senior workers have been asked to re-enter their jobs. They are now offered new responsibilities such as training young workers in the same workplace. Nowadays the National Manpower Policy (NAP 2004, an Italian Law for
the reform of the retirement system) is directed to combine old workers’ experience with the young’s energy and talent through rising the retirement age and developing the supplementary benefits.

Nevertheless, the actions taken for the elderly in our country are mainly focused on welfare aspects. It is essential to overcome a cultural problem and to promote a new awareness capable of valuing the potential of the elderly and encourage intergenerational learning on wider scales for the benefit of the whole society.

In Italy almost every town has one or more local senior centre (centro sociale), a place where the elderly or retired can get together and organize activities for leisure (e.g. social games and competitions), take on courses and workshops, travel together on excursions and trips. In addition the town councils frequently organize activities for the elderly, such as courses to improve their memory skills, to keep fit and to train them to become active members of the citizenship.

Other popular institutions are the Universities for Senior Citizens and the CTP (Permanent Territorial Centres). They often co-operate with other public institutions (local university, town council, region administration etc) and offer a wide range of courses and activities in different fields. They aim at encouraging social participation and promoting lifelong learning. As the interest in the latter grows, their activities are no longer addressed just to senior citizens but to other age brackets.

The largest organization of volunteers on a national level is Auser. It has branches all over Italy, in 1412 municipalities. It represents a strong support for the elderly in two ways: it involves senior citizens in voluntary work and active ageing and supports elderly people in need of assistance of any kind. In some cases the work of the volunteers is rewarded.

✔ Challenges

Firstly, it is important to set before the challenges for the young learners in transition to work. Young people entering the labour market in Italy have to face difficulties unknown to previous generations. There is a high competitiveness marked by “educational inflation” and due to the high number of university graduates. This makes the things particularly difficult for those with lower educational attainments. Long job searching periods are especially problematic from an economical view: people seeking their first employment position are not eligible for unemployment benefits. Last but not least, entering the labour market often occurs in form of temporary contracts or collaborations (called co.co.co or co.co.pro) which
bring along great disadvantages for the employee (e.g. no welfare contributions, unpaid days off or holidays, unpaid maternity leave, no sickness benefits etc)

The individual experience of precarious transition phases are connected with scarce self confidence, lack of trust in the society and in the infrastructures and hesitation to make plans for the future. The consequences are late financial independence from the family (together with a late moving-out from home) and the postponement of the transition to marriage and parenthood (Bernardi/Nazio 2005: 356pp.).

The need of more information, individual support as well as ITC skills development are key issues in the efforts to overcome these difficulties.

Apart from the problems the youth in transition face, which challenges do arise for the elderly, the other target group in focus?

The pension figures in Italy are often too low to allow a comfortable lifestyle to the elderly and the local administrations often intervene to support them financially (e.g. voucher for food, free health care assistance). The lack of money may sometimes prevent old people to volunteer and look instead for an additional income.

Nevertheless there is a great eagerness for voluntary work. Almost 30% of the volunteers in Italy are elderly people. They work for NGOs, non profit and charity institutions, the Church, political parties and public institutions.

The elderly volunteers are an enormous resource of knowledge, experience and skills that in G8WAY we intend to exploit in favour of transitions for youngsters by integrating them as mentors.

Identification of further needs

On the one hand young people in transition from school to work have a need of individual support that cannot be fulfilled by the existing entities.

One the other hand there is a huge potential of experienced and skilled elderly with great eagerness to volunteer. It is essential to encourage the elderly to get involved in intergenerational learning and support. Mentoring therefore will become the keyword in our G8WAY approach to enable people over 50 to use web 2.0 resources for supporting young people. Training is necessary in order to support the volunteers to help the youngsters in transition to use the G8way platform.
Focusing on the intergenerational issues, Il Filo aims to adopt new learning activities such as digital storytelling and apply them in the production of a scenario on intergenerational learning. Digital storytelling is a valuable tool as it collects experiences and translate them into stories of transition. Two perspectives will always be embedded: the knowledge and experience of the elderly and the plans and experiences of the young.
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2.3.4. Portugal

**Author:** Ana Ribeiro, SPI, Portugal

✔ **Transition period and learners in Focus**

The transition period in focus is higher education to labour market. We will be working with youngsters (mainly from 22 to 28 years old) that graduated and are looking for a job (usually the first job).

✔ **National Context**

In Portugal, general education (up to the end of upper secondary education) is regulated by the Ministry of Education, whereas higher education is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

![Figure 2: The Portuguese educational system](source: adapted from Eurydice 2006 and the Portuguese Ministry of Education)
The compulsory school lasts nine years, although the law to broaden the compulsory school to twelve years (until the end of upper secondary education) was already approved (Law nr. 85/2009). Students who have completed secondary education can enter higher education if they have successfully passed the entrance exam. Higher education is a binary system composed by Universities and Polytechnics, both public and private, although most of the students enter into public higher education institutions. Compared internationally, the education attainment in Portugal is one of the lowest in the whole of OECD: “a major problem of Portugal’s tertiary education system stems from the poor performance at the school level. Raising tertiary level attainment rates for the population must include raising the percentage of school-leaving cohorts that is potentially available for tertiary level studies”.

In 2006 a new Decree was issued, implementing the Bologna principles to the HE system – study cycles and their duration (Decreto-Lei nº 74/2006). After this, all HEI started to adapt their curricula according to the new system, including the introduction of the approach by learning outcomes. Since the harmonization with the Bologna system, the degree structure is following the framework:

- In Universities: First-degree (licenciado), Master’s degree (mestre) and PhD (doutor).
- In Polytechnics: First-degrees and Master’s degree.

**ICT usage**

In which regards the use of ICT in Portugal, there has been a growing effort to increase the conditions for ICT use by students in the last years. In connection with European priorities, the Portuguese government launched strategic programs such as *Plano Tecnológico* ([http://www.planotecnologico.pt/](http://www.planotecnologico.pt/)) and *Programa Operacional Factores de Competitividade* ([http://www.pofc.qren.pt/](http://www.pofc.qren.pt/)), where the creation of conditions for the increase of the digital literacy of the Portuguese people is a clear priority. Thus, one of the most publicized actions of the latest Portuguese government was the distribution of the computer *Magalhães*, guaranteeing that each child that enters the school system (5 or 6 years old) has a personal computer.

According to the Portuguese Observatory for the Knowledge Society, the computer is more used among the younger groups of population: 63% of the individuals between 25 and 34 years old (age of transition from higher education to labour market) use the computer (UMIC, 2006). Statistics also show that the proportion of computer usage among individuals increases with the rising level of the education: in Portugal, 91% of the individuals with
higher education use the computer; 87% of the individuals with secondary education use the computer (UMIC, 2006).

Regarding the use of ICT tools to support studies and to develop further competencies, there is still a lot to be done in order to leverage Portugal with most of the other EU countries. According to EUROSTAT Portugal has been consistently under the European average regarding internet usage:

- In 2006, 35% of the individuals and households in Portugal had internet connection, whereas the European (EU27) average was 49%;
- In 2007, 40% of the individuals and households in Portugal had internet connection, whereas the European (EU27) average was 54%;
- In 2008, 46% of the individuals and households in Portugal had internet connection, whereas the European (EU27) average was 60% (EUROSTAT).

✔ Support services

In Portugal, the support provided for this transition period is ensured mainly by higher education institutions and employment centers. Generally, each university has a structure to support students and help them integrating in the labour market. The characteristics of these structures can vary, but usually they provide services such as:

- Support to students and graduates looking for a job;
- Support to companies who wish to recruit graduates;
- Management of international mobility programmes, such as Leonardo da Vinci;
- Organization of events about the integration in the labour market.

One example of this kind of structure is the department of internships and professional integration of the university of Aveiro (http://www2.adm.ua.pt/gesp/servicos.asp).

Besides higher education institutions, also employment centers provide support to recent graduates (and all people looking for a job), mainly by identifying potential job offers or complementary vocational training programmes that graduates can frequent, while they get financial support equivalent to the minimum salary.

Job fairs are often organized by higher education institutions, by municipalities or other institutions. In these fairs, representatives of companies are available to provide information
about job offers and recent graduates can introduce themselves, hand over their CVs and look for a suitable job opportunity.

The usage of internet, web 2.0 and social media to support this transition has intensified, although the internet is mainly used to publish information and not to promote interaction between the main actors of this transition (graduates and companies) or to support the development of skills. However, some improvements have been made in this area: the portal http://www.recemlicenciados.com/ aims at offering an interaction platform for former higher education students – for example, one graduate that is already employed can share his/her experience in the labour market, provide tips, etc.

**Challenges**

The main challenge that higher education graduates have to face is the lack of perspectives of integration in the labour market. More and more, this perspective influences the choices that students have to make when they finish the 9th grade and when they finish the 12th grade. Only recently professional and technological courses have gained more popularity in Portugal, which means that many times students opt by very theoretical courses in Universities, which sometimes don’t prepare them adequately for the profession they wish to exert. Currently, there is more and more concern from schools, councilors and parents, to guide students to educational options that are more connected to the entrepreneurial world and that can guarantee a place in the labour market.

Portugal is one of the EU countries with the lowest level of education among its population. There is also a high rate of unemployment among recent graduates, which reveals a certain lack of adjustment between the range of studies offered and the needs of the market. Only in recent years, a greater effort has been made from public institutions to reinforce the importance of education and training and to conciliate school curricula with the entrepreneurial world. According to data from the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, in 2009 8.7% of the people registered in employment centers were graduated (IEFP website). Thus, one must consider that many of the recent graduates looking for the first job are not registered in these centers. Also, according to the National Institute of Statistics, many of the graduates that are employed have jobs that require low qualifications or no qualifications, such as cleaning and construction.

In this context, transition from higher education to the labour market is a difficult and challenging period for students. When the youngsters leave university, at the average age of 24, they have to deal with different changes: frequently they have to move to a new city
with more job opportunities, they face an increasingly difficult and competitive labour market and the majority have no previous working experience.

✓ **Identification of further needs**

Looking at the existing support system, there is certainly a need of more support for students in the transition from higher education to the integration into the labour market. One of the main priorities in this area is to reinforce the connection between the needs of the labour market and the competences developed in higher education. The support system for this transition should be able to provide help not only in the concrete task of looking for a job, but also regarding other aspects, such as: how to behave in an interview, how to make the transition to active life, which transversal skills are required in the labour market, among others.

In this context, a more holistic support is required for this transition. Since often the entrance into the labour market involves the shift to a different city, part of the support provided should be made accessible at distance, namely through web 2.0 tools. The use of these tools would allow a more effective exchange of experiences and a support more focused on the needs and expectations of recent graduates.
References:


2.3.5. Romania

Author: Magdalena Balica, Institute of Educational Sciences, Romania

Transition period and learners in Focus

The G8WAY partner IES (Institute of Educational sciences) in Romania will be focusing on the transition from higher education to work. To this purpose, ISE will be cooperating with one university in Bucharest: the National School for Political and Administrative Studies (NSPAS).

Based on previous institutional cooperation, IES provides expertise in organizing and delivering modules on pedagogy for all students in NSPAS. The module is available to all students interested to become teachers in the future as an optional complementary qualification, although this is not in all cases their first carrier choice. In this context, direct interaction with students provided a set of insights regarding their development’s need regarding the social, psychological and pedagogical competencies necessary for their carrier prospect. The module is structured in a blended learning system, intending also to develop student’s skills in using ICT for learning.

In the same time IES is providing on regular bases the pedagogical expertise for teachers in NSPAS in the field of innovative solutions for using ICT in learning processes and in organizing the university curriculum in a blended learning system. From this experience, IES collected a set of valuable information regarding the learning needs of students in direct link with their future carrier.

The group of learners in focus consists of students in the last 2 years of their studies that are preparing themselves to get a job in the field of political sciences, communication sciences and sociology. The selected students are those enrolled in the pedagogical module in university, run by IES experts.

National Context

A short overview of the recent historical background shows that the Romanian university system in the communism time was characterised by a highly selective approach at the entrance and a predefined number of universities, profiles and students, according to the needs of a centralised and planned economy. Before the 90’s Romania had one of the lowest numbers of students in university compared to other European countries. The status of a
university graduate was socially recognised and respected and usually most of the graduates benefited by an immediate integration on the labour market, ensured by the state. The transition from higher education was based on some measures that usually were in place due to bilateral contracts between university and big industrial factories that provided training places and intensive training stages during the studies.

Beginning with the 90’s, in the context of transition from a state-directed economy to the free market economy, Romania witnessed one of the biggest increases of the participation rate in university education in Europe. The number of students increased year by year, getting to 571613 in 2001/2002, for example, and ending up to 891098 in 2008/2009, while new private and public universities were established. Most of the universities were oriented on a huge demand of students entering in the university, very often ignoring real needs on the labour market.

In this new context it is relevant to point out that, in 2008, the employment rate of the 15-64 years old population with university level was almost 85%, while in the case of the young graduates up to 25 years old, the employment rate was much lower getting to 58,8%. Consequently, at the present moment, at least one of four young university graduates is unemployed (see Table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of students in university</th>
<th>Employment rate of the population of 15-64 years old with university level</th>
<th>Employment rate of the population of 15-24 years old with university level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>571613</td>
<td>82,4%</td>
<td>64,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>586567</td>
<td>81,7%</td>
<td>63,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>611779</td>
<td>82,2%</td>
<td>63,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>647400</td>
<td>85,1%</td>
<td>65,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>716464</td>
<td>85,3%</td>
<td>64,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>785506</td>
<td>83,7%</td>
<td>50,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>896258</td>
<td>86,6%</td>
<td>62,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>891098</td>
<td>84,7%</td>
<td>58,8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. The evolution of number of university students and the employment rate 2001-20086

Those figures show that for graduate newcomers at the employment market in Romania, the starting conditions are much more challenging than for the academic generations before.

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Moreover, a recent study named *Quality Education for Labour Market* and carried out in 2009 has unfolded an additional work integration issue: almost 20% of the graduates are getting their first job in a totally different domain than that they had specialised during their university studies. In the case of students graduating communication sciences, this percentage was even higher, approaching 27%. Unfortunately, for the moment the data are not available also for students political sciences and sociology, but we can estimate that their situation is relatively similar with the general trend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduates in:</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>IT &amp; Computers</th>
<th>Communication Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First job after the graduation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not the case</td>
<td>11,1%</td>
<td>12,4%</td>
<td>7,1%</td>
<td>5,1%</td>
<td>8,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not answering</td>
<td>1,0%</td>
<td>2,1%</td>
<td>1,0%</td>
<td>1,0%</td>
<td>1,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed in the field of university studies specialization</td>
<td>65,7%</td>
<td>29,9%</td>
<td>59,2%</td>
<td>35,7%</td>
<td>47,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed in a similar field of university studies specialization</td>
<td>11,1%</td>
<td>27,8%</td>
<td>19,4%</td>
<td>31,6%</td>
<td>22,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed in a totally different field than university studies specialization</td>
<td>11,1%</td>
<td>27,8%</td>
<td>13,3%</td>
<td>26,5%</td>
<td>19,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
<td>100,0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. The field of first job after graduation, comparing to the university studies specialization

**Support services**

It is difficult to speak about a real support system for students regarding their transition to work. The responsibility of their future employment usually being seen solely at learners themselves, universities at the moment show a low interest in supporting students to prospect their career and find a job. Anyway, at the system level there are some players and measures targeting to help students in finding an appropriate job.

In the first place, the university is obliged to provide relevant practice stages in different organization and companies. There are Guidance Centres in Universities that might help students in job orientation. However, the guidance and professional orientation services in

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7 Source: Quality Education for Labor Market, Phare 2006/018-147.05.01
universities are still in the early stage of development and only few students are really benefiting from these support services regarding their preparation of the transition to work. According to the above mentioned study, only 24% of the questioned graduates benefited by counselling services during their studies or immediately after.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information by posters</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers invited to provide information</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job market</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES, the services provided were utile</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Type of guidance and professional orientation service

Moreover, the university at the moment being in the phase of elaborating their tracking graduates system, only few of them are able to provide reliable data on the labour market integration of their graduates. The Romanian National Agency for Quality Assurance in University System is currently preparing a new list of national quality indicators. The tracking graduates system will be one of the issues addressed. The tracking system intents to monitor the situation of students after their graduation, in order to collect information on the work integration rate of graduate and their carrier path after they lived the university.

Companies are playing a rather passive role. They are usually approached by universities or by the individual students themselves with the request to host training stages for students or to provide internship stages. In reality, only a small number of employers is interested to provide such support to universities.

NGO-s and voluntary work organizations are usually the players that are actively engaged in involving students in different kinds of activities that may provide relevant learning experiences.

Private recruitment companies are playing a role with regards to competence evaluation, counselling and guidance of job search for graduates. Due to the overall costs of these services that have to be raised by graduates themselves, they are not equally accessible to all students. Anyway, the online services provided by recruitment companies in Romania are being widely and successfully used.

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8 Source: Quality Education for Labour Market, Phare 2006/018-147.05.01
**Challenges**

At the present there is no reliable and detailed data available at the national level regarding the work integration of graduates in political sciences and sociology. According to a recent survey conducted by the Counselling Centre in National School for Political and Administrative Studies (2008), more than 50% of the questioned graduates found a job that is not directly linked with their studies. Those students are also declaring that they do not very often have the chance to use their formal education experiences directly at the workplace. Often, their other informal experiences are counting more when they are applying for a job or performing their current job tasks.

In order to improve their employability, the learners are challenged to find themselves relevant informal or non-formal contexts in which they may develop other relevant competencies alongside with their studies. Voluntary work, part time jobs or project involvement during their studies are only few of their personal strategies used for gaining needful practical experiences in the field of political sciences, communication sciences and sociology. The university is not providing at the moment any kind of support for the students in order to learn how to register, keep and value their informal learning experiences.

The support system for students in transition to work is still fragmentary and only a limited number of students have access to it.

**Identification of further needs**

The students of political sciences, communication sciences and sociology need specific key competencies that they cannot sufficiently achieve in universities. There is a lack of congruence regarding university education on the one hand and labour market requirements on the other hand. The development of a set of specific skills and competences for students in order to register, develop and present their learning and work experiences, using Web 2.0 might help students to easily manage and present their learning experiences anytime and anywhere, being easily to be transferred and visualized in different contexts. At the same time, web 2.0 has a high potential to contribute to equal access regarding the support system.

However, the current support system for students in transition to work is still very weak, the entire responsibility of their integration being on their shoulders. In order to decrease the
pressure on students in their effort to prepare for the world of work, the universities should make additional efforts to provide more support. A relevant example in this case may be an optional course on developing appropriate skills for students using web 2.0 tools in order to value their informal or non-formal experience. Taking into account that most used channels to find a job are Internet application required by the online recruitment companies, using web 2.0 tools in presenting their experiences may be an important and advantageous personal resource.

References:


2.3.6. Sweden

Author: Erik Wallin, CITY Conversity AB, Sweden

✓ Transition period and learners in Focus

From the individual’s lifelong perspective, life in most countries has three principal ages with characteristic ages indicated (+/- 5 years):

- First age: From birth to early adulthood, age 0 – 25
- Second age: From early adulthood to retirement, age 25 – 60
- Third age: From retirement to death, age 60 - 85

These stations define the major transitions in life and within each of these ages there are minor transitions but within the general conditions of the age, such as rights and duties as a parent in the Second age.

The Swedish partner City Conversity AB (CCAB) will focus on the early second age in general and the transition from Higher Education to Labour Market in particular, such as internships or trainee programs for students that have completed a masters program. These transitions often have a regional dimension where a number of stakeholders are involved to make the transitions effective and efficient for all partners involved such as the academic system (demonstrating the relevance of study programs for “real life” applications), the business and industrial system (taking advantages of fresh state-of-the-art knowledge by investing further in human capital as employees) and the public and civic sector (avoiding too heavy burden on the social welfare system if expected transitions fail and generate new members of the social excluded group due to permanent unemployment). CCAB has established some expertise in collaboration patterns in these kinds of Triple Helix alliances in regional contexts.

This period in life is perhaps the one that is most crucial for the whole life career: establishment of a professional profile that fits not only the individual personality but also to the labour market and long-term economic growth patterns. The second age is also the age of own family establishment with a lifetime partner, own children and establishment of own long-term housing conditions. In our analysis and design of supporting ICT for transitions in this target group we will delimit ourselves to only the professional career aspects and consider family formation as a secondary issue.

The early second age, with ages typically ranging from 25 to 35, is a period in life that offers
the greatest *Window of Opportunity* as the typical student that graduates from a university a very rich set of opportunities for *what* to do (further education, work, travelling etc), *where* to do it (in current place, a foreign place, in virtual space etc), *when* to do it (this year, next year etc.) with *whom* to do it (alone, with a life partner, within a team etc) and under *what terms* to do it (voluntary work, low paid work, costly additional education etc). Due to a number of restrictions for the effective realization of a choice made, only a very few number of these opportunities are realistic for the individual students – they tend to follow current “main streams” from academia to working life.

But a significant characteristic of our current and future knowledge based society is that these earlier “main streams” are becoming more and more invisible as the variation of individual careers are steadily increasing due to:

- Decreasing barriers for taking all these opportunities into account as realistic future scenarios (mobilization support, international standards etc.), and
- Increasing new opportunities of housing, partnerships, professional careers, social networking and living conditions (new growth economies etc.).

One of the target groups for our investigations of actual and potential transition paths in the G8WAY project will be *master students* that are preparing for what to do after graduation from a university. The Swedish branch of the student organization AIESEC will be an associated partner to CCAB within the G8WAY project. AIESEC is an international organization of students with focus on their member’s future careers as potential leaders in industrial companies or other organizations. They have 35000 members in over 107 countries and have close partnerships established with 1700 universities and several big international business organizations. We will focus on students that are finishing their masters degree at a university in the Øresund region and who are planning their long-term occupational career, including consideration of places to live, companies to work for and other concerns they have about their future life from a “cosmopolitan” perspective.

See more about AIESEC and their partners and supporters world wide and locally at [http://www.aiesec.org](http://www.aiesec.org). The AIESEC members in the Øresund region will be a key target group for both the analysis and the design of supporting instruments for their future academia-to-business transitions. CCAB and AIESEC will collaborate more formally in the G8WAY project according to a partnership agreement currently in preparation.
National Context

The number of people with higher education completed within the age group of 25-34 years is 40% of the total age group. The mean value for EU-19 countries is 31%. The current unemployment rate in this age group is 9.7%, while the age group 15-24 years has an unemployment rate of 29.1% due to the high barriers in Sweden to enter full-time job positions directly from ordinary school system and the raising requirements for higher education in order to get a full time job at all in the current knowledge society. Statistics show that almost all students that completed their higher education have got a job within a three year period after examination. Statistics (IFAU, 2009) also show that students from higher education will have more and more difficulty in entering the labour market when starting their career after higher education as unemployed. Some of the factors contributing to this very critical period in transition from higher education to the labour market are the following:

- Students that start their career as unemployed might be less ambitious and less motivated to engage in available labour market opportunities
- Students that start their career as unemployed will lose value of their acquired knowledge and competence when not used directly after graduation
- Students that start their career as unemployed will not get relevant experiences of real jobs and working conditions compared to the other students that have successfully entered the labour market
- The employers are more reluctant to employ persons that are unemployed in comparison with persons that already have a job or at least job experiences

With this background it is natural to focus on the different paths that are available for making transitions from higher education to labour market before and just after graduation from academia. If these paths are absent or unsuccessful for a specific student, still more severe and problematic transitions will follow, including transition to permanent unemployment, i.e. social exclusion. We are taking the Swedish context as the basic institutional framework but will include parts of the Danish institutional framework because we will focus on transitional patterns and mechanisms within a specific cross-national region, the Øresund region, in which both Swedish and Danish institutions of relevance for higher education, labour markets and economic growth are involved. In the Øresund Region there are eleven universities, organized as an association of universities called Øresund University. Øresund University has a strong concern for a closer collaboration between academia, industry and regional public authorities in the region. A number of regional, industrial clusters have emerged in the region over the years, such as a cluster within the
Health and Medical area, Functional Foods, ICT, Nano Technology and Environment Management.

There is a general interest from the universities, the regional authorities and the companies in the region that good talents should stay in the region and be attracted by the job opportunities available and generated within the growing clusters in the Øresund Region. Brain drain should be avoided but brain gain of international experts from other parts of the world is also strongly supported by the companies in order to stay top in international comparison with other similar industrial and regional clusters.

See more about Øresund University and the Øresund Science Region at http://www.oresund.org

✓ Support services

At the European level there are a number of agencies that work with issues related to these transitional problems. Most universities are engaged in the ERASMUS program for exchange of students and teachers. One organisation that provides support to students mobility and transitions from universities to the labour market is AIESEC (Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales). In the context of G8WAY, a closer cooperation with AIESEC has been established to make it possible for CCAB to work with their student members in the Øresund region. AIESEC offer different kinds of support for effective transitions on both the international level and the regional level in the form of traineeships, scholarships, project work and real world cases for student entrepreneurship. We will try to map all these transition paths and also explore new ways to make the transition effective for all involved stakeholders (the student, the employer, the community and family members involved etc).

✓ Challenges

From a socio-economic perspective there is a really big difference between – on the one hand - the generation of a successful transition path from education to long term employment over the lifetime and – on the other hand - the generation of a set of failed such transitions that generate social welfare costs and lost personal income over the lifetime. In the Swedish context a growing concern can be noticed considering community help (health care, employment services, social insurance, re-training, mobility support etc) not as short-term ad hoc measures to overcome temporary problems, but as long-term
socio-economical investments in productive and “self-growing” human and social capital. In a recent Swedish study the societal cost for the exclusion of a young person from “ordinary” way of life can be measured in terms of 350 to 1 600 kSEK per year. Added to that are some 300 kSEK in annual production losses caused by unemployment. (See English summary of report at www.skandia.se/ideer)

On the regional and local level, transitions between different universities, from a university to a company or vice versa have a number of shortcomings for the moment. CCAB together with AIESEC, Øresund University representatives and other associated partners, will try to make a more detailed map of this landscape of actual and potential transitions within this set of higher education institutes, companies, public authorities and other organizations in the region. Four concrete challenges can be identified:

• The rather un-structured and scattered set of learning and working opportunities in the region, difficult for the student to see in its totality, to investigate further and take advantage of in the personal career planning.

• The (still) high costs of travel, change of housing and other logistic problems involved in many of these actual and possible transitions, such as when a master students wants to take a course in Roskilde (in Denmark) to complement studies completed in Kristianstad (in Sweden).

• The different institutional frameworks for admission to courses, language used in the courses, pedagogies practiced at the different institutions, ways of assessment and accreditation and the ways the individual student can incorporate an “external” course module in the current study program to be accounted for in the examination and accreditation at the “home department”.

• ICT tools for supporting learning processes are very heterogeneous so there are no effective collaboration for a common and shared Learning Management System or similar at the different universities and departments.

The dominant design of the education system within a lifelong learning context is very much scattered into different space-time activity packages with low degree of integration of learning, working and living from the individual perspective, as illustrated below:
✓ **Identification of further needs**

From the situation described above one of the problems that becomes obvious is the lack of *match-making* or even *market-making* instruments for the two groups: the students preparing their individual transitions and the organizations looking for future talents to engage in their business operations. There is an immense amount of information demand on both sides in order to make good arrangements for meetings and contractual agreements. Supporting tools have to be customized and personalized to fit better for the deal-making process between the partners.

Modern ICT in general and Web2.0 technology in particular can help a lot to support the information gathering and structuring process on the student’s side, e.g. in the form of extended CV-s, ePortfolios and similar. From the organization’s side a better foresight and a more long term competence management program might be helpful to recruit not only the “right” person to the “right” job but also do it at the “right” time and at the “right” place with low costs for the logistics involved.

In summary, this case of transition problems points to a more general set of problems at the level of the education system which has to do with the current dominant design in relation to what is needed against the backdrop of new possibilities: *education process re-engineering* as illustrated below:
An ambition for the G8WAY project is to contribute to such an education process re-engineering by developing suitable software instruments and services using Web2.0 technology. The new technology makes it possible to blend and mixture different type of learning, working and social acts in new ways that reduce the logistic costs to almost zero and open up the whole world as an arena for performing such acts. Most of these opportunities are still only in a visionary version but the collaboration between the partners in the G8WAY project is designed to realise some.
References


2.3.7. United Kingdom

Author: Angela Rees, Pontydysgu, UK

Transition period and learners in Focus

The transition period on which Pontydysgu will focus is the transition from Higher Education (University level) into the labour market. Based on 2009 figures the target cohort is around 300,000 students per year (Milkround News website, 11/06/2009). The target group will therefore be UK students undertaking their last year of study on a university level course and recent university graduates. This group includes students following both Bachelor and Masters level courses or those having recently graduated with a Bachelors degree, a Masters degree or a recognized equivalent such as an HND. The expected age of the target group is 21 for first degree graduates, Masters level graduates will be older.

National Context

The main challenge perceived by the target group at the moment is the high level of unemployment in the UK although this is a common problem in the rest of Europe. Research into Students’ views on the “Economic Crisis” conducted by Highflyers (Highflyers website, 22/02/2010) showed that of the 1,017 final year students surveyed “virtually all of the students questioned feared that there would be fewer graduate vacancies [...] as a result of the economic crisis” and of those actively searching for a job, less than 16% described themselves as “very confident” about their employment prospects.

“A significant number of students have been put off applying for jobs in investment banking, property, retail and accountancy due to the economic downturn and fewer students are keen to work for small or medium-sized businesses this year. But a third of finalists say working in the public sector is now a more appealing prospect” (Highflyers website, 22/02/2010).

According to data published by the Liberal Democrat party, during July, August and September 2009 one in five unemployed 18 to 24 year olds (although none of the 18-21 year olds were old enough to have yet gained a degree) were graduates (Guardian website, 10/01/10).

The available statistics show that 6.7% of graduates in the 2003 cohort from full-time first degree courses were still unemployed and looking for employment or looking for further
study and training in January 2004. For 2007 graduates the unemployment figure dropped to 5.5%. Unemployment in 2007 was highest among IT (9.5%) and Art and Design Students (8.5%) (Statistics for 2007 graduates, 22/02/2010).

In recent years the government has pushed to increase the number of students going onto Higher Education up to around 50% of school leavers by 2010 (Tamsin Bowers-Brown, 2006). As a result the number of graduates emerging from the university system each year rose by more than 70% between 1997 and 2007 (Times online, 11/01/2009). The knock on effect is that there are high levels of competition for graduate placement schemes, for work experience and for all graduate jobs.

In 2007, fewer graduates entered commercial, industrial and public sector management than in previous years (down by 450 graduates). There were also fewer (by around 2,000) graduates going into clerical, catering, retail and customer service types of ‘non-graduate’ jobs (Statistics for 2007 graduates, 22/02/2010).

A recent report by the Centre for Enterprise consultancy found that 88% of small and medium sized businesses would not be recruiting graduates during the recession and that 89% had not recruited a recent graduate (Guardian website, 10/01/10). Small and medium size businesses account for 99% of all companies in the UK and three-fifths of private sector employment. The same survey reported that around a third of these businesses did not know the difference between an A-level and a Degree level qualification (Guardian website, 10/01/10).

Conversations with final year students at Staffordshire University revealed another issue concerning many of the target group, they are aware of their own lack of knowledge of the options available to them within career types. For example one student reading Law expected that they would have to become a solicitor or lawyer, the archetypal role assigned to the law student and one which was actively promoted to the student during her course. She believed that many law graduates do not become aware of the diversity of jobs available until they have strayed from the path of or failed in the process of becoming a lawyer. There are also issues here from the point of view of the university course, some students studying Graphic Design are required to produce a creative CV and find ways of marketing themselves as designers as part of their course, the course assumes that all Graphic Design students wish to pursue careers as Graphic Designers, there is no option to work on a CV to become for example a Graphic Design Teacher or Researcher.

In matching Graduates to jobs there is also the issue of whether or not they have the required skills to do the job. The academic courses are not necessarily matched to the
practical needs of the employers meaning that some employers may have to offer training courses before or as part of the recruitment process, others find that they take on new recruits who are not fully equipped to do the job they are expected to do.

Research into the “Graduate Skills Gap” shows that the IT, construction and engineering industries have complained that there is a shortage of suitably trained graduates with the required technical skills that they can employ to meet their manpower capacity requirements. Many of the graduate employers are complaining that they cannot fill their graduate positions because the caliber of the graduates with respect to the softer skills and working world skills is not satisfactory. The one area which does gain positive feedback is work experience, employers get to see examples of how graduates have performed in actual work places whereas graduates get to see if they want to work in a particular industry, lowering turnover when they are employed for real (“Graduate Skills Gap” online, 22/02/2010).

In this speech to the Association of Colleges, Lord Mandelson explained his vision of a “higher skills system”, rejecting the division between academic university education and vocational further education. He suggested that the future of university education needs to change because the profile of students is changing. He intends to push for two year degrees and wider part time or work-based study should be at the core of the wider participation agenda (The Dearing Lecture online, 22/02/2010).

✔ Support services

On a national level, some organizations exist to aid transition for young people in general. The government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) run the “Connexions” service for young people3, its main remit is to act as an information and advice service for 13 to 19 year olds. It does however offer some careers advice which is relevant to the target group. There are also a small number of organizations which are specifically aimed at aiding the transition from Higher Education into work. Most Universities have their own careers centre, students are encouraged to attend face to face meetings with advisors in order to be assisted in gaining work experience placements and apply for graduate jobs. Alongside this service, students will also be directed to Prospects.ac.uk4, which is a university run website with a job search engine.

Other similar websites exist in the UK, examples include milkround.co.uk5 where students can upload their CV and receive targeted emails about jobs, graduate recruitment schemes and careers fairs which match their individual preferences.
Many large organizations run graduate recruitment schemes which can lead to short term work experience placements, further training and some long term jobs (Milkround website, 22/02/10). In some areas the recruitment of students onto a university course is directly linked with a future employment pledge, for example in Scotland all trainee teachers are guaranteed one year of employment upon graduation (Teach in Scotland website, 22/02/2010).

Recruitment fairs such as the National Graduate Recruitment Exhibition (website, 22/02/2010) occur throughout the year giving graduates a chance to talk with prospective employers and find out more about potential career opportunities. Similar graduate recruitment fairs happen on a smaller scale at individual universities and tend to involve more local businesses.

✔️ Identification of further needs

Those in particular need of assistance with transition are probably those students who typically struggle to find work, particularly those from IT and Art backgrounds (Statistics for 2007 graduates, 22/02/2010). How seriously the economic downturn will affect graduate recruitment remains to be seen but the outlook amongst current final year students is pessimistic.

It is possible that these students would benefit from being part of a support network such as that which can be created through the use of web2.0. The Staffordshire University students spoken to as research for this report were already using Facebook to connect with recent graduates whose career path footsteps they wished to follow. However, one Imperial College MSc science graduate interviewed in relation to this project explained that they would be wary of connecting with people with similar interests because of the increased competition for placements that this could cause, but would be interested in connecting with people at a higher level in their career. The social networking site LinkedIn already allows for this type of networking. By introducing students to this and other similar networking tools which are specifically designed to aid career progression, the transition process may be helped. The tools are already in existence, what seems to be missing is a way of leading graduates from different disciplines to the right tools to aid their individual transitions.

The other area for development appears to be finding a way of making sure graduates have the required skills for the workplace. These are subject specific and appear to be a particular problem where soft skills are required. Transition could be aided by offering learning
opportunities in problem areas such as grammar, knowledge retention and others as identified by potential employers. This could easily be addressed by encouraging students to engage in learning activities such as those with may be provided via the medium of Web2.0

The project cannot create more jobs for graduates but it could offer them a way of increasing their skills, matching skills to the potential employers needs and broadening their horizons in terms of the types of jobs which exist as well as opportunities for further learning.
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3. The G8WAY approach to web 2.0

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Web 2.0 refers to a new understanding of the internet as a means of distributed and self-organized vs. centrally and linear organized processes of content production, editing and delivery. The term “web 2.0” basically refers to interactive applications or services serving the purpose, including “mashups” which allow connecting a wide range of technologies through the use of standardized programming interfaces (APIs). Web 2.0 covers a wide range of basic technologies, such as weblog, wiki, podcast, social networks, social bookmarks, social news and media sharing which shall allow for a decentral generation of content and its circulation in communities of users.

Noteworthy, coming from this definition the concept of web 2.0 is not necessarily linked with the subject of learning. Web 2.0 in the most general sense could be conceived an organizational principle of knowledge production, circulation and consumption making use of “shared” technology. However the overall objective of G8WAY is to take advantage of the fast growing availability of web 2.0 tools and services, and elaborate a pedagogy driven web 2.0 environment for a variety of learning activities taking place during educational transitions. The project seeks to improve learners’ knowledge, skills and key competences acquired in order to successfully cope with the most crucial challenges emerging from transition processes.

✔ What about learning?

The main focus of the G8WAY project is on the specific type of learning processes, which support young people in the acquisition of competencies, needed to successfully cope with educational transition.

Competencies can be understood as an actor’s ability to look out and self-organize (personal capacities, such as skills, knowledge, practical experience) within a situation, which is defined by relative openness, uncertainty, complexity and a highly dynamic character.9 The basic functionality of competencies is the ability of an actor to respond or act towards a challenge / problem, not available through conventional knowledge or practice. This definition at the same time describes the fact that competencies can be acquired only

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through creativity applied in situations, which are new, open (to solutions) and real world based – which of course implies taking the risk for failure.

The problem might look like the following: on the one hand, in the case of simple learning, material success depends exclusively on the appropriateness of the situation. Hence learning triggers and goals are determined by catalyst events in the person’s environment and cannot be dictated by herself. On the other hand, complex environmental considerations necessarily make simple learning tautological, since newly emerging problems can only be tackled either by temporary adjustment or via stricter enforcement of conventional knowledge and skills, even if those applied prove to be obviously inadequate.10

So far so good. But how do we put our solutions and responses to a challenge into action, if we miss the knowledge and skills (or more adequately: if we miss requisite variety)? The answer might be seen in the fact that human action by and large is value-driven. Values – as deeper structure - have the function to enable acting of an individual under conditions of uncertainty, and as such allow for bridging between limited knowledge and concrete action, by in situ substituting missing knowledge and skills. Practically speaking, even if we don’t actually have the knowledge and skills (what it is and how to do) to cope with a new challenge, our values allow for judgments and decisions, for example how we wish things to be and the necessity to act. Personal values are developed through experience and coping episodes, each of which are characterized through contradiction and conflict.11 A pedagogy framework for the development of competencies in a highly complex and individual process such as transitions therefore is of different nature to those we would expect for a curriculum for the teaching / learning of knowledge and professional skills.

G8WAY understands transitions as a learning processes and looks at web 2.0 applications as potential supporters of acquiring competencies in these processes. The overall objective of G8WAY is to take advantage of the fast growing availability of web 2.0 tools and services, and elaborate a pedagogy driven web 2.0 environment for a variety of learning activities taking place during educational transitions. The project seeks to improve learners’ knowledge, skills and key competences acquired in order to successfully cope with the most crucial challenges emerging from transition processes.

A basic taxonomy of key competencies could look like the following:

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10 Preisinger-Kleine, Can organisations learn to learn, CEDEFOP 2002. Individuals act upon consciousness, while the basic mode of organisations is communication. However they face the same problem of generating requisite variety, with a view to selection and adaption in an overwhelmingly complex world.

11 For this central motive see Piaget, Vygotsky etc.; as for constructivism we can think of expansive learning as a reference model.
• (P) Personal competencies, such as empathy, tolerance etc.
• (A) Activity-related competencies, such as general capacity to act under certain conditions and in different situations, characterized by their openness, uncertainty etc.
• (M) Professional and methodic competencies of an individual, referring to the knowledge available on the background of his own culture
• (S) Social and communicative competence, such as the ability to act and communicate in a group or wider social context

The project, alongside a pedagogy framework, will produce an analytical tool, which will allow for the analysis of single learning activities by their learning characteristics, such as reflection, conversation, experience and demonstration. Analysis might refer to learning activities already in place or elaborated during the project. The tool shall allow pedagogy developers and teachers to make informed decisions regarding the selection of technologies and appropriate use of web 2.0 tools, by mapping learning cases against the analytical categories of the pedagogy framework. In order to test the framework a set of basic scenarios will be developed, each of which will describe a typical learning situation, appearing during educational transition. The pedagogy framework in this context will serve the purpose of analyzing the learning characteristics and underlying pedagogy principles of a given learning situation, which might take place in a formal or informal setting.

According to our previous argumentation, a pedagogy framework for the development of competencies should meet the following principles:

• Learning objectives are in responsibility of the learner
• The Learning objectives are action-orientated and focused on self-organisation of practical problems
• Besides knowledge and skills, goals have to be formulated for the value dimension
• Learner-centred pedagogy approach
• Learners are in responsibility of learning outcomes
• Learning is embedded into networks of supporters and peers
• Learners self-organize the process of acquiring skills and competencies

As for the learning environment, web 2.0 technologies can be applied to various settings and therefore are neutral in technological terms. However, a distinction can be made between learning communities and communities of practice regarding the locus of control of their learning. While the former one is derived from formal curricula, and communication flows
are subsequently planned according to needs of a predetermined learning process, within communities of practice the learners are held to self-organize their learning process and to self-determine learning aims, content, methods and means of self-evaluation. The community of practice model largely corresponds the constructivist notion of expansive learning, and enforces the idea of self-organized learners.

The shift of paradigm from behaviorism to cognitivism has changed the focus from behaviors to the internal mental representations and processes. The central issues that interest cognitive psychologists are the internal mechanisms of human thought and the processes of knowing. The conceptualization of the mind as an active memory system has given rise to a lot of inquiries to finding out the answers to mental structures, such as what is stored and how it is stored, and to mental processes concerning how the integration and retrieval of information is operated. Those inquiries propose different descriptions about memory systems, representations and structures of knowledge in memory. They also proposed different hypotheses about how representations influence and interact with incoming information. In turn, those hypotheses provide implications on how to control the instructional conditions. The assumption is that the correspondence between the instructional conditions and the internal conditions of this active memory system will maximize the effectiveness of the instruction. The fundamental principle is to set up instructional events and strategies that will facilitate the learners’ internal mental process of the task.

It is important to remark, that the breach between learning and use, which is captured by the folk categories "know what" and "know how," may well be a product of the structure and practices of our education system. Many methods of didactic education, particularly those from a cognitive view, assume a separation between knowing and doing, treating knowledge as an integral, self-sufficient substance, theoretically independent of the situations in which it is learned and used. The primary concern of teaching and training often seems to be the transfer of this substance, which comprises abstract, decontextualized formal concepts. In addition, the shift of paradigm from behaviourism to cognitivism has changed the focus from behaviours to the internal mental representations and processes, but from both perspectives, learning still is an outcome, either behavioural change by reinforcement or a reconstruction of knowledge representation as a result of mental process. Learning focused on behaviour, usually starts with job task analysis, procedural analysis and functional job analysis and ends up with shaping behaviour in order to fit with tasks. In certain respects cognitive learning remains the same: learning focuses on transmission of “knowledge” as mental representation.
The activity and context in which learning takes place are thus regarded as merely ancillary to learning pedagogically useful, of course, but fundamentally distinct and even neutral with respect to what is learned. Recent investigations of learning, however, challenge this separating of what is learned from how it is learned and used. The activity in which knowledge is developed and deployed, it is now argued, is not separable from or ancillary to learning and cognition. Nor is it neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of what is learned. Situations might be said to co-produce knowledge through activity. Learning and cognition, it is now possible to argue, are fundamentally situated.

If there is a shift on those metaphysical, epistemological and axiomatic beliefs, the challenge lies in what to do and how to do in order to adopt the shift. The practice of instructional design, which was deeply rooted in behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, were challenged with the emergence of constructivism, which views reality as individual construction. The constructivist orientations in the field have resulted in a lot of dialogues in different aspects of the instructional design process as well as suggestions of alternative instructional design theories. From the constructivist perspective, knowledge is neither behavioural changes nor organizational structure resides within the learner. Instead, knowledge is viewed as construction of understanding in a context or is located in the actions of persons and groups. Thus, the ultimate goal of learning is to facilitate the active cognitive reorganization in learners, and their active engagement in the world. Moreover, the focus of design of instruction in the constructivist paradigm has shifted from how to structure instructional events in order to maximize the effectiveness of information transmission to the development of meaningful learning environments that will help learners construct their understanding by engaging in meaning-making. Such changes in epistemological and pedagogical beliefs have challenged the practice in the instructional design process.\(^\text{12}\)

**Why Web 2.0**

The following table shows the difference between web 1.0 and web 2.0, especially with regard to our case of competency learning – in terms of their learning characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-learning Web 1.0</th>
<th>E-Learning Web 2.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gaining and processing knowledge</td>
<td>• Development of (learning) competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distinction between experts / users</td>
<td>• Learners share experience (feedback loops in dialogue mode)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Top-down learning (predetermined learning process)</td>
<td>• Bottom-up learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• External learning model</td>
<td>• Learners rate content according to their experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hierarchical “dialogue” (feedback loops in monologue mode)</td>
<td>• Learners (critically) reflect own experience in the light of others’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consumption of knowledge without deeper self-reflection</td>
<td>• Shared knowledge development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Value driven self-reflection of participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Static software applications with focus on knowledge and skills acquisition</td>
<td>• Dynamicc applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No change of software over time</td>
<td>• Applications such as wikis and blogs allow for judgements and meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expert based knowledge</td>
<td>• Content is scaled to the needs of communication (micro-content)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Book model (book text can’t be changed)</td>
<td>• Content is open to change, which is constitutive for content production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Wisdom” of network rather than experts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data and metadata</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Experts determine learning content (well-tested and -designed knowledge,</td>
<td>• Learning content is derived from learners’ experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ready for consumption”)</td>
<td>• Learning is oriented in the interests and motivations of learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning is a work in progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge is critically reflected and discussed in a value-oriented approach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Difference between web 1.0 and web 2.0
A Pedagogy framework

What do we mean by the term pedagogy framework?

Pedagogy frameworks in their current manifestations shall allow educators to reflect the theory of educational practice and from this derive informed decisions on the use of learning materials and tools, such as ICT based learning technologies in learning design. A basic model of development and transfer is thought to be the following one:

1. Review of course structure or learning situation
2. Examination to establish areas of learning that could be enhanced
3. Working through media comparison tables to establish possible replacements or additions to the learning situations in the course
4. Comparison between the original and enhanced course models to establish which should be adopted, covering different criteria, as well as enablers and constraints
5. Building a new course by integrating the elements from the final shortlist of techniques

As outlined earlier the G8WAY pedagogy approach aims at the development of personal competencies, needed in order to successfully cope with challenges and problems evolving from educational transition. Following the 4 key competencies proposed earlier, a classification method of web 2.0 characteristics with regard to their contribution and functionality at the acquisition, reflection and transfer of competencies (into transition practice) could be formulated as follows:
Web 2.0 tools | Characteristics | P | A | M | S
---|---|---|---|---|---
Tagging „Folksonomy“ | User generated Taxonomy using „Tags“ (Tag Cloud) | □ | ■ |
Meta methodology Semantic Web (SemWeb) | Formalizing and operationalizing relations of terms | □ | ■ |
Weblog (Blog) | Online diaries of persons and groups | ■ | □ | □ | □
E-Portfolio | Digital archive of learning activities, such as project work | ■ | □ | □ |
Wiki | Jointly developed digital documents | □ | □ | □ | ■
RSS – RSS-Feed | Selective retrieval of information, stored on third party websites | □ | □ | □ |
Podcasting | Production and release of audio files | ■ | □ | □ |
E-Learning extensions | Learning applications developed by users | □ | ■ |
To be extended …

Table 13: Method of web 2.0 characteristics

[legend:
■ High potential to support the development of competency
□ Limited potential to support the development of competency
No potential]

✔ Web 2.0 based support in transitions: services in place

There are different support measures available for the target groups of G8WAY:

• Concerning the transition from university to work, an ad hoc search on the internet showed that there are various sites, which either hold educational offers or information materials for graduates faced with the transition to vocational training, work or higher education. The bulk of these sites follow a blended learning approach by delivering standardized and ready-to-use information through internet portals or in database format, combined with feedback forms and opportunities for face-to-face contact with career counsellors. A typical example is the British CONNEXION portal, which addresses a broad range of issues relevant for different age groups, such as health, social life, adolescence, vocational orientation and job search. The site makes extensive use of multimedia, including digital storytelling as a means of information.

• Concerning the transition from school to work, a view on online support measures in
Germany shall serve as an example. There is a wide range of offers provided by the Federal Employment Agency. This includes, amongst others, online information on job profiles, competency assessment and up-to-date job offers. However, especially for disadvantaged youth there are barriers (technical, personal) in accessing these.

Web 2.0 concepts are realized on a broad scale within social networks, such as the German “StudiVZ” or “SchülerVZ”. Quite similar to “Facebook”, these large scale pupils and student networks (2010: 16 Mio. Users) make extensive use of mashups connected through standard APIs. However the social networks are separated from each other and don’t foresee a special offer for people with transitional status. Individual membership is based on a fixed educational status, counting out learners during a transitional period.

Wikipedia points out a range of social networks, which are dedicated to the transition for higher education to work or entrepreneurship, such as FledgeWing, which is an online community aimed at entrepreneurial university students and currently supports 170 universities worldwide. Another social network is XING, which in the first instance promotes itself as community of practitioners (professionals), whatsoever also holds job-offers and newsletters for graduates as well as forums for contacts among students and potential employers. The main offer is articles, case studies, job lists, event postings and calendars, community and grouping tools (matching of peers with similar interests), mentor search, tools for document collaboration, goal tickets and forum discussions, contact details for entrepreneurial centers along with university events.

Besides social networks, there are also school / university specific forums, which try to bridge between the world of education and work by bringing together professionals, teachers and students in open forums, or within an alumni context with the chance to exchange experience among students and professionals, including tips for job applications and job start. However frequency and number of contributions is rather limited, compared to the above mentioned sites.

Apart from the situation of students and university graduates, there is a lack of those forums for young people outside university education and here again, especially for those facing personal or social disadvantages.