

**REPORT ON CONCLUSIONS AND RESULTS**  
**Assessment Report on the Social Policy Experimentation**

**PROGRESS PROGRAM - SESSION VP/2012/007**

**ESPY PROJECT - “Experimentation on Social Policy for Youth (ESPY)”**

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The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The project Experimentation on Social Policy for Youth (ESPY) is part of European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - PROGRESS (2007-2013).

This programme is implemented by the European Commission. It was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment, social affairs and equal opportunities area, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals in these fields.

ESPY has a total budget of €1.034.988,00 of which €827.990,40 is co-financed (80%) by the European Union and it aims to develop, test, disseminate and replicate innovative youth activation measures in order to prevent youth unemployment and exclusion.

The project is comprised of Málaga County Council (Spain) as beneficiary and Tipperary County Council (Ireland), Universidad de Málaga (Spain), Regional Development Fund of East Macedonia and Thrace (Grecia), Alliance of Social professionals (3Sz) (Hungary), Provincia Regionale di Siracusa (Oggi Libero Consorzio Comunale) (Italy) and Agência de Desenvolvimento Regional do Alentejo, S.A. (Portugal) as partners.

Espy has tested innovative youth activation measures in order to prevent youth unemployment and exclusion, in particular for young people living in rural, remote and peripheral areas who face multiple barriers in accessing the labour market. To this end, a holistic approach will be carried out aiming to set up new social programmes and policies.

Evaluating the impact of the work carried out required a combination of various methods, techniques and instruments to obtain an accurate approach to the results of the project, in order to reach transferable conclusions that would enable them to be implemented in public policies.

To this end a quasi-experimental model was followed, which included triangulation as a strategy to combine quantitative and qualitative techniques for information gathering and to determine the sources to be evaluated.

Using combined assessment methods provided the chance to reinforce the assessment and to more efficiently use the various sources of quantitative and qualitative information generated.

A work group was created to implement the ESPY project, comprising professionals from the European Resources Department, Community Social Services and Employment Department.

The Provincial Community Social Services Network is set in 6 Areas of Social Work where municipalities and young people for Social Policy Experimentation were selected.

The variables taken in to account when selecting the municipalities were:

- Municipality features: number of inhabitants, rural area.
- Number of young people residing in the municipality.
- Educational resources: location of the secondary schools.
- Area of influence of other municipalities and resources.
- Young people being helped by the SSSSC.

### 1.1. Social experimentation participants

The project was aimed at young people between 15 and 24 years old who are unemployed, have dropped out of school or are at risk of doing so and face multiple barriers in accessing the labour market.

Among them, the following groups were defined:

Experimental group: young people taking part in the social experimentation.

Control group: young people with similar profiles to those belonging to the Target Group, but in this case, the designed action should not be applied to them.

The data were collected based on methodological triangulation, including quantitative and qualitative techniques for information collection and various evaluation agents such as Social Services professionals and companies that worked directly with experimental group participants.

The experimental nature of the project required that the work performed be carried out on a sampling of the population object of the project. A total of 484 young people took part, of which 242 benefited directly from the actions, while another 242 enabled, by being monitored, the possibility of measuring the results of the experiment, evaluating the changes in the young people depending on whether the actions were applied to them or not.

### 1.2. Evaluation procedure

The statistical matching method with a control group was added to the testing in order to prevent possible bias derived from the difficulty to randomise in towns where it was difficult to access the experiment. Based on this method, instead of comparing all the youths participating and not participating in the project as a whole, the results of each participant will be compared with a non-participating subject with similar observable characteristics. The total number of young people in the control group guarantees that it will be possible to find a non-participant for each participant.

Measures were carried out following the “Before-during-after” format.

Before: at the beginning of the social experiment, general information about participants was collected in order to reference results and identify limitations through various questionnaires.

During: over the course of the social experiment, an open system of data collection was established regarding project objectives. The development of envisaged actions was tested for each strategic line, checking schedules, planned tasks and resources available. To this end the evaluation of finished actions was used (workshops, workplace experiences, management practises, training actions, etc) and the information collected in Participation Workshops.

After: at the end of the project, particular information was collected regarding all the variables studied by means of instruments specifically designed for this purpose (questionnaires) and qualitative techniques of evaluation such as in-depth interviews and discussion groups.

Quantitative data were handled statistically using the statistical package SPSS version 19.0.

### 1.3. Information sources

The variables were evaluated with the following information collection instruments and techniques:

- Evaluation Questionnaires:

- Annex I: Referral form, contains details on the person or organisation making the referral and the young person they refer, stating the reason why. It was only collected before the experimentation.
- Annex II: Adjustment questionnaire contains the personal data on the youth being referred and closed questions on the reason for searching for employment, training or initiative for entrepreneurship.
- Annex III: Attitude evaluation questionnaire contains a series of statements, sentences or attitude options that the young person should rate, on a scale from 1 to 5, showing their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement.
- ASE: Questionnaire validating the evaluation of Attitudes towards the Search for Employment. Measures the variable with a Likert-type scale (1-5).

Three groups of variables/categories have been considered:

- Sociodemographic variables: Sex, age, town, family composition, qualification, course and marital status.
  - Attitudinal variables: motivation, attitude towards employment, entrepreneurship, attitude towards training, job expectations.
  - Behavioural variables (previous behaviour): habits relating to job search, previous employment experience, educational path data and previous training experience.
- *Activities report. Each action was evaluated through a qualitative report including objectives, methodology, results, conclusions, etc.*
  - *Meetings among young people taking part in the experimentation (Participation Workshops),*

We worked with the local young population, analysing their reality, stating their problems and priorities and setting out the design and implementation of new youth policies that are closer to their needs and to their reality. We also analysed the achievements reached.

- *Meetings between professionals and companies that work directly with young people (Participation Workshops)*

We also worked with the professionals in the field to analyse the needs, expectations and proposals for action for the young people in rural settings, as well as to evaluate the intervention strategies followed within the framework of the project and those carried out within the framework of public policies.

- *Evaluation meetings between professionals and companies that worked directly with experimental group participants*

Evaluation meetings were set up in order to take measures to improve the intervention, in the case of intermediate evaluation, and with the purpose to perform a general qualitative evaluation of the project, in the case of the final evaluation.

#### **1.4. Monitoring system**

The following systems were established for monitoring purposes:

- Espy technical team comprised of 5 professionals from various disciplines and the various Services related to the implementation of the project. This team was responsible for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the experiment.
- Espy technical team and agents with the Community Social Services. Regular monitoring meetings were established with the technical personnel of the Community Social Services and the ESPY team.
- Espy technical team and hired professional companies. A coordination team was set up with the professionals in charge of implementing the contracted activities, to ensure achievement of the objectives, to detect difficulties and to evaluate the actions.
- Espy technical team and University of Malaga. Regular monitoring meetings were established. An evaluation protocol was initially established to be implemented during the project, and has been continuously applied and followed.

## **2. EVALUATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

As stated in section 1.3., several sources of information were used. The evaluation and recommendations on each of the project's actions were obtained from this analysis, as well as its general evaluation.

### **2.1. EVALUATION BY STRATEGIC LINE AND ACTION**

#### **2.1.1. Strategic Line 1: Training**

The actions of strategic line 1 are classified into two main sections:

- Intervention in the formal education channels
- Intervention in the non-formal education channels

#### **A) Intervention in the formal education channels**

The target population of these actions were school-age minors, their families and the Education and Social Services professionals working with them.

The aim of these actions was the adaptation of formal education channels to the needs of these young people in truancy, so that these channels are valued as the appropriate scenario for their personal development.

Actions have been implemented with these three target groups to change their habits and attitudes using coaching tools, emotional intelligence and neurolinguistic programming.

#### **A.1) Communication and coordination improvement between schools/high schools and social services**

This action was implemented in 11 high schools of the province of Malaga, with a total of 36 workshops (3 at each school). 78 youths participated.

A guidance service was created for young people. School centres have implemented Experimental Workshops in which experts have worked together with youth on a process of self-knowledge and setting understanding, so that they are trained to take their own decisions by reducing uncertainty and risks.

Workshops were conducted through personally designed dynamics to favour group work. They have looked for new motivation formulas to promote competence acquisition and improvement of students' skills.

An **initial challenging attitude** was found in several groups. Progressively, as they felt that they were heard and not judged for stating how they felt and what they wanted to do, the groups were able to open up to the experience, based on trust.

They made **individual discoveries** regarding themselves and their lives, and they drafted a goal to take a first step towards what they want in life. The youths began personal work to draft their goals and they have acknowledged their needs. Their interest and desire for self-knowledge has been awakened.

The goals were achieved thanks to the **emotional impact** obtained with the workshop's initial motivation. The participants' level of implication has meant that they were better able to explore who they are, how they are doing and what situation they are going through.

New channels of communication were also opened between the youths and their families, who require more training in this type of actions.

### **A.2) Actions with families**

This action comprised a total of 30 workshops (2/3 workshops by Social Work Area (SWA)), which benefited 49 families.

Work was carried out with families by means of individual intervention plans and guidance workshops, which have provided them with skills and capacities to educate and support their children, so that the expected results are achieved.

In most cases the attendees were the youths' **mothers**, whose ages ranged between 35 and 50, and who had very few personal self-management tools.

These workshops enabled **new ways for families to interact with their children**, as well as educational strategies. The families also had **personal shortcomings**, therefore the sessions had to be redirected, implementing personal development strategies. We cannot try for the family to change education strategies with their children if there is no well-planned initial personal goal set by the father/mother.

On the other hand, simultaneously implementing the actions with the youths and their families has led to interest by both parties and has been quite rewarding.

### **A.3) Innovation spaces for professionals**

This action comprised a total of 17 workshops (2 per Social Work Area and 5 in the city of Malaga), which benefited 140 professionals.

Spaces for debate have been created for teacher staff from different school centres and Social Services professionals.

The participants received training in new interventions strategies, adding new practical tools to their professional job.

This space for debate has led to ideas to be developed based on the professionals' needs, which will improve education and intervention. It has also motivated the professionals.

#### ➤ **Recommendations based on actions A.1., A.2. and A.3:**

Although the assessment of the actions was satisfactory, the following recommendations can be made:

- **Reduce the distance between the education system, Social and Employment Services, families and youths.**
- **Reduce the age for intervention.** It is recommended to begin the intervention, the work towards knowing themselves and towards generating their own future, with youths who are in the last year of primary education, in order to facilitate the transition to secondary studies, bearing in mind the various personal stages of each young person.
- Implement actions to **define goals** aimed at **all the youths of the same classroom.** The participating youths stated that they feel labelled when they are taken out of the class to be specifically counselled. This type of actions should be aimed for the whole class, because it is beneficial to everyone, thus avoiding the feeling of exclusion for those youths at more of a disadvantage.
- Personalised and detailed **monitoring** work.
- **Visits to educational centres** by youths who have participated in the Espy activities so that they can pose as example and motivate other youths to continue with their studies.

## **B) Interventions in the non-formal education channels:**

### **B.1 Dual training**

This action comprised a total of 3 training activities, each lasting 600 hours, divided into 200 theory hours and 400 practical hours, benefiting 27 youths.

This training was coordinated by inclusion tutors, who guided young people in the process to ensure the success of the training. The final aim was for young people to achieve a level of development at the workplace which allows them to compete in the labour market as highly qualified professionals because of their human, intellectual and practical qualities.

The practical section of this activity received a grant.

This intervention was performed in sectors that showed an employment growth despite the economic crisis:

- Ecological agriculture in the Guadalhorce Valley, where agriculture is one of the main economic sectors.
- Comprehensive management of cork in the Ronda mountain range, where cork processing is a source of employment.
- Revival of professions in the Axarquía that include certain productive elements that favour a revival of professions and elements of high interest to the community.

The **training** provided was **adapted** to the resources and opportunities of each area. There was an approach to new work and entrepreneurial opportunities pertaining to new fields in each of the districts.

The program put the **youths in contact with companies**, improving their chances for employment. Company owners have stated their satisfaction with the traineeships and have expressed their commitment to hire these young people.

The youths learned **habits and attitudes for employment**, acquiring discipline, responsibility, etc. and they developed the skills required for a work environment. **Teamwork** was also

promoted and the self-sufficiency of each student was encouraged through various tasks, distributing responsibilities and roles among the participating students.

The sessions carried out turned out to be a bit long. A **maximum of 5 hours a day** would be the best. **Theory and practise also had to be combined** in order to retain the students' attention.

Although one of the main motivations was collecting the **grant**, this has allowed us to work with the youths who would not have acquired habits of responsibility, punctuality, scheduling, etc. without it.

## **B.2. Skills-building itineraries**

This action was developed within the framework of three-day camps to improve young people's motivation and skills-building with coaching tools, emotional intelligence and neurolinguistic programming.

A total of 37 youths participated in this residential training.

During these camps the participants improved the **definition of their personal goals** before focusing on professional goals. This activity also helped them learn to face their personal conflicts and to adopt strategies to overcome them. They discovered aspects within themselves that they did not even know they had, providing them with the opportunity to get to know and value themselves.

It was initially difficult to **motivate the youths**. After attending, they thanked the professionals for pushing them, because this activity helped them realise just how far they could go. They worked on eliminating dependent lifestyles and victim attitudes.

**Different interests** were observed regarding the aspects to be worked on depending on their gender. Girls showed more interest towards emotional relationships, personal growth, self-knowledge and discovering a meaning to life, whereas boys were more interested in achievements, personal and professional triumph and the need to feel free.

This action was a **meeting point** for young people with participation forums. Collaboration and cooperation ties were consolidated and friendships were also made.

**Resources and tools were activated** to awaken the young people's attitudes and initiatives.

### ➤ **Recommendations based on actions B.1. and B.2:**

- Resolve the young people's personal conflicts and identify their interests as an **activation point**.
- **Provide personalised training** adapted to the person. A prior diagnosis of the itinerary that a youth needs is essential, as well as implementing personalised training, adapting the skills to the reality of each territory and each youth.
- **Providing grants for training activities** allows a young person to begin and remain on an itinerary. However, further in-depth work is also required, working with their personality and motivating the youths to think about their employability and to acquire attitudes and responsibility towards training and work.
- **Company owners'** awareness should be raised by providing them with knowledge of what it means to have a person doing traineeships with them.

- We must find a way to **raise enthusiasm about entrepreneurship** among young people. Opportunities are found but young people are not capable of taking advantage of them.
- **Professional accompaniment** throughout the itinerary is necessary and is requested by young people. Mentoring and coaching as instruments help youths change their attitude towards employment and especially towards training, in those aspects pertaining to emotions, personal and family conflicts and motivation.

### 2.1.2. **Strategic Line 2: Employment**

#### **A) Plan to promote and support young entrepreneurs**

##### **A.1) Management training, management traineeships and Support Services for Youth Entrepreneurial Initiatives.**

This action consisted of the implementation of training actions that provide youth with the knowledge and competency to establish a business, its administration, management, marketing, etc.

This action comprised 3 activities: Management training, management traineeships and Support Services for Entrepreneurial Initiatives. The training included a total of 100 hours and 20 hours of traineeship with companies.

Training and practical work was carried out with a total of 21 youths and a total of 20 used the Support Service.

At the end of the training all of the participating youths defined their **Business Plan**.

The management **traineeships** were evaluated in a very **positive** light. The youths acquired **management skills** and they experienced, in a real environment, what it means to manage their own economic activity after receiving prior training on aspects related to the setting up of a business.

The youths also learned about the **resources** relating to **entrepreneurship**.

##### ➤ **Recommendations on action A.1:**

- Provide support for the **entrepreneurial initiative over the medium/long term**.
- Teach **more hours of in-person training and management traineeships** with companies, **reducing online training**.

#### **B) Plan for the promotion of youth employment by companies**

##### **B.1 “Work experiences”**

Young people have been offered “workplace experiences” to work on finding their professional vocation to motivate them when directing their education and job search. Monitoring has also been established to support young people in the process.

These voluntary traineeships have been supported by coaching, which began with personal interviews to identify the areas of interest for the development of the voluntary works.

Each young participant visited three different organizations or companies belonging to different economic activities and took turns in one of them during one month.

A total of 19 young people benefited from this program.

This activity allowed each person to find their **personal and professional interests**. The young people identified their path, which in some cases meant returning to education.

The Work Experiences helped to motivate and activate the young people at a time when most of them are discouraged due to the lack of opportunities in rural areas and the difficult geographical mobility due to lack of financial resources. This activity also improved their personal skills and responsibility regarding professional habits and attitudes and overcoming of obstacles through personal work with the support of the **counsellor**, an essential professional figure who accompanied them throughout the process.

In many cases the main obstacle in this activity was the **family** of the youth, who did not support his or her participation in a traineeship experience without being paid. This affected their motivation. For some of the youths this meant that they could not perform the activity, although for others it was a challenge to perform it in spite of the difficulties.

On the other hand, we need **community work** that helps overcome prejudice towards young people and their families because in a large number of cases the stigma of the family that they come from has entailed a huge obstacle in performing this activity. If their environment and companies exclude the youth and his or her family, employability cannot be worked on.

This activity allowed **company owners** to get to know young people from the area. In no case did the youths cause any problems whatsoever and the final evaluations by the companies were very positive.

The **family duties** were quite difficult to balance with work. The case of young mothers with very few resources meant that sometimes they were unable to attend their traineeships because they had to take care of their children as they had no daycare or family help.

Most of the young people are in a pre-work stage. **Social skills** must be worked on, in general and for employment especially, as well as professional skills.

➤ **Recommendations on action B.1:**

- Carry out **prior and joint youth/family work** so that the family becomes involved in the young person's change process and can become elements of motivation and support for them.
- **Community work** that helps overcome prejudice towards young people and their families because in a large number of cases the stigma of the family that they come from has entailed a huge obstacle. This community work is key because if those closest to them exclude them, young people can do nothing.
- Carry out the **prior work online** to minimise and remove any obstacles encountered.
- **Increase the number of traineeship hours** with companies. This activity is not long enough to achieve satisfactory results regarding changes in attitudes and acquisition and strengthening of Social Skills because the results of this work usually show over the medium term.
- Carry out **awareness raising and information activities with company owners** so that they are familiar with the opportunities of having young people in traineeships and can overcome their fears.
- **Increase the duration of the activity** up to a week of experience with three different companies and traineeships of two months with the chosen company.
- **Provide grants** for these activities, providing the minimum financial resources for transportation and daycare in the cases of young people with family responsibilities.

- Perform **intensive personal accompaniment**, especially for emotional support and overcoming personal and skills shortcomings, even at the traineeship centre itself.
- Achieve a **commitment to hire**, even looking into the possibility of the Government providing incentives for companies to hire.
- Increase the activities and steps to provide **continuity** to the process to include young people in the job market.

## B.2. Job Club

The Job Club is an innovative employment guidance proposal in which young people are the leading actors in their management and search for information and decision-taking. The main objective of this Job Club is to work with young people in their job search, providing them with the necessary skills and tools by means of Job Search Working Teams.

A total of 113 young people benefited from this program.

A **support network** for young people was created within the framework of this activity, through the Active Job Search Working Teams. The training provided was **cooperative** and was based on self-knowledge through the group and the support of a guidance counsellor.

This activity gave the young people **visibility** in their towns and regions, which enabled them to go beyond their comfort zone and introduce themselves to companies and people in the town, improving their networks. It also allowed the young people to become aware of **the resources** available in their area.

A **personal job search plan** was designed for each youth, promoting a proactive attitude towards the search.

Throughout the activity we found **poor levels of reading-writing skills**, which makes it harder for young people to be employable. There was also a case of an over-qualified youth (university studies) who still had the same need to enter the job market. This was not a problem because the youth joined the group, even assisting the monitor's job in specific aspects such as drafting a resume, guidance on specific aspects, etc., reinforcing the idea of teamwork and combining efforts.

The Job Club's aim was initially for the groups to be more independent, but this was not possible and in many cases the leader had to **guide, advise and teach them**, because the young people were not able to perform the tasks on their own.

### ➤ **Recommendations on action B.2:**

- Hold **more continuous sessions**. During the experimentation, a total of 10 sessions were held, at a rate of one session per week. It is recommended to hold two sessions per week: the first session to distribute the tasks within the Job Search Team (comprised of youths) and the second to discuss the result of these tasks. The frequency is hard to determine, as it depends on each young person's needs. The key should be the accompaniment, not the time.
- **Set up permanent public areas** for the Active Job Search Teams.
- Have the **technical** staff at the Job Club who will continue to encourage the youths until they are ready to manage themselves.
- **Accompaniment** by local professionals and their connection with the young people is the main basis for keeping them within the resources until they acquire basic skills of perseverance and responsibility and their attitude changes towards employability focused on personal and external resources.

- **Clearly define the profiles in selecting young people** that are referred, because there were youths who, by attending the Job Club, became aware of the improvements or changes they needed to make in order to be hired. This opens the need for **prior training activities** to prepare the young person.
- Carry out prior work with the young person on attitude and personal preparation.

### 2.1.3. **Strategic Line 3: Participation in community life**

#### **A) Participation workshops**

This activity had a double objective:

- To provide feedback to the project by means of the participating community responses to the social experimentation (Focus Group) in order to jointly analyse the achievements obtained.
- To define new proposals to submit to public policies. To this end local young people analysed their reality, expressed their problems and priorities and outlined the design and implementation of new youth policies closer to their needs and reality.

Six participation workshops were carried out (one for each Social Work Area) with participation by 181 people, between technical staff from the various government offices, social agents and youths (both those benefiting from the project and other youths from the area).

This activity has allowed for **online work to be promoted**, which was important not only because of the coordination between services and professionals, but also because of the features of the territory, where there are large distances and efforts are required in order to focus the intervention. The design of a professional and entrepreneurial network involved all of the key agents of the district in designing the activities to improve employability and training for young people.

It has also meant an area for professionals and young people to connect, getting to know the young people in a different context, entailing a change of image and perception, overcoming stereotypes by establishing a new relations model with better participation.

Youths have also been **integrated** into their reference community and the **corporate network** has become involved in the implementation of the project.

#### **B) “Positive youth” meeting**

This participation pattern has been supplemented by specific actions to inform and increase awareness by means of the so-called “optimistic youth marketing”.

Two separate activities were performed within the framework of the Meeting:

- Conferences, micro-theatre and testimonials focused on mobilising and activating young people.
- Stands in exhibition areas where youths found relevant entities that provided them with information to access employment, training and participation.

One meeting was held, lasting four hours, with the participation of a total of 267 people, mainly youths from each of the 6 districts of the province.

This meeting was a **participation area** for the young people of the province. It provided information on the **resources** available in the region, from a point of view that would be interesting for young people.

It was a good decision to focus the meeting making the **youths the main characters** of their own stories, using the testimonials of the experiences obtained within the project.

The **European initiatives for youths** were also directly **promoted**, as well as the **employment and training initiatives**.

### **C) Training and Communication 2.0: Knowledge of social media for training and employment**

The aim of this activity was to train youths in the use of tools that are provided by social media for training and employment.

Six ten-hour training sessions were given (one at each SWA) divided into two sessions, making a total of 12.

65 youths benefited from this activity, where they learned to create **social media profiles to improve their job search** and to use **existing social media to find employment and training opportunities**.

#### ➤ **Recommendations on activities A, B and C:**

- **Involve all of the territory agents.** A territorial network should be developed from the beginning of the project.
- Include **company owners in the planning** of the activities.
- **Choose young leaders** in the towns, who will help spread the word on the project's actions.
- **Training workshops on social media** should be **longer** (more sessions) and should include more practise sessions. Each session should also be timed to at least once a week, in order to implement the acquired skills outside of the workshop.
- It is important that the training on social media be identified with a title that clearly identifies the action. Youth nowadays are very familiar with social media, therefore only the training that will facilitate their access to employment and training will be of any use to them.

### **3. EVALUATION DATA ON QUANTITATIVE LIMITS**

As stated in section 1.3, various sources of information were used for the evaluation, among which were several questionnaires.

A quantitative analysis of the questionnaires was performed, and conclusions were reached on several aspects. The conclusions are presented in this report, pertaining to:

- Analysis of the evaluation questionnaires.
- Analysis of the attitude and behaviour effects of each of the activities.
- Analysis of the entry profile. Data interpretation and conclusions.
- Final conclusions of the quantitative analysis.

#### **3.1. ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES**

The pre-evaluation and post-evaluation results of the questionnaires contained in the addenda II, III and IV are analysed below:

### 3.1.1. Analysis of the adjustment questionnaire (Annex II)

In short, the results show that the main changes of the experimental group after the intervention were that they now feel that they have more possibilities of finding work in the current situation. Those people who are part of the experimental group are the ones who are most considering continuing with their training. The percentage of people signed up with the employment office also increased, as well as the percentage of people who have previously worked less than one year. They also believe that they are better prepared to join the job market and, in fact, the percentage of those who have sought work has increased. They mostly search for jobs at the Employment Office and on the Internet. Some options, such as the Centres for Entrepreneurial Development (CADE) are barely used, although an increase was observed after the intervention. Other important changes took place regarding the control group, mainly that they have ended up with more motivation to participate in a job orientation project as a possible job option and, in addition, they are more willing to continue receiving training in order to get a job. Without a doubt these two changes are important because they point out the need to continue working along these lines to cover their need for training for a job.

As for what they contribute in their search for job or training, they mostly state that it is their willingness to learn and their time.

The aspects that they still need to improve are mainly that only some of them have thought about setting up their own company and that the entrepreneurial initiative is very low in general, although this data is even worse in the control group. They are currently mainly looking for work and are studying.

### 3.1.2. Analysis of the attitude evaluation questionnaire (Annex III)

In general there were some interesting changes in the experimental group. Significant differences were found in all aspects pertaining to the need to work hard to achieve things, in the satisfaction obtained from hard work and in that they do not mind spending as much time as needed to finish something. Their perception of assurance in their capacity to do things also increased. All of these changes are significant only in the experimental group, not in the control group participants. This means that the intervention has greatly improved the participants' perception that hard work and effort are the basis for achieving goals.

Regarding the other issues, although there were no significant changes, there were important improvements in that their enthusiasm for doing new things increased and their negative perception on the lack of assurance in their own opinions and the feelings of inferiority regarding the people they study or work with decreased. These aspects are very important because they have allowed them to gain in assurance of their capacity to do things.

Although these results are very important, there are still many aspects to work on with this group because, on the one hand they have their family that does not provide them enough support regarding training or job searches and the trend is that increasingly the perception of support is lower. On the other hand, regarding themselves, they need to acquire more assurance and confidence because, as the results show, they are not willing to take risks, they are scared of change, they continuously need the approval of those around them in order to do anything, they become frustrated when they do not get something they want and they do not like the idea of going away to study/work in what they do not like.

This data is interesting because we achieved that they value the importance of hard work and partly it has led to an increased confidence in their possibilities, but they still show a certain lack of self-assurance. Continuing work with this group and providing them with strategies and techniques that are useful for training and employment will surely help them to acquire skills to better face academic/job challenges.

### 3.1.3. Analysis of the Attitudes towards Job Search Questionnaire (Annex IV)

In general, the participants of the experimental group had, from the beginning, a less favourable attitude towards employment than the control group, and the biggest changes happened in the experimental group. Many of these changes were not statistically significant but in practically all cases the trend was to improve their attitude towards employment, which is important because in certain groups small changes mean a lot and they show the professional the best path to be followed. On the other hand, although the control group had a better attitude towards employment, most of the results showed that the trend was to reduce their positive perception.

The significant changes for the experimental group took place specifically in that their knowledge of the sources that can provide them with employment increased, and that the job search techniques are important when looking for work. The perception that job searching is frustrating and discouraging and that it is almost impossible to find a job in the current economic situation also significantly changed. The control group did worse in all these areas. There was a significant negative change in the experimental group regarding the issue of family. At the beginning the participants thought that their parents thought that they would make an effort to find a job, this opinion became worse after the intervention, and the interest of the participants in their parents' opinion also decreased. However, in the control group the changes were in the opposite direction and their perception of their parents improved. This data is important because parents' support is essential in such a time of life changes as is adolescence. Adolescents that have a general good perception of family support feel more assured, better integrated and have better academic results. In this regard we must advise the professionals to also extend their interventions programs to the family and directly involve the parents in the development of these programs

There were also important although not significant improvements in that the experimental group participants reduced their perception that finding a job mainly depends on "contacts" and on luck. However, their positive perception that looking for a job is pleasant, stimulating and challenging and that knowing the sources of information is very useful in finding a job increased. They also feel more prepared to properly use the job search techniques; they feel that finding a job is important and that it basically depends on what they themselves do. These aspects are important because there is less perception that finding a job is a matter of luck or contacts and the importance of training or the use of job search techniques increases. Changing from a perception of external behavioural control "finding a job depends on luck" towards an internal control perception "finding a job depends on what I do" is an important change because it teaches participants that they are active agents in the job search process and that they can improve their situation.

On the other hand, both groups believe that the possibility of finding a job immediately is increasingly worse. This is concerning, but it may also be caused by the current economic crisis which, in general, is creating in society a very pessimistic view on the employment future for young people.

### 3.2. ANALYSIS OF THE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR EFFECTS OF EACH OF THE ACTIVITIES

The results generally show that in the work carried out in Strategic Training Line (L.1) the participating youths improved in their life attitudes and job search after the activity. In all cases, the participants in the experimental workshop, in the family workshop, in the skills workshop and the dual training increased their positive attitudes when compared to the young people who did not participate. However, the dual training experience was different for those youths who only participated in this activity and did not receive any further interventions. Their attitude towards job searching decreased, therefore we will need to explore whether dual training as a single activity should be complemented by other interventions in order to be effective.

On the other hand, regarding the activities included in the Strategic Employment Line (L.2) firstly the Job Club is important due to its effect on leading to positive changes both in life

attitudes and in job search attitudes. All of the participants in this activity saw an important increase in their positive attitudes, even those who only participated in this single activity, which strengthens its usefulness for the intended goals.

The remaining activities of this strategic line, Job Experiences, Management Training, Management Traineeships and Support for Initiatives had the same results in the changes undergone by the participants. After participating in all of them the youths improved their attitudes towards job searches, however, they underwent a certain relapse in their initial life attitudes. The specificity of these activities regarding employment may have contributed to this result, which points to the need to introduce at the same time goals to reinforce positive global attitudes in any activity.

Lastly, the Social Media Workshop in the Strategic Participation Line (L.3) had the opposite result. The participating youths improved in their life attitude, whereas their interest in seeking employment decreased, even more so than in those who did not participate in the workshop. Again, the possible design of the activities focused exclusively on one single aspect, and the participation of youths only in this one, may explain these results and points to the need to offer more comprehensive and complementary activities.

### **Conclusions on the change in behaviour**

The results show that the job search behaviour by the youths participating in the various activities underwent varied changes, depending on the activities they received.

Specifically, the activities that clearly increased the behaviours and thoughts of the young people towards their involvement in the job search were mainly those focused on the Work Experiences, Management Training, Management Traineeship, Support for Initiatives and Job Club. The main goals of all of these, included in the Employment Strategic Line (L.2), were aimed at preparing for and experiencing work skills, therefore the strategy enabled a true change in the young people's behaviour. It was possible to go from the attitudes to the behaviours insofar as the participants test these behaviours in quasi-real work areas, which makes it advisable to offer these youths various types of accompaniment during their work experiences.

On the other hand, activities aimed especially at Training and Participation led to a backslide in the job search behaviour of the members, especially those who participated in the Experimental, Families, Social Media and Dual Training Workshops. However, these results may show that the information and training received during these activities is contributing to reduce the youths' prior job search behaviour insofar as it offers answers that they did not have previously and which made them take specific steps in the search, even if they may not have been the right ones. Finding out whether the prior steps may have been less successful than the new answers that they now have may be a future line of study for this group.

### **3.3. ANALYSIS OF THE ENTRY PROFILE. DATA INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS**

In this analysis we simultaneously related the labour and psycho-social aspect with the process to provide these young people with access to the job market, gathering information on the descriptive features and on the social and labour situation, tying these factors with the attitudes and motivation as basic factors when it comes to initiatives or searching and finding a job. We concluded in general terms that there was a low level of motivation, a not very receptive attitude towards their own initiative, and a moderate collaboration with the job search techniques. After analysing the results it is plausible that youth unemployment is related to attitudes and motivation; as transversal elements in job searching.

On the other hand their personal situation, social factors and broken homes, in addition to affecting the way they view employability, play an important role and have a psycho-social impact on them, affecting the employment process.

The data shows that they are generally people with low qualifications and training, with a high rate of absenteeism and participants who did not complete the compulsory education. In spite of the circumstances not favourable to them entering the job market, they are considered employable although they need further training, social and family support as well as job mediation or techniques for job seeking, because of the psychological and social barriers that limit their possibilities.

Social entrepreneurship is also a critical need, along with suitable social-employment guidance, in order to develop potentialities and social initiative. Employability is dependent on a set of internal and external factors, attitude and on the ability to adapt to demand.

Lastly, we must point out the general trend towards higher scores in the control group than in the experimental group, from which we concluded that these youths have a better attitude and motivation towards employment, but greater specific problems regarding social situation and other specific factors.

### **3.4. FINAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS**

Below are the main conclusions gathered from the evaluation of the Social Experimentation carried out by the *Diputación Provincial de Málaga* within the framework of the ESPY “Experimentation on Social Policy for Youth” Project. To this end the participants were divided into experimental group and control group, pre-test and post-test measurements were obtained from both groups regarding life attitudes, attitudes towards job search and psycho-social adjustment. The data obtained were also analysed taking into account gender, age and area of the province where the study was carried out. The effects of the activities on the participants’ attitudes and behaviours regarding the job search were also analysed.

Firstly, regarding the socio-demographic profile of the participants, they are youths between the ages of 15 and 24. The experimental group was slightly larger, representing 60.9% of the total, as opposed to 39.1% in the control group. These are young people who are in vulnerable situations, sometimes socially excluded, most (63.3%) were referred by the Social Services Public System and they come mainly from rural areas in the interior of Málaga. As for studies, they are also in situations of vulnerability as they show a certain degree of absenteeism, which makes it harder for them to succeed in their education and training development during this basic socialising stage towards transitioning into employment. A large percentage of youths do not complete basic education (24%), understood as the minimum education required to access the job market, and 10% only work at house chores as their main work. They are mostly from broken homes, although they show no outstanding behaviour problems outside of the classroom. As for employment, the youth unemployment rate is very high (63.9%) three times higher than the average of the general population. Almost half of the young population analysed had no occupational qualification and neither did they participate in any ongoing or professional training programme in 40.3% of the cases. There is no doubt that the lack of qualification or training is a factor that explains the high rate of youth unemployment. The participants had a low degree of motivation to carry out daily tasks and to search for a job. As for the activities carried out by the young people in searching for jobs, we found that almost half of them (43.9%) showed interest in the job offers. Over half of them intend to work, and have a receptive attitude towards employment. However, the entrepreneurship and self-employment initiative is quite reduced and slightly more than half of them said they are not interested in training, in spite of their low level of education and qualifications.

Regarding the changes after the intervention, we found firstly that, in general and regarding the life attitudes, there were interesting changes in the experimental group. Significant differences were found in all aspects pertaining to the need to work responsibly to achieve things, in the satisfaction obtained from work and in that they do not mind spending as much time as needed to finish something. Their perception of assurance in their capacity to do things also increased. All of these changes are significant only in the experimental group, not in the control group participants. This means that the intervention has greatly improved the participants’ perception that hard work and effort are the basis for achieving goals.

Regarding the other issues, although there were no significant statistical changes, there were important improvements in that their enthusiasm for doing new things increased and their negative perception on the lack of assurance in their own opinions and the feelings of inferiority regarding the people they study or work with decreased. These aspects are important because their participation in the program has allowed them to gain in assurance of their capacity to do things.

Although these results are very important, there are still many aspects to work on with this group because, on the one hand they have their family that does not provide them enough support regarding training or job searches and the trend is that increasingly the perception of support is lower. On the other hand, regarding themselves, they need to acquire more assurance and confidence because, as the results show, they are not willing to take risks, they are scared of change, they continuously need the approval of those around them in order to do anything, they become frustrated when they do not get something they want and they do not like the idea of going away to study/work in what they do not like.

This data is interesting because we achieved that they value the importance of hard work and partly it has led to an increased confidence in their possibilities, but they still show a certain lack of self-assurance. Continuing work with this group and providing them with strategies and techniques that are useful for training and employment will surely help them to acquire skills to better face academic/job challenges.

As for attitudes towards job searches, in general, the participants of the experimental group had, from the beginning, a less favourable attitude towards employment than the control group; however, the biggest changes happened in the experimental group. Many of these changes were not statistically significant but in practically all cases the trend was to improve their attitude towards employment, which is important because in certain groups small changes mean a lot and they show the professional the best path to be followed. On the other hand, although the control group had a better attitude towards employment, most of the results showed that the trend was to reduce their positive perception.

The significant changes for the experimental group took place specifically in that their knowledge of the sources that can provide them with employment increased, and that job search techniques are important when looking for work. The perception that job searching is frustrating and discouraging and that it is almost impossible to find a job in the current economic situation also significantly changed. The control group did worse in all these areas. There was a significant negative change in the experimental group, again regarding the issue of family. Although at the beginning the participants thought that their parents trusted them and the effort they were willing to put in to find a job, this opinion became worse after the intervention, and the interest of the participants in their parents' opinion also decreased. However, in the control group the changes were in the opposite direction and their perception of their parents improved. This data is important because parents' support is essential in such a time of life changes as is adolescence. Adolescents that have a general good perception of family support feel more assured, better integrated and have better academic results. In this regard we must advise the professionals to also extend their interventions programs to the family and directly involve the parents in the development of these programs

There were also important although not statistically significant improvements in that the experimental group participants reduced their perception that finding a job mainly depends on "contacts" and on luck. However, their positive perception that looking for a job is pleasant, stimulating and challenging and that knowing the sources of information is very useful in finding a job increased. They also feel more prepared to properly use the job search techniques, they feel that finding a job is important and that it basically depends on what they themselves do. These aspects are important because there is less perception that finding a job is a matter of luck or contacts and the importance of training or the use of job search techniques increases. Changing from a perception of external behavioural control "finding a job depends on luck" towards an internal control perception "finding a job depends on what I do" is an important change because it teaches participants that they are active agents in the job search process and that they can improve their situation.

On the other hand, both groups believe that the possibility of finding a job immediately is increasingly worse. This is concerning, but it may also be caused by the current economic crisis which, in general, is creating in society a very pessimistic view on the employment future for young people.

Regarding the psycho-social adjustment results pertaining to employment, they show that the main changes in the experimental group after the intervention were that they now feel that they have more possibilities of finding a job in the current situation, they are the ones who most think about continuing with education, the percentage of people registered with the employment office has increased as well as the percentage of people who have worked previously less than one year. They also believe that they are better prepared to join the job market and, in fact, the percentage of those who have sought work has increased. They search for jobs mainly at the Employment Office and on the Internet, some options, such as the Centres for Entrepreneurial Development (CADE) are barely used, although an increase was observed after the intervention. Other important changes took place regarding the control group, mainly that the experimental group participants have ended up with more motivation to participate in a job orientation project as a possible job option and, in addition, they are more willing to continue receiving training in order to get a job. Without a doubt these two changes are important because they point out the need to continue working along these lines to cover their need for training for a job. As for what they contribute in their search for job or training, they mostly state that it is their willingness to learn and their time.

The aspects that they still need to improve are mainly that only some of them have thought about setting up their own company and that the entrepreneurial initiative is very low in general, although this data is even worse in the control group. They are currently mainly looking for work and are studying.

Regarding the job search behaviours, the experimental group changed the most and benefited the most from the intervention. There was also a large increase in positive thoughts and behaviours regarding job search. However, there were no changes in the control group and the job search scores were lower than in the experimental group.

Taking into account gender differences and changes in attitude of the participants, we can conclude that the males in the experimental group increased their positive life attitudes and those in the control group decreased. However, in women the differences were barely noticeable and in the control group the change was even larger. Clearly the change in positive attitudes towards job search was larger in the experimental group and this difference was found to be the same in men and women. However, when analysing the job search behaviours, there were interesting changes because the women showed a bigger change, as changes in job search behaviours in men were very small, although somewhat higher for the experimental group. Thus, although the life and job search attitudes were somewhat higher in men than in women, in behaviour aspects women were the ones who significantly changed. This result is interesting in order to continue analysing why a positive attitude change in men does not translate into an important change in the job search.

As for the results depending on the subjects' age, we found that the positive life attitudes in the experimental group increased in the 15 to 18 year-old group and in the 19 to 24 year-olds. The 19 to 24 group had a less positive attitude than the younger group, but this group had the most important changes regarding the control group because the positive life attitude decreased greatly in the control group of the 19 to 24 year-olds. There was also a significant change in the job search attitudes in the older youths because it was the 19 to 24 experimental group that most benefited from the intervention. This same dynamic happened in the job search behaviour changes, because the significant differences were found for the experimental 19 to 24 group, who evolved towards more positive behaviours in their job search.

As for the areas where the experiment took place, the results of the analysis of life attitude changes, attitudes towards employment and job search behaviours improved in general for the experimental group in the areas where the experiment took place, although some areas stand

out more due to their attitude aspects and others due to improvements in the job search behaviour. This may be related to the type of activity carried out in each area, future studies could further analyse the type of workshop or activity and its specific relationship with the change in job search attitude and behaviours in each of these areas. We must point out that in rural areas it was not easy to implement all of the proposed activities due to the lower availability of resources and more problems in access (e.g. transportation problems), but even so the activities were an element of change when compared to the control group in those areas where it was implemented.

The effects of each of the activities on the changes in attitude and behaviour regarding job search were also analysed. As for the change in attitude of the participants after participating in the intervention, we can conclude that in the work carried out in Strategic Training Line (L.1) the participating youths improved in their life and job search attitudes after the activity. In all cases, the participants in the experimental workshop, in the family workshop, in the skills workshop and the dual training increased their positive attitudes when compared to the young people who did not participate. However, the dual training experience was different for those youths who only participated in this activity and did not receive any further interventions. Their attitude towards job searching decreased, therefore we will need to explore whether dual training as a single activity should be complemented by other interventions in order to be effective.

On the other hand, regarding the activities included in the Strategic Employment Line (L.2) firstly the Job Club is important due to its effect on leading to positive changes both in life attitudes and in job search attitudes. All of the participants in this activity saw an important increase in their positive attitudes, even those who only participated in this single activity, which strengthens its usefulness for the intended goals.

The remaining activities of this strategic line, Job Experiences, Management Training, Management Traineeships and Support for Initiatives had the same results in the changes undergone by the participants. After participating in all of them the youths improved their attitudes towards job searches, however, they underwent a relapse in their initial life attitudes. The specificity of these activities regarding employment may have contributed to this result, which points to the need to introduce at the same time goals to reinforce positive global attitudes in any activity.

Lastly, the Social Media Workshop in the Strategic Participation Line (L.3) had the opposite result. The participating youths improved in their life attitude, whereas their interest in seeking employment decreased, even more so than in those who did not participate in the workshop. Again, the possible design of the activities focused exclusively on one single aspect, and the participation of youths only in this one, may explain these results and points to the need to offer more comprehensive and complementary activities.

On the other hand, the results of the effects of each of the activities on the change in behaviour show that the job search behaviour by the youths participating in the various activities underwent varied changes, depending on the activities they received. Specifically, the activities that clearly increased the behaviours and thoughts of the young people towards their involvement in the job search were mainly those focused on the Work Experiences, Management Training, Management Traineeship, Support for Initiatives and Job Club. The main goals of all of these, included in the Employment Strategic Line (L.2), were aimed at preparing for and experiencing work skills, therefore the strategy enabled a true change in the young people's behaviour. It was possible to go from the attitudes to the behaviours insofar as the participants test these behaviours in quasi-real work areas, which makes it advisable to offer these youths various types of accompaniment during their work experiences.

Alongside this, the activities aimed especially at Training and Participation led to a backslide in the job search behaviour of the members, especially those who participated in the Experimental, Families, Social Media and Dual Training Workshops. However, these results may show that the information and training received during these activities is contributing to reduce the youths' prior job search behaviour insofar as it offers answers that they did not have previously and which made them take specific steps in the search, even if they may not have

been the right ones. Finding out whether the prior steps may have been less successful than the new answers that they now have may be a future line of study for this group.

In general the changes in job search attitudes and behaviour were very important for the experimental group participants. Now we must design intervention strategies to continue progressing with the changes achieved and to improve those aspects that the study has shown are elements that may prevent the development of these changes.

### **3.5. EVALUATION OF THE CHOSEN INSTRUMENTS**

As stated above, several evaluation instruments were designed. We must highlight the observations and recommendations made by the local professionals who applied the instrument, as well as by the professionals of the various companies who implemented the activities, regarding the difficulties encountered.

Although the instruments that were designed were key to evaluating the project, in the future it is recommended they be adapted if the group they are aimed for has similar profiles to the youths receiving this project, because the following evaluations were received:

- The young people found it difficult to understand the questions.
- The questionnaires should be given in places other than where the activity is being carried out because it takes time away from the activities and makes it harder to begin them properly.
- The questionnaire should be adapted to the comprehension and language levels of the youths because many of them had to have certain words explained to them (e.g.: activity, job market, etc.). They should also be adapted pursuant to their ages, designing different forms for the various ages, better suited to their interests.
- In general the young people were not able to answer the questionnaires by themselves, requiring professional assistance to do so.
- The forms were too long and the questions were very repetitive for the youths.

### **4. MAIN CHALLENGES OR DIFFICULTIES (DIAGNOSIS OF THE PROBLEMS)**

Evaluation of the project experimentation entailed an analysis of the main challenges or difficulties perceived by the youths and by the various professionals working in that area.

These challenges and difficulties should be the starting point and basis for analysis of the development of future public policies because the aim of social policies is to provide responses to the social needs and to offer resources that contribute to overcoming the obstacles that, in this case young people, have in joining the job market or training.

Therefore, it is a point of consideration which must be taken into account when designing activities to overcome the challenges and difficulties that young people face.

Thus, the **challenges or difficulties stated** by the various groups (youths, social workers, other agents) in the six districts are:

- **Lack of motivation and of social skills in young people.** The young people of the towns are unmotivated due to the lack of resources in the area. This lack of motivation is associated with low self-esteem, low assurance in themselves and lack of social skills, which leads them to generalised discouragement and lack of initiative to continue searching for a job and education, taking on a reactive and conformist position; these young people don't know what they want and don't know what to do.

- **Very few training opportunities.** Education is one of the main challenges to be improved, both formal and non-formal education. There is a need for training in specific skills, more suited to the reality of each territory and to the needs of the youths.
- Highlight **skills in languages and computers.** Difficulty for some young people to access internet, leading to a technological gap. There are quite varied profiles of youths in the region: some are well prepared and others are digitally illiterate due to lack of access and of knowledge of social media.
- **Imbalance between the existing education offered and actual employment.** Need for alternatives to traditional education, such as traineeships or specific training, more suited to the actual job market.
- **Young people lack experience,** which makes it harder for them to access the job market.
- **Economic crisis** that leads to a lack of job opportunities. Precarious and very seasonal job offers.
- School dropouts or a high degree of absenteeism are all related to the above items. As the young people are not clear on their professional goals, do not see many job opportunities around them and do not find training suited to their needs, they become unmotivated and choose to drop out of school.
- **Lack of family support** is also an aspect to bear in mind. In some cases the family does not support keeping them in the education system or in complementary activities to search for jobs and/or training. Specifically, the lack of support when performing activities of the type “unpaid traineeships with companies”, because some families consider it as a type of exploitation instead of an opportunity to learn, knowledge of the employment reality and an extension of the contacts network.
- They point out the **lack of grants** for the training or employment programs as a great difficulty for young people to continue their itinerary and have the option to travel outside the town, because many of them have to drop out of school due to lack of financial resources in the family unit.
- Related to mobility is the **lack of public transportation or schedules not suitable** to their needs, along with a network of roads in bad condition.
- All of the groups coincide in the **difficulty to access** information. They run into quite varied information, managed mainly by public entities.
- **Lack of coordination between area agents and public administrations.** Sometimes there are resources that are not used due to lack of communication and others that are duplicated.
- **Lack of resources** to promote self-employment.
- Change of image of the group of young people. Young people who neither work nor study are **negatively labelled.**
- **Lack of youth associations and of initiative by the young people** to get together and work to improve their situation.

## 5. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Espy project has allowed the implementation of a new form of intervention with young people in rural areas, with the aim to contribute to improving employability and training opportunities.

The project has entailed getting to know the interests of young people and their needs, training of networks of professionals; it has enabled a new area for consideration, discussion and participation to help plan social policies that are closer to the reality of the areas and which will answer their needs and expectations.

The implementation of an experimental project entails an intervention scenario that will allow for development of measures not applied until now, which means implementation with different opportunities and threats, strengths and weaknesses, which may arise during the experimentation process.

This learning can be summarised with these **conclusions**:

- In general **the activities performed have led the young participants to improve their attitudes and behaviours** towards the job search, finding that this was greater when the interventions were complementary within the various stages in the design: training, employment and participation.
- **Youth unemployment is related to attitudes and motivation**. The main difficulties for young people to transition from unemployment to employability are the difficulties and deficiencies in these aspects. The activities have allowed them to learn about other **skills and attitudes** that are related to work.
- Their **personal situation, social factors and broken family situations** influence the way in which they are guided towards employability. The young people who lack family support had more obstacles and difficulties in participating in activities, as well as affecting their motivation.
- Consideration should be given to the fact that these youths have an **unstable education**. Some of them had not written in two years and had difficulty reading.
- The professionals and the young people found the general need to design lines of activities, resources and youth social policy instruments focused on working **personal aspects** such as overcoming conflicts, defining goals, personal preparation, motivation and emotional work.
- The project has set in motion activities for **personal development and work** by using coaching, neurolinguistic programming and emotional intelligence techniques. Its success lies in that **the young people felt that they were the main characters and that they were heard**. In addition, offering them **various behaviour scenarios** led them to show undeveloped skills and competences.
- Participation by youths in the activities allowed them to **overcome the resignation** regarding their situation (unemployment, lack of social support, lack of financial resources, loneliness...) to a new scenario where they were allowed to connect with professionals, resources, companies and, especially, with other young people, which enabled them to find a new social support network, generating new opportunities for change. We especially point out those women with children who created a support network amongst themselves, opening the possibility of looking for a job.
- The **youths** participating in the activities have awakened to a new consciousness and they **demand that the accompaniment continue** until their goals are consolidated. The technical staff must work accompanying the young people, motivating them in their process of change.
- Youths are a key group for the Community Social Services, especially youths who have difficulties, because activities such as accompaniment and intervention with their networks and relations systems (high-school, family, etc.) become very important. The

project has enabled a greater **approach** by the Community Social Services to the youths, with a proposal that is different and aimed at their needs.

- The towns in Malaga province are spread out and the towns where the project was implemented were in rural areas with not very good connections between towns, not only within the province but also within each district. This, along with the scarce or non-existing financial resources, makes it difficult to select the youths, for them to participate in activities that are not carried out in their own town and to keep them in the itinerary.
- The **ESPY participants** who benefited from the activities are currently the **best channel and entryway to reaching other youths**. They can be the best communicators of positive experiences. It was found that professionals often encounter difficulties connecting with the interests of young people and they do not see us as a technical resource to help them overcome their difficulties in accessing the job market and personal difficulties.
- Young people demand further information and professionals consider that the information is there; it was found that the problem lies in the **communication channel**, because the information does not reach the young people.
- The importance and success of the project relied on the **transversal work** carried out by Social Services and Employment.

As for **recommendations**, we conclude that:

- The results have shown a **profile of vulnerable youths** who, when they have resources, are capable of changing their attitudes, their behaviours and achieving a better psycho-social adjustment. Therefore the availability and accessibility of resources for this type of population is essential to help them acquire the skills needed to face their employment challenges.
- In general these are youths with a **low perception of themselves and of their possibilities**. The intervention improved these deficits but we must continue insisting on this element because possibly, by gaining in self-confidence their entrepreneurship and initiatives towards employment will improve, because the entrepreneurial initiative in general was very low.
- We must continue committed to **global intervention strategies** that include activities along all the lines: training, employment and participation.
- These activities should also include **individual mentoring/coaching** as instruments help youths change their attitude towards employment and towards training, especially in those aspects pertaining to emotions, personal and family conflicts and motivation. It is deemed essential that prior to referring a youth to an employment and/or training activity, they must have overcome their personal barriers. We must work towards approach strategies based on coaching and accompaniment techniques.
- When implementing new activities a key element is to identify **young leaders** in the towns, who can lead in the activities.
- There should be a **guidance counsellor**, both during school age and once education is completed, who will provide them with information on the various alternatives depending on their interests and professional goals. Itineraries should be designed for the youths that include **accompaniment** so that when planning the administrative structures in the region that work with young people, their **tasks and dedication must be identified** so that this demand for accompaniment does not entail a workload, rather it is a task that is included in their duties with no extra effort required.

- Mobility should be facilitated, as well as **planned transportation support**, helping youths participate in the activities. In many cases as they have no family support or do not have the financial resources, this was an obstacle for them to attend the activities.
- Support for work-family balance should also be planned, as many of the young women already had children and had nowhere to leave them in order to come to the activities.
- The diversity of the Malaga province recommends that we design **more open activities** so that they can be adapted to each area.
- **Design of a professional and entrepreneurial network** in the region. We must previously work with the key agents in the region to involve them in the activities to improve employability and training of the young people and each one, within their own possibilities, can build a scenario of opportunities.
- We must all contribute to the **Community Work** to overcome the barriers and labels that are placed on people due to their conditions, to belonging to certain families or to living in certain places. **Community work** is necessary, to provide continuity to the technical work carried out with the youths. Without this intervention within the community the youths will continue having exclusion barriers because their own surroundings do not provide them with the means to become integrated.
- The **age for intervention** to begin with young people should be extended, starting earlier, at around 15 because at this age young people begin having more resistance to changing attitudes. Beginning work with vocational guidance, skills and competences at early ages will help to guarantee opportunities for young people, contributing to them building their goals for the future. On the other hand, it is also deemed necessary to extend the age limit to young people over 24, because difficult employability barriers affect them as well.
- Global **family/youth interventions** are an essential element. Young people need the support of those closest to them, and their family should be ready to emotionally support their children, in most cases by doing personal work within the family itself. Youths in general perceive a very low level of family support and we must raise parents' awareness of the importance and positive repercussions of their children participating in the job search programs.
- We must highlight activities for **training, social, family and work mediation support**, along with a **personal work** process, not only by the youth but by their whole family.
- **Actual work experience** is key to job opportunities for young people.
- Promote activities where the methodology focuses on the young person participating with others, sharing their experiences and proposing joint solutions, promoting their sense of usefulness and **collaborative culture**.
- Promote new work methods, in and out of the classroom. **More personalised education**, adapted to the young people's needs, taking into account their vocations and talents.
- Increase the **training options**, with more flexible formulas where the acquisition of knowledge through experience is more important:
  - o Get to know the young people's interests before proposing training activities.
  - o Training aimed at the job market.
  - o Promotion of personalised dual training, implementing courses with personalised traineeships with companies, adapted to the profile of each participant (combination of dual training activities + job experience).
  - o Better quality language training, especially at conversational level.

- Provide information to the group in a **clearer and more appealing** way. The youths themselves could be considered for providing information to other young people.
- Change of image by **seeing other young people** who have achieved their goals. Promote positive models that are close, using local media (television, radio, press...).
- Promote **creativity, initiative, innovation** through entrepreneurship. Promote the creation of companies and local development.
- Promote **youth association** by providing public and free of charge meeting places, where they can work together to improve their employability.

## 6. PROPOSALS RECEIVED

During the activities pertaining to participation, areas were provided to listen and record the demands of both youths and professionals.

The project promoted the generation of areas for consideration, discussion and proposals that would provide added value to the evaluation of the project itself, promoting these areas to provide opportunities for development of action plans with youths, adapted to their interests and needs.

Therefore, **young people** demand:

- More training, both through education activities with more content and through training capsules. They point out that in the region training activities that are no longer offered, pertaining to various professions such as butcher, mechanic, waiter/waitress, etc. are essential.
- Youths searching for seasonal work demand being able to train with small training capsules, which will qualify them for jobs in the hospitality and agricultural industries.
- Traineeships with companies, especially in their own towns, which would provide them with job experience and the local entrepreneurs would be able to get to know them.
- Information and awareness raising activities, to inform company owners of the possibilities of receiving trainees. They should also be informed of the benefits they can claim when they hire a young person (for example the “bono joven”). When putting this into practise, we found that the owners lack knowledge and are afraid of inspections, which means that they are not always willing to accept a trainee.
- Training and practise activities, staying focused on enjoying them while involved in them.
- Adapt the training to the needs and demands of the area.
- Create opportunities for participation in varied activities.
- Hold events in their area that will inform them on the resources available for employment and training.
- Provide financial resources that will help them with their transportation, because without it they cannot consider activities outside of their town.
- Search for traineeships suited to the youths’ professions and expectations.
- Towns should provide spaces to promote the creation of economic initiatives.

On the other hand, the **professionals** who took part in the project activities demand:

- Meetings and working groups prior to implementing the activities, to create a joint work network.
- Coordination groups on the operation of the activities and follow-up plans for the youths.
- Promote hiring by companies after the project.
- Involve the local corporate industry in the activities, both in the design and implementation.
- Awareness-raising activities in the towns. There were difficulties in integrating some of the youths who were in social exclusion situations. Small towns are prejudiced when it comes to companies opening doors for a certain type of youth.
- Organise open house days at important companies in the region.
- Have enough resources to promote youth mobility.
- Begin working with 15 year-olds, especially in the last year of primary studies. The transition from primary to secondary studies is key, as well as motivation work with youths at that time, development of skills, competences, becoming familiar with professionals and with careers.
- More online work because the youths are scattered throughout the region and efforts must be made to focus the intervention.
- Create job groups in rural areas.
- Organise visits for the young people to the professionals in their towns to become aware of resources.
- Professionals and young people require a point of connection between companies/employment/youths.