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The European Youth Guarantee: Evaluation and Analysis

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Introduction

Nowadays, although there has been a little recovery, Europe is still surfing the waves caused by the 2008 tsunami. A prolonged attempt to draw policies and great reforms aiming to rescue economic stability and to save social condition is on the agenda. Yet it is the recognition of a problem that delineates the first step of any “policy cycle”, from which follows the assessment of a need.

Youth unemployment has reached unprecedented levels in several Member States of Europe and the “Youth Guarantee” is one of the most recent responses of the European Union. This comprehensive policy has the financial assistance of the European Social Fund and should be integrated in the employment policies of the Member States.

Around the Y.G. Italy is building and completing a new model of governance struggling to create a system based on the effective ability to combat youth unemployment but, faithful to the European Recommendation, the government is probably placing too much confidence in a faulty program implementation that is bringing about scarce, and more significantly, disordered results, whereas in countries where the system of active policies is already established (Germany, UK, France), the Youth Guarantee is not presented as a prototype of a new organizational model, but as a complementary policy aimed at supporting the category of the most disadvantaged young people. Thus, within Europe, the plan is leading to different outcomes.

In the following document, as evaluators we look at the Youth Guarantee in an attempt to assess the program outcomes. Therefore, I Chapter gives a detailed and precise description of the European program theory focusing on the need for the program, its design, operation and service delivery. Then, Chapter II concentrates on the process of evaluation in Italy, providing an account on program implementation at a national and regional level specifically, reaching an in-depth analysis of the grade of success of the regions: Lombardy, Lazio and Sicily. Consequently, the need for answers leads to the III Chapter, where through a careful monitoring activity, the summative and formative evaluation is conducted. Indeed, the final part on impact and efficiency assessment allows the reader to understand what effects the program has been displaying on its intended outcomes and whether perhaps there have been other unintended effects, which may disrupt the entire evaluation of the plan. However, a parenthesis providing four analytical proposals is opened, in order to rectify the difficulties encountered during the phase of program implementation, thus responding to the most intriguing evaluation question: can the Youth Guarantee be a solution?

Chapter 1

Program Theory

Youth Guarantee: Definition of the Policy

The Youth Guarantee is an active European policy that combats youth unemployment, by promoting the activity and the employability of all young people under 25; without entailing the direct creation of new jobs, or at least, providing entitlement to certain measures for all those young people who fulfil pre-established criteria. The programme requires Member States to offer European young people with employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within 4 months, after having left school and before becoming unemployed.

The policy's fiscal costs that have been estimated for Member States amount to nearly €1 billion per year. The Y.G. Recommendation along with other European programs for reducing unemployment indicates a new form of investment plan for Europe.

European Institutions and Sources

The Youth Guarantee was formally adopted by the EU's Council of Ministers on 22 April 2013¹ and it was consequently endorsed by the European Council on June 2013². Within a range of five different possible secondary legislation

¹ Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 (2013/C 120/01)
[On establishing a Youth Guarantee]

² European Council, Brussels, 28 June 2013 (EUCO 104/2/13) [Conclusions]

sources of the EU, the youth policy (Y.G.), aiming at increasing social welfare through education, training or occupation, has taken the form of a “recommendation”, whose normative dimension is defined as a non-binding legal instrument that, similarly to the “opinion” source, does not confer rights nor obligations to the member states to whom it is addressed. Therefore, the legislative formation of the Youth Guarantee has developed from the exercise of the Union competences that have fallen into the twofold non-binding category encompassing “recommendations” and “opinions”; meanwhile, the other three binding legal instruments made of “regulations”, “directives” or “decisions” have just been conceded by the different European organs, for the achievement of a fully-fledged Youth Guarantee Recommendation.

EU countries tend to recognize the substantive principle of the Y.G. that is evident in the very architecture of the policy. Subsequently, from the occurrence and contingency of the following bureaucratic events, the Y.G. came into existence:

- Between 2005 and 2008: the Council adopted the 2005/600/CE³ and 2008/618/CE⁴ “decisions” on employment guidelines. Thereafter, in order to support youth employment, the Council stressed the need to identify specific programmes, "providing a new starting point" to all young people within 6 months; until in 2008, the Council again reduced the intervention period to 4 months.

³ Council Decision of 12 July 2005 (2005/600/EC)
[On guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States]

⁴ Council Decision of 15 July 2008 (2008/618/EC)
[On guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States]

- On 1 July 2011, the Council, with Recommendation n°191⁵, focused on the topic of guarantees by asking for "policies that reduce early school leaving" in which particular attention is posed on the need to strengthen the link between education/training and employment.
- On 6 July 2010, the European Parliament called Resolution 0262⁶ in promoting youth access to the labour market. For this, all the policies that were related to the labour market as well as to the education and training fields had to be provided through a "guarantee for young people". By doing so, the Parliament expressed the need to ensure every young person the possibility to receive an offer of employment, apprenticeship, additional training or a combination of working and training.
- On January 2012, following the previous initiatives and in particular the “Youth on the Move” program, the European Commission presented the plan of action named "Opportunity for Young People" on which the Parliament gave its opinion in May 2012 with a “resolution”.
- On December 2012, the Commission issued a proposal for a Recommendation for the establishment of a system of “Guarantee for Young People”. In February 2013, the Ministers for Employment of the Member States (EPSCO) reached a political agreement on the Youth Guarantee and established the YEI (Youth Employment

⁵ Council Recommendation of 28 June 2011 (2011/C 191/01)
[On policies to reduce early school leaving]

⁶ European Parliament resolution of 6 July 2010 (2009/2221(INI))
[On promoting youth access to the labour market, strengthening trainee, internship and apprenticeship status]

Initiative) in order to channel more funding to regions and people most affected by youth inactivity leading to unemployment. Nearly 8 billion euro were derived from the EU budget and then allocated as investment.

The construction of the Youth Guarantee has followed the legislative path designed by Article 292 of the TFEU, which commands the Council to take into consideration all the European Commission's proposals. So far, the proposed package of measures on "Youth Guarantee" has been forwarded simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council but also to National Parliaments, the Committee of the Regions and to the Economic and Social Committee. This last organ claimed to favour the need for policies that contributed to growth and to the creation of high- quality and stable jobs, reflecting the European eagerness to strengthen social cohesion⁷. So that, in order to fight youth employment, the Commission's proposal package of measures was launched on December 2012⁸. This action was a prelude to a later intervention of the Commission, when the European executive organ recognized and "welcomed"⁹ the validity of the Council's political agreement reached by the EU's Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers¹⁰ on 28 February 2013. The aforementioned intervention of the Commission represented a notorious phase-building momentum that led to the conclusive establishment of the Youth Guarantee Recommendation¹¹ (22 April 2013).

⁷ EESC opinion: Youth Guarantee (ESF) (SOC/485 EESC-2013-3206) 22-23 May 2013

⁸ Youth employment: Commission proposes package of measures of 5 December 2012

⁹ Youth Employment: Commission welcomes Council agreement on Youth Guarantee of 28 February 2013

¹⁰ Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, News 27/02/2013

¹¹ Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, "Youth Guarantee: What is it?"

Youth Guarantee: Beneficiaries

The concept of a "Youth Guarantee" is rooted in the experiences of northern Europe and especially of the following countries: Sweden (1984), Norway (1993), then, Finland and Denmark (1996). Nonetheless, in developing the European policy, here taken into analysis, the European Commission was notably inspired by the Finnish model of the "Youth Guarantee" and by the Swedish "Job Guarantee Scheme". The common denominator pertaining to both these states was linked to their national commitment of curbing the unemployment rate by reducing youth unemployment.

The Northern European cases showed that integration between the world of work and training was attainable through the creation of a network capable of embracing all the different key players, in other words, the beneficiaries of the European Youth Guarantee Recommendation.

Devised for the Inheriting Youths of Europe

Young people are facing numerous problems moving from education to work. On this precise point, the previous Commission President José-Manuel Barroso expressed his apprehension by claiming that: "Too many young Europeans are asking if they will ever find a job or have the same quality of life as their parents. They need answers from us. That is why, for the past two years, the European Commission pushed the urgent need to tackle youth unemployment to the top of Europe's political agenda. Now, with the Youth Guarantee, young people have a real chance of a better future. I call on Member States to translate this agreement into concrete action as swiftly as possible."¹²

¹²*Ibid.* (MEMO 13-152)

Nonetheless, the broad category of 'young people' is not homogeneous in its configuration and the Y.G. tends to provide measures that are intended to identify and partially resolve macro areas, which are vital for further improvement. It is evident that there are too many young people at stake and consequently the level of intervention demanded varies among different groups. Therefore, in order to get a concrete evaluation, we may question whether the procedures for gathering members of the target population are well defined.

In comparing young people, it is important to focus on the period posterior to the 2008 crisis until nowadays, given that the issue of youth unemployment has been intensifying by the emergence of a new rising category: young people NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). These young people - aged between 15 and 24 – are particularly excluded from the labour market, because they are neither studying nor devoted to training. Furthermore, throughout the European Union, the NEET's group counts nearly 7.5 million of presumed workers, being in percentage 12.9 % of young Europeans, which is a very relevant number. Most of them only possess a secondary education qualification, while others have left school as well as training even earlier. Recent research reveals that for more than 12 months, 30.1 % of unemployed people aged < 25 has remained confined in a precarious situation, in other words: without a job. In addition, today, a great number of young people is not actively looking for an occupation; so far, they are not receiving any structural support that may allow them to re-enter the labour market. Moreover, within many Member States, NEET rates are well above the lowest levels recorded since 2008 and extremely close to the upper boundaries. This is particularly true for the countries with the highest rates, such as: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Italy and Romania. Rather lower – and improving – rates can be

found in: Austria, Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden.¹³

Usually, the group of NEETs is excluded from common relevant statistics, even if this category should deserve particular attention and a concrete statistical visibility for tracing its components' social behaviour during time. It is worth noting that, along with other categories of young people, the NEETs share a set of common transversal characteristics, above all: the inability of gaining human capital and the steady reduction of well-being over time. This status may dramatically put at risk future employability outcomes and may present the symptomatic condition that is ordinarily a prelude to new and variegated forms of social exclusion.

In describing Y.G. policy application, especially with reference to the Young People "Inheriting Youth" as future heirs of Europe, the data on the aforementioned category better explains the dramatic condition that the Recommendation is aiming to solve. Henceforth, in the following diagram a reflection on numbers seems to be essential.

¹³Draft Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council of 28.11.2014 COM(2014) 906 final

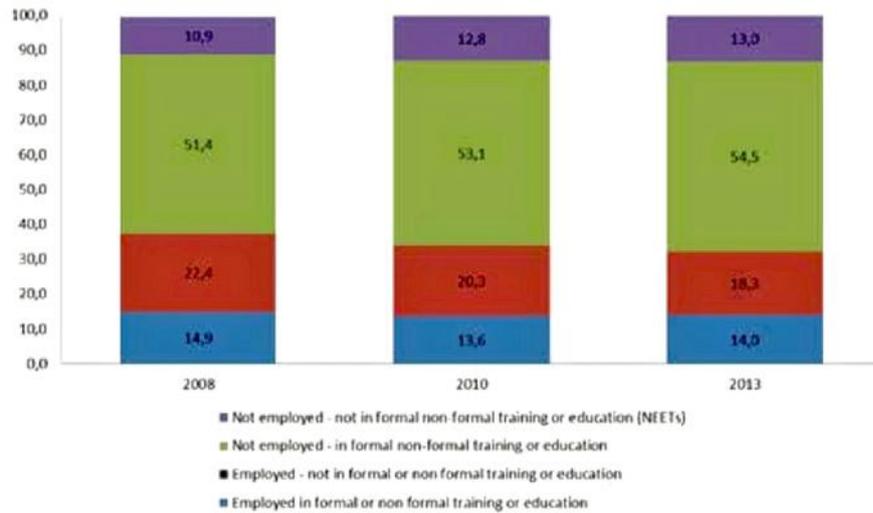


Figure 1: Education and training, 2014
Source: Eurostat

The many analyses on youth unemployment, regularly conducted by diverse European bodies, clearly depict the impressive statistics on youth unemployment. In this way, they tend to demonstrate the uneasy condition of young people, who seem totally left to their destiny, in particular, when they drop out of school.

We have traced the characteristics of the population in need, and although many divergences exist across countries, the Y.G. Recommendation contemplates specific eligibility criteria for the inclusion and participation of young people to the program. Therefore, as the “ILO- Employment Policy Brief on Youth Guarantee”¹⁴ reports, the following eligibility criteria are usually part of most youth guarantees:

¹⁴ ILO- Employment Policy Brief “Youth guarantees: a response to the youth employment crisis?”

- Age: The majority of guarantees and similar youth employment programs define eligibility according to age that generally ranges between 15- 29.
- Duration of unemployment spell: Young people's eligibility may also depend on the duration of the unemployment spell. Typical interventions mostly start between one to six months from registration with the PES and this criterion might apply in conjunction with other eligibility criteria.
- Definition of the target group: this is certainly an important prerequisite for the implementation of a guarantee. Furthermore, it is also crucial to enhance the labour market prospects of disadvantaged youth, who face multiple barriers to labour market integration. Therefore, an additional criterion that is relevant to define the target group mostly relates to educational attainment.

In synthesis, against the phenomenon of youth unemployment that has to be intended as cause and consequence of the substantial labour- market confusion, the European organs have struggled to envisage, through the Y.G Recommendation, an ample range of activities, aiming at encompassing all the above mentioned categories of young unemployed people, as well as the other target groups, here, following.

For the Companies and their Enlargement

The European Commission has shown in recent years a growing awareness of the need to draw up policies supporting small-medium firms, and likewise companies that generally possess an equal meter of recognition on some of the difficulties encountered in their business activities. Indeed, in several Member States the segmentation on the labour market continues to be strong, while,

although over the last few years the number of vacancies has remained relatively stable, the labour market matching has worsened considerably. Hence, the Youth Guarantee has been granted in the attempt to fill these gaps, partially responding to the increasing request of the category of employers for a real guarantee: the possibility to survive and the ability to develop.

According to the policy pathway, the Member States can relate on existing positions that are shown to be vacant, so that the Y.G.'s configuration ultimately reveals the real intention of the plan, built on the social and economic ambition of improving the efficiency of the placement's dynamics for young people in Europe. Therefore, the companies can take an active role within the program; in particular, they might accommodate interns or trainees participating in the activities of the Youth Guarantee, or they can employ workers holding a professional degree with an apprenticeship contract. In this way, the Y.G. offers an important opportunity for companies, who can benefit from the facilities provided by the different countries. Thus, the companies can invest in young motivated people and renew their human capital. In providing opportunities for employment, training and self-employment, they can contribute to the achievement of the objectives meant by the program. In addition, in some EU countries, bonuses are given for new hiring and specific incentives are obtained for the activation of internships and apprenticeship contracts or, for the conversion of an internship in the employment contract; moreover, the Y.G. provides certain forms of credit that can be given to young people hence encouraging self-employment.

Furthermore, in order to get partial understanding of the degree of stimulus that the Y.G. may entail within the European labour market, it is worth quoting two best practices, represented by the "Nestlé Need Youth"¹⁵ case and by the

¹⁵ Nestlé Needs Youth. "Progetto Nestlé per l'Occupazione Giovanile in Europa."

“Bosch” business activity¹⁶. Both companies fall into the scope of the policy and they serve as proof that the Y.G., in principle, can foster the nourishment of companies.

Starting with Nestlè, the multinational corporation is expecting to soon implement four types of actions: first of all, by 2016 the group will employ 10,000 young people under the age of 30 in the various company areas (production, administration, sales, marketing, finance, design, research and development); secondly, the company will open 10,000 internship positions for young people under the age of 30 and it will create a program of career guidance in schools and universities across Europe (training for interview, preparation of CV, advice on the labour market, etc.) So far, at the third step, Nestlè, along with the leading suppliers of all Europe will constitute the so-called “Alliance for Youth”, contemplating more opportunities for labour integration of young people. Finally, the group foresees the constitution of a North-South alliance that will offer the young people of South Europe (the hardest hit by youth unemployment) the chance to realize important work experience abroad, moving to the Northern countries, which are less affected by the crisis, specifically, Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria and UK.

The Bosch project proposes to create an alliance between schools and businesses. Moving in this way, the strategy of the company is to effectively address the issue of youth employment, by exploiting all instruments accepted by the Y.G.’s policy configuration *i.e.* internships, apprenticeships, and any other occupational forms, thus favouring the school-to-work transition. With this in mind, the multinational corporation has signed memoranda with the countries where its activity is present. The company, which is already well

¹⁶ Giovani e occupazione: Youth Guarantee.

“Attivazione in Italia del programma europeo per il contrasto alla disoccupazione giovanile.”

established in Europe, would arguably increase its competitiveness by adopting this policy and strengthen social cohesion between its old workers and the new ones.

For the Society and its Improvement

In developing and delivering the Youth Guarantee, some stress the fact that by improving young people's participation in the labour market, the policy should bring about a significant boost for the economy, leading to a consequent improvement of society. Indeed, the scheme provided by the Recommendation envisages strong cooperation between young people and firms, under the protection of the respective EU countries, imagining effective collaboration between all the other stakeholders such as: public authorities, employment services, career guidance providers, education & training institutions, youth support services, businesses, employers and trade unions. Therefore, the capacity to establish cooperative arrangements and durable ties would be another success factor for the policy that is striving to ensure a key role for youth organizations and especially to gain their approval. Since the policy is principally designed for young people, youth participation at all levels is particularly welcomed and Member States hope that the new heirs of Europe may perform the roles of promoters, advisors/partners, connectors, role models, outreach workers, feedback facilitators, and above all, be the first committed and aware advocates¹⁷ of the policy plan.

¹⁷ ICF INTERNATIONAL- Piloting Youth Guarantee Partnerships [Summary Report.pdf]

Leafing through the next pages, we will evaluate if the services intended by the Youth Guarantee have been correctly provided and if they are effectively reaching the target population. However, this fundamental question finds part of its answer in the embedded notion for which, in order to get an efficient degree of program performance, some Member States have tried to make the Y.G more attractive to young people through the creation of online national portals that propose a mechanism of matching between demand and supply. The networks are made of workers (users), who surf through the circuit of information where job opportunities are listed, thus the websites perform the role of collecting job openings and constitute the technological tools aimed at mediating employers' requirements with potential employees' requests.

The Y.G. represents a way to invest in young people, and special attention is posed, apart from NEETs, on those young vulnerable people facing multiple barriers, suffering social exclusion, poverty or discrimination. Therefore, the program has developed strategies based on partnership that enable employment services together with other partners to support young people in need, providing personalised guidance and planning for individual action. This ensures that young people will often be consulted within the design and further development of the policy system, whose access to information is made publicly available. In synthesis, the Y.G. program aims at increasing the opportunities for employment, training and learning, and aims to facilitate public involvement at all levels.

Youth Guarantee: Method and Objectives

The Youth Guarantee Recommendation has been hereby presented as an active policy that must ensure young people a qualitatively valid opportunity for work while leaving the European Member States free choice as to how to implement the programme at the local level. Nonetheless, the policy is made up of guidelines that look for the attainment of certain specific objectives, but these latter seem to fluctuate within the different countries' methodological dimensions which may ultimately constrain the entire realization of the Y.G. Recommendation. At least, given the EU measures provided within the scope of the Y.G., the "European Council Recommendation¹⁸" specifies three basic principles:

- i) Early intervention and activation through development strategies such as education and training, also including general education, vocational education and training (VET) and labour market training.
- ii) Partnership-based approaches through employment planning, job-search assistance and employment subsidies; strengthening the capacity of the Public Employment Services (PES) in order to provide personalized guidance, individual action planning and support; but also active labour market measures, including public works, community services and business start-up programmes.
- i) Mutual learning opportunities based on monitoring and evaluation of the measures implemented under the Youth Guarantee. This is even more evident, thanks to the support of awareness-raising activities set up across the Member States by the Y.G, chiefly, using the European

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Youth Portal, which also promotes particular and specific information campaigns.

Falling within the scope of the above-mentioned objectives, the Youth Guarantee provides a procedural system for both entering and assisting young people into the program. In this regard, the following graph shows a double-level mechanism built around the “Youth Guarantee Service” that is represented in the grey area, where young people's transition into the labour market is processed:

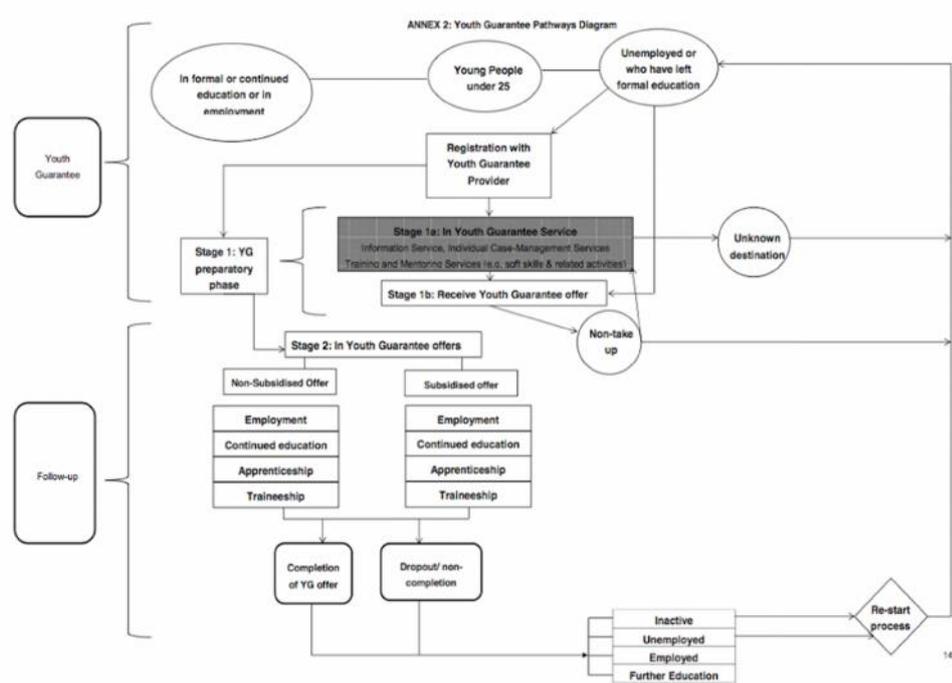


Figure 2: Indicator Framework for Monitoring the Youth Guarantee
Source: The Employment Committee

So far, the Y.G. Recommendation tries to present a full correspondence between method and objectives. This is proven by the ultimate goal of the policy that is reflected in its methodology, which attempts to support and assist the participants of the program by promoting their integration into the labour market and so remarkably improving their employability. According to the Draft Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council, the “EU has to considerably invest in human capital”. Consequently, by looking for more education and training, productivity will increase and at the same time, the unemployment rate will diminish. The Y.G.’s intervention along with other plans for employment may allow the entire Eurozone to reach, by 2020, its first main target that is contemplated in the following data: “75% of 20-64 year-olds to be employed”¹⁹.

Program Performance: European Countries’ Results

The Youth Guarantee is proving to be a driver for structural reforms. Accordingly, adjustments at the local level may foreshadow a change of route for the whole of Europe, but this could take place only if Member States make great efforts to lead transformation. In fact, given the nature of the Y.G. Recommendation, the procedure for program implementation is quite unrestricted, leaving to the European states full capacity to choose appropriate forms and methods and tailor interventions according to their national, regional and local needs; for these reasons, the Youth Guarantee does not amount to a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach. Consequently, in order to make Youth Guarantee a reality, at different times most Member States have presented their

¹⁹Draft Joint Employment Report from the Commission and the Council of 28.11.2014 COM(2014) 906 final

comprehensive Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans and identified precise measures, describing specifically the roles of public/private/associative authorities. Eventually, they listed costs in explaining how the plan would be financed; therefore, these so-called Implementation Plans can be seen as a testament comparing theoretical application with practical program realization.

In June 2013, the Y.G. Recommendation was endorsed by the European Council; this policy acceptance posed the foundation for extensive construction without denying EU countries the chance to lay their own building-stones too. In this regard, the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans, even though presenting different assumptions for what concerns their (implementation) activity, were conceded for the resolution of a common problem. Within the context of the annual cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination, known as European Semester, the European Commission is the main executive organ as well as one of the principal surveilling body, and plays an important role in assessing EU countries' national reform program. Nonetheless, also the monitoring Employment Committee (EMCO) traces part of EU countries' work, reporting the European results. Hence, it is possible to derive a concrete analysis on the Y.G. Recommendation that, "country by country"²⁰ is here taken into account.

Member State	Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan	Eligible Regions to get extra funds (YEI)	Resource Allocation
Austria	Submitted (March 2014)	No	X
Belgium	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	42.44
Bulgaria	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	55.19
Croatia	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	66.18
Cyprus	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	11.57
Czech Republic	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	13.60
Denmark	Submitted (April 2014)	No	X

²⁰Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. The Youth Guarantee Country by Country.

Estonia	Submitted (April 2014)	No	X
Finland	Submitted (May 2014)	No	X
France	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	310.16
Germany	Submitted (April 2014)	No	X
Greece	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	171.52
Hungary	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	49.77
Ireland	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	68.14
Italy	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	567.51
Latvia	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	29.01
Lithuania	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	31.78
Luxembourg	Submitted (May 2014)	No	X
Malta	Submitted (February 2014)	No	X
Poland	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	252.44
Portugal	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	160.77
Romania	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	105.99
Slovakia	Submitted (January 2014)	Yes	72.17
Slovenia	Submitted (January 2014)	Yes	9.21
Spain	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	943.50
Sweden	Submitted (December 2013)	Yes	44.16
Netherlands	Submitted (April 2014)	No	X
UK	Submitted (March 2014)	Yes	206.10

Table 1: Countries' Results

Source: Employment Social Affairs & Inclusion

From a brief look at the table, it is possible to deduce the exact level of implementation regarding the respective countries' plans. The column that calls for eligibility on the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) refers to the European Council decision (February 2013), intended to reinforce the financial support for those measures that favour youth employment, such as the Youth Guarantee. The YEI initiative concedes a budget amounting to €6,4 billion that can only be extended to regions with particularly high youth unemployment rates with young people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training (NEETs); half of that sum comes from a dedicated Youth Employment initiative excluding co-financing at national level, while the other half comes from the European Social Fund along with national financial contributions. So far, all

member states have drafted their youth guarantee implementation plans, but not every country has received concrete financial support from both the European Social Fund and from the youth employment initiative. Concerning the latter program, the reasons for exclusion are reflected in the eligibility criteria that apply for the YEI for which, in assessing the variety of labour market situations across the EU, the countries that may deserve the monetary budget should present the following parameters:

- Those countries where the youth unemployment rate for young people aged 15 to 24 exceeded 25% in 2012 and
- Those where youth unemployment was more than 20% in 2012 and the national youth unemployment rate was over 30% the same year.

From the program description it is clear that all the constituent components, activities and functions of the Y.G. have been concretely defined. Thus, in the wordings of the Joint Employment Report 2015, the Member States have been and are still progressing with the implementation of their Youth Guarantees; they are bringing about a program that is intended to create a well-functioning labour market. Even if some results have been achieved, the Report indirectly examines the inefficiency hidden behind a simple Y.G. Recommendation, by asserting what is the real and intense urgency for Europe: “Further efforts are required, with specific attention for public employment services, tailored active labour market interventions and vocational education and training. Member States should ensure a favourable environment for companies to offer apprenticeships, thus facilitating the transition from education to employment.”²¹

²¹ *Ibid.* COM(2014) 906 - final

Chapter 2

Program Implementation

In Italy, among the many social categories in difficulty, the group comprising young people is the hardest hit by the economic crisis. Data on unemployment report that, already in 2012 the youth unemployment rate (15-24 years) was 35.3%, then, in 2013 it reached the highest peak since 1977. However, the 40% reached then was nothing compared to the 44% registered by Istat on July 2015, revealing the steady negative growth in youth unemployment that Italy is experiencing. What is more, and importantly, the phenomenon of young people NEET is estimated at approximately 1.27 million (of which 181 thousand are foreigners) which is even more alarming. Moreover, the situation in the South is particularly serious, where the youth unemployment rate is verging on 47% and where the employment rate is stuck at 13.2% (against 18.6% nationally and 32.8% as the average European). Nowadays, the majority of the population on practically all social levels concretely perceives the magnitude of youth unemployment as causing greater and greater concern to European as well as to national political classes, which tend to be completely hindered and absorbed by economic reasoning.

As a solution, the European Commission announced the intention of giving political/financial assistance to EU countries, with the availability of funds for Italy being of nearly 1,513,000-billion euro, thus divided:

- Approximately 567 million euro from the Youth European Initiative (YEI)
- An equal amount of 567 million euro provided by the European Social Fund (ESF)
- The national co-financing formula estimated at 40 % with an amount of 379 million.

Process Evaluation: Nationally

Italian Institutions and Sources

In light of the Recommendation of the EU Council of 22 April 2013 on the establishment of a “Guarantee”, the regulatory provisions called by Europe for the implementation of the Plan seemed to be consistent with the scope intended by Italy. So, taken for granted the validity of the European programme, the “Decree of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy”²² has disclosed the mission structure that is better exposed and defined in the “Italian Implementation Plan of the Youth Guarantee”²³ of December 2013, which came into being following a normative path which intended to be the sum of different implementing measures:

²² Decreto del Secretariato Generale, 18 Novembre 2013

²³ Piano Italiano di attuazione della Garanzia per i Giovani.

- Formerly the “*Decreto Legislativo* No.181, April 21st, 2000”²⁴ provided for young people (aged 25 or older, if they had a university degree, up to 29 years of age) an offer of a guarantee, within 4 months from the beginning of unemployment, in practical terms, of: " an accession proposal to the initiatives of employment or training or re-training or other measures promoting professional integration". At least with regard to those who registered at the competent services (within the meaning of *Decreto* No. 181, the Y.G. was already part of national legislation since 2002 (the year of introduction of the provision).²⁵
- *Decreto Legge* n. 76/2013²⁶ thereafter transformed into *Legge* 99/2013, specifically Art. 5, and designed the structure of the mission, demanding that all the necessary arrangements that are required for the implementation of the guarantee in the country be put in place.
- *Decreto Legge* n. 104/2013²⁷ (Law 128/2013) with Articles 8 and 14 revealing the prospect of implementing the Guarantee and responding to the specific recommendations of the European Commission, reflecting the necessity to take measures on the promotion of young people's school-to-work transition by proposing internships and apprenticeships, thus enhancing job orientation and strengthening the placement dynamics.
- On 20 February 2014²⁸, the State-Regions Conference approved the Youth Guarantee guidelines hence defining the support of the technological platform. In addition, the regions defined a policy for training-employment and when

²⁴Decreto Legislativo 21 aprile 2000, n. 181

²⁵ Decreto Legislativo 19 dicembre 2002, n. 297

²⁶ Decreto-Legge 28 giugno 2013, n. 76

²⁷ Decreto-Legge 12 settembre 2013, n. 104

²⁸ Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri.

Approvazione verbale seduta, 12 Febbraio 2014

required, accepting the possibility of using extraordinary plans for youth employment.

With respect to the European Recommendation guidance delivered to Member States, the Italian government has declared it will carry out the Y.G. policy, with cooperation at all governmental levels, spreading across public administrations, businesses and social organizations and the third sector. Consequently, the Y.G. Italian implementation plan assesses its own national mission by detailing its operative structure, which is set up by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and composed of the representatives of the Ministry and its technical agencies - ISFOL and Italian Labour – the Ministry of Education, MISE, MEF, the Department of Youth, INPS, the regions and autonomous provinces and Unioncamere. In addition, for a better execution of the Youth Guarantee, the Italian Government has also taken into consideration the strategic involvement of the business and associative communities.

This major wideness of scope was attained through the signing of a series of Memoranda entailing agreements with other types of organizations: sports (CONI), religious (project Policoro CEI) and banking (Unipol group). Thus far, in the national portal, nineteen agreements can be identified signed by Confindustria and Finmeccanica (the protocol was signed by the Minister of Education); CIA and AGIA; Confartigianato; Confesercenti; CNA; Casartigiani; Confcommercio; ABI; ANIA; Unipol, Alliance of Italian Cooperatives; Assolavoro and Network Work: Farindustria; Confapi Confprofessioni and ADEPP; Cones; FederlegnoArredo; Policoro CEI project and the group Iren. The last protocol was agreed on 18 November 2014, and no further protocols have been signed in 2015 to date. In each protocol, the following are specified: the objectives of the Agreement; actions on

traineeships, apprenticeships and in some cases orientation, self-employment and education in general and the dissemination of information through communication channels, in particular by enhancing the web-site Cliclavoro.it.

Italian Method and Objectives

The Youth Guarantee plan in Italy aims to guarantee young people aged between 15 and 29, and not under 25 as suggested by Europe, a qualitatively valid offer of work as a follow up to study, apprenticeship, work experience or other forms of training within 4 months from the beginning of unemployment or from having left the education system.

The campaign was launched in 2014 and it foresaw two ongoing programming stages, both integrated and multifaceted, with the participation of young people and businesses and with public opinion as the target groups. The first phase, targeting businesses, began in May, where it was considered to be fundamental to involve the business world as an active component in the construction of professionalising opportunities and jobs for young people. The second phase, which started in November, was aimed principally at young people, with the objective of involving and making them aware of the initiative and promoting their participation in the job opportunities and training schemes offered by the programme.

The Italian plan thus shows the particular method that it employs, encompassing its fundamental long-term goal based on the intention to increase all practical aspects connected to the job market. Apart from that, the plan envisages two main objectives: on one hand, to have 'a considerable impact on emerging contingent work opportunities' and on the other hand, to give 'the basis for the

creation of a permanent system of Guarantee for Young people. According to the Italian Implementation Plan, young people are offered an ample range of opportunities that coincide with the very objectives of the program. Therefore, the method includes the main phases that aim for attainable results, which should be assessed for a concrete evaluation. Hence, the Italian methodological procedure and the principal services provided are listed:

- Information–The Italian Plan foresees a universal information and orientation system which young people can access by registering on various sites: www.Garanziaperigiovanni.it (under construction) the Clicalavoro site, Regional sites, the Employment Exchange and other related services along with *ad hoc* booths that will open in educational and training institutes. During the information and communication phases, the various institutions or associations already mentioned will be involved, including the Chamber of Commerce, Associations of Unions and Employers, Young people's associations and the Third Sector.
- Orientation – After registering and an initial interview, the young person will be given an individual orientation path destined to lead to a personalised work/professional training project. In brief, the intention is to make the activity of employment orientation systematic, involving the world of education (schools, professional educational and training organisations and universities) thanks to specialised operators and valid computer technology.
- Interview – The Italian plan intends to offer young people the opportunity of taking part in a specialised interview with qualified careers managers who will prepare young people for their entry into the job market, with tailor-made paths created using their personal curriculum and their own evaluation of their individual experience and competence. In other words, interaction with young people who do not study or work (NEET), or who have left school early; for the

creation of paths towards employment, including paid employment, by way of services and instruments that favour the meeting of employment sought and employment offered.



Figure 3 Youth Guarantee: Services
Source: Piano di Attuazione Italiano

- Possible Paths – Young people who present the necessary requirements will be offered direct financing (bonuses, vouchers etc) to access a variety of possible paths, including a contract as an employee, an apprenticeship contract or work experience contract, Volunteer work, specific professionalising training and accompaniment into employment by scouting for employment opportunities, defining and managing types of accompaniment and tutoring, matching demand and request depending on the characteristics and propensity of the young person in question. Furthermore, the programme favours self-employment or independent work, foreseeing personalised training and assistance and the drawing up of a business plan, as well as assistance gaining access to credit and financing and start-up support.

- Communication – In order to inform young people about the offers available in the Italian plan and to incite them to take advantage of the opportunities described, an integrated communication plan has been prepared which aims to involve all young people and to stimulate a 'viral' debate. The intention is to allow ideas and creative proposals to circulate in order to increase the messages and products available to young people, produced by young people themselves.

Process Evaluation: Regionally

The role of the Italian Regions

The Youth Guarantee Programme requires an exhaustive strategy that is shared by the State and regions with the scope of becoming effective and active throughout the country. Therefore, along with the national plan which identifies action that is common to the whole country, each individual Region has the task of adopting its own plan, which defines the elements of the Programme that are to be activated in its own specific area, always in keeping with the national strategy.

The Regions must concretely set up active policies for the young people taking part in the Programme and provide the necessary measures. They have the function of coordinating the organisation of a network of public employment services and qualified private organisations who have the task of welcoming, orientation and ascertaining the needs and potential of each young person in order to identify the path that is the most appropriate for his or her abilities and professional experience. Although the plan is theoretically clear, well defined

and easy to put into practice, the investigation turns on whether the program process theory finds its expression, practically, in the program outcomes.

Indeed, the Regions are probably carrying out too many duties and coordination sometimes seems hard to attain. For example, it is down to the Regions to direct the young people towards the various Employment services where they will have their first orientation interview, moreover, the Regions monitor each action taken in order to observe the running process, the services supplied, the number and profiles of the beneficiaries, costs and other characteristics concerning the possibility of employing them. Thus, the Regions are seen as “intermediary bodies”, to some extent, and vital for the creation of different plans that are to be activated. Playing this fundamental role, they are placed between the Ministry of Employment, which defines the national plan, and the network of employment services that is scattered throughout the land.

The Inter-Regional Battle from North to South

Having provided a description of the Italian program, we now move towards policy adoption specifically conducted by three regions: Lazio, Lombardy and Sicily. Although the comparison has the air of a battle, it is hard to derive a real winner or loser. Nonetheless, Sicily is the slowest region in its implementation of the programme; meanwhile, Lombardy is still modelling two activities: one of self-entrepreneurship and the other of labour mobility (within the country or in the EU countries); both services look like feasible gateways from labour market stagnation and also seem essential for economic recovery.

According to the 67th monitoring report, the regions possessing the largest number of participants are the following: Sicily with 17% of the total (145,099

accessions) and immediately after Campania with 10 % (equal to 87,250 accessions) the region of Lazio is third on the list with 8% (equivalent to 73,866 accessions). At first glance, the worst element that is immediately visible and that, to some extent, precludes an efficient program outcomes realization, is the gap between the number of young people enrolled and the number of those who have stipulated an agreement in the “Service Pact”.

The table reports the discrepancy between the demand, embedded in the young people registered on-line, and the supply of offers that not only appear to be scarce but, as we will advance later, even disorderly in their allocation within the national web portal. Unfortunately, the simple fact that many young people have signed themselves into the web portals does not assure any guarantee regarding the possibility that they will receive a service in return.

	<i>Enrolled</i>	<i>Assumed with Agreement</i>	<i>Funds</i>
Lazio	50.527	33.791	137.197.164
Lombardia	57.248	34.043	178.356.313
Sicilia	127.260	93.263	178.821.388
<u>Total</u>	235.035	161.097	494.374.865

Source: 65° Report of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

Tabel 2: Monitoring Data

From an overview of the services delivered by the three regions, here an account is provided of the main emerging characteristics, which will be subsequently assessed through an analysis that intends to test the level of implementation among the Italian Regions.

Lombardia

After adhering to the convention with the Ministry of Employment on 16 May 2014, the region of Lombardy has presented its own plan of regional activity (d.G.R. n. 1889/2014), followed by an official activity resolution (d.G.R.n.1983/2014) which led in October to the publication of a decree by the General Director of the Regional council n.9619/2014²⁹.

The d.D.G.n.9619/2014 defines the aspects relating to the actions of welcoming, accepting, orientation, training, transition to work, apprenticeship and work experience. It defines what was previously indicated in the general Regional activation Plan and makes it possible to identify some elements that are typical to the Lombard system. First of all, it expects the complete cohort of people potentially interested in the Youth guarantee to be divided into two smaller categories, of flux and stock. In the first category are young people leaving secondary school, IeFP and three-year University courses after not more than four months. In the second are all the other NEET (never employed or unemployed) aged between 15 and 29. It is the task of training bodies to look after firstly but not exclusively their own ex-students and introduce them either into the labour market or into extra-curricular work experience.

²⁹ www.garanziegiovani.regione.lombardia.it (Lombardia Online Portal)

In keeping with previous territorial work policies, the Region has decided to invest considerably in third level apprenticeships. Above all, the Lombardy Region aims to reinforce placement services within training institutions in its own region. Together with these, the other main agents of the Youth guarantee are to be qualified public and private bodies dealing with employment services, which will have the task of welcoming, profiling and final orientation of the NEET, who will apply through the web portals.

Lazio

On 23rd April 2014, with d.G.R.n.746, the region of Lazio approved the convention scheme with the Ministry of Employment and Social policies and began activating the Youth Guarantee programme.³⁰

The Region of Lazio immediately created a regional portal, where it is possible to find all the information necessary for young people, with an explanation of the opportunities provided and the possibility of registering with the programme, and qualified organisations that supply services for employment. In order to guarantee its citizens a better service of combining the request and the supply of work, the Region has also regulated for the first time the accreditation of employment services, activating a distinct system for private organisations who work side by side with the public services.

Within the sphere of employment services dedicated to young people, the Region of Lazio was the first to include experimenting with placement contracts. This type of contract is stipulated between the young person and the employment centre and qualified employment organisations, so allowing the

³⁰<http://www.regione.lazio.it/garanzigiocatori/> (Lazio Online Portal)

young person to sign a contract that will give him or her a voucher of a value proportional to the difficulty of employment, which can be used in specific services in one of the recognised accredited services. Still within the sphere of the programme, in order to help young people enter into employment, in June 2014 the Region of Lazio signed a series of protocol agreements with consultancy Foundations for employment, Federlazio and Unindustria.

Sicilia

The Region of Sicily accepted the national Youth Guarantee plan with the approval of a Regional plan of action and the decision of the Regional council n.106 of 13th May 2014.³¹ Data elaborated by Istat report that Sicily is the region with the highest unemployment rate in the Italian Peninsula.

On 26th January 2015 the d.G.R.n.291 was published, aimed at putting young people aged between 15 and 19 back into education and professional training, aided by qualified training organisations and unqualified training organisations who have presented their application for qualification. On 28th January 2015 the Director General of the Regional Department of employment, work, orientation and training services and activities published notices relative to specialised training activities by way of a catalogue of training offers for young people, interregional and transnational professional mobility opportunities, and extracurricular work experience in other regions and parts of the peninsular.

³¹ <http://www.silavsicilia.it/GaranziaGiovani/Pagine/Login.aspx> (Sicilia Online Portal)

The notices regarding interregional and transnational mobility foresee the involvement of 650 and 500 users respectively. The subjects supplying this service will be either public or private, working either individually or in association with others. These organisations can also be candidates who propose extracurricular work experience. This last activity is to be carried out within the region of Sicily (13.000 actions estimated), inter-regionally (580 actions estimated) or transnationally (400 actions).

Program Effect among Italian Regions

At the very beginning of the programme implementation, the Italian plan had an expected target amounting to 1,230,000 of young people in terms of enrolment. Nevertheless, later in 2014, the government lowered its expectations by imagining a new number of 560,000 young people registered. Not a real achievement, if one considers the current statistics in relation to the full set of potential beneficiaries -over two and a half million young people- of whom only 28% has logged into the platform and joined the Y.G. programme. Comparing 2013 - the year in which Italy estimated the initial number of possible young recipients – to nowadays, the beneficiaries of the plan have increased considerably and among them, many are saying that they are ready to make their entry into the labour market. Furthermore, as one of the latest reports³² published by the Ministry of Labour indicates, the total number of users has experienced an increment of 10,000 units more than the previous week, yet only 47% had a job interview even though more than 50% of young people were contacted over two months after their inclusion in the plan.

³² 61° report, Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali

Theoretically, from the 1st May 2014 the legislative activity of the regions has been copious and continuous, but at a practical level, the web-profiling of many young people is still inadequate, evident in the scarce outcomes and results attained so far. This is especially due to the method used for profile activation as well as being due to the development pattern that has evolved. Above all stands the fact that, in order to assess the impact of the implemented actions, only few regional areas have been identified for concrete territorial monitoring. Looking more closely “region by region” at details, the common denominator that runs through almost all the national territory is the promotion of internships. This is not surprising, given the preponderance of resources reserved both at national and regional levels to the internship initiative that is unintentionally presented as the hallmark of the Italian Implementation Plan.

Therefore, in most cases, the final effect obtained from the processes of reception, profiling and initial formation – by now basically defined or almost completed by all the 20 regions- is reflected in the activation of an extracurricular training period, based on internship; meanwhile, the other possible solutions provided by the Y.G. Recommendation remain wistfully confined to the background. In addition, it would be preferable not to mention that some regions have neither originally determined their funds nor provided the costs, which have mutated in course of programme implementation for other regions too. Anyhow, there are few active calls that can be found within local regulations. A good welcome, however, seems to have been had by the civil service, promoted through the launching of regional initiatives and by relying on national standards.

These notions confirm the general approach of the regions in the implementation phase of the Youth Guarantee, keeping paths already known - internships, training and civil volunteer service - rather than trying to explore new avenues as apprenticeships and innovative paths directed to self-employment.

Chapter 3

Summative and Formative Evaluation: Analysis

Program Monitoring

The Italian Youth Guarantee plan is subject to continual monitoring and evaluation in terms of the implementation of its interventions, with the aim of documenting the number and characteristics of the beneficiaries of the scheme as well as the costs-effectiveness of the measures taken in terms of employment of the beneficiaries, in order to ascertain what corrective measures need taking. The activity of analysis, monitoring and evaluation are based principally on information that can be gathered from the technological platform of the Ministry of Employment and Social policies. Other sources are available from official statistics (Istat, Isfol, the Chamber of Commerce and Inps)

The indicators used are those defined in appendix II of the Regulation (UE) n. 1303/2013 of the “Italian Youth Guarantee Plan” and in the conventions between the Ministry and the Regions. Monitoring is divided into four different sectors of activity:

- Evaluation of the process of implementation of the Regional Plans
- Monitoring the services provided and the beneficiaries of the interventions
- Evaluation of the impact of the interventions
- Evaluation of the impact in terms of comparison with other members of the European Community

The 65th report on monitoring shows a concrete increment in the percentage of young people registrations to the program. On September 10, the total number of registered users exceeded 746 thousand units, 13,000 more than the previous week. The number recorded, considering the net of cancellations, stands at 646,977. Cancellations usually occur with an annulment of the subscription or due to lack of requirements or to not keeping an appointment with the Employment Service, but also there are a few refusals of proposed measures, but these are refusals made by the young people themselves.

The purely statistical data that emerges from the site reveals that no significant variations can be observed in the composition in terms of sex and age of those registered, 51% of whom are male, 49 of whom are female. A progressive growth in the presence of females as age increases is confirmed, with 55% of those registered being young women who are older than 25. All in all, under 18s make up 8% of the group, while 53% of those registered are aged between 19. 24.8% of the young people registered have a degree, 57% have a school leaving diploma and 25% have a middle school diploma or less.

Nevertheless, the report is pleased to declare that the number of young people matched continues to grow, thanks to the work of the Employment Services, which are contributing to the scope of the program. Pragmatically, the program is to date reaching 441,589 young people throughout the country, 158,969 of whom have been offered at least one measure. The report certifies that: “The result has been achieved as a result of the progressive consolidation of a standard information system that constantly improves the flow of information moving from the regional systems to the central-national portal.”³³

³³ 65° report, Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali

Any form of program evaluation needs to record the program participants, however, this fundamental step should not be confined to a simple activity devoted merely to the counting of numbers. If this were the case, the validity of the program would pass only through the identification of a target group already known, without concentrating on the well-being of the users, whose social and working conditions should improve for the progress of the collectivity as well. This should be the scope of a permanent guarantee, simultaneously enclosing predetermined goals and objectives, which once reached have to be assessed.

Examining ADAPT Data

In October 2014, the “ADAPT” study centre and the “online Repubblica Intern Journalists” produced an informal monitoring system directed at young Italians with the objective of gathering their opinions about the Youth Guarantee in order to supply the Ministry and others dealing with the Plan further information to add to the official monitoring.

The results in terms of participation were significant: 3 thousand young people answered the monitoring questions, and made it possible to widen observation and appraisal of the Plan in action a year after it began and reach some initial conclusions.³⁴

Firstly, it is important to describe the main characteristics of the young people who took part in the initiative and responded to the monitoring questions. Above all, 64% of those taking part in the monitoring are aged between 25 and 29, which is the very age group that the European Recommendation did not include among the beneficiaries of the Youth Guarantee Plan. If on one hand this would

³⁴ Monitoraggio Informale Garanzia Giovani. Repubblica degli Stagisti - ADAPT

suggest that the Italian Government was correct in widening its offer to include those aged under 29, on the other hand, what strongly emerges is one of the obstacles to competitiveness for young Italians compared to their European peers, and that is age. In short, the fact that so many people aged between 25 and 29 felt the need to sign up to the programme immediately pinpoints one of the problems of the Italian Labour market, that is, the lack of work opportunities for this age group which comes straight after the age group used to gather data on employment/unemployment of the 'young' (15-24). The fact that 72% of those interviewed defined themselves as 'actively looking for work' shows that this objective has only been partially reached, because it can be deduced that those enlisted in the Plan are young people who were mostly already part of the large group of unemployed, or are 'actively' unemployed.

With regard to the control group monitored by “Rds-ADAPT” made up not of representatives but rather of volunteers, (and relevant despite this) 73% declared that they were already enrolled at the Employment Office of their town. This data confirms that many under 30 year olds adhering to the Youth Guarantee Plan are already actively seeking employment, and are not NEET. It has thus emerged that from the point of view of young people, the European Plan is attractive and those who are actively seeking employment have signed up, convinced that they will be given what the name promises, that is to say, the guarantee of a path towards becoming employable and above all, will get a job.

Problems arise not in terms of the request but in the response given by institutions. Yet, problems arise even at the stage of sending the applications: in fact, around half the young people registered who were interviewed said that they had had no acknowledgement of their application. This statistical data also appears in Ministerial reports and is of such gravity as to confirm the potential

contradictory effect of the European plan, which is to spread further discouragement among young people rather than encouragement.

Following an act of trust in the institutions as a response to a direct promise, lack of consideration of this sort would cause discouragement even in those who, unlike many of their peers, have neither given up nor abandoned hope.

Impact Assessment: Proposals

The assessment of the program theory has indicated that the program's objectives are sufficiently well articulated to make it possible to specify expected outcomes, even if it is still difficult to derive the net effects of the program. Indeed, the assessment of the program process leads to the conviction that the intervention is insufficiently implemented to have a reasonable chance of producing the intended effects.

With the aim of putting the Recommendations swiftly into action, in this paragraph, four analytical proposals are presented in the effort to act as a preparatory basis for guaranteeing more efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the Plan. They are concrete proposals for the construction of an Italian system that considers the coordinated action of politics and services as a real possibility. These analytical proposals arise from the reasoning that was prompted by looking at the development of the Italian plan; therefore, to assess implies the linking of some suggestions to the *prima facie* outcomes already obtained:

I. Ameliorate the organization of online data through an efficient management.

In September 2015, the Minister of Employment Poletti launched the “Digital Growth” project, with the aim of consolidating the employability of young people and to encourage the digitalisation of PMIs, in order to generally improve the quality of the offer in the digital sector. For this reason the new site is intended also as a support system for the national Youth Guarantee portal, which to date is not monitored by anybody and which should be, according to the European directive, the means of effective intermediation between the user and the objectives of the Guarantee. However, first and foremost it would be important to bolster what is already available and build a sort of integrated national platform, which could be used by young people who want to access the Guarantee, so that there would be services in common throughout the territory, corresponding to national standards and in keeping with regional legislation.

In particular, the proposal is to intervene in such a way as to insure that the offers of work published on the portal are profiled towards the reference target of the initiative, that is to say that the announcements are loaded in a systematic way and with the possibility of filtering the offers according to the characteristics of the young user and his or her expectations for personal and professional growth. In order for the young person's subscription to the site and thus his or her insertion into the programme to respect the requirements foreseen by the European plan, it is necessary to insert both filters on identity records and filters for the employment situation of the young person.

The functionality of the site should be simple and efficient and above all make evident all the offers of employment, especially those specifically for people having little or no work experience. In fact, most of the announcements inserted at present are destined towards people with a little experience in both the job

and the tasks offered. As well as proposing a more careful monitoring of the statistics and the entire running of the site, the topic of digital security should be taken into consideration, so that the insertion of an announcement on the portal is controlled and the information provided cannot be used by anyone for purposes other than those relating to the programme.

II. Operate a better execution of the Employment Service. Provide concrete personalized orientation and a real personal project for the young people soon to be adults in the job-market.

It is necessary to put into practice the experience of Youth Corners, guaranteeing the young people who have signed up a personalised and continuous service along the lines of the system used in Germany and Austria, where the principal of “one desk one operator one young person” is now commonplace. In this particular programme, the young person who has signed up to the programme is tutored by specific operators who are dedicated to guiding him or her from the beginning of work, throughout the experience and also afterwards, in the follow up.

This procedural model could be conducted on a focus group experimenting a sort of company based mentoring for which, once a group of young people has consigned their CV and a personal evaluative profile has been created for each one, they would receive a professionally tailor-made plan. In so doing, the young person would be directed along the most appropriate path for them, and consequently, put into contact with professionals, closely concerned with their inclinations. The relationship that would be built between the young person and the professional would be similar to that between a pupil and a teacher, being of great stimulus for both, as well as bringing long-term improvements to the economy and society.

This process of evaluation may then become coextensive with an appropriate management information system (MIS) in tailoring specific measures in line with the plan. This could favour continuous monitoring of indicators of selected aspects of program process and help to appraise the status condition of all the young people involved. For example, a national data bank composed of all the CVs could be created; the CV could be up-dated by the young people themselves, and through a careful monitoring, the evolution entailing successes or failures of the program put into action would be assessed by the State. Indeed, this may be an accessible and reliable way for evaluating the effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee.

III. Elaborate new strategies based on strengthening partnerships at all levels.

In many areas it seems difficult to create alliances; it is necessary to involve private agents and maintain the connection between them and public institutions, as required by Europe. There must be a change in the division between the tasks of the State and Regions and the creation of a direct connection between Inps and employment services.

One of the next decrees designated to the Jobs Act is concerned with these very themes. The idea is to construct a national Employment Agency, which will be responsible for running everything that at present is divided between the regions and Inps, similar to the French and German models. This reform cannot be completed however, until Chapter V of the Constitution is re-written and the State is given back some decision-making prerogatives. In order to insure a correct use of Politics, it is fundamental to always encourage interpretative dialogue between the legislative bodies and all the key stakeholders, which would foster and further extend program development.

IV. Ensure verifiability of the skills gained by enhancing their comparability as well as their possible improvement, thus fostering labour market integration.

The Youth Guarantee is an opportunity to experiment with innovative measures of accompaniment into employment and active orientation in the context of scholastic and university teaching institutions. In order to involve young people leaving formal education, the education system itself should be seen as a “starting point” and a provider of information and initial orientation. Thus, it is crucial to stress the need to improve school-to-work transition, enrich the existing school and training courses and especially, strengthen the mechanisms of internship and apprenticeship, by adopting fair or profitable forms of compensation.

The resources available in the European plan should be used in a functional way regarding the objectives, foreseeing investment in placement structures and in the instruments that are principally used to reach the objectives of assisting in employment transition phases (orientation, accompaniment into employment and apprenticeship).

Efficiency Assessment

The evolution of the current thesis has come about by assessing all the activities required for a concrete evaluation. The Y.G. has been presented as a political, economic and social policy that provides little credible and defensible evidence in succeeding with its purpose, particularly in Italy. The program performance and effects achieved so far may prevent any evaluator from stating that the interventions have been effective in fully attaining the desired goals and objectives. However, before giving the final assertion a cost-effectiveness analysis has to be conducted for assessing the efficiency of the program.

In doing so, there will be no affirmative answer to the question as to whether the costs are reasonable in relation to the benefits, in monetary terms. Nevertheless, by expressing outcomes in substantive terms the Commission advocates that: “a Youth Guarantee has a fiscal cost for Member States, but this cost is much lower than the cost of inaction”³⁵, and this surely indicates a reality.

Apart from this statement, in the case of Italy, as long as the program theory clearly enlists all the procedures for involving all the members of the target population, the way the services are provided is still unlikely to produce the intended outcomes. By way of the regional portals, many young people are already registered, and yet, even after several months, most of them have not been contacted. Conversely, in the weekly monitoring, statistics about the small number of interviews set are absent, while problems also arise for those apprentices who, as many journals report, have not even been paid for months³⁶. In this regard, the ability of the Ministry to mobilize all the potential stakeholders has been weak and inefficient. For example, the third sector could also have proposed an innovative offer of internships. In addition, data on job opportunities reveal that: “71.1 % are concentrated in the North, 11.9 % in Central Italy and 16.9 % in the South, while 0.1% are work opportunities abroad”³⁷, when it is widely known the phenomenon of youth unemployment particularly affects the south of the Peninsula.

These features do not only prove the simple lack of involvement of the relevant Italian labour market guardians but also reveal the Italian real inability to attain the goals of the plan: primarily to completely achieve the program’s objectives

³⁵ “Youth employment: Commission proposes package of measures – frequently asked questions”

³⁶ Garanzia Giovani flop: tirocinanti e stagisti senza stipendio da mesi. “Il Fatto Quotidiano”

³⁷ 67° report, Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali

and then to curb, even if partially, the rate of youth unemployment. The dramatic fact is that over the years the program has created a great deal of work which is "weakened"³⁸ and underpaid, producing few guarantees. At least, a predictable guarantee, and an unintended outcome is the one based on the hypothesis that the Youth Guarantee may put the employment dynamics at risk by creating a parallel market for young people.

In the wordings of the Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, "what we measure affects what we do"³⁹. This statement discloses an indisputable truth that evaluators, before gathering, analysing and interpreting evidence about program performance should always consider. Because no matter how well the program is implemented and administered, "any program theory that does not relate to the actual nature and circumstances of the social condition at issue will result in an effective program"⁴⁰. For this reason, if a qualitative assessment focused on the measurement of the well-being of the target group were launched for every new program, it may come as a surprise that the ones available would, as a consequence, become more credible, reliable and accountable and their effectiveness would considerably increase. "Evaluation thus informs social action, contributing information for planning and policy purposes, indicating whether certain innovative approaches are worth pursuing"⁴¹

³⁸ La Youth Guarantee e il rischio di un mercato parallelo per i giovani. "Repubblica.it"

³⁹ R. Stiglitz, A. Sen, J.P. Fitoussi
"Report on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress"

⁴⁰ "Evaluation.: A Systematic Approach"

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

A possible final proposal may be to manage an authoritative social investigation aimed at evaluating the condition of the young people at stake in Europe, in this way reflecting on an issue that seems more relevant today than in any other period in history. All the intermediate bodies that favour the systematic school-to-work transition may conduct this activity of inquiry by presumably seeing whether young people are entering or staying outside any European program. The purpose would be to check the status of implementation of any structural reform and to make a comparison between them, and the real goal be to improve the social condition achieved so far by the category of young people.

Conclusion

Evaluation means providing answers to the questions posed in the course of the detailed assessment processes underway. In highlighting all the critical events and premises necessary for the realization of the program, the following thesis has stressed the inefficient coincidence between the needs and the functions performed by the plan, particularly within Italy. Meanwhile, it is notorious that many structural reforms of the labour market in Europe seem to have uncomfortable consequences such as reduced levels of employment, which is going to be stuck at double digits in the coming years.⁴²

Without doubt, the Youth Guarantee is probably not allocating adequate resources both in monetary and in substantive terms. However, this confirms more the suspicion of an implementation failure rather than a theory failure. The Youth Guarantee remains a precious opportunity to modernize Italy and to give young people an opportunity to participate actively in the architectural construction of a new Europe.

⁴²“Double digit unemployment predicted even if Eurozone recovers”- Financial Times.com

S u m m a r y

Sin dagli anni della grande recessione fino a quelli della crisi economica del 2008, per tentare di sanare alcune emergenze economiche, politiche e sociali susseguitesi nel tempo, lo studio del tema della disoccupazione giovanile ha da sempre suscitato grande interesse nel dibattito delle politiche pubbliche. Oggi, più che mai, la condizione endemica di continua disoccupazione giovanile nella quale riversa gran parte dell'Eurozona richiama l'attenzione dei governanti dei diversi stati membri, tutti impegnati nella ricerca di soluzioni teoriche e pratiche atte al ripristino di un equilibrio efficiente.

Molti giovani Europei stanno subendo i danni causati da un insieme di politiche volubili ed è proprio l'imprecisione nella programmazione di riforme che porta l'intero sistema sociale a sprofondare ulteriormente nella crisi. Quest' ultima tende ad assumere forme più variegate ed appare così potente da riuscire a prosciugare molte liquidità economiche, senza delle quali la condizione del mercato del lavoro volge inesorabilmente verso un sostanziale e irrecuperabile deterioramento. A peggiorare gli eventi, il debito accumulato progressivamente dai paesi europei frena possibili sviluppi e rilega il confronto accademico nel limbo della politica inetta. Senza enfatizzare troppo il fatto che, a volte, si ha come l'impressione che la vecchia classe dirigente "al potere" sembri non gradire staffette intergenerazionali mentre i giovani lottano per conquistare opportunità e diritti in un mercato sempre più globalizzato.

Tuttavia nel 2013, come forma di risposta all'esigenza di arginare il problema della disoccupazione giovanile, il Consiglio dell'Unione Europea ha prescritto l'attuazione di una Raccomandazione: "Garanzia Giovani". L'idea di tale politica risale dall'esperienza positiva conseguita dai paesi dell'Europa del Nord (Svezia, Norvegia, Finlandia e Danimarca) intorno agli anni '90. L'intervento si configura come un "nuovo approccio" ma attendibile e dai fini conseguibili. La Garanzia Giovani, avente come obiettivo principale l'abbattimento della disoccupazione giovanile, rappresenta da parte dei paesi aderenti il comprovato impegno nel realizzare la condizione di un'Europa più competitiva e dinamica. Questo perché la politica europea favorisce l'entrata dei giovani nel mondo del lavoro e sancisce, in particolare, l'importanza di: "garantire a tutti i giovani di età inferiore ai 25 anni – iscritti o meno ai servizi per l'impiego – di ottenere un'offerta valida entro 4 mesi dalla fine degli studi o dall'inizio della disoccupazione. L'offerta può consistere in un impiego, apprendistato, tirocinio, o ulteriore corso di studi e va adeguata alla situazione e alle esigenze dell'interessato"⁴³. La Garanzia Giovani non va intesa però come una misura contro la disoccupazione giovanile. Non si prefigge lo scopo di creare nuovi posti di lavoro ma tenta di far emergere quei posti di lavoro che già esistono e che risultano essere vacanti. La politica si prefigge, quindi, lo scopo di attuare un potenziamento ed una resa efficace della funzione intermediaria di tutti gli enti coinvolti. In tal senso, la Garanzia Giovani è una misura dedicata a favorire l'occupabilità delle persone e non la loro occupazione.

⁴³ Council of the European Union (2013), Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/1)

NEED ASSESSMENT

Sebbene ogni tanto vi siano alcuni segni di miglioramento, quasi due terzi dei paesi membri sono oggetto di una dilagante disoccupazione giovanile. Alcuni stati hanno raggiunto livelli da record e in paesi come Grecia, Spagna, Croazia e Italia il tasso si attesta intorno al 40%. La crisi ha portato, tra gli effetti meno desiderabili, una considerevole inattività tra i giovani. In totale ci sono oltre 7,5 milioni di ragazzi che non hanno un impiego, non seguono corsi di istruzione o formazione e prendono così il nome di NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Questo gruppo, da intendersi come principale gruppo target della Garanzia Giovani, corrisponde a quasi il 13% della popolazione giovanile in Europa. In più, circa un terzo dei disoccupati sotto i 25 anni sono disoccupati per più di 12 mesi.

La classe politica europea avverte chiaramente il rischio che gli eventi avversi possano condizionare fortemente la crescita e sviluppo delle attuali generazioni. Infatti, mentre nel momento di transizione scuola-lavoro la possibilità di incorrere in un breve periodo di disoccupazione può essere considerato in qualche modo come normale, il protratto disimpegno dei giovani può causare invece situazioni fortemente limitanti tra le quali: penalizzazioni salariali, esiti occupazionali poveri e rischio di esclusione sociale.⁴⁴

A livello europeo, la disoccupazione di lunga durata rappresenta circa un terzo della disoccupazione totale dei giovani. Tuttavia, questa situazione varia notevolmente tra i paesi. Ad esempio l'Italia presenta numeri elevati di disoccupazione giovanile che coincidono con le percentuali di disoccupazione di lunga durata, differentemente i paesi come Finlandia, Danimarca e Svezia

⁴⁴Eurofound (2012), NEETs young people not in employment education and training, characteristics, costs and policy responses, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

rivelano una bassa quota di disoccupazione giovanile che non corrisponde alla disoccupazione totale e di lunga durata (circa del 10%).⁴⁵

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM THEORY AND PROCESS

Nella elaborato della tesi si è cercato di rispondere agli interrogativi posti al fine di determinare l'efficacia delle operazioni e dei servizi proposti nel piano europeo. Molti paesi hanno aderito ed il livello di implementazione registrato è complessivamente medio. Lo stesso accade in Italia, ove risulta particolarmente rilevante cercare di indicare e valutare lo schema procedurale attuato dal governo. Tuttavia, il primo intento del programma dovrebbe essere quello di provare a soddisfare le esigenze dei seguenti gruppi target:

- Rivolto ai Giovani eredi d'Europa

Sempre più crescente è il numero degli stati che hanno investito in strumenti online e in siti web per stimolare l'interesse dei giovani al programma. Pertanto, con la registrazione dell'utente ai portali online si crea un primo punto di entrata, al quale segue, attraverso la compilazione di tutte le informazioni necessarie, il pacchetto di attività proposte dall'Europa. Concretamente i ragazzi rappresentano la domanda, la così detta forza lavoro, che si realizza negli annunci delle offerte delle aziende.

- Per lo sviluppo aziendale

La Garanzia Giovani offre importanti opportunità per le aziende, che possono beneficiare delle agevolazioni previste dai diversi paesi. Così, le imprese possono rinnovare il loro capitale umano investendo su giovani motivati.

⁴⁵ Eurostat – Youth long term unemployment rate – access 14/06/2015

Pertanto, il settore aziendale fornendo direttamente opportunità di lavoro contribuisce al raggiungimento degli obiettivi prefissati dal piano europeo.

- Per la cooperazione tra gli *stakeholders*

La garanzia Giovani favorisce la connessioni di rapporti tra pubblico e privato. Tutti gli Stati membri hanno messo in campo nuove strutture di *governance*, al fine di superare la frammentazione delle competenze in materia di politiche giovanili e per migliorare l'approccio di partenariato. Esempio emblematico è l'Italia, dove un nuovo organismo di coordinamento nazionale (Struttura di Missione), è stato posto in essere al fine di riunire tutte le parti interessate a livello nazionale e regionale.

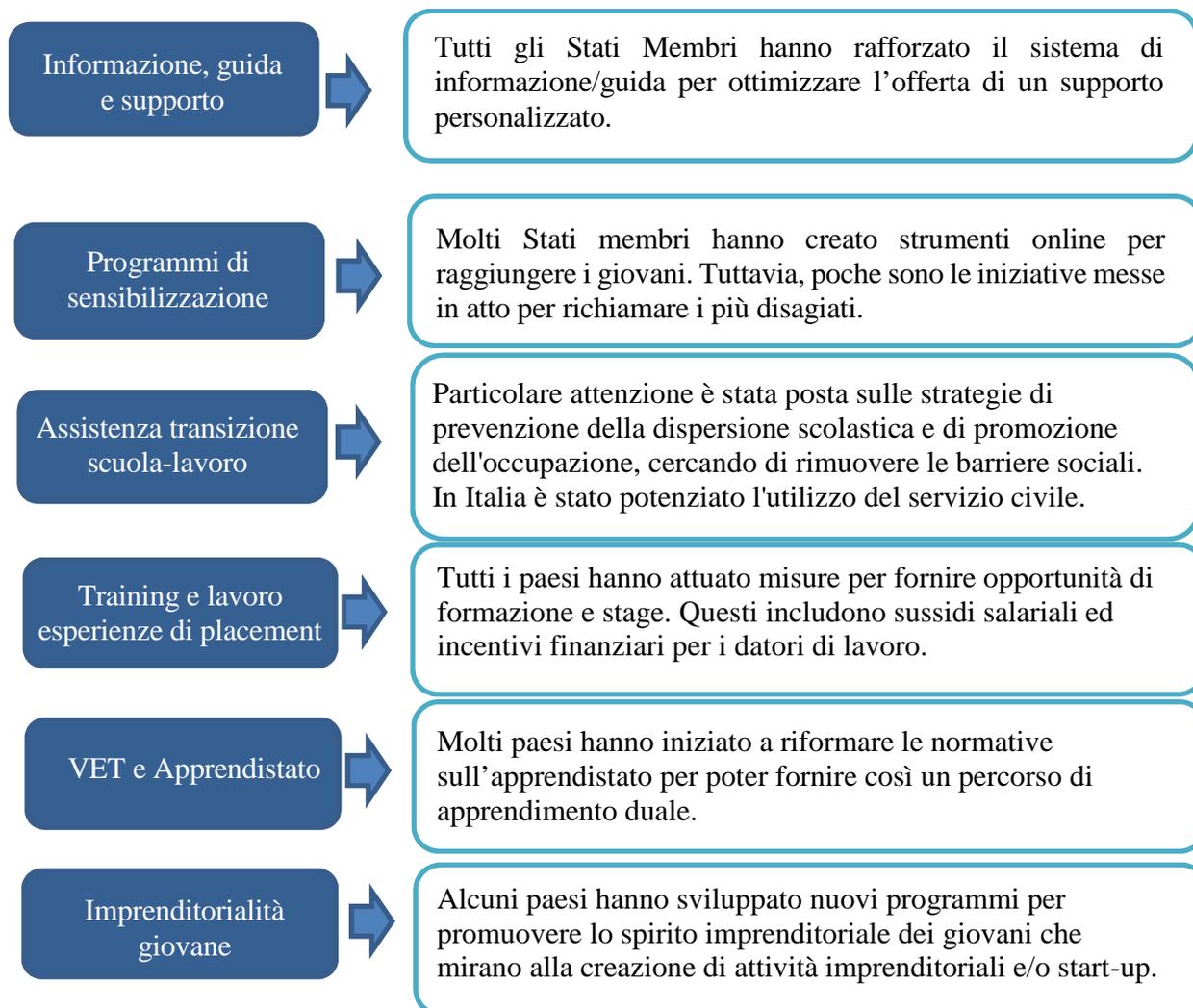
IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Come indica il piano di attuazione Italiano: “la natura dell’iniziativa è essenzialmente preventiva: l’obiettivo è quello di offrire prioritariamente una risposta ai giovani che ogni anno si affacciano al mercato del lavoro dopo la conclusione degli studi, ma nello specifico contesto italiano tale iniziativa deve prevedere anche azioni mirate ai giovani disoccupati e scoraggiati, che hanno necessità di ricevere un’adeguata attenzione da parte delle strutture preposte alle politiche attive del lavoro.”⁴⁶

Tuttavia, la tesi evidenzia come il processo di valutazione dei risultati sia condizionato da diversi fattori che hanno condotto il programma, soprattutto in Italia, al conseguimento di parziali risultati sperati, come di altri non desiderati.

⁴⁶ Piano Italiano di attuazione della Garanzia per i Giovani.

La garanzia per i giovani non è un ' *one-size -fits-all* ' approccio, ma consente agli Stati membri di adattare gli interventi in base alle loro necessità nazionali, regionali e locali. Le prove raccolte durante il primo anno di attuazione hanno rivelato le seguenti caratteristiche, nonché principali azioni concrete:



EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

L'esperienza di programmi quali la Garanzia Giovani dimostra che la combinazione di interventi precoci e di veloce attivazione possono portare alcuni miglioramenti nella transizione scuola-lavoro. Purtroppo però, le risorse rese disponibili dalla Raccomandazione appaiono insufficienti al fine di produrre uno stimolo concreto. Particolarmente in Italia è opinione comune il pensare che ci vorranno anni per attuare pienamente il programma. Inoltre notevole è il rischio che l'introduzione della Garanzia Giovani ritardi l'adozione di riforme più politicamente sensibili, come le misure volte a ridurre la dualità del mercato del lavoro, che proprio la Garanzia Giovani sta a sua volta involontariamente fortificando. Il finanziamento della politica europea per i giovani è regolata attraverso l'iniziativa dell'occupazione giovanile (YEI- Youth Employment Initiative) e la somma totale destinata ammonta a €6.4 miliardi nel periodo 2014-2020. Tuttavia il rapporto sulla "Inclusione Sociale dei Giovani" condotto da Eurofound stima che un supplemento di quasi €50 miliardi sarebbe necessario per garantire che tutti i NEET europei ricevano un intervento concreto, quindi reale ed efficace.

La Garanzia Giovani contiene molti elementi che possono migliorare la posizione dei giovani d'Europa sul mercato del lavoro ma le misure che propone, soprattutto per il modo in cui vengono implementate, non sono in grado di fornire sollievo immediato. Gli incredibili tassi di disoccupazione giovanile risultano essere il riflesso di problemi strutturali e conseguenza dell'inadeguato legame tra istruzione e mercato del lavoro. La correzione di tali problematiche richiederà tempo e proprio il tempo è il fattore imprescindibile nello studio delle politiche pubbliche. Quell'elemento che si tenta sempre di abbreviare nel momento in cui si intraprende un progetto di politica, che questa sia da formulare, implementare o valutare.

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