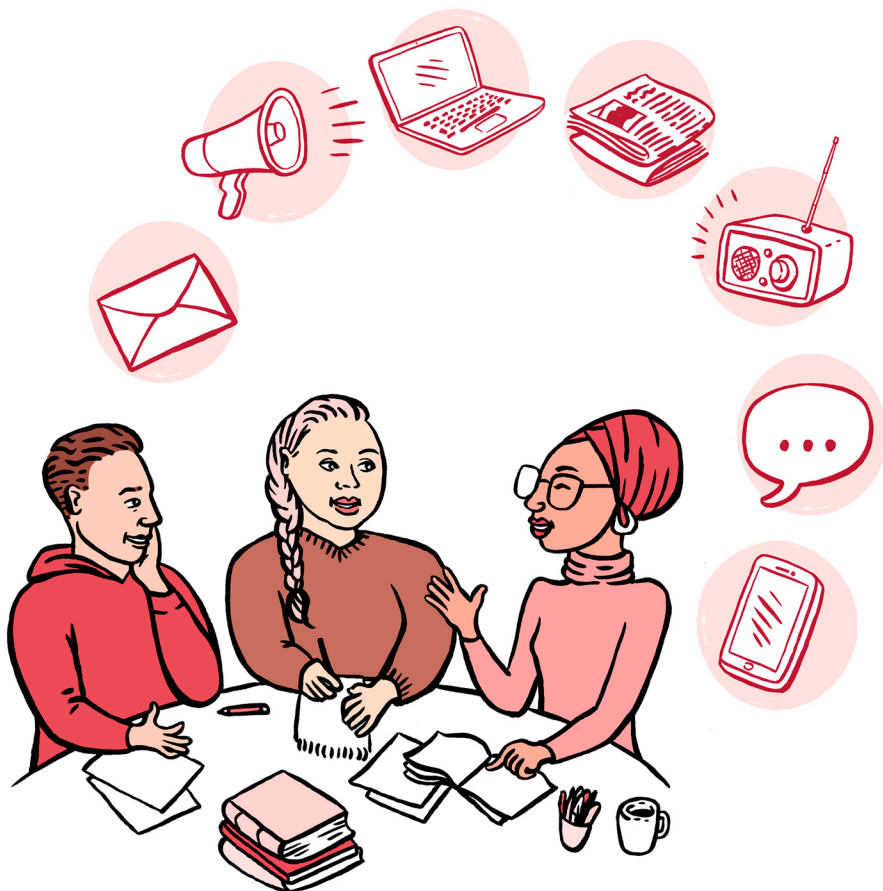


Communicative Ecologies in Adult Education

by Jo Tacchi, Amalia Sabiescu, Cecilia Gordano



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Contents

List of Abbreviations	8
Executive Summary.....	9
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	14
1.1 Background and aims.....	14
1.2 Conceptual foundations.....	16
1.2.1 Communicative ecologies and communication assemblages	16
1.2.2 Principles of an analytical framework.....	18
1.2.3 Communicative ecologies as methodological framework.....	21
1.2.4 The analytical framework used in this study.....	22
1.3 Methodology.....	28
1.3.1 Research question and objectives	28
1.3.2 Approach to research design	29
1.3.3 Research design for WP4.1	30
1.3.4 Data collection instruments	31
1.3.5 Partners' input and coordination.....	34
1.3.6 Sites and sampling	34
1.3.7 Data coding and analysis	36
1.4 Report structure.....	38

PART I

Mapping communicative ecologies: Young people in vulnerable situations and adult education..... 40

Chapter 2. Communicative ecologies of young people in vulnerable situations.....	42
2.1 Individual and group communicative ecologies and assemblages	43
2.2 The five dimensions of communicative ecologies and assemblages	47
2.3 Capacity to aspire and construct goals	51
2.4 Social networks and hubs.....	53
2.5 Relevant content and information.....	55
2.5.1 Accessing information about adult education.....	56

2.6	Media: Communication modalities and platforms	61
2.6.1	Social media use and practices: Preferences and patterns	62
2.7	Agency: Contextual resources and literacies	65
2.8	Challenges in information and communication practices	70
2.8.1	Challenges in everyday life and formal communication contexts ...	70
2.8.2	Challenges in accessing information about adult education	74
2.9	Leveraging young people's information and communication practices	76
Chapter 3.	Communicative ecologies in adult education.....	83
3.1	Communicative ecologies and assemblages in adult education	83
3.2	Information and communication at programme level.....	84
3.2.1	Programme design.....	84
3.2.2	Student recruitment.....	89
3.2.3	Student selection and enrolment.....	95
3.2.4	Programme delivery	98
3.2.5	Post-course communication	103
3.3	Information and communication within the adult education organisation .	108
3.4	Policy-making and the adult education sector	110

Part II

Matches, mismatches and routes to effective practice119

Chapter 4.	Information and communication in adult education programmes	120
4.1	Programme design and improvement	120
4.1.1	Gaps and challenges	120
4.1.2	Routes to effective practice	124
4.2	Student recruitment, selection and enrolment.....	132
4.2.1	Gaps and challenges	132
4.2.2	Routes to effective practice	137
4.3	Programme delivery	146
4.3.1	Gaps and challenges	147
4.3.2	Routes to effective practice	148
4.4	Post-course communication	155
4.4.1	Gaps and challenges	155
4.4.2	Routes to effective practice	156

Chapter 5. Communication within the adult education organisation.....	162
5.1 Gaps and challenges.....	162
5.2 Routes to effective practice	167
5.2.1 Goal-driven information and communication networks	167
5.2.2 Key factors for building effective networks.....	177
Chapter 6. Policy-making and the adult education sector	183
6.1 Gaps and challenges.....	184
6.1.1 Obstacles in information flows and data sharing.....	184
6.1.2 Challenges in involving relevant actors: Young people and representative groups	186
6.1.3 Lack of specific competences and procedural knowledge for effective communication and engagement.....	190
6.2 Routes to effective practice	191
6.2.1 Building effective networks for information production, access and circulation	192
6.2.2 Effective practices in engaging relevant actors: young people and representative groups.....	199
6.2.3 Cultivating information and communication competences	202

Part III

Implications for research, practice and policy 205

Chapter 7. Implications for research	205
7.1 Information, communication and vulnerability	206
7.1.1 Vulnerability and access to information and communication	206
7.1.2 Agency, resilience and aspirations	211
7.2 Information, communication and AE routes to APC.....	213
7.2.1 Media literacies, civic cultures and APC.....	215
7.2.2 Cultivating young people's resilience and capacity to aspire	218
Chapter 8. Implications for practice and policy.....	224
8.1 Informing the design of relevant AE programmes	224
8.2 Improving access to Adult Education for young people at risk of social exclusion	225
8.3 Improving information and communication in AE programme delivery.....	226

8.4	Promoting sustainable information and communication flows in policy-making.....	227
8.5	Informing forums for dialogue between AE providers and young people at risk of social exclusion	230
Chapter 9. Conclusion		233
References		238
Annex 1. Data collection: Sampling and cases		245
Annex 2. Communicative ecologies field sites.....		248
Annex 3. Good practice adult education programmes.....		259

List of Abbreviations

AC	Active Citizenship
AE	Adult Education
AMS	Austrian Public Employment Service
ANT	Actor Network Theory
APC	Active Participatory Citizenship
CE	Communicative Ecologies
CEA	Communicative Ecologies and Assemblages framework
CSA	Criminal Sanctions Agency (Finland)
DoA	Description of Activities
DGASPC	General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection (Romania)
FA	National Board of Forestry (Sweden)
GP	Good Practice
IMS	Instant Messaging Platforms
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4D	ICTs for Development
IDSS	Intelligent Decision Support Systems
IT	Information Technology
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

Background and Aims

This report presents research on the role of information and communication in adult education (AE) for active participatory citizenship. EduMAP work package 4.1 utilised a communicative ecologies approach to understand aspects of access, inclusion and engagement in AE for young people at risk of social exclusion in order to:

- shed light on interconnections and mismatches between the supply and use side of adult education;
- offer an in-depth view of the information and communication context of young people at risk of social exclusion.

Methodology

The **main research question** of WP4.1 is:

How can communication inside of and around Adult Education (AE) programmes be improved, in order to:

- *Reach out to and connect effectively with young people at risk of social exclusion?*
- *Enhance interaction and learners' engagement?*
- *Enhance engagement and collaboration within the AE organisation and with relevant external agents?*

The **research design** consisted of three research strands:

- *Strand 1. Context analysis* to map local contexts and identify a group of young people in situations of vulnerability for research on communicative ecologies.
- *Strand 2. Targeted research on good practices* mapped the information and communication context in and around adult education programmes, interviewing AE providers and learners.

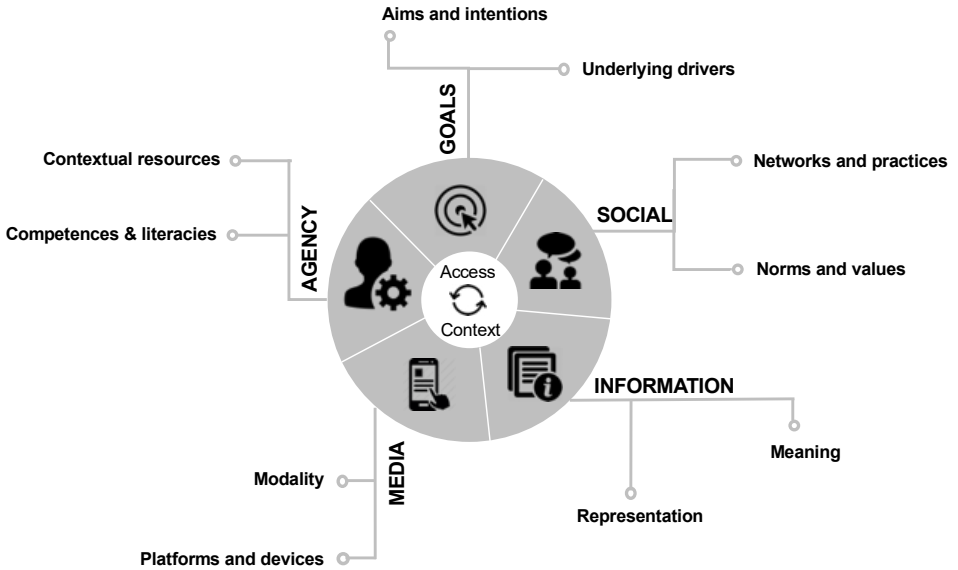
- *Strand 3. Communicative ecologies mapping with groups of young people in situations of vulnerability* designed to focus on the communicative ecologies of groups identified through Strand 1.

Sites and sampling: EduMAP partners conducted research in two contexts:

- i. in Adult Education environments, by collecting and analysing data on communication from 40 AE good practice (GP) cases in 20 countries (Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, UK, Ireland and the Netherlands, and Turkey) involving 712 respondents (**Strand 2**); and,
- ii. with selected groups of young people at risk of social exclusion in seven EU countries (Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Spain, UK) and Turkey, involving 91 additional respondents (**Strand 3**).

Theoretical framework

We used a communicative ecologies conceptual framework to develop the research design for the communication aspects of the EduMAP project. Through fieldwork and iterative cycles of data analysis, we developed the Communicative Ecologies and Assemblages (CEA) analytical framework, which distinguishes between communicative ecologies (totality of resources and networks available at all times to individuals) and assemblages (ways of mobilising information and communication resources to reach specific goals).



The CEA framework focuses on five key components that come into play when constructing communicative assemblages: Goals, Social, Information, Media and Agency. A key output from this research, the CEA framework can be used in various communication-related scenarios, not only educational. We apply the CEA framework to structure the WP4.1 research analysis and formulate the key findings in this report.

Key findings

We analysed the communicative ecologies of young people in relation to their need for and ability to access information about AE. Cutting across the rich variety of GP cases, we focused on five elements that are essential for enabling young people to access information, identify suitable opportunities and engage in AE programmes that make a difference for their lives: i) the **capacity to aspire and construct goals**; ii) access to **social networks** and hubs; iii) access to relevant content and **information**; iv) access and use of relevant **media** and platforms; and v) possession of needed information and communication **competences and literacies**. Significant was the finding that social networks are centrally important for access to AE information, particularly for isolated

and hard to reach groups. Another key finding is about the value of networks for enabling AE providers to reach out to, recruit, engage and create nurturing environments for the development of APC competences. These networks were analysed in terms of the organisations and agents involved (social layer), the media that enhance information flow and communication (media layer), the informational content they circulate (information layer), and the resources and competences invested (agency layer).

The research identified effective communication strategies during course provision across four areas. First, the cultivation of one on one personalised relationships between AE professionals and learners to provide personalised support, mentorship, advice, coaching and guidance. This is essential for developing trust. Second, adapting the variety of media options available to the needs of an educational environment. Blended, tailored models appear to be best suited for a variety of teaching and learning scenarios. Third, listening, empathy, horizontal relationships and open dialogue are present in most good practices. These are essential not only for maintaining a good communication atmosphere, but also for encouraging acquisition of communication skills among learners. Fourth, cultivating communication competences and literacies is essential both for AE professionals and learners. For learners, one of the key barriers to APC is in competences for formal communication, even when they are not the central learning outcome targeted by a programme. Additionally, post-course communication emerged as one of the most underestimated areas of potential for AE to make a significant difference to the lives of young people in vulnerable situations. It can result in a source of support and information for learners who have completed the course, generate new resources for promoting the programme through its Alumni, and provide data about the impact of a programme on its learners.

Effective communication within and external to the AE organisation was shown to be important for sustaining flows of information and communication both internally and with external stakeholders. These are essential for drawing in expertise and information to reach out to and attend to the needs of young people holistically. Routes to effective practice can be understood in terms of complex, multi-faceted networks that mobilise communication resources involving AE professionals and related support services. Key factors for running successful networks include: establishing clear and relevant information and communication goals, aligned with organisational missions; establishing cultures of communication and values such as freedom and responsibility, empathy and respect; complementarity between online and offline, mediated and

direct communication adapted to specific communication scenarios; and, embedding information and communication activities in organisational practice.

Significance and implications for policy and practice

The research reinforces that there is high value in information that is up to date, representative and relevant for AE policy and practice. This is not always available or accessible for a range of reasons. Social networks can foster better access to information and better ways of processing it. To be useful in a specific scenario, information needs to be relevant, for instance regarding a specific context or group of young people, or access to a certain type of AE. One of the biggest hurdles lies in how to make information entering a communicative assemblage useful, especially when sourced from statistics or reports where it has been formatted to fit with many potential scenarios. Some of the cases we researched rely more on people and social networks, and some more on the capacity of ICT to not only gather but also to process data. For AE programmes, design or refinement relies on a combination of accessing data and bringing in the views of experts, other stakeholders and young people themselves.

The obstacles encountered in both policy and practice indicate that current solutions for information access and use are less than ideal. This is evident particularly in situations of vulnerability, exclusion, emergency and crisis, which demand very specific sets of data. Given the diversity of the AE field, the added complexity brought by interlinkages with APC, and the highly context-specific considerations posed by situations of vulnerability, we had best consider the value of human capacity for information production, transmission and processing and those of machines as two balancing poles. It is through the opportune creation of networks that harness the intelligence of people and machines that we can create the conditions for AE to become and be made constantly relevant for the needs of young people in situations of risk.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background and aims

The EduMAP project has been designed to understand and map the actual and potential role of adult education (AE) in including young people in vulnerable situations in active participatory citizenship (APC) in Europe. One of the project's premises is that AE tends to benefit the already educated and is often out of reach or inaccessible to the majority of young people at risk of social exclusion. There is an information and communication dimension that contributes to the effectiveness of AE for young people. For example, in order to enrol in AE programmes, young people need reliable information about suitable courses and potential positive impacts. Information and communication is an equally important consideration when designing AE programmes, so that the needs and communication preferences and capabilities of those at risk of exclusion are considered. Such considerations are relevant too in relation to policies and national AE programmes.

Failure of AE programmes to reach young adults at risk of social exclusion, or failure of AE policies to account for their specific needs, can be addressed in large part by paying more attention to information and communication-related issues. EduMAP used a communicative ecologies approach to understand the role of information and communication processes in shaping aspects of access, inclusion and engagement in AE for young adults at risk of social exclusion. It sought to identify the critical points and ways of addressing them for making AE more inclusive and effective in cultivating APC for young adults at risk of exclusion.

Research objectives

The objective of WP4.1 is to map and examine the varied communicative ecologies (CEs) that exist in the field of adult education among the providers of educational initiatives and young adults at risk of social exclusion, in order to:

- shed light on interconnections and mismatches between the supply and use side of adult education;

- offer an in-depth view of the information and communication context of young adults at risk of social exclusion.

This was achieved by mapping communicative ecologies in two contexts: (1) in Adult Education environments, by collecting and analysing relevant data on communication from 40 AE programmes that include young adults at risk of social exclusion, studied as good practice (GP) case studies; and (2) with selected groups of young adults at risk of social exclusion in seven EU countries and Turkey. The resulting datasets were analysed together to describe and identify matches and mismatches in the communication practices of AE providers and those of young adults at risk of social exclusion who could potentially benefit from AE. The goal was to shed light on how communication between AE providers and young adults at risk of social exclusion can be improved.

Role of this deliverable in the project

WP4.1 research directly complements and connects with four other work packages:

- **WP2** (Kersh and Toiviainen 2017) presents desk based research providing an overview of the state of the art of adult education across EU member states and Turkey, specifically focusing on the role of adult education and lifelong learning (LLL) in motivating and engaging young adults at risk of social exclusion in the 28 EU member states (referred to as the EU28) and Turkey. Task 2.1 provided the starting point for the selection of GP programmes and the elaboration of the criteria for GP selection, used in conjunction with other sources (project Description of Activities, literature). We designed WP3 and WP4.1 research drawing on the overview of the AE context and history.
- **WP3** is the other main data generating work package. The main objective of WP3 was to identify and review educational initiatives, which have proven to be successful in including young adults at risk of social exclusion in active political, social and/or economic participation, with a view to identifying and describing elements of good practice that can be taken up in other contexts and in the future. Complementing WP3, WP4.1 aimed to map the communicative ecologies in the field of adult education and for young adults at risk of social exclusion. The two WPs share a concern with deep analysis of AE initiatives, from an AE perspective on the one hand (WP3) and on the other from a communications perspective (WP4).
- **WP4.2 and WP5** have drawn upon the WP3 and WP4.1 country-based data, findings and analysis reports to inform their work. WP4.2 aims to create appropriate forums for dialogue between AE providers, young people in vulnerable situations and other key actors and relevant stakeholders in AE. The empirical research conducted for WP4 has been used to inform the design of scenarios for dialogue forums which leverage young

people's documented information and communication practices and respond to needs, gaps and indications of effective practices in AE information and communication. WP5 aims to develop a prototype of a web-based Intelligent Decision Support System for AE policy and programme design. WP4.1 data informs WP5, in particular the strands that concern the role of information in AE programme and policy design.

To ensure proper coordination of the combined research design, the leaders of WP3 (DVV) and WP4.1 (FEL) have met weekly or fortnightly since October 2016 to ensure coherence and rigour for the research design, data collection, analysis and reporting for both work packages and to ensure our data collection activities are aligned and complementary.

Thus, this deliverable focuses on how the communicative dimension of adult education initiatives can contribute to improving their effectiveness in reaching and engaging effectively with young adults at risk of social exclusion.

1.2 Conceptual foundations

1.2.1 *Communicative ecologies and communication assemblages*

What are communicative ecologies?

The concept of 'communicative ecologies' (CE) was developed in 2002 (Slater, Tacchi and Lewis, 2002; Lennie and Tacchi, 2013) as an analytical framework for studying information and communication technology, structures, processes and practices in international development. It was designed to go beyond narrow conceptions of media impacts and universalistic notions of media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to take account of relationships, contexts and complexities. Don Slater defines a communicative ecology as:

- "The whole structure of communication and information flows in the people's ways of life," and
- "The complete ensemble of (symbolic and material) resources for communication in a locality, and the social networks which organize and mediate them." (Slater, 2013: 42)

The CE concept has been applied and further developed through a series of communication for development projects since 2002, in which it was used as a

conceptual and methodological framework for development programmes and evaluation design (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013). The history and evolution of CE in development are important for understanding some of the key features of CE as both a concept and a methodology, in particular its concern with *actionable knowledge*: understanding change (as it happens) and making space for intervention and action towards positive social change.

Distinguishing between communicative ecologies and assemblages

One of the key distinctions used in this study is that between communicative ecologies and communication assemblages. **Communicative ecologies** are made of information and communication resources, media, networks, and content, which are accessed by young people to fulfil their information consumption and production and social and communication goals. The idea of 'ecology' implies the existence of a complex, interrelated array of processes and practices and the resources and media used to perform them. There is not a fixed structure, or single way of seeing and analysing communicative ecologies, and everyone's communicative ecology is both different to everyone else's, and shifting. However, mapping communicative ecologies from the perspectives of individuals and groups that we are interested in gives valuable insights into how they manage relationships and information flows, the capabilities to access technologies, platforms and information, and how all of this works within complex lifeworlds that are very different to our own. We can identify and isolate some key elements in a communicative ecology, such as the media that are available to a young person or group, the social networks they access, and typical goals and contexts for which they create diverse communication assemblages.

The idea of '**communication assemblages**' implies that young adults may pull together resources, networks and media differently for different goals and communication contexts. In time, these practices are embedded in routines, become established and often taken for granted as the usual ways of achieving a certain communication goal. Diverse assemblages may then be created for specific communication goals, scenarios or contexts of communication. A young person may use the same resource such as media very differently for different scenarios. For example, given the availability of social media, a young person may use Facebook for sharing information with friends, family and a broad circle of acquaintances, WhatsApp for close friends and family only, and have a public Instagram profile.

Communicative ecologies and assemblages are interrelated, they use by and large the same communication media, content, resources, and both characterise the information and communication practices of young people. We can think of communicative ecologies as including communicative assemblages:

- Communicative ecologies make up a complex, dynamic, often messy repertoire of information and communication resources, agents and networks and flows and processes that connect them. They encompass manifold established communication assemblages, each with their own goal and typical use contexts.
- Communicative assemblages are goal-driven, they stand for the way the same resources, networks and media are mobilised towards a specific objective, from professional communication goals (young person looking for a job) to ones embedded in one's daily routine (stopping to chat with a neighbour on the way home).

In a nutshell, then, when mapping communicative ecologies we speak about the availability of resources such as a mobile phone, Internet connectivity, or freedom to speak, and typical scenarios or contexts in which these are used. When, on the other hand, we describe communication assemblages, we look at these resources in use for a specific purpose: a young person using his mobile phone to call a friend, social media to publish a blog, and their freedom to speak (a resource in itself) in a peaceful protest.

1.2.2 Principles of an analytical framework

As a conceptual framework, CE is embedded in a theoretical tradition drawing on social constructionism and ecological approaches in communication studies. CE endorses a social constructionist approach to the social study of technology, as represented in particular by Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Bruno Latour's work. From Latour CE draws on the idea that apparently fixed entities such as 'the media' are in reality the condensed form of networks and social practices that are 'black-boxed' and named. They are often taken for granted in research and practice, yet the circumstantial existence of these media is in reality only a temporary fixation, as the processes that underpin them continue to evolve and change (Latour, 2010; Slater, 2013). This is perhaps more evident today than in any earlier period, as we witness a fast pace of change in what constitutes our mediascapes, in particular the seemingly ever evolving social media.

CE embraces an ecological perspective for the study of communication and technology. Related concepts are: media ensembles (Bausinger, 1984; Morley, 2007), which posits that rather than studying media technologies in isolation, we should pay

attention to how they function together in ‘ecosystems of technology’, and how media processes and everyday life are interwoven (Morley, 2007); and Altheide’s (1994) notion of ecology of communication. An important aspect of distinction is that CE does not recall a closed ecosystem or context to study: it is rather focusing on *process* and *emergence*—how human agents continuously configure and re-configure communicative systems and practices in contingent, fluid, often messy ways (Slater, 2013).

The most important features of CE as an analytical framework are grouped across four dimensions, 1) understanding of the local context and local construction of meaning; 2) taking a process view; 3) a holistic approach focused on studying relations; and 4) a distributed view of agency.

1. Contextualised construction of meaning

CE endorses an analytical frame that allows experiences, definitions and meanings of media and communication to emerge, embedded in the perspectives and practices of a local community, group or individual. In this approach, media are not ‘things’ with inherent properties. Rather, they are intricately growing in and related to a social context, shaped during social practices and interactions (Slater, 2013). Paying attention to how media are seen and embedded in wider communicative practices and relationships enables understanding of which media have or could gain legitimacy in the eyes of people, and how their use embodies or on the contrary clashes with engendered values and ways of life.

2. Emergence and process

CE conceptualisations endorse the view that what we may habitually call ‘media’ or ‘technologies’ are concretisations of social relations, networks, and practices. As Slater (2013) argues, CE are not composed of media, but of *communicative assemblages*. These in turn refer to processes by which agents make use of any communicative resources at hand in order to go about their communicative practices and fulfil their information and communication goals. While we may focus our analysis on a particular media or platform such as radio, the internet, television or Facebook, these are in fact only provisional forms taken by complex systems of interrelated processes that are fluid, dynamic, and changing. This focus on emergence and process enables us to see communication and technologies not as things that have universal and fixed meaning, but as complex systems and processes, in continuous transformation through use in

each context. This in turns facilitates understanding of how media are configured (or reconfigured) during use and assimilation in a social context, and in reverse, how these processes reconfigure the social context itself (Slater, 2013).

3. Holism and a relational perspective

In conjunction with a process approach, CE adopts an analytical view that acknowledges the interdependence and relatedness of processes and phenomena that together facilitate communicative acts. This is embedded in a holistic approach, which sees communicative practices in interplay with other socio-cultural and economic practices, at individual and collective level in a community or group, and among diverse communities. This is significant for how we study communication and technology use in at least two respects: First, it acknowledges that entities that we may regard as stand-alone with inherent properties, in reality owe their properties to relations with other entities and systems. Examples range from cable companies and production teams that make TV happen, to the infrastructures that underpin access to internet, but can be extended to how media systems work together, and instances of convergence of new and old media. Second, this facilitates a shift from a causal approach to communicative practices and social change, to a more complex and nuanced analysis that emphasises change as the outcome of long-term interactions and relations among diverse entities and agents.

4. A distributed view of agency

As conceptualised by Slater (2013), agency is distributed in networks made of human agents and tools. This implies that agency is about connectedness, it occurs in the interaction between human agents and material tools. Slater's view has wide-ranging implications for how we study media and communication practices in marginalised contexts. One immediate inference is that in this view we can no longer think of some media as efficient in and of themselves, nor can we decide that a best practice or a media system that works in one context can be transferred to another context and achieve similar results. Rather, this view shifts the analytical focus on the agents and relationships established with various other agents, resources and tools.

1.2.3 **Communicative ecologies as methodological framework**

As a methodological framework, CE is embedded in an ethnographic approach, with an analytical focus on holism, relatedness, emergence and process as described above.

Aligned to these principles, communicative ecologies research:

Takes a process view, focused on studying communicative assemblages, or the *processes* of “conceiving, constructing, maintaining, repairing and operating communication systems out of the socio-technical materials to hand” (Slater 2013: 47);

- Endorses a holistic analytical stance and acknowledges the *interdependencies and relations* between human, material and symbolic elements and agents involved in communication processes and practices;
- Understands *agency as distributed and relational*, shaped through interaction between human agents and tools.

Communicative ecologies mapping

The principles of holism and relatedness translate in a research design that includes concentric analysis, from immediate to wider context. It incorporates socio-cultural and personal practices, processes, everyday activities that embed information and communication processes. It can encompass community/surrounding social context, suggests power relations, and limitations and opportunities such as those implied by languages, diversity (gender, ethnicity etc.), literacy and so on. It points to wider contexts, for example, social structures and processes that affect the users/communities, government policies, infrastructures and institutions.

Key data collection techniques typically include participant observation and field notes, in-depth interviews, group interviews or focus groups, and participatory techniques (see Tacchi, Slater and Lewis, 2003; Lennie and Tacchi 2013). Key questions to understand a local communicative ecology include:

- What kinds of communication and information activities do people carry out or wish to carry out?
- What communications resources are available to them - media content, technologies, and skills?
- How do they understand the way these resources can be used?
- Who do they communicate with, and why?
- How does a particular medium—like radio or Internet—fit into existing social networks? Does it expand those networks? How can a new project or initiative connect to its users' social networks? (Tacchi, Slater & Lewis, 2003.)

1.2.4 The analytical framework used in this study

We used the CE conceptual framework to develop the research design for the communication aspects of the EduMAP project. Through fieldwork and iterative cycles of data analysis, a framework has emerged as an analytical tool which we found to be useful for:

- Mapping individual and collective practices, including practices carried out by young people and by complex organisations in the field of AE
- Shedding light on the relations between information and communication on the one hand, and aspects related to exclusion, citizenship and social change on the other
- Shedding light on opportunities for interventions in adult education or other initiatives focused on young people at risk of social exclusion and social change.

The Communicative Ecologies and Assemblages (CEA) framework distinguishes between communicative ecologies and assemblages (see section 1.2.1 above for a thorough description of differences and relations among the two). In brief, for analytical purposes we can think of communicative assemblages as ways of mobilising information and communication resources to reach specific goals. Communicative ecologies, on the other hand, include both communicative assemblages as well as spaces of possibility made of the totality of resources and networks available at all times to individuals, which can be configured into new communicative assemblages.

The framework can be used in various communication-related scenarios—to analyse existing practices, to identify spaces for intervention, or to look at the outcomes of interventions. It can be used to focus on individual or collective practices, in communities or in organisations. For example, it can shed light on various scenarios by which young people search for job and education opportunities and how their practices can be rendered more effective by enhancing competences (such as information literacy), linking them to professional or advisor networks, etc. Equally, it can shed light on how AE providers mobilise communication resources for specific goals and to what effect, e.g., analyse the communicative practices underpinning recruitment of new students, to understand why some groups are typically reached, and others are not, and what can be changed to reach out to the latter.

Components

The CEA framework (Figure 1.1) focuses on five key components that come into play when constructing communicative assemblages: Goals, Social, Information, Media and

Agency. These components form the outer circle of the framework, while in the centre, and of importance to each component, are access and context which are cross cutting dimensions.

Access relates to various aspects of accessibility for young people at risk of social exclusion. For instance, young people may not have access to particular communication platforms or channels, or, they may have physical access but are unable to gain access because they lack relevant literacies, or bound not to access for social or cultural reasons. It is relevant to each of the five components.

Context relates to the particular and specific location of communication and the lives of young people, and how it shapes the five components. None of the components can be analysed in a vacuum, it is important to consider the contextual determinants and enablers, barriers and opportunities.

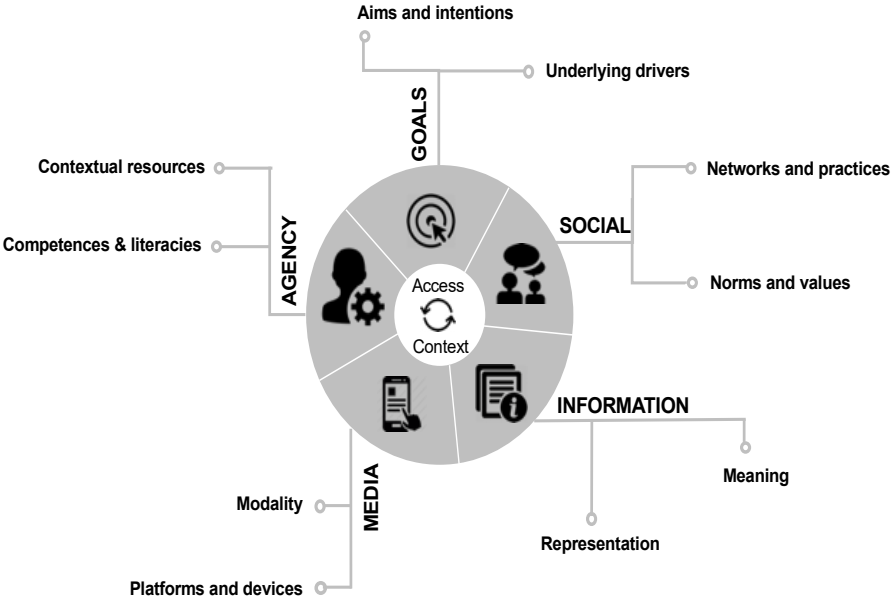


Figure 1.1. The Communicative Ecologies and Assemblages (CEA) analytical framework that emerged through this study

The five components are further described below.

Goals

These are the mobilising factors that give direction and purpose to the process by which communicative assemblages are constructed. This includes underlying drivers such as aspirations, motivations and expectations that mobilise the agent to take action. These goals may be short or long-term and can be associated to a variety of context-specific objectives. These may be conscious and acknowledged by the agent, associated with a plan of action and expected effects such as opening a social media account to start following inspirational people in the field one may want to profess in the future. Or it can be an intent that is not fully acknowledged, for instance because it is driving a repetitive action, or is the after-effect of past goals such as in seeking to enlarge one's network of followers by starting to follow more inspirational people and posting content more frequently after an account has been created already.

Underlying drivers can inspire a variety of different goals, which result in constructing different communicative assemblages. For instance, for a young person who aspires to become a journalist, this aspiration may be the underlying driver for using diverse communicative assemblages each with their own goal: register in a local network for young journalists, look for internships or study opportunities, join an online forum, volunteer for a local investigative journalism outlet etc.

Questions to ask:

- What information and communication goals mobilise the construction of communicative assemblages?
- What underlying drivers (such as aspirations, motivations and expectations) led to the creation and sustenance of these?
- What effects are expected from the action taken to pursue these goals?)

Descriptors: Underlying drivers and Aims.

Social

Refers to the social networks that an agent has access to, the social relations nurtured and built, and the interaction and socialisation practices that shape these relations. It can also encompass social norms, rules, constraints and values that regulate and guide

social interaction. The social agents can be individual or collective, and can include organisations and institutions.

For example: A young Roma woman has access to a wide network of friends and relatives that are part of the Romani community in her neighbourhood. Social and cultural norms regulate her interaction with them, for instance she will relate differently to other women, men, youngsters and elderly members of the community. Different communication channels may provide access to close and more distant networks, both formal and informal.

Questions to ask:

- What social networks does the agent have access to? How are they shaped and maintained through communication assemblages?
- What social practices are ingrained or typically carried out with these networks?
- How do social and cultural norms and values affect communicative ecologies?

Descriptors: Networks and Practices

Information

This captures the content of the informational or communicative act, in which two layers can be identified:

- The meanings conveyed by the agent as initially intended and how they are ultimately received and interpreted.
- The codified or represented information, which uses a language, register, style and protocols that can affect the way the meanings are interpreted.

It is the dynamics between these two layers that constitutes one of the most important aspects to capture in the analysis. An illustrative example is how different registers of communication are used in professional contexts compared to the typical communication styles and registers used in everyday life communication. A young person may, for instance, have difficulty adapting their communicative style to professional communication contexts, and may require familiarisation and new competences to be able to communicate, bridge networks and access professional opportunities.

Questions to ask:

- What meanings, understandings and messages are intended and conveyed?
- How are these meanings codified to be conveyed—any particularities of language, style, semiotic standards and formalisms?
- How are these meanings understood, and what effect do they have? Is anything lost in translation?

Descriptors: Meaning and Representation

Media

Refers to the medium through which information is codified and embedded for transmission and reception in communicative acts. Media encompass both human communication means—such as human voice/orality used in face to face communication and human-made tools for communication (analogue and digital). It is important to keep the media layer open to agent-driven and localised interpretations of what media is relevant and appropriate for what purpose.

When analysing the media component of an assemblage, it is important to look at some aspects:

- Modality: can refer to delivery mode (analogue vs digital) as well as the sense/perception modality of encoding and transmitting information: sound, visual, tactile, multimodal, etc.
- Channel/platform: radio, television, Internet
- Device: radio player, television set, radio receiver, DVD player, computer.

At the same time, it is important to see media embedded rather than separate from the other components of the framework. This is why access and context are particularly important to consider; it conveys not only the time-space scenario of the communicative act, but can also refer to the interweaving of media and social networks and practices, agent competences required to communicate and interpret etc.

Example: The same communication message, such as an overview of an AE programme advertised to attract new students can be embedded and delivered over different media platforms, modes, and contexts: during an information event in a local community centre (oral presentation by course manager); in a local radio programme (live broadcasting); in a newspaper article; over social media as a Facebook and Twitter post.

Questions to ask:

- What media are implemented in these assemblages?
- What aspects of the transmission modality, platforms, and devices used affect the communicative act and the information transmission?
- How are media harnessed and interweaved in social practices and processes to reach out to the set communication goals?

Descriptors: Modality and Platform

Agency

This is the counterpart of the communicative intention captured in the 'Goals' component: if Goals are the mobilising factors for a communicative assemblage, the Agency component captures the ability of the agent to carry out the communicative act. Thus, the Agency layer can encompass agent-specific resources, competences, literacies that are mobilised and used in carrying out communicative acts.

We can identify two categories of resources needed by the agent to engage in communication acts: agent-specific resources such as competences and literacies that enable one to understand, access, produce and interpret information; and material resources which can include electricity to charge their phone, money to top up phone credit, availability of resources such as a community library or computer centre. These resources are variously needed to engage in specific information and communication practices.

For example, a young person may be encouraged to look for AE opportunities online. To be successful in this pursuit, they would have to possess some competences and literacies, such as basic literacy and digital literacy skills, as well as information literacy applied to the specific context of AE – meaning being familiar with the channels and platforms where AE information is typically delivered, protocols and formalisms used for accessing and responding to messages etc. At the same time they would need access to resources such as a computer or another device connected to the Internet, which could be their own device, or accessed from a community centre or library.

Questions to ask:

- What agent-specific communication resources, competences and literacies are employed in communicative acts?

- Which are needed for better performance, and which potential ones are not utilised?

Descriptors: Literacies and Contextual resources.

Relations between components

The questions listed above for each component serve to isolate and analyse aspects of what are otherwise, interconnected processes. Communication objectives are achieved by blending the social, media, and content-related aspects. Each of these elements also gains significance in relation to the others. The actual content or information transmitted or received in communication acts is not always easy to isolate. Most often, it acquires meaning in context. For example, the same words can be uttered in a testimonial delivered in a public meeting in an AE organisation, in a community centre in a disenfranchised neighbourhood, recorded and played in a conference room, written in a local newspaper, and so on. While the message can be said to stay fixed, in reality it gets various interpretations in relation to the context where it was delivered and the media that enabled it to be transmitted. Further, meanings can change, be received differently according to how they are blended or supported by social networks and mediators.

Thus, in using the framework, the components listed above are isolated and analysed as dimensions that enable focus on particular aspects of communicative practices. However, it is important to refer as well to connections among them – looking, for instance at how messages acquire meaning and effect in conjunction with media and social networks, and how young people's agency also affects the way messages are decoded and understood.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Research question and objectives

The original objective of WP4.1 is to map and examine the varied communicative ecologies (CEs) that exist in the field of adult education among the providers of educational initiatives and vulnerable groups, in order to: (1) shed light on interconnections and mismatches between the supply and use side of adult education; and (2) offer an in-depth view of the information and communication context of vulnerable groups.

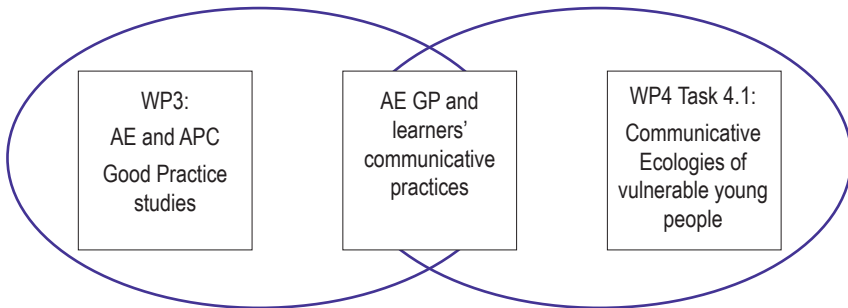
During the course of the research, the **main research question** of WP4.1 has been formulated as follows:

How can communication inside of and around Adult Education (AE) programmes be improved, in order to:

- *Reach out to and connect effectively with young adults at risk of social exclusion?*
- *Enhance interaction and learners' engagement?*
- *Enhance engagement and collaboration within the AE organisation and with relevant external agents?*

1.3.2 Approach to research design

The research for WP4, WP4.1 was conducted jointly with the research for WP3. This allowed for an overlap while at the same time preserving the integrity of WP3 and WP4.1. It also mitigated against research fatigue on the part of our GP research respondents, who otherwise would have been approached twice for different interviews that we now combined.



We developed clear data collection and analysis protocols aligned to both WP3 and WP4.1 objectives, which allowed us to formulate the two deliverable reports for these work packages.

In the first instance, these considerations informed and were tested through the design and application of a **pilot study**, which in turn formed the basis for the full-scale design. Running a pilot was deemed a key activity in order to ensure a rigorous and valid research design that could be implemented by all partners across all sites and that would provide answers to the project's key research questions. It also helped

us plan in terms of understanding of the time and budget required for each GP and Communicative Ecology study. It helped us ensure appropriate implementation of ethics protocols accounting for local conditions of vulnerability. In addition, we were able to develop and test data analysis.

The pilot study was conducted between December 2016 and March 2017 in Bucharest, Romania.

Specifically, for WP4, the pilot study tested the approach, methods and protocols for:

- analysing the communicative ecologies circumscribed by AE initiatives studied as GPs (Adult Education Communicative Ecologies). The pilot studied a VET initiative specifically targeting vulnerable young adults in Romania, which was studied from an AE perspective (WP3) and communications perspective (WP4).
- analysing the communicative ecology of a vulnerable group. This involved research in a marginalised Roma community in the disenfranchised outskirts of Bucharest, Romania. Methodological aspects related to the choice of a vulnerable population to conduct research with, access issues and protocols for data collection and ethics approach were tested in this site and stood at the basis for the research design related to the communicative ecologies of young people in vulnerable situations (Strand 3).

This resulted in a coherent framework for data collection protocols spanning access to research sites and respondents. Through engaging with research participants in the pilot study we were able to think through the benefits that participants (particularly AE organisations) may derive for offering their time for research. It also highlighted the diverse conditions of vulnerability and ethical implications (e.g., ensuring full informed consent for participants with illiteracy or functional illiteracy). Finally, we were able to fully test our qualitative research instruments and protocols.

1.3.3 Research design for WP4.1

As mentioned above, a unique research design for WP3 and WP4.1 was developed in order to ensure consistency and to maximise the results of fieldwork activities. From the perspective of WP4.1 inputs, the research design key stages can be described as follows:

- *Strand 1. Context analysis* had the purpose to map the local context investigated by each partner team and identify a vulnerable group which could be involved in research on communicative ecologies

- *Strand 2. Targeted research on good practices* mapped the information and communication context around adult education programmes, shadowing WP3
- *Strand 3. Targeted research on vulnerable groups: Communicative ecologies mapping* was designed to focus on communicative ecologies mapping with a vulnerable group identified through Strand 1.

Strand 2 focused on studying good practice AE programmes from a communications perspective, seeking to identify information and communication flows, resources and practices in adult education initiatives. This implied that a section on information and communication was included in each interview guide (with AE practitioners; policy makers and educational authorities; and young people participating as learners in AE programmes). Moreover, there were communication aspects inherent in the functioning of the AE initiative, which could be relevant for both WP3 and WP4.1. This was one of the key aspects considered when a joint research design was set up. For example, collaborations between AE providers and other educational, state or NGO stakeholders are important for fulfilling the core activities of an AE provider, from organising joint projects to reaching out to beneficiaries. At the same time, from a communications perspective, these are studied as networks, looking at actors, information and communication flows, and from here identifying processes that work well, or gaps in information and communication.

For **Strand 3**, focused on studying the communicative ecologies of a vulnerable group, each partner selected a group that had a particularly vulnerable status in the context they were studying. The aim was to ensure a representative coverage of different types of vulnerabilities across the Consortium, but also focus on groups who experienced conditions of vulnerability or were underprivileged in a particular country context. The methodology involved group or individual interviews, communicative ecologies mapping techniques and observation recorded through field notes.

1.3.4 Data collection instruments

Question protocols for Strand 1 and Strand 2 were developed with appropriate distinctions dictated by the project key research questions with respect to either WP3 or WP4.1. This decision was based on the acknowledgement of the inter-relations between the scope of research of WP3 and WP4.1 in particular: communicative aspects investigated through WP4.1 are overlaid on the targeted research on good practices,

focusing on diverse communicative practices and interactions conducted by or among policy-makers, AE providers, and young people. Thus, an appropriate design of data collection was set up, by which research was conducted through interviews and desk research spanning the three strands introduced above.

In **Strand 1**, interviews have been designed to enable validation of good practices, their contextualisation in the local AE field, and to confirm access to studying them in-depth. Main actors involved in the AE field and social inclusion (particularly AE educators and NGO representatives) have been interviewed in order to:

- Identify elements of good practice against context-specific features
- Probe/assess previously identified good practices and confirm access to studying them.

In addition, desk research was conducted by partners to collect:

- Statistics and studies on the vulnerable group on which the strand #3 research in a given country is focused, disaggregated according to gender if available
- Statistics and studies on media access for the VG (e.g. broadband uptake, mobile phone ownership and usage, media channels and availability), wherever available disaggregated according to gender, vulnerability status, and the type of vulnerability covered.

For **Strand 2**, data collection involved desk research, interviews and focus groups. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with:

- Educational authorities/ policy-makers whose area of focus is relevant for the GP.
- Educators, designers, managers and other staff involved in the design and management of the specific educational initiative identified as GP.
- Current and former learners involved in each GP.

Interviews with policy makers have been designed to provide expert views on the local policy context and to enable an assessment of good practice cases, by means of a comparison between the relevant educational/policy goals and approaches, with the achievements of the GP under study. Specifically for WP4, a section of the interview guide included questions regarding communicative aspects in the process of policy-making and implementation, for instance to what extent are vulnerable groups and their representatives involved or consulted in the process of policy-making.

Interviews with AE practitioners elicited data about the specific GP programme studied, as well as the context within which it was designed, delivered and evaluated, aiming to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the GP in terms of its contribution to develop APC competences for learners and to support their participation in socio-economic and political life.
- Identify pedagogical strategies and approaches, and other supporting elements that can be linked to the positive outcomes of the programme.
- Understand how the institution communicates with learners and other institutions—including main groups/actors, channels, messages, and their effectiveness or associated challenges.

Interviews with learners were designed to understand, from learners' perspectives, how the programme has affected them and their chances for more active socio-economic and political participation. We gathered learners' views on whether and to what extent the programme resulted in any change/improvement in terms of:

- Development of APC competences for learners,
- Opening up opportunities for socio-economic and civic-political participation.

One section of the interview looked at communication before, during and after the programme – focusing on what worked and what could be done better through different means and channels.

Focus groups were conducted with some current or former learners involved in a programme, organised depending on the practical possibilities for each GP studied.

Strand 3 data collection involved research carried out primarily through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and communicative ecologies mapping. Semi-structured interviews and focus were carried out with young people 16-30 years old that may or may have not been actively involved in AE programmes. Their focus was on young people's communicative practices in formal and informal networks, and their personal, educational and professional aspirations.

Communicative ecologies mapping has been conducted as a support tool to the individual interviews and focus groups, to guide the discussion on communicative practices and to evidence key aspects of communicative ecologies, namely: 1) *devices/platforms* for information and communication; 2) *people and networks* and 3) *content*; and their relations to the goals and life contexts where any of these are used.

In all interviews and focus groups, **gender** was approached as a cross-cutting theme. Prompts and follow up questions have been used regarding gender issues in policy making and implementation of educational policies and in AE teaching and learning contexts.

1.3.5 Partners' input and coordination

All EduMAP partners except Foredata were responsible for carrying out qualitative research for WP3 and WP4, covering a number of EU countries and case studies corresponding to the allocated person months for the two WPs. The research design was developed by WP4.1 and WP3 leaders in close collaboration with partners, and final versions were delivered to partners by means of guidance documents that described the rationale, data collection protocols, sampling considerations and methodological aspects for each strand. An overview of the data collection covered by EduMAP partners is provided below and synthesised in *Annex 1. Data collection and sampling*.

1.3.6 Sites and sampling

Field research was conducted by partners (April 2017—February 2018) following the research design. This involved research on context mapping and identifying a vulnerable group to study (Strand 1); study of communicative ecologies in adult education, focusing on AE GP cases (Strand 2); and studying the communicative ecology of a vulnerable group (Strand 3). Partners conducted data collection in line with the research design documentation, and considering issues related to access and practical considerations stemming from each research context.

Each partner was responsible for conducting research in a number of countries, and covering cases of AE good practice corresponding to their person months. Overall, research was conducted in 20 countries, covering 40 AE good practice cases (jointly for WP3 and WP4.1—**Strand 2**) and communicative ecologies have been conducted in 7 EU countries and Turkey (**Strand 3**).

Strand 2 research involved AE practitioners, educational authorities and policy-makers, and AE learners. Educational authorities and policy-makers have been selected based on their relevance to the GP identified. In particular, we selected educational authorities and policy makers whose area of work and scope of decisional power was directly related to the area of the GP programmes studied.

Educators and programme designers were selected based on their involvement in designing, developing, delivering and/or evaluating the programme. A series of roles have been covered in each organisation, including, as applicable: Instructional designers—responsible with conceptualising and designing the AE programme; Programme/project managers; Directors/managers who have a vision for the role of the GP in the institutional context, and in the broader AE context; Teachers/educators; Communication and outreach officers.

Current and former learners involved in the GP programme have been selected through the mediation of the implementing agency. Sampling was guided by the following considerations:

- Gender balance—aim for proportional coverage of young men and women
- Factors such as economic and employment status, groups within the 16-30 age range.

For **Strand 3**, seven partners (all university partners except TLU, who did not have enough time allocated in DoA) conducted communicative ecologies research with one vulnerable group, while FEL conducted research with two young people groups, in Romania and Spain. Overall, eight studies of young people communicative ecologies have been conducted in seven EU countries and Turkey: Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Turkey, and the UK (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Overview of young people groups studied in Strand 3. Targeted research on vulnerable groups. Communicative ecologies mapping

Partner	Strand 3 Country	Young people group	No of Informants
UTA	Finland	Youth in special needs AE	9
DVV	Germany	Migrants and refugees	11
AUTH	Greece	Homeless men	10
USZ	Hungary	Roma	7
FEL	Romania, Spain	Roma; Roma women	11 + 9
ASBU	Turkey	Syrian refugees	14
UCL	UK	Migrant women, learners of English as a second language	20

Communicative ecologies datasets

WP4.1 datasets are clustered around adult education CE (studied in Strand 2), and CE of young people (studied in Strand 2—AE learners, and Strand 3—young people not associated with an AE programme).

Adult education communicative ecologies are circumscribed to the 40 AE GP cases in 20 countries: Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, UK, Ireland and the Netherlands, and Turkey for the outside Europe coverage (see Annex 3 for descriptions of the AE programmes studied). A total of 712 informants have been involved across AE practitioners, young learners and policy-makers whose remit aligns to specific AE GP cases (see Annex 1, Table 10.1 for a list of cases per country and Table 10.2 for sampling details).

Specifically for Strand 3, young people's communicative ecologies include eight groups from seven EU countries (Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Spain, UK) and Turkey, in which a total of 91 informants have been involved (See Table 1.1 above and Annex 2 for a description of field sites and sampling).

Vulnerable groups covered specifically in Strand 3 included migrants and refugees, Roma men and women, migrant women studying English as second language, Syrian refugees, youth in special needs AE and homeless men. In addition, other conditions of vulnerability have been covered in Strand 2, with AE learners, including young people leaving care, long term unemployed, women affected by mining disaster, prisoners, substance abusers, early school leavers, and young people experiencing economic vulnerabilities and with special needs (total 184 young people involved in Strand 2 research).

1.3.7 Data coding and analysis

To ensure comparability and relatedness among data and findings from different country contexts, a consistent process of data analysis has been shaped and adopted across partners, based on a common library of codes. The project took a hybrid approach to data coding and analysis based on a combination of deductive coding (operationalised from the project research questions and conceptual framework) and inductive coding (new codes developed from collected data). This approach ensured alignment with the project's research objectives and questions (by using deductive codes), whilst

maintaining openness for new insights to come from collected data (through inductive coding).

Researchers across the EduMAP consortia were encouraged to keep a record of all data, including observations through fieldnotes which were particularly relevant for strand 3. All data was labelled according to agreed classifications, including where it was from and how it was collected. Labelling in EduMAP meant recording what kind of research data it is (interview transcript etc.), where it was collected, when it was collected or written, and who it involves. Labels needed to be clear enough for researchers to find when sorting through large amounts of data, and to clearly identify the type and source of the data. All data belonging to each EduMAP partner was placed in a qualitative software package. All data was organised by country and GP case, and could be explored and identified by a range of other codes and classifications.

The codebook was developed by the WP3 and WP4.1 coordinating teams in constant dialogue with partners. Initially, the master codebook was tested on the dataset from the pilot project conducted in Romania. After two rounds of partner testing and feedback, the codebook was finalised and shared across the consortium in December 2017.

For the purpose of WP4.1, codes were designed to enable data retrieval for answering the key research question regarding ways of improving AE programmes for reaching out to before and addressing young people effectively during and after AE courses. WP4.1 codes are clustered around AE GP cases and young people communicative ecologies; and a code has been devised specifically to retrieve data on dialogue forums between AE providers and young people (Figure 1.2).

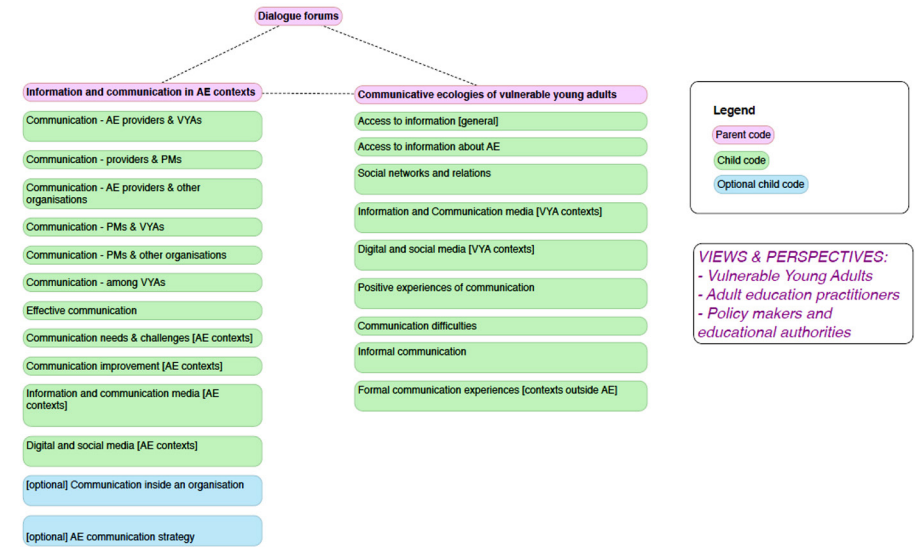


Figure 1.2. Visualisation of codes clusters in response to project research questions focused on WP4

1.4 Report structure

The report is structured in three main parts:

Part I. Mapping communicative ecologies: Young people in vulnerable situations and adult education illustrates how the Communicative Ecologies framework is applied in the context of young people and their information and communication practices (Ch. 1), and to Adult Education (Ch. 2). It provides a necessary background, shows what CE mapping implies, and what communicative ecologies and assemblages look like, before going into identifying challenges and ways to improve information and communication in Part II of this report. At the same time, it offers an in-depth look into young people's information and communication practices, looking at information flows, social networks, media and other resources and showing differences by group, gender, geography and different adult education provision scenarios.

Part II. Matches, mismatches and routes to effective practice answers the main research question of this WP, and looks at challenges and gaps, achievements and ways to improve information and communication practices in AE programmes at three levels: programme level and the interface between AE practitioners and learners (Ch. 4); communication in AE organisations (Ch. 5); and at the level of policy that affects the AE sector (Ch. 6).

Part III. Implications for research, practice and policy places the findings in dialogue with theory and literature on communication, education, vulnerability and APC (Ch. 7) and maps implications for AE and APC practice and policy (Ch. 8), at five levels, for:

- Improving design of AE programmes through consideration of relevant information and involvement of key stakeholders;
- Improving young people's access to adult education;
- Cultivating constructive, collaborative learning environments in adult education programmes;
- Improving access to information and its integration in the policy development process; and
- Informing forums for dialogue between young people and AE providers.

Chapter 9 outlines concluding remarks and the significance of this study for research, practice and policy.

PART I

Mapping communicative ecologies: Young people in vulnerable situations and adult education

This section of the report maps information and communication practices in the two contexts investigated by the EduMAP project: that of young adults at risk of social exclusion (Chapter 2) and that circumscribed by the adult education field (Chapter 3). The mapping is done on the basis of the analytical framework described in the introductory chapter, which distinguishes between communicative ecologies and communication assemblages, as discussed above:

- **Communicative assemblages** represent the ways by which information and communication resources are harnessed and given direction and purpose by an information and communication goal formulated by the agent. Their main characteristic is that they are goal-driven, and the same resources (such as networks, media or material resources) can be mobilised by the agent differently when driven by different goals. In time, certain assemblages are repeated, and may become routinised, established, such as continuously updating social media profiles and following interesting pages, in order to keep oneself informed in a particular area.
- **Communicative ecologies** are made of the totality of information and communication resources, networks and flows that happen in one's life or are available to an agent. Some of these are or have been mobilised in goal-driven communicative assemblages, while some are available or accessible but may not have been used yet to some definite purpose. Thus, distinguishable from communication assemblages, the ecologies have a sphere of potential and one of actuality, they are a lot messier, unpredictable and difficult to wholly grasp and assess in a research study.

The two chapters in this part provide an overview and illustrate diverse communicative ecologies and assemblages, circumscribed to the contexts of young people and adult education. Both are descriptive, and use multiple examples from the field sites covered

in the research to illustrate the variety of ecologies and assemblages that can be crafted in these contexts. Aided by the analytical framework, they show the importance of considering a few key elements when mapping information and communication practices, especially: the goals of the agent that mobilise communication, the social networks and practices, the media repertoires, the informational content accessed or produced, and the competences and other material resources available for the agent. Attention to these elements helps identify both challenges and points of leverage in communication, which can be further used to improve outreach of AE and engagement in AE for young people at risk of social exclusion.

Chapter 2 draws in particular on research on the communicative ecologies of young people carried out in Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Spain, Turkey, and the UK (see Table 1.1 in the Introduction chapter and Annex 2 for details on the field sites and sampling). Chapter 3 draws on the research conducted for mapping adult education communicative ecologies across 40 AE GP cases in 19 EU countries and Turkey (see Annexes 1 and 3 for sampling and AE programmes characteristics).

Chapter 2. Communicative ecologies of young people in vulnerable situations

For me always I try to be social with people, contact directly. Because I don't like social media. I contact directly. I'm a sociable woman. [Young Adult UK_19]

This chapter introduces and illustrates typical communication ecologies and assemblages used by young people across a variety of settings and countries. We do not aim to generalise the incredible diversity of communication practices, but rather point to patterns and tendencies that shed light on young people's communication contexts. Such insights can inform improved practices in AE information provision and communication (something that we will treat in the forthcoming sections and chapters of this report).

In this chapter, we first show how we can analyse the communicative ecologies of individuals and of groups (section 2.1). Section 2.2 offers an overview of the five key dimensions composing the CEM framework that is used to analyse empirical data in subsequent sections, from 2.3 to 2.7 as follows:

- section 2.3 focuses on young people's goals and aspirations to engage in particular communicative and informational practices;
- section 2.4 outlines the implications of social networks and hubs in their communicative assemblages;
- section 2.5 zooms in on how young people access which content and information, paying special attention to AE information and the role social networks and media repertoires play in this process;
- section 2.6 presents patterns of young people's preferred media, platforms and devices across countries; and
- section 2.7 analyses how agency is distributed across young people's contextual and personal resources, with a focus on communication competences and literacies.

Throughout the analysis, issues of availability and access to information and communication resources are given particular attention. This is crucial for conveying the difference between having access to and habitual use: for example, some young people may lack access to devices and Internet connectivity for using social media. Others

have access, but may choose not to use it, or use it for very specific communication purposes.

In the remainder of the chapter, section 2.8 highlights challenges young people encounter in accessing information and engaging in communication practices. Finally, section 2.9 describes information and communication practices of young adults that can be used to leverage improvements in the communicative outreach and effectiveness of adult education.

2.1 Individual and group communicative ecologies and assemblages

[I use] phone cards as well. Like back home like sometimes they don't have any access to light [electricity], it's like sometimes if you call them on WhatsApp they are only....they don't put their own WhatsApp on or they don't charge their phones, I can't get through to them, I have to phone. Use phone cards [Young Adult UK_3].

Both communicative ecologies and assemblages are circumscribed to agents, which can be individuals or groups. The **communicative ecology of individual young adults** maps media, social networks and typical contexts or scenarios of information access and communication—for example, at the library, in the neighbourhood, at the local community centre, and so on. It shows which resources are available and accessible to agents, most often used or preferred and for what purpose (Text box 2.1).

Text box 2.1. The communicative ecology of a Roma woman in Barcelona (Spain)

Like many other girls of her age, Tamara¹ (16 y.o.) loves her smartphone and uses it all day long, mainly for communicating with close family and friends through WhatsApp. It is by far her favourite mobile app because she can get in touch with loved ones very easily and she likes reading the “beautiful thoughts” they put in their user status. She also enjoys taking pictures and sharing them on Instagram, where she can see her friends too. “I almost never use Facebook, I did not even download it on my mobile phone,” she explained. Sometimes, however, she uses Facebook from a PC she has at home, which she also uses to watch music videos on YouTube. Her communication assemblage coincides with that of other young people’s, and is centred on the use of smartphones and WhatsApp to communicate with family and friends. Her Internet access is not a problem because she has a monthly data plan and WI-Fi at home, where she lives with her aunt, cousin and little brother. Most mobile phone calls are with her aunt, who encourages her to do something she otherwise would find it hard to do herself: “She wants me to study and work and not to have a boyfriend (...) otherwise I won’t do anything in life. I also want to be someone in the future.”



Fig. 2.1. Tamara's Communicative Ecology Map

Tamara attended the two first years of compulsory secondary education, but she repeated the second year: “I didn’t understand anything so I just ignored it all,” she explained. Instead, she started a VET on hairdressing, which she has always liked, by recommendation of her social worker. Sometimes she searched for information online about new hair styles and make-up tips. She did not look for other information online beyond this, not even the chapters of her favourite soap operas that she could not watch on TV anymore because she was at school. She is very keen on TV programmes—such as talk shows, reality shows, series and the news—and a flamenco music radio station she often listens to in her aunt’s car and at home. She said she never reads newspapers, except for the horoscope section.

¹ All names used are aliases.

The **communicative ecology of a group** is typically mapped for geographical communities, people sharing the same space, though theoretically it could be done as well for distributed groups. The analysis takes a collective stance, looking at:

- Which goals are cherished collectively by a group or community, or what patterns of goals can be identified in a community;
- Which information and communication resources are available or accessible by the group (for example, a community library computer room) or owned by most individuals (such as mobile phones);
- What typical communication processes and practices occur in the group or community, and what variations are encountered.

Collective communicative ecologies or assemblages do not imply consistent and homogeneous practices among all members. Rather, they will most likely imply variation and difference in communication patterns among groups or individuals belonging to the same community. It is important to show how communication patterns vary in relation to specific factors or group determinants. For instance some members may have access to certain resources while others lack access, according to socio-economic status or other differences. Social norms may dictate behaviour and interaction for specific age and gender groups, and so on (See Text box 2.2).

Text box 2.2. The communicative ecology of a Roma community (Bucharest, Romania)

A Roma community live in a marginal neighbourhood of Bucharest. The neighbourhood is declared a marginal urban area to indicate high levels of poverty and social isolation, low levels of education, high unemployment, high crime, substance abuse, poor living conditions and substandard sanitation, among other issues.

The **communication goals** cherished collectively are affected by these issues. Survival and making ends meet is most often the end goal for young people and adults alike. Very few young people aspire to do anything beyond obtaining a job that will enable them to get by. Thus, aspirations are focused on meeting immediate needs, and material needs are targeted beyond social, cultural and spiritual ones.

Poverty affects communication beyond the level of goals, it also drastically reduces access to resources. A chief issue is lack of access to electricity, experienced by many families in the neighbourhood. Some families draw electricity from neighbours, others are connected illegally, and some do not use electricity in the home at all, occasionally going to neighbours to charge

their devices. A young mother explained that she has to choose which devices to charge every day, from the washing machine to the phone. The phone could stay uncharged for days. Another issue is lack of money to top up phone credit. Most participants in interviews mentioned they did not have data plans for the internet, rather they use WI-FI from their neighbours when they can get access. When they cannot top up their phone credit, phones may stay unused for days.

Media resources at individual and family level include mobile phones, TV, and radio which is mostly used in cars and very rarely in homes. Shared resources include two public libraries with access to media facilities, however they are not used by most Roma. Shared ownership of media resources, including phones, in a family is common. **Media practices** privilege face to face and oral communication, and the mobile phone for mediated communication. Most respondents own a TV and use it to access news or for entertainment, chiefly movies. Interestingly, the mobile phone is preferred by some people over the TV, and YouTube is one of the favourite social media sites for accessing entertainment videos. Social media are used for leisure and entertainment information. The main platform is Facebook, used as well as a news source, although access to news is rather dictated by the news feeds of friends, rather than by strategic choice of news sources. Radio and print are reported as not used at all by the research participants.

Strong, reliable **social networks** are cultivated among the Roma community, with a pronounced inner-community orientation. Proximity and family and friendship ties are the most important criteria by which people nurture social relationships. Contacts outside the neighbourhood are reduced, especially for women. Many young mothers report going out of the neighbourhood very rarely, and while inside, their contacts are reduced to family, neighbours, and their children's schools. Men, who typically work, have more connections both inside and outside the neighbourhood.

Social networks are important for passing on information about the neighbourhood and local events, and also to comment on information gathered through the media. Young people often stay informed about news and happenings in the neighbourhood and beyond through informal conversations and word of mouth. Interpersonal contacts and informal social networks—whether face to face or by phone—are the main way to access information about jobs or education opportunities, as well as dealing with authorities. Thus, we witness **informal networks as entry points** for accessing information about formal environments and opportunities.

Inclusionary and exclusionary practices occur inside the neighbourhood. One vector is substance abuse and violence. Social circles are formed around gangs that abuse illegal substance, with episodes often escalating into violence.

Apart from informal social networks cultivated in day to day life, the Roma benefit from the presence of a few associations and NGOs that focus on specific themes such as tackling substance abuse, access to health services, combatting discrimination or enhancing access to education. Prominent among these is [Minority inclusion NGO], which launched several

programmes for the Roma community, spanning education, community development, collective action, and womens empowerment. One of the aspects they focus on regards empowering the community as a whole to identify its collective issues and priorities and bring these issues to authorities to find ways of solving them. Mothers' Club, a weekly meeting and self-help group, enables collective mobilisation and encourages local people/women to become more aware of their rights and communicate with authorities as a group.

2.2 The five dimensions of communicative ecologies and assemblages

This part provides an overview of the five sets of resources that are essential for being able to build communicative assemblages, each aligned to the five components in the communicative assemblages framework described in the introductory chapter of this report:

1. The capacity to aspire and construct goals
2. Social networks and hubs
3. Relevant content and information
4. Media—modalities and platforms
5. Agency: Contextual resources and literacies

1. Capacity to aspire and construct goals

This refers to young people's capacity to formulate goals and devise plans of actions that can further mobilise adequately the resources needed to reach out to them. While this may often be taken for granted, field data revealed that often young people in situations of risk and vulnerability lack or do not have a developed capacity to formulate and mobilise goals in ways that can help them achieve things they may want or they could benefit from to bring positive change and transformation in their lives. Analysing the data from the young people we interviewed, we identified diverse levels where young people encounter difficulty formulating goals or taking action to reach them, which will be described in section 2.3.

2. Social networks and hubs

Social networks play a crucial role in young people's lives which extends across everyday life and communication, as a hub to access and debate information, but also as sources of information which leads to professional and education opportunities. But what precisely are social networks? And what do they mean for young people? These resources condense two essential aspects: active agents, and connections or associations. In the settings included in this research, it appeared that the social networks that hold value as information and communication hubs across informal and formal contacts abide by three conditions: familiarity, trust and outside connectivity. These conditions can be fulfilled at once or partially, and can include people from a young person's immediate surroundings such as family and friends, people from different environments and circles with whom the young person interacts occasionally, as well as members of centres and associations that are somehow linked to the young people. Familiarity and trust are gained through repeated interactions or encounters and they usually shadow one another. In a sense, trust has to be earned, and this is particularly the case for young people who experienced or are still experiencing situations of risk, isolation, marginalisation and abuse. Outside connectivity refers to the capacity of an agent to link to other, outside networks. This is not a necessary condition for being part of a young person's social network, but it becomes essential when social networks are accessed for information and professional leads that come from outside one's immediate circle. For instance, a social worker linking a young person in an isolated neighbourhood to opportunities to work and study outside their neighbourhood, will do so on virtue of their connections with other organisations and professionals. These distinctions can be conceptualised in terms of bonding social capital (within a community or group) and bridging social capital (between agents pertaining to different environments and with different socioeconomic characteristics).²

Social networks can be formal or informal, and can include individuals and groups, or organisations. The **formal/informal** boundary is porous and subjective, and depends to a great extent on the subjective views and experiences of individuals. However, as a rule of thumb, informal connections will include friends, family and acquaintances while formal networks will encompass trustworthy acquaintances from organisations such as social care centres, AE providers, the City Hall, and so on.

2 The types and value of social networks in relation to vulnerability and active citizenship will be interpreted in Part III on Conceptual findings in relation to the concepts of bonding and bridging social capital.

3. Relevant content and information

This refers to information needed to reach out to cherished goals and to what degree this is accessible for young people. The analysis of relevant content is tied particularly to the communication goals, the media used and the social networks accessed. Different purposes involve accessing different types of information—from language learning to entertainment and job seeking; and through diverse media—from face to face and oral communication to digital social media; and the social networks accessed facilitate certain communication flows with associated content. One subsection of 2.4 is dedicated to young people's access to information about AE and two relevant topics emerged from fieldwork: the role of social networks and media repertoires.

4. Media: Modalities and platforms

Media accessibility typically refers to the availability and outreach of various platforms for analogue and digital communication, ranging from face to face interactions, written media, radio and television receivers to computers and mobile phones and a reliable Internet connection. In section 2.5, we look at what media platforms and channels young people access and how they mobilise media resources for both formal and informal interactions.

Agency: Contextual resources and literacies

Agency is about connectivity and interactions distributed across a vast range of interrelated actors, from human agents to material tools. It enriches CEM analysis by shedding light on the tensions, possibilities and constraints at stake when a given agent engages in specific information and communication practices, and it encompasses:

- *contextual resources*, which include the material conditions of young people's media accessibility and affordability, such as electricity to charge their electronic communication devices, or money to top up one's phone; or external resources such as a community library or computer centre;
- *agent-specific resources*, such as diverse competences and literacies (e.g. basic, digital and information) that enable young people to understand, access, produce and interpret information.

Contextual resources usually underpin the resources analysed through the other components of the framework. Analysing them as part of young people's agency conveys the idea that agency is distributed, but that ultimately the power to use them

effectively converges in the agents themselves. Beyond the typical access to media and devices, contextual resources include:

- The capacity to aspire, build and reach out to personal and collective aspiration and collective goals
- Good transportation infrastructure to connect a community
- The existence of a local library, community centre and youth club
- The freedom to speak out against an oppressive regime and the freedom for networking and association
- Strong ties with people in the geographical proximity
- Competences and literacies necessary for communicating in different contexts—at school, in the office, abroad in a different language etc.

Competences are both conditions and end results of communication practices, and they may guide in direct or subtle ways the practices, networks and channels accessed. For instance, lack of written language competences may determine young people to prefer audio-visual content; however, on the contrary, for some young people the very lack of written language competences may determine decisions to read written media such as newspapers to improve their competences.

The five components of the CEM framework outlined above are traversed by two highly intertwined issues: access and use, which will be examined accordingly in the following subsections.

- *Access and availability of communication resources.* Young people may construct communicative assemblages for very different goals, they will choose certain media for communicating with friends, and others for going about looking for jobs and accessing education. But what is at their fingertips, where do they start from to build their communicative assemblages in first instance? What is lacking to enable them to reach the communicative and other goals they potentially cherish?
- *Use,* framed according to the different communication contexts that emerged in this study, namely everyday life—with family, friends and acquaintances—and formal or professional communication—education and school environments, workplaces, and access to public services, from City Halls to healthcare. Although they often overlap and present blurred boundaries, it is conceptually useful to assess their specificities and how they affect and are affected by each component in the framework.

2.3 Capacity to aspire and construct goals

The goals that mobilise communication assemblages are among the most important to analyse, as depending on these young people will go about crafting very different assemblages from the resources at hand. Goals can be investigated in terms of long-term aspirations, interests and ambitions that drive communication practices over the long term. Alternatively, they can be seen in terms of immediate communication intentions and objectives—such as opening a social media account, cultivating professional social networks, or navigating the Internet for entertainment.

Many of the young people involved in the study find it difficult to articulate their aspirations, ambitions and concrete plans for the future, especially in their professional lives.³ This is significant, as in the absence of long-term aspirations and professional plans, they are less likely to know what education track they could pursue, or what competences they should or could shape to reach out to their goals. For example, when asked what they wanted to do in the future, many young Roma interviewed in Romania mentioned they just wanted “an easy job”, something simple, something they could do with their apparently limited capacities. After further probing, it emerged that at least some of these young people had once cherished, or even still cherished aspirations about what they really wanted to do. Yet there was always an obstacle in that they lacked the confidence that they could reach it, or the credentials, basic competences and other resources required to pursue them: a young Roma man wanted to become a butcher, but could not take a vocational course because he missed a secondary school diploma; a young woman wanted to become a nurse, but could not afford to pay for nor attend a course as she had three young children to care for; and one young woman wanted to become a hairdresser, but she was illiterate and would not be accepted in a hairdressing VET course.

Difficulties in articulating aspirations and long-term goals are often associated with lack of confidence in young people’s own capacity to achieve, lack of role models and positive examples in their lives, or the absence of support and encouragement to believe in their capacities. Most significantly for the focus of this study, our data indicates that the information and communication practices and networks that young people engage in have a fundamental impact on the ability to build aspirations. It is particularly important to

3 For a theoretical discussion about the capacity to aspire and aspirations in relation to information and communication practices and networks, please see the present report, Chapter 7 *Implications for research*.

enhance access to other people who overcame similar obstacles and fulfilled their goals and aspirations, thus becoming role models for those still in situations of vulnerability. The power of networking and positive role models is acknowledged for instance among the wider Roma community in Spain. Programmes such as Campus Rom⁴ seek to connect young people interested in a specific subject with Roma who have advanced professionally or educationally in the same subject.

Second, for many young people that do hold aspirations and ambitions, they may lack the capacity to construct achievable goals aligned to these aspirations, or the capacity to devise action plans to reach out to cherished goals. This is one of the fundamental aspects to be taken into account by adult education courses. AE programmes can devise the kind of support structures and provide access to the right information and support to help young people (re)connect to their aspirations and work with them to identify the competences needed, the steps that can be taken to reach out to them, scope opportunities in the outer environment or identify ways to cover critical compulsory education gaps.

Apart from long-term goals and aspirations, which are particularly important when seeking to connect young people to AE opportunities, our study also looked at information and communication goals cultivated in the immediate term, such as for socialising and entertainment. In most cases, young people interviewed mobilise communication and information resources to cultivate family and social bonds, share quotidian life events with beloved ones through small talk, sharing advice or help, and supporting each other in a difficult situation. When family is physically nearby, personal communication is highly valued, as is the case of Roma interviewees who live in extended communities in Romania, Spain and Hungary. In these contexts, the goal of intense digital media use, especially IMS platforms such as WhatsApp, is to complement personal communication goals, more than accomplishing different ones. By contrast, interviewees who are living in a different country than their extended families, such as migrant women in London, Syrian refugees in Turkey or asylum seekers in Germany, rely on digital media as the one and only means to know about them and vice versa. Keeping in touch at a distance despite difficulties becomes the main goal to these young people.

The following sections describe how young people mobilise key resources to reach out to these goals, evidencing the role of social networks, media repertoires, content and information as well as competences and literacies.

4 <https://www.campusrom.org/>

2.4 Social networks and hubs

I don't need to go out of the neighbourhood, in here I feel like at home. (Young Adult Romania_6)

The study revealed that **social networks play an essential role in young people's lives as information gateways and leads to professional and educational contexts**. This may refer to (1) social networks cultivated informally such as friends and family, as well as to (2) trustworthy acquaintances from associations, community centres or social care centres.

Among the young adults involved in research, some benefit from very rich social networks and others rely on just a few points of contact. In most cases, however, **an inner community or group focus** appears to prevail over relations with outside groups, as evidenced among homeless youth in Greece, Syrian refugees in Turkey and Roma women in Romania.

The **homeless interviewed in Thessaloniki**, who encounter prejudice from the society and often experience social isolation, tend to interact mainly with other homeless in their same situation and eventually with social workers at care facilities, who provide them with outside connectivity.

A similar community-centred ethos characterises the group of **Syrians interviewed in Ankara, Turkey**. Although their profiles vary in terms of education, cultural and economic background, as newly arrived refugees they all live retracted in their communities, with very tight and closed Arabic social networks composed of friends and relatives. Thus, they do not have much contact with the local host society and resources, mainly due to lack of Turkish skills, lack of time (men have to work and women have to look after their families) and strict traditional norms that, for instance, do not allow women go out on their own, increasing their isolation. **Roma women in Romania** also rarely go out of their neighbourhood, so their interactions are often reduced to family and close neighbours, and occasionally with teachers and parents in their children's schools,

I kind of stay here all the time. There's nowhere to go, really. Because I don't have a job, I have nowhere to go, nowhere to leave to, and to come back from. (YP8, F, Romania)

Most social networks accessed by the young homeless in Thessaloniki, Syrian refugees in Turkey, and the Roma interviewed in Bucharest abide by the first two conditions of social networks—familiarity and trust. Thus, they are mostly used for informal

and day to day communication, but they are community-restricted. This very strong community orientation, underlies a tendency to isolate from the outside, reinforced by the discrimination and stigmatisation by wider populations.

The dynamic and changing, sometimes volatile, nature of social networks materialises in concrete daily interactions in which agents exchange communication and information resources both formally and informally. Thus, the value of informal information exchanges through social networks should not be underestimated as these social circles confer a variety of benefits, depending on specific contexts and young people's needs:

- As support structures, strengthening the sense of belonging, protection, safety and security
- As ways to improve communication skills, language competences (for migrants)
- As sources of information and spaces where information—from political news to daily life issues—are debated
- As leads to opportunities for education and professional life.

The value of social networks as support structures readily comes out when they are missing. Where young people are isolated and do not benefit from a community or group (such as migrant families or single adults travelling on their own), this may contribute to feelings of loss, worthlessness, isolation and withdrawal, and can cut them off from important information or social opportunities.

When young adults lack a community of belonging, as in the case of some of the **homeless young people in Thessaloniki**, they may find comfort and support in ad-hoc groups, or those organised around local centres and social care facilities, where they share food and leisure activities (e.g. watch TV and play video-games). Paradoxically, this is usually limited to peer collaboration for a specific, short-term purpose (e.g. to find food through city restaurant donations) but it rarely turns into strong social networks, mainly due to independent, lonely and distrustful personalities.

By contrast, the value of social networks increases exponentially when young people benefit from the support of a cohesive community or group. Most informal everyday communication practices tend to take place inside the community, covering informal communication and becoming a hub where information sourced through other means is shared, debated, and enriched. It is this informality and the fluid nature of communication that makes information transit particularly fast and effective, as evidenced

among migrants in Germany and the UK, and Roma communities in Spain, Romania and Hungary. *Informal* contexts and social networks usually provide entry points for accessing *formal* contexts and social networks such as those related to information about jobs, education and other relevant professional opportunities. For instance, many of the **migrant women interviewed in the UK** appreciate above all personal contacts as sources for information, including when it comes to finding out about job opportunities. This may also be because language barriers may make it more difficult for them to find work without personal connections. Similar patterns have been found for the migrants and refugees in Germany, the Roma interviewed in Romania and Spain, or the Syrian refugees in Turkey. In turn, informal networks are often complemented by the intervention of contacts working in formal environments: organisations, associations and social care centres, local administrations and the like that mediate between young people and AE opportunities, as examined in subsection 2.5.1 on the role of social networks in accessing AE information.

The role and value of social networks is tightly interrelated with **the value of face to face communication and interpersonal relationships**, which many of the young people interviewed prefer over other means in day to day communication at local level, as examined in more detail in section 2.6 on Media repertoires.

2.5 Relevant content and information

I hardly ever watch the news. Only if I see something on Facebook or people are talking about it a lot, then maybe I hear about it. I don't say 'I'm going to watch the news'. I don't watch them. (Young Adult Finland_2)

The availability of certain kinds of information varies in different contexts, often depending on the networks that young people access, their language skills, interests and motivations. This part presents some general patterns in information access and a subsection focuses specifically on how young people access AE information. General patterns of information access identified in fieldwork encompass:

Home vs host country culture and news access. Immigrants and refugees deal with multiple belongings and information sources in between their home and host countries. Depending on factors such as their time of settlement and intentions to stay in a given country, they engage differently with local content and content sourced from their own countries. Some groups tend to live in closed social environments, according to their

home country norms and values, with little or no access to local culture but mostly relying on information from their places of origin (as is the case of **Syrian refugees in Turkey**). Or, they might open to the host country culture and news resources, where they aim to stay (as **migrant women in the UK and Germany**). Migrant women in the UK report that the degree of English language competence in their family partially dictates which TV shows are selected: husbands with good English language skills may prefer to listen to news from their home country in Arabic, while they prefer to listen to local broadcasts to improve their language skills.

Informationally isolated communities. The lives, networks and interactions of the Roma in Romania, Hungary and Spain tend to develop within their neighbourhoods only, with little contact with the broader society. The homeless in Greece might access useful information to improve their living conditions through family, home-based peers, potential employers and/or social workers, though these interactions are often limited, sporadic and irregular.

Multimedia and multipurpose information access. Content accessibility often depends on the type of media and devices that a young person has access to. Young people refer to a variety of digital media preferred for being versatile, ubiquitous, immediate and personalized. Roma young people in Hungary like looking for tailored content (mainly entertainment, movies and music) while **migrant women in the UK** value how smartphones provide quick access to key information when necessary, e.g. in a health emergency.

The next sub-section focuses exclusively on information access patterns for AE among the young people interviewed, paying special attention to the role of social networks and media repertoires.

2.5.1 Accessing information about adult education

Information access patterns for AE depend on a variety of factors, including: needs and interests for pursuing AE, social networks, access to media, and competences ranging from local language communication skills (for migrants and refugees) to media and information literacy. These mirror or reflect the patterns for everyday life and formal communication outlined throughout this report, but AE-specific communication patterns can be identified as well. Information access patterns specific to AE access, and different from other practices of accessing information about professional opportunities evidence

the specific role that social networks and media repertoires—in particular social media—play in making young people aware of relevant AE information and content.

The role of social networks in AE information access practices

Three key findings underpin the role of social networks for accessing information about adult education:

1. **Word of mouth and social networks** are among the most important (and at times the most important) ways of accessing information about AE.
2. **Information delivered locally**, through trusted information sources such as community centres, local foundations or informal community leaders is most likely to be considered and followed upon by young people, especially those living in close knit communities.
3. **Key mediators** such as support organisations, foundations, or caretakers have a central role in:
 - Providing access to information young people actively look for
 - Initiating searches and tailoring information for young people that need it
 - Supporting young people to follow up or decide to apply for a suitable programme.

Firstly, it is important to place **the role of social networks in accessing information about AE** in perspective. In some contexts, information is not obtained exclusively through social networks, but rather through a variety of sources, including various media and social media. However, when it comes to actually following up on opportunities or taking a decision, information gathered through trusted networks has more chances to be considered, as illustrated in Text box 2.3.

Text box 2.3. Varied social networks for AE information access for migrant women in London

Migrant women in London use diverse platforms and channels for information about adult education (written, online, or through word of mouth), but social networks and contacts (both personal and sometimes professional) are significant to facilitate their access to particular programmes and resources. Word of mouth is an important information channel for many, which may involve asking friends or family who have undertaken similar courses, but also trusted professionals (for example the community health visitors responsible for their young children's general health and welfare, advisors from community organisations, or teachers if children have started school). Some of the women receive information about courses from libraries, the local council, children's play groups or at the Jobcentre. Some also mention that

seeing a centre or college in their local neighbourhood may prompt them to go inside and ask for information at reception desks, whilst others recall being influenced through general leaflets in the post.

The women involved in the research who already access learning opportunities, also use the social context of their courses to develop networks that may offer information about future opportunities—such as WhatsApp groups. The learning centre or college itself can also be a source for further information about adult education opportunities, both through the support from tutors in classes and through information provided by reception staff in the form of prospectuses and leaflets. Some women, again through their prior participation in learning opportunities, mention receiving targeted written communication (e.g. emails) about further courses and programmes. When it comes to progression routes to other courses (e.g. vocational education and training), information about funding opportunities and support can be particularly important. At this point, the women interviewed appreciate personalised help and advice either from tutors or advisors at the college, or from within their social networks, because information available on the internet can be confusing and unclear.

In some other contexts that are informationally isolated or where information does not easily reach young people at risk of social exclusion, the role of professional figures such as community and social workers, local administration youth contact points etc. becomes all the more important. This may be the case especially for migrants and refugees who have not yet established local networks. For example, in **the Germany study**, information about AE programmes is reported to be obtained by the JMD (Youth Integration Centre Point) or by the Job centres (also in charge of redirecting young people to integration courses).

A very different but still informationally isolated setting is represented by the **Roma neighbourhood in Bucharest**, where without the intervention of mediators young people may not actively reach out to AE opportunities (see *Text box 2.4*). Equally, **the homeless people in Thessaloniki** do not go about seeking information on adult education on their own but rely on local support centre staff. Their actual participation in AE, however, is still dependent on more complex factors, such as their ability and motivations to comply with the basic requirements of studying and attending lessons. Indeed enhancing access to AE is not only about merely finding the right information: young people do not only need to receive information about AE, they need to be assisted, tutored and coached into taking a decision or finding a convenient way to go about integrating an AE course in their lives.

Text box 2.4. The Roma in Bucharest and the key role of mediators for AE information and decision-making

Triangulated data from interview, ethnographic observation of group meetings and discussions with [Minority inclusion NGO] suggest that young people in [Bucharest Roma neighbourhood] **very rarely purposefully look for AE opportunities**. If they do, then it is likely that they have a strong desire, aspiration and associated motivation for which they need additional competences and qualifications; or, the information is at their fingertips, for example in the case of hearing about courses organised in their neighbourhood.

For example, many young men and women in [Bucharest Roma neighbourhood] have not completed secondary or even primary education, and substantial numbers are illiterate. They would benefit greatly from taking Second Chance education, however on their own these young people would not be driven to actively seek information and see if the course suits them. From the interviewees' sample, more than half had graduated from primary school or a few grades above, and two had not been to school. While one of them had learnt at home to read and write, the other was illiterate. Yet, only one of the respondents had started Second Chance education (and gave up due to work and family commitments), and none of the others seriously considered the option or looked actively for information.

Young people may open up to finding out more about AE opportunities that they could really benefit from, if this information is brought to them through familiar channels. When they do look for information, or open up to receiving it, young people will turn to familiar places and people, rather than distant centres or even online information. When the researcher attended a group meeting at Mothers' Club, the women started talking about the difficulties they had helping their children with homework. Two of them mentioned they were illiterate, hence it was really challenging to be helpful for their children. They would like to know how to read and write and had heard about Second Chance. However, they had mixed attitudes towards the programme. They expressed concerns over time investment and their age—going back to school felt awkward. The community assistant, who also filled a role as a promoter for Second Chance education offered to talk to them after the meeting. Following on this thread, the researcher found that this is how information about Second Chance is usually delivered—in a spontaneous, unplanned way; needs-driven but at the same time serendipitous. Channels used are informal and face to face, the community assistant may deliver this information in a setting like Mothers' Club, but also at school when a mother picks up her child, or on the street. These examples and this episode point to the importance of having AE information suitable to existing needs, channelled through familiar information hubs and platforms.

The role of media repertoires in AE information access practices

Scenarios of media use for AE information are varied, however two key emerging findings are worth reporting:

Firstly, the use of digital and social media for personal browsing and entertainment is not an indication that these are also used for accessing information about AE. On the contrary, we found that young people engage in very different patterns of media use for informal vs formal (including AE) information access. This is partly because social media is heavily associated with informality and leisure activities, so it is not surprising therefore that most young people do not immediately associate it with more 'serious' purposes such as looking for a job or AE opportunity. Young people in Germany, Roma in Romania and some migrant women in UK report using social media regularly, yet they do not typically use it for accessing information about AE, or at least not unless they are following on a lead received from a trusted contact. For digital media and the Internet in general, the drawback is that young people do not know where to look, so they first need to find out about and follow up on leads and tips from contacts. Alternatively, as some young people in Spain report, they may come across AE programme announcements accidentally, while looking for jobs or in other searches.

Exceptionally, many Syrian refugees interviewed in Turkey use social media for professional and education purposes too: Facebook to follow certain institutions that supply AE programmes and WhatsApp groups for networking and receiving information about finding jobs and AE programmes. This implies that in refugee and migrant cases, the Internet might compensate the lack of social networks normally accessed in home countries, which they are now missing in their host country. For the migrant women in the UK, the internet (particularly the search engine Google) can also be an important source for finding out information about programmes or colleges in general. Some women need support with this (e.g. from family members), but for others having access to research via the internet can also mitigate against having less social contacts and networks as a result of migration.

The above implies that, **secondly, the best way for AE information to reach out to young people is through blended channels** that merge direct information provided through contacts, organisational mediators and social networks, with information provided through a variety of digital and social media channels. This puts the spotlight again on the importance of social networks for access to AE information, particularly for

isolated and hard to reach groups. Fieldwork in Romania evidences that without reliable indications from a trusted contact, Roma young people would not know where to look for AE information, or may come across courses requiring payment that may otherwise be offered to them for free. However, it is likely that online information could be used successfully to complement initial information delivered in young people's community, though centres and hubs with a local presence. Similarly, although first-hand information provided by social networks also prevails as the most effective way to make Spanish young people interested in AE, timely information provided online can be also effective with a generation that, in most cases, feels at ease in digital environments. To conclude, digital and social media can become effective vehicles if alert to three key aspects: 1) Social networks remain the most effective ways of passing on information and heightening chances of follow-up; 2) Young people's digital practices tend to be more focused on entertainment than on active information research; and 3) AE information is often accessed randomly and by chance.

2.6 Media: Communication modalities and platforms

I only use the internet when I want to find out if my ex boss has a job for me. I don't have a mobile, it's expensive [...] so I use the e-mail to ask him if he has a job for a day or two just to buy food and cigarettes... (Young Adult, Greece_7)

With respect to digital media, there are three main common features traversing the highly diverse information practices of young people at risk of social exclusion:

- 1 The popularity of mobile phone ownership, praised as multimedia devices for multiple purposes—from voice and text communication to accessing social media and entertainment games;
- 2 The pervasive nature of social media, with a spotlight on the widespread preference for WhatsApp.
- 3 Different media repertoires are mobilised by young people for everyday life vs formal and professional information and communication practices.

Despite these common features, very different patterns of access were identified among the young people involved in the research. The most well connected appear to be in **Finland**, where all the young people with special needs interviewed have access to digital media—personal smart phone, computer, laptop, iPad—in accordance with the

high connectivity rates of the broader Finnish population.⁵ By contrast, the least well connected young people interviewed are **the homeless people in Thessaloniki**, who cannot afford their own smartphones, and Romanian Roma, who tend to share mobile devices with their families. Interviewees in Spain and Germany can be located in the middle of the spectrum of digital connectivity, because they all own smartphones, though the majority do not access other devices.

Smartphones usually serve as multimedia devices to listen to podcasts, watch series and read the news, substituting traditional media use. They were followed by television and at times radio, with more rare (or no) occurrences of print media, depending on context. Interestingly, the mobile phone is preferred by some people over the TV for video consumption, and YouTube is one of the favourite social media sites for accessing entertainment videos. A few respondents in Germany watch TV for entertainment—its use seems to have changed after displacement—and some said they listen to German radio stations to improve their German skills. Watching TV is a popular entertainment among most Roma interviewees in Spain and Romania (e.g. movies, series and talk shows).

The UK media context stands out here with more cases where not only television and radio but also free print media have been mentioned. Some migrant women mention radio as a source of information and news, especially those who have caring roles and housework responsibilities as mothers and wives. Their media assemblages included appropriating traditional media features for their own purposes in creative ways: for example, some use the audio part of the TV as a form of radio, while full engagement with the audio-visual experience requires '*sit[ting] down*' (Young person 2)—something that seems more of a luxury for some. Some may occasionally read freely distributed newspapers to improve their English language skills. In turn, young people in Hungary said they do not buy newspapers, mainly because they do not have any money and everything is online.

2.6.1 Social media use and practices: Preferences and patterns

With respect to **social media platforms**, there are two main features shared by almost all young people interviewed: first, WhatsApp is the most used and preferred application,

⁵ According to a recent survey (OSF 2017) all Finns aged 16 to 34 have a smartphone and they use the Internet several times per day mostly with their smartphones when outside home whereas the usage of tablets outside home was less popular.

followed by Facebook and YouTube and, to a lesser extent, Instagram.⁶ Secondly, these apps are mainly used for family communication and leisure and entertainment information, since formal communication with, for instance, actual or potential employers and authorities rarely occurs through social media.

Despite these shared traits that cut across diversities in groups and countries, media preferences and usage patterns vary greatly among respondents and contexts. For example, WhatsApp was not the main option for Hungarian Roma, who prefer Viber for local messaging and use Facebook intensively for social networking, including closed groups, page following etc. Romanian Roma as well prefer the platform Facebook and its Messenger function. In Spain, the youngest Roma women (16 y.o.) use Instagram but none of them uses Facebook, which is preferred by interviewees aged above 25.

The above patterns are examples of how social media uses vary greatly across groups and cannot be taken for granted when devising information campaigns for AE. For example, in the UK, a local authority based organisation went through the fairly lengthy approval process for a Facebook account only to find that this wasn't the preferred media account of young people they were seeking to target, who used snapchat and Instagram.

For most respondents the use of social media is restricted to informal communication, and tends to be associated with informality, leisure, entertainment and for cultivating informal social networks, but also for accessing news. The following usage patterns of social media stand out:

1. Social media for social interaction, networking and communication

By far, this is the primary use goal for social media, though it is accomplished through diverse communicative assemblages in which agents mobilise the resources they find available and more convenient in a given spatiotemporal context. Social media is essential to keep in touch at a distance, as exemplified by highly mobile populations, such as refugees in Turkey, and migrants in the UK and Germany, who communicate with their beloved scattered in different geographical places and build new social networks in the host societies.⁷

6 Other social media services popular in the broader society such as Twitter were not mentioned.

7 Although some migrant women in London describe concerns about the privacy of platforms such as Facebook and are careful and selective in how they communicate on social media.

2. Social media as information source for news and entertainment information

Use of social media for news access is most pronounced among the migrant women in London and the migrants interviewed in Germany. News access and social networking are blended, and often punctuated with aspects related to relevance and wayfinding: because news pieces are shared by trusted channels they follow, or by friends who are largely interested in the same things, the chance for the news to be more relevant, valid or interesting is also higher.

UK migrant women access news combining new and old media, through news apps on smartphones or by following friends on social media who share news that might be particularly interesting or relevant to them:

But when something [is] not shown on TV so I go to Facebook. Because people, you know, people share the news. The latest, latest came in there. (YP19, F, UK)

Migrants interviewed in Germany use Facebook to read global news for free in media such as BBC, Al Jazeera and other local press agencies that keep them abreast of the situation in the country of origin. By contrast, German newspapers are not used to access information or news due to the language barrier.

Other young people are much less keen on using social media for accessing news because they are just not interested. In particular, among the young people in Finland and the Roma in Romania, Spain and Hungary, news access through social media appeared rather incidental than intentional, a by-product of following friends' posts.

3. Social media as hub for passing on opportunities among interest groups

This is a practice that bridges informal and formal purposes of communication, and has been found to be quite rare among respondents. While some young people mentioned they do follow specific information streams such as cooking recipes or voluntary causes, it was only in the case of Syrian refugees and Hungarian young people that this use was systematic. Syrian refugees used WhatsApp and Facebook to get information about employment, scholarships, aids and education facilities. Five of the Hungarian young people interviewed mentioned they were members of closed interest groups on Facebook for sharing relevant information. Exceptionally, two Roma women interviewed in Spain participate in big WhatsApp groups of social activism in which social interaction mingles with information sharing.

2.7 Agency: Contextual resources and literacies

And all the times I talk with someone, I ask the tutors, everyone, the staff, 'oh do you know something like that for helping me in the English'. [...] The tutors, the friends I find that you know something is new. Everything I know new I send to my groups, had a lot of groups from the WhatsApp. (Young Adult UK_1)

The ways and extent to which young people mobilise communication and information resources depend on both individual resources—basic, digital and information competences and literacies- and contextual resources—such as availability of media devices, connectivity, infrastructures and material conditions in which communication takes place. Thus interviewees' agency to communicate and access information can be understood as being distributed among the various devices, platforms, channels and other human and non-human actors involved in a given communicative process.

Despite difficulties, young people's widespread access and use of digital media is facilitated by contextual resources, unevenly but more or less distributed across diverse actors: from highly competitive telecommunication markets that have opened mobile telephony to the masses and made internet connections faster and cheaper, to social policies that support public free Wi-Fi access points and volunteers who manage these and other facilities.

This distributed view of agency suggests that we look at the individual or group agency of young people not only in relation to their immediate access to resources, but also how these are distributed and nestled in other processes. For instance, the **homeless young people in Thessaloniki** mentioned that they have no access to smartphones because it is costly and they cannot afford it. Their digital disconnection, however, is cushioned by their possibility of accessing the Internet in the care facility they regularly attend, where their sense of agency (understood here as the possibility of digital connection) is enhanced by the combination of their own knowledge and motivations to communicate, computers, WIFI and the social workers who manage the centre, among other factors.

A different example of distributed agency involves how media ownership and usage are shaped by sociocultural and economic features in which gender roles emerge as strong explanatory factors. For instance, the **young Roma in Bucharest** blend individual and collective patterns by sharing mobile phones and even Facebook profiles with other family members. Likewise, **Syrian refugee women in Ankara** hesitate to use

social media, particularly Facebook as there can be gossiping among their relatives and neighbours about what they share. Despite being very different cases, for both groups young people's agency operates in a wider network of economic constraints, cultural and social norms, family traditions and gender regimes that affect most aspects of their lives, including what media and platforms they use and how.

In turn, issues related to competences and literacies are intricately related to key aspects of communication practices:

- The social networks accessed, which can open up language and communication competences (such as in the case of migrants interacting with local people) or can effectively shut some young people out (because they won't 'fit')
- The content accessed, which expands on language and communication skills and diverse registers and communication styles (e.g., reading news as a way to grasp the subtleties of written as different from oral language; but also finding a piece of content incomprehensible)
- Various media and platforms, which can build or enhance digital literacies, or shut off young people who do not have the basic skills.

In the following examples we outline some of the most illustrative and insightful cases of how competences and literacies influence the information and communication resources that young people can access and use to craft different communicative assemblages.

1. The specificities of living abroad: migrants and refugees

Accessing news, frequenting social networks and partaking in digital media practices by migrants and refugees meet manifold purposes, including:

- learning the local language/improve local language skills
- supporting acculturation practices—learn about local ways of being, values, socialisation protocols
- maintaining the link with one's home country culture and news.

Motivations to improve competence-building in local language and information heavily depend on whether young migrants aim to stay in the host country or not. In this sense, there are big differences between **migrants in Germany and the UK** (who download apps to learn the local language and show interest for the local culture) and **Syrian refugees in Turkey** (who see it as a temporary abode before moving further to Europe). Although some of them try to learn Turkish by watching YouTube videos, most prefer

watching news in Arabic from some international channels in order to follow news about their country instead of cultivating social relations with locals.

In turn, across more contexts, key competences for formal and professional communication appear to be closely tied with young people's confidence in their own power, increased agency and abilities to carry out activities in formal contexts or in contact with authorities, on their own. In contrast, lack of competences tied in with increased dependency on others—whether social workers, family members, friends or acquaintances. Thus, migrants and refugees' mastery of the local language is linked to increased confidence and autonomy, or independent handling of communication with authorities and in other professional contexts. Some migrant women in London provide accounts of how they used to depend on others (e.g. husbands and sometimes children) to be able to communicate in English and how they felt empowered by the experience of being able to communicate directly, for example with doctors, about their concerns. Many speak about feelings of shame and frustration related to not being able to express themselves and be understood.

Text box 2.5. Communication practices between language learning, acculturation and maintaining links with home countries (migrant women, London)

Many accounts of information and communication practices are linked with the key learning needs and aims of the migrant women interviewed, namely navigating day to day life in a country with which they are still becoming familiar and in a language they are still learning. For example, watching or listening to the news in English is described by many not just as a means to access information, but also as a way in which they seek to improve their language skills. Using subtitles on television is mentioned as a helpful feature in this context [young people 2, 3, 4 and 20], although some experience them as a distraction [young person 19]. In any case, because the women are still in the process of learning English and broadening their vocabulary, understanding what is said on TV is not always easy. In the context of increasing access to global news programmes in various languages through satellite or digital TV, some of the women describe choices in terms of their information practices: watching the news can support both English language learning and acculturation processes in the UK, as well as providing an important ongoing link to language, culture and news from the women's countries of origin. In a focus group interview, diverse practices emerged: while one woman said she uses news in Arabic as a way of keeping in touch with developments in her country of origin (and perhaps also as a more accessible means of information gathering due to the ongoing language barriers she experiences as a migrant woman learning English), another informant

emphasises her need to improve her understanding of English while her husband (whose English is already good) watches the news in Arabic. Choosing the language of information media, but also for day to day communications, including (where relevant) with their children, can involve some balancing of needs: the need for one's own (and especially the children's) connection with the language and culture of the women's countries of origin on the one hand, and the need for improving their English communication skills on the other.

2. Socio-cultural regulations and gender

Besides personal motivations to improve communication competencies and literacies or not, a group's specific cultural and social norms and values also shape possibilities, as illustrated by the gender regimes operating on Syrian refugee women in Turkey. They often live confined to their flats or in slums, looking after their crowded families (sometimes also their in-laws, if married); their husband may abandon them with small children or have many wives. They may be forbidden from going out alone or work where men are present and they do not use any social media for communication with relatives or institutions because they lack time, material resources and skills. A woman explained that she does not have an opportunity to go out and attend any AE course because her husband has two other wives at home and there are many children to care for in the house. Even educated women access some information via their male relatives rather than from direct contact with the institutions. Their agency to develop autonomous communication and information practices thus becomes severely restricted by their domestic and care responsibilities, making it difficult for them to escape the vicious circle of isolation and dependency.

3. The challenges of formal communication

One of the most pronounced boundaries separating different communication contexts that emerged in this study is the one distinguishing between everyday life and formal or professional communication and whether young people have the required competences to assemble different information and communication practices for each one. Indeed, evidence points out the difficulties most young people have in managing the different registers for communication at work in formal contexts (e.g. education and school environments, workplaces, and access to public services, from City Halls and healthcare) and informal environments (daily interactions with close social circles such as friends and family). This came out in particular from the triangulation of interviews with young people, social care NGOs, and educators in Finland, Romania and Spain.

4. The multiple layers of media and information literacies

Media and information literacies are essential for finding professional opportunities, getting informed about one's rights, getting in touch with authorities and many other important activities in a young person's life on at least three levels. **On a first level**, some basic literacy competences have to be met: knowing how to read and write or knowing the local language. Among migrants and refugees, the lack of mastery of the local language is a serious impediment when visiting a doctor, or accessing local information and news. At the same time, it can be a driver to improve one's language skills, such as migrant women in the UK who use radio and television as well as newspapers as a means to upgrade their English language competences.

On a second level, information and digital literacy are important assets for reliable and trustworthy access to information, whether it is about being informed about local happenings, or finding education and job opportunities. Many of the young people interviewed in this study are digitally skilled, and easily manipulate digital devices and social media. However, knowing how to use a device, send a WhatsApp message or an email does not mean they are fully digitally literate or possesses information literacy. The latter also implies capacities for information retrieval (knowing where to search online for jobs, for instance) and checking information accuracy (separating facts from opinions, and singling out trustworthy information). Thus, some young people may appear digitally and informationally literate, while in reality they rely on more complex assemblages made of contacts and networks and trial and error to fulfil their communication goals.

This pattern of information access through third parties and mediators repeated across various countries datasets. Indeed, some young people were not able to or just not motivated enough to go about finding what they needed on the Internet on their own, despite being online most of the day. Thus, the critical issues related to young people's information access are their narrow use of media and its different information channels as well as their uncertainty of where to even begin to search for information. However, when young people are motivated to accomplish their goals, they are capable of overcoming difficulties with surprising creativity and resilience, as clearly illustrated by one **Romanian Roma** who, despite being illiterate, managed to use Facebook by recognising the symbols; she was able to write and read her name and those of friends and family, and the rest of the communication was image-based.

On a third level, media and information literacy are linked to knowledge about and capacity to navigate often complex social, professional and job market structures. For

instance, just to access suitable jobs through a website and follow on successfully to a job interview, young people not only need the digital skills to navigate the Internet. They also need to know which portals typically advertise certain kinds of low or highly skilled jobs; why jobs that require sending CVs are different from the ones where just a phone number is advertised for contact; how to prepare and present oneself for a job interview, etc. For instance, young Finns proposed that there were a lot of job possibilities “on the internet” but offered no further observations on the subject, neither did they describe their experiences in job seeking. Some seemed uncertain about their chances or even commented that they needed support on the matter. Similarly, the experiences of young Romanian Roma point towards them lacking media and information literacy, and awareness of how media channels support the market of job demand and supply. A few participants tried to use the internet with no definite strategy, for instance they just used mainstream search portals such as Google. They reported that they did not come across suitable options and gave up after a few attempts. This made the Internet seem unreliable, with dead ends and job posts that soon dated. Just one respondent declared he found jobs through a job portal. However, he used a portal that posted mainly low qualification jobs, and looked over announcements just to identify contact details to then follow up by phone. These examples suggest that issues of media literacy are interspersed with knowledge of the job market and invisible divisions in access to jobs. By only being aware of some media practices for job seeking – from personal contacts to portals for low qualified jobs – participants’ access to the job market is also curtailed and limited to only certain jobs and categories of jobs.

2.8 Challenges in information and communication practices

Well maybe sometimes people they accept you. When you do the mistake they give you more chance to speak. And some people they don't like to understand, to listen what you do, they really....they 'she can't talk English', they ignore you. (Young Adult UK_18)

2.8.1 Challenges in everyday life and formal communication contexts

A series of challenges appear to be applicable across respondent groups, though they are nuanced differently for diverse group and individual experiences:

- Competence-related challenges—these can range from lack of competences for formal communication, to poor knowledge of local language

- Isolation and lack of connecting networks which can deliver important information about professional opportunities, including AE
- Discrimination and mistrust from the rest of society, coupled with discrimination from authorities, service providers and employers.
- Lack of capacity to navigate social services
- Transition to digital practices and implications for reaching out to young people
- Challenging life contexts and implications for communication (violence, abuse)

Most often these challenges are not single vectors, they influence and potentiate each other. For instance, social isolation is often related to poor communication and language competences, and it can be both a result of and a cause of discrimination and stigmatisation. They also bear different layers and distinctions with respect to formal and informal communication and life contexts.

Competence-related challenges

Unpolished communication competences can affect chances and opportunities in formal and professional contexts, from knowing how to present themselves during an interview to communication skills at work or with authorities. Across very diverse contexts, young Finns and young Roma interviewed lack competences for formal communication, which is a very big impediment in employment and relations with authorities. In general, the challenge is to switch from informal, daily life communication to more formal registers. For instance, they may lack the skills to introduce and present themselves in a job interview. This is entrenched with low self-confidence and at times a feeling of humbleness which deters them from taking initiative. Inadequate media and information skills also pose issues. As reported above, knowing how to navigate the Internet does not mean being media literate.

Some of these challenges appear to have similar implications across some respondent groups. For migrants and refugees, issues around poor local language competences spiral out in conjunction with other issues such as lack of social networks and contacts, coming to affect self-confidence and trust (see Text box 2.6).

Text box 2.6. Wide-ranging impacts of language competences for migrants and refugees [in London, Germany and Turkey]

For migrant and refugee young people, one widely shared challenge concerns mastery of the local language. In the Germany study context, the **language barrier** prevents young refugees and migrants not only from accessing information, but also from actively taking part in communication and interaction with other people outside their language community. As regards information access, an inadequate command of German language does not allow them to avail themselves of news and information sources such as newspapers, among others. (see also the Text box 2.5 with the experience of migrant women in London). Some of the communication challenges reported mutually influence each other in a vicious circle—such as the impact of reduced social networks and lack of dialogue with locals on improving language competencies. For instance, migrants interviewed in Germany and refugees in Turkey report lacking social contacts with locals, preventing their progress in the acquisition of verbal language skills. Although many use YouTube and mobile applications to learn, one German respondent highlighted that face-to-face conversation would be much more effective, while the conversation events and meeting places offered by some organisations were said to be insufficient.

Poor communication competences may lead to increased feelings of dependency, even worthlessness and lack of self-confidence, often times in relation to how the other sides in the dialogue respond. Migrant women in London report that communication with some professionals is *really hard* and *difficult* if *they use big words* [Young persons 2 and 3]. In this context, the professionals are considered as instrumental in either facilitating communication or maintaining barriers. Interestingly, communication with education professionals such as nursery workers or children's teachers is perceived as *easier*. At the other end of the spectrum, telephone calls, for example to banks or council officials are considered a particular challenge by the women, not just because of the pace and type of language used, but because the medium itself makes understanding (e.g. through missing non-verbal cues) more difficult.

Communication challenges are connected for some women with feelings of shame about their own lack of English language proficiency. For many, these feelings provided a key impetus to studying in ESOL programmes, which has helped them develop confidence in a range of communication contexts. On the other hand, negative communication experiences can challenge the foundations of this newly found confidence and lead to withdrawal from participation opportunities, as the following account of two women's experience as volunteers in a charity shop shows:

The manager was rude when we don't understand. If you were slow... she was annoyed [...] But we worked 3 months and then...because that was really difficult to understand what she is saying, and we need to be like quickly. I don't know...[...] And then we just left ... (Young person 14).

Social isolation, marginalisation and discrimination

Social isolation and discrimination, even stigmatisation, are felt to some extent by most respondents, though experiences are nuanced and vary according to multiple configurations of difference based on ethnicity, gender and/or age, among other variables. For some, it may be just about 'being different', while others constantly face rejection from the other members of society. In Romania, Spain and Hungary the Roma population often face discrimination not only from non-Roma individuals but also from institutions. Some respondents remarked they have been denied jobs and opportunities or services by authorities because they are Roma. This results in a deep mistrust in authorities: "We are like garbage to them", said one Romanian Roma woman.

Lack of capacity to navigate social services

Some respondent groups remain unaware of their rights and entitlements and navigating the system to secure them unless they are in contact with social care professionals. Among the migrant women interviewed in the UK, a key challenge concerns difficulties with bureaucratic systems such as needing to provide documents before being able to access a course, or understanding the funding systems for further or higher education. Among Roma young people in Romania, many participants lack knowledge about their rights, benefits or subventions they are entitled to, and have difficulty in navigating social services. Even when they are aware, if they have been treated badly, they become reluctant to go to the City Hall and ask for them. Some other groups are on the contrary knowledgeable about their rights and where to go for solving their administrative issues. The difference seems to be made by the way information is circulated within groups and communities, often through the mediation of social assistants, care centres and other professionals and NGOs. Roma women in Spain did seem to know their rights and entitlements, they visited public administration social services and accessed financial support to rise children, buy food and/or pay the rent, though not all their claims were always covered. A Roma informant said she took an AE course having been "obliged" by the social worker of the programme that provides her with a minimum income.⁸ By contrast, an AE practitioner explained that she wanted to encourage young people to claim their rights to education in the face of funding delays and finance cuts that negatively impacted on their access to programmes and trainings. However, she

8 PIRMI (*Renda mínima d'inserció*, in Catalan) or minimum insertion income is a social subsidy of around 400 euros for people who do not have economic resources to cover their basic expenses.

asserted “it’s not easy for youth to ask for something when they don’t feel entitled to do it” (AE authority, Int3, SP).

Transition to digital practices and implications for reaching out to young people

Another reported challenge relates to the transition to digital practices, and what it can mean for the young people in the long run. For instance, Finland has started digitising its public services and pushes strongly in this direction. However, young people might lag behind in this process, either because they cannot afford an internet connection and devices, or because despite being well technologically equipped they lack digital literacies in information retrieval and formal communication skills.

Challenging life contexts and implications for communication (violence, abuse)

Reports about encountering violence, abuse and other challenging situations in one’s own environments or during specific events of one’s life are less encountered in the groups we have studied. However, they need to be taken into account as particularly challenging situations that can impact on competences, communication, self-confidence and trust and the general outlook on life, education and the future. These issues can be experienced at individual or collective level (e.g. a community or a neighbourhood). The Roma Bucharest neighbourhood is notorious for substance abuse and gang behaviour and it can be violent. Similarly, the homeless in Thessaloniki are not strangers to violence and extreme behaviour. For example, the reports from some of the interview participants are that communication with the police is probably the most challenging as they have been having trouble with the law and the police administration were not at all helpful with allocating them an attorney.

While the reporting above attempts to sketch some general tendencies across challenges experienced in certain young people groups, it is important to acknowledge that challenges are context-specific and these instances cannot be generalised.

2.8.2 Challenges in accessing information about adult education

The challenges reported by young people with respect to accessing AE information to a great extent reflect more generic challenges with communication, the most widely encountered being:

- Lack of knowledge about the local AE system and opportunities
- Lack of connecting social networks that can intermediate AE opportunities

- Lack of support structures for turning information into decisions

Lack of knowledge about the local AE system and opportunities

Often this issue stems from a general lack of awareness about the role that AE could fill in one's life and professional future. Young people are often found not to be too concerned about AE, nor aware of their AE needs and how AE could improve their skills and their life. Except for young people who have a purpose, goal or ambition and/or have benefitted from professional advice and support, most young people have hardly reflected on the role of AE in their lives. This means they also know very little about AE opportunities, how the system is organised and what providers offer. Often, they may be ignorant about free course provisions that would suit them. Among the young **Roma interviewed in Romania**, none knew about the free courses organised monthly by the National Agency for Employment, and covering vocational skills many of them wished to develop.

Lack of connecting social networks

Largely due to lack of interest and initiative, the young people interviewed very rarely find AE information by independently searching for information. Most often they do so through personal contacts or local centres and organisations they are in touch with. This is a positive aspect when young people do have these networks, and when the opportunities passed on match their interests. However, for those young people lacking these connections, it is much more difficult to find out about AE information.

In Romania, the challenges in accessing AE experienced by the Roma stem both from systemic discrimination and the specific living conditions and other conditions of deprivation, for instance poverty and informational isolation. These are in one way or another related to information circulated through social networks, or the lack thereof:

- Over-reliance on informal networks, with elements of chance, in finding information;
- Over-reliance on fragmented information, fed often through limited networks, meaning that often a young person may give up an AE option because they decide it does not suit them or it is not achievable;
- The lack of systematic channels filtering through AE information to circles within young people's reach. While the local NGO is a significant presence, its activity is not specifically focused on AE.

Interviews with **German migrants** reveal how these challenges are exacerbated by their isolation and lack of trustworthy contacts with local people and organisations. One young migrant reported they were facing difficulties in finding an appropriate language course and did not know where to access information about AE opportunities. After some probing questions, it emerged the respondent was not aware of the service offered by the JMD—Youth Integration Centre Point. The respondent was in Germany with their partner and did not have any other contacts. The lack of social networks seems to play a crucial role to such an extent that it impairs access to further opportunities, such as educational ones.

Some other challenges are specific to groups. For instance, for migrants, a **lack of language skills** is a constant challenge in accessing AE opportunities. Among the migrant women interviewed in the UK, a key challenge in accessing information about adult education is their limited understanding of English and of some of the systems in UK society.

Lack of support structures for turning information into decisions

Meaningful access to information translates into a decision to attend or at least follow up to find out more about a programme. Field data indicates that for this to happen, it is important how young people receive the information, whether it comes from a trusted channel or contact, and whether it is accompanied or not by advice or support that applies to their specific case. In the absence of these trusted contacts and structures, even when information reaches young people, often incidentally, there may be a lack of effective follow up.

2.9 Leveraging young people's information and communication practices

This section looks at how the information and communication practices outlined can be leveraged to improve the outreach and impacts of adult education. These are presented as emerging themes that reflect findings applying across various groups of young people; followed by cases that focus on specific contexts. The themes are clustered in three parts, dealing respectively with leveraging social networks, leveraging media, and leveraging relevant content for young people.

Leveraging social networks

The best hubs for information provision include networks, mediating organisations and individuals that are in constant contact with young people, and whom young people trust.

Text box 2.7. Leveraging social networks. Cases: migrant women in London, migrants and refugees in Germany, and Roma in Romania and Spain

Information provided through familiar and trusted networks will not only get more attention, but also has more chances to be followed up on.

Migrant women interviewed in London consider that personal communication with someone they know and / or trust holds a particular significance for them in terms of accessing AE, alongside more general forms of information access (e.g. the internet). This preference may also continue once they do access AE courses, for example by talking to their tutors about next options or asking for information about courses at the AE reception.

In **Barcelona**, fieldwork evidenced the key role of mediating actors who connect young people and AE providers in a timely and effective manner. Mediators encompass mainly social workers and school educators that detect which young people may be failing in formal education early on and propose changing their educational pathway towards more practically oriented training, such as VET. There is also a dense network of local youth information points distributed throughout neighbourhoods and cities within Barcelona province as well as street educators who personally invite youth on the streets to join a programme or activity. Most interviewed young people were encouraged to join an AE programme by one of these mediators, though there were also cases of young people accessing training on their own initiative as well as based on friends' recommendations by word of mouth.

The **Romanian Roma** young people interviewed in Bucharest rarely search for AE opportunities on their own, despite the fact that they have either the need to pursue AE (such as Second Chance or VET education) or desires to train in a particular field. Largely unaware of what AE can do for them, they need to receive not only the information, but also adequate support and advice from trusted professionals or organisations to access AE.

Among **German migrants**, the prominent reliance on personal social networks and social or supportive organisations may suggest that face-to-face communication is preferred to communication practices through ICTs. However, it is not clear from the available data whether this is the result of a lack of equally reliable, trustworthy or accessible alternatives due to the language barrier. It would be interesting to understand whether the use of alternative forms of communications would be explored once specific barriers were overcome, for example if services were available in other languages.

Leveraging media, platforms and mediated practices

Blended models which deliver information across multiple online and situated platforms are often best suited for the needs of various young people groups.

Text box 2.8. Blended models for information provision. Cases: migrant women in London and an informationally isolated Roma neighbourhood in Bucharest

The **UK case** suggests that a blended approach would work best to respond to the needs of young people with diverse needs and information seeking practices. From the perspective of AE providers seeking to promote access to their programmes, it seems that providing information and communication about AE opportunities through a variety of means is important:

- Digital presence—website, Facebook page, ideally with some information in a range of community languages
- Leaflets and brochures—ideally in various languages as above
- Community presence—for people walking past
- Considering the potential role of current and former learners as peer ambassadors for programmes—given the importance of word of mouth for new learners
- Multi-agency approach—e.g. information available to health services, education and advice services professionals, advertised in doctor's surgeries and schools, places of worship etc.

In contexts such as the **neighbourhood in the periphery of Bucharest** (relatively isolated informationally), findings suggest that there is leverage in using media to reach out to young people, but only in complement to human/organisational mediation. On their own, young people do not seek AE information online. Blended models by which information is circulated through organisations/contacts and then complemented by information on social media (such as Facebook groups) would work best, also to respond to issues of trust.

Young people's information access patterns (for example the use of language learning apps) can be used as clues for increasing the chances of young people accessing AE information online. However, issues of trust and the likelihood of follow-up should be well balanced when opting solely for this information means.

In the **German research context**, many informants reported that they started learning the language autonomously through language applications, internet websites and YouTube video channels. All these educational opportunities are considered by the interviewees as complementary to further education. Yet, these services are not directly

linked to programmes or courses that migrants are required to attend. AE organisations could take advantage of the available technologies, accessing potential learners before they start classes and providing them with basic language teaching in preparation for formal courses. Actually, German adult education centres through their Federal association have developed a smartphone application to support future and existing learners, but this was not mentioned by respondents.

Social media has the potential to become an important channel for information provision. However, solutions have to be found to fill the gap between formal vs informal social media usage, which seems to apply over multiple contexts researched.

Text box 2.9. Bridging formal and informal uses of social media

Most young informants do not make connections between social media usage for informal purposes (which prevails) and for more formal purposes, such as learning about AE. An exception is made by the **Syrian refugees in Turkey** and the young people interviewed in Hungary, who use closed groups via WhatsApp and/or Facebook to access information.

In **Germany**, on the other hand, the widespread use of social media platforms, especially by young people, does not seem to be utilised to find education provision. It is not clear whether the fact that interviewees do not look for AE opportunities through such channels is due to the absence of advertised AE programmes or whether it is traceable to a mismatch between existing information and the actual use of social media by young people. Yet, Facebook is also used with the aim of accessing news and not only for entertainment.

Very few—and only highly motivated—respondents in **Spain** mentioned they had been looking for AE information online. Most of them expressed they would prefer to get information about future AE or job opportunities through a mobile phone call or SMS such as WhatsApp. Some also mentioned email as a good means of receiving such information, though this was problematised by many users who admitted they do not check it regularly and educators who confirmed this option had not worked. In all, they are comfortable with getting personalised information by digital media addressing them individually instead of actively checking a website, Facebook account or similar themselves. Instagram is very popular among the youngest informants so an attractive communication strategy to advertise AE provision could take advantage of this visually engaging app.

Media and information literacy skills are important indicators of young people's information and communication practices and should be considered as part and parcel of young people's media and communication resources. Literacy levels are also likely to influence the depth, outreach and quality of engagement with media that could potentially be used as leads to professional and AE information.

Text box 2.10. A holistic approach that tackles context-specific information access issues experienced by the homeless [Case: the homeless young people in Thessaloniki]

Before considering any suggestion for providing communication strategies in AE programmes for the homeless we need to take into account that one of the consequences of young adults' homelessness is being forced to withdraw from school, regardless of school performance up to that point. Once on the streets, returning to or continuing school becomes a real challenge. Without access to affordable housing, adequate income, proper nutrition, and trusting supportive adults, school is often not a realistic possibility for homeless young adults. In Greece, the approach to homelessness and the infrastructure in place to respond to it typically does not support young homeless adults who wish to return to, or stay in school. Denying homeless young adults adequate opportunities to obtain an education is de facto condemning such young people to a life of poverty. Moreover, homeless young adults have fewer personal and social resources compared to their housed peers, which contributes to their marginalisation.

Given the life contexts of homeless people in Greece, the **internet and social media may act as a resource for these otherwise resource-poor adults in many ways**. The interactive and informative nature of the internet creates an environment amenable to learning, confidence, and self-empowerment, offering opportunities to communicate, establish and maintain relationships, find information on a variety of issues, and for recreational and entertainment purposes. Homeless young adults interviewed were using their time online to have fun, socialize, and pursue resources such as housing, medical care (mostly finding information on symptoms for diseases), and employment. While it is encouraging that homeless young adults are pursuing employment and housing related activities online, one also needs to acknowledge that their computer and internet literacy levels might be limited. Computer classes could be offered where these skills can be learned and honed. Since most employment applications are now submitted online, caseworkers could work with these young people to locate these opportunities and assist them in creating their CVs and foster other online job etiquette skills such as inquiring about employment opportunities over email. The ubiquity of internet use among homeless youth also opens up the possibility of delivering interventions online. It is entirely possible that homeless young adults who are more digital media savvy are capable of both conducting internet searches for housing or jobs and using the internet to effectively communicate with their social networks.

Leveraging needs for relevant content and modes of transmission

Young people are sensitive to personalised content that reflects their interests and echoes real-life needs, or resonates with their future outlook or the possible barriers they face.

For all of the young people involved in this study it is important to communicate the added value of AE as relevant to their specific situations. Content should be customised, it should be relevant for young people, tie in with their needs and their life conditions. AE content should also communicate solutions to tackling barriers to AE access that may deter young people from even considering it. Young people are often discouraged to attend because of factors that are not accounted for in AE communication. The bottom line, then, is for any AE programme communication campaign to be preceded by research in the targeted community or communities. One size fits all recipes are not likely to work, as the conditions, stories, needs and drivers covered under the umbrella of the 'vulnerability' concept are in reality extremely varied.

The case of young migrants and refugees

Apart from the themes outlined above, we draw attention to the case of young migrants. Without implying a homogeneous treatment of migrant groups, we suggest rather that they experience very particular and context-specific conditions that should be taken into account when seeking to improve their access to AE information. In addition to the themes above, two further key aspects should be considered for migrants and refugees, which are further nuanced for particular contexts:

- Tackling key competence-related barriers such as fluency in the local language
- Considering the competences as well as networks and media usage patterns of migrants as an evolving rather than a static process

The first issue came out as crucial in all studied contexts involving migrants. For instance, the migrants interviewed in Germany try to look for educational opportunities but most of the time all the information available is inaccessible to them. It is not surprising that they rely on mediators, such as the JMD—Youth Integration Centre Point - or on personal social networks to find it. Information provision in the languages of migrants and refugees could help to reach out more effectively to this group.

With respect to the second point above, depending on the length of stay in the host country, migrants may improve language skills, increase their confidence levels, expand their social networks and their media usage repertoire. Thus, our study suggests we should avoid one size fits all recipes and generalised conclusions (and solutions) and acknowledge not only difference but also evolution in the situation of migrants. The UK migrant women interviewed provide an illustrative story.

Text box 2.11. Evolving confidence and competence levels for young migrant women [Case: London migrants]

At this stage in their journey of learning English and becoming more and more accustomed with life in the UK, including negotiating their educational needs and aspirations, the women interviewed seem to have developed some confidence in their ability to communicate and access information in English. There are different preferences and practices but also some commonly expressed tendencies (e.g. preferring text messages over voicemail messages, or face-to-face communication over phone calls where they rely on their listening skills alone to understand what is being said). Most of the women appear confident in using a variety of social and digital media for accessing information and communication, with some distinctions about 'private' and more 'public' or formal media platforms. However, many women also contrast their current confidence levels with previous experiences of (perceived) incompetence in communicating in English and resulting feelings such as shame or experiencing dependency on others, before they started courses. This reveals, for some, a gap between how they access information about opportunities including AE programmes now and their capabilities to do this previously, when others, including friends or family members, but also in some cases professional advisers, pointed them into the right direction of accessing AE.

Chapter 3. Communicative ecologies in adult education

The best form of advertisement is actually recommendation. It's always the case that participants recommend us as a provider. Because people who have learned here are satisfied (Teacher, Edu3, DE_GP1).

3.1 Communicative ecologies and assemblages in adult education

This chapter proposes a way to model conceptually the information and communication processes in adult education through a communicative ecologies lens. As in the case of communicative ecologies of young adults discussed in the previous chapter, we can think of communicative ecologies in adult education as emergent processes and practices made of communicative assemblages. The latter are opportunistic mixes of communication resources, processes and practices mobilised to reach specific communicative goals, which come to be stabilised and often taken for granted through repeated use. Mapping communicative ecologies in adult education is about identifying the communicative assemblages that have become established or routinised for particular goals and scenarios. While these are provisional structures, they may seem well established in the eyes of AE practitioners and learners alike. For example, an AE organisation may routinely recruit young learners from the nearby neighbourhoods through a combination of leaflets and posters distributed through local community centres and associations, and maintaining a website and a social media page. In one year they may realise that most of their recruits come through referrals from local community centres and associations. Thus, they will decide to reinforce a community presence and conduct community visits, testimonials and demos, recruiting young people through local mediators. This illustrates the making of a new communicative assemblage out of the resources at hand. The new assemblage uses most of the resources of the old one, but adds some new elements as well. In a few years, this assemblage may become routinised and established, until there is reason to perform some other changes.

To enable us to map CE in AE, and to identify open points for intervention, we focus on three areas around which AE communication practices are assembled:

- The AE programme—across its design, student recruitment, delivery and after programme completion (section 3.2)
- Communication within the AE organisation (section 3.3)
- AE policy and the connections established within the AE field (section 3.4)

While we treat them separately, information and communication flows at each of these levels are connected, and it is these interconnected flows that bear a significant impact on the quality and outcomes of the educational experience offered.

The chapter will shed light on how information and communication structures and processes are constituted and take place at each of these levels, using the communicative ecologies and assemblages framework introduced in the introductory chapter and its five dimensions: Goals, Social, Media, Information and Agency. We will illustrate with examples from the 40 AE programmes studied as good practice in EduMAP.

3.2 Information and communication at programme level

Communication with AE students at course or programme level is structured around five key moments:

1. Design of the AE programme
2. Students' recruitment
3. Students' selection and enrolment
4. Programme delivery
5. Post-course communication

These moments are associated with a diverse array of goals and communications scenarios, and are treated separately in the next parts of this section.

3.2.1 Programme design

Looking at the communicative practices emerging around programme design is about identifying the flows of information and communication among the stakeholders involved, how they travel across diverse media platforms, how these are infused and

the difference they make for the way a new programme is conceived and designed. In this study, we have used the CEA analytical framework to structure and shed light on the interconnections among these various elements and processes, focusing on how communicative assemblages are crafted around specific communication aims and goals related to the design, redesign or improvement of an AE programme. This perspective is illustrated in Figure 3.1, which synthesises the communicative assemblages mobilised in the redesign and monitoring of a federal-level AE programme from Austria.

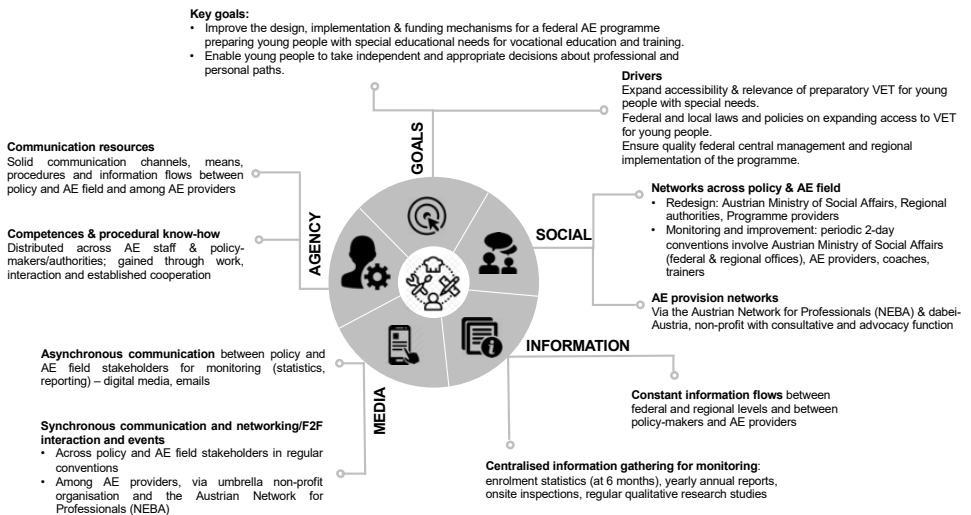


Figure 3.1. Communicative assemblages mobilised in the redesign and monitoring of a federal-level AE programme

(Production Schools, Federal VET preparatory programme, Austria)

The first element to consider is **how goals are formulated**, and how they drive the assemblage of resources. Central to all good practices studied are beneficiaries' needs. However, they take different approaches to identifying, documenting and using them as a basis for formulating goals and a driving vision for new programmes.

Some of the good practices respond to needs identified by beneficiaries often through direct requests, while others are designed based on the identification of a need by AE providers or other stakeholders, and then tested to probe whether the programme meets this need. TR_GP3 exemplifies this:

A new programme comes into being in two alternative ways: either we decide that it would be useful and helpful for refugees to start a specific programme, we design it and then introduce it to the individuals; or, the students themselves or their families come to us and demand a specific programme. In the latter case, once such a request is received, we consider whether it would be useful and, also importantly, feasible for us. Because there is no point of offering a bad programme that we cannot properly administer just for the sake of satisfying a demand. (AE professional, Edu4, TR_GP3)

Programmes like UK_GP1 and UK_GP4, the public AE schools of Catalonia, and IE_GP1 have been designed based on observing beneficiaries' needs over the long term, developing a strategic vision about meeting them and are sometimes piloted before being scaled up. Their design evolves over time. For the mentoring programme UK_GP1, the development and testing of early versions of the programme happened in one school '*under the radar of the Local Education Authority*'. This happened with the help and support of one school head master, who was willing to become a partner in developing a programme that supports young people in vulnerable situations, in particular those who experience care. Once the final design proved to be successful, the local authority was approached for buy-in. Another example of programme testing and circular feedback between AE provision and demand is found in the public AE schools of Catalonia (Spain), where the curriculum is revised every year by members of a specialized administrative body, the Curricular Management Service (henceforth CMS) for AE, dependent on the Department of Education of the Catalan government. Besides updating content, they also adapt it to new emerging needs, e.g. to offer more language courses in a neighbourhood with an increasing migrant population. For that purpose, CMS technicians work together with AE educators, who are the main source of knowledge about course demand and learner performance. Once the course content is agreed upon, a pilot plan is implemented in one school in order to check its viability through a verification process between educators, school authorities and CMS. IE_GP1 also came about based on needs that had been observed over time (ethnic minority young people accessing mainstream services / being offered a meaningful service by mainstream organisations), although the focus of the project was much less designed by practitioners but rather an iterative process led first and foremost by the young people with the facilitation of practitioners.

In contrast, some programmes are developed to respond to situations of emergency and crisis. This is the case with the three AE programmes studied in Turkey. A significant

common element in all the three reported cases in the Turkish context is their *ad hoc* nature. In particular, all these cases were established in the face of acute crises, created by the massive influx of Syrian refugees in two of the programmes and a natural/industrial disaster in the other, as temporary and urgent responses. As such, they do not reflect the culmination or materialisation of a long-standing, long-term vision or a well-established policy. Neither are they perfect examples of smooth and well-articulated decision-making or policy-making processes. They do, however, possess remarkable elements of creative problem-solving, interactive decision-making by different actors including the vulnerable individuals targeted by the AE programmes, and effective communication channels before, during, and after the programmes by the providers and the learners. Also, they are examples of how such temporary solutions and *ad hoc* programmes can be transformed into sustainable institutions and policies over time.

However, and despite their often *ad hoc* nature, the design of these programmes still emulates the vision and goals of the organisations that run them. For example, the organisation running TR_GP1 uses the following principles in designing its new programmes: flexibility and responsiveness; collecting and using empirical data; openness to communication, coordination, and collaboration; fundraising from different partners.

Apart from beneficiaries' needs, the design of AE programmes has to consider a host of other requirements. For instance, programmes such as UK_GP3, UK_GP2, FI_GP1-3, ES_GP1 and some programmes connected to UK_GP4 represent local versions or adaptations of national programmes. While their design can vary greatly among providers, since they are adapted to local contexts, they do have to abide by a common core dictated by the adopted framework.

Funding-related considerations are also of paramount importance. This may imply that they have to pay attention to demand and supply dynamics, to make sure they will have a sufficient number of learners and therefore funding. Alternatively, funding may come from national authorities, organisations and projects and the programmes may have to be shaped to respond to their requirements.

These other factors are generally considered together, in a framework that indicates whether a programme is viable and bound to be successful or not. A senior manager in one of the organisations running UK_GP4 explains that he uses tools for calculating whether or not offering a certain programme will be a good economic decision for the college:

I make quite accurate predictions about what it can earn or what level of subsidy is it worthwhile to invest in to get the programme off the ground. (Senior manager, Pol1, UK_GP4).

As regards funding schemes, some AE practitioners interviewed in Barcelona (Spain), complained that they have increasingly become scarce, discontinued, highly competitive and based on quantitative evaluation standards that often collide with learners' well-being. One informant asserted that both learners and their training institutions are put under a lot of pressure to reach the quantitative performance indicators expected by funders: the maximum results in labour integration, no matter its quality, within the shortest time.

Access to reliable information before and during the design of a programme is critical for its success. In analysing information flows, we found that this is often sourced or circulated through networks of experts and organisations that come to influence the running of a programme in some way or another. TR_GP2 exemplifies how collection and interpretation of information can be achieved even when programmes are designed as emergency responses; and the importance of involving the right stakeholders to access required information and ensure uptake and adequate positioning for the prospective programme.

TR_GP2 was initially developed to respond to a crisis, the mining disaster in a small town in the West of Turkey⁹. Despite the emergency, a solid empirical base was established before designing the specific programme. This involved (i) sending a committee to the field to interview targeted vulnerable individuals to understand their needs; (ii) talking to local authorities about their assessments; (iii) reviewing which other actors are in the field and what they do; (iv) hiring a professional research company to conduct empirical research, and only then designing their AE programme.

In [Year anon], right after the mining accident, we established a committee from our members and visited Soma. We felt that we needed to do something but didn't know what to do. We didn't want to just throw some money to relieve our consciences, we wanted to help create something sustainable and long term. So, we wanted to see what the needs were. It wasn't possible to do anything the first time we went there because there was so much grief but we conducted an analysis. At the second time, we met with

⁹ Less than five years before the writing of this report [year anon], an explosion at a coal mine in a small town in the West of Turkey caused several hundreds of deaths in what was one of the worst mining disaster in Turkey's history. TR_GP2 was organised for the vulnerable young women who lost their relatives there.

local governments [the provincial governor and the mayors of different municipalities], we inquired about the already existing help and programmes. Then, we had a professional research company conduct research on women labour in the city. (AE professional, Edu6, TR_GP1)

Most programmes studied take a **multi-stakeholder approach to the AE programme design**, not only to establish required information but also to set the basis for future collaboration and networking and for general endorsement of the programme. Stakeholders typically consulted or involved include: young people who may become beneficiaries or groups and associations that represent them; schools and educators; networks of mentors or employers; and local authorities—depending on the nature of the programme. Chapter 4 will illustrate through examples the importance of involving certain groups of stakeholders to ensure the suitable design and success of a programme.

Another aspect is a strong dependency among **informational and media layers**. Access to reliable information may often entail access to databases and other systems that store, for instance, statistics on students, vulnerable groups, the job market and employability ratios, etc. Many of the programmes researched indicate that access to this kind of information is essential for ensuring that new programmes are adapted to target needs as well as to general societal and job market needs. Yet, this can prove challenging, largely because the organisations responsible with collecting and storing information have their own procedures and sharing protocols, and this may also intersect with confidentiality and data protection issues. Chapter 4 will further shed light on challenges and effective practices for accessing information through mediated environments and ensuring information flows across diverse stakeholders that influence the design of AE programmes.

3.2.2 Student recruitment

Before a programme starts, AE providers typically send out information about the programme to potential students. We have analysed the communication practices around student recruitment using the CEA framework, drawing attention to five aspects: the communication goals, social networks and practices, use of information and media, and agency. An example is provided in Figure 3.2, which illustrates how communicative

assemblages mobilised to recruit young people at risk of social exclusion for a Romanian VET programme for integration on the labour market (RO_GP2).

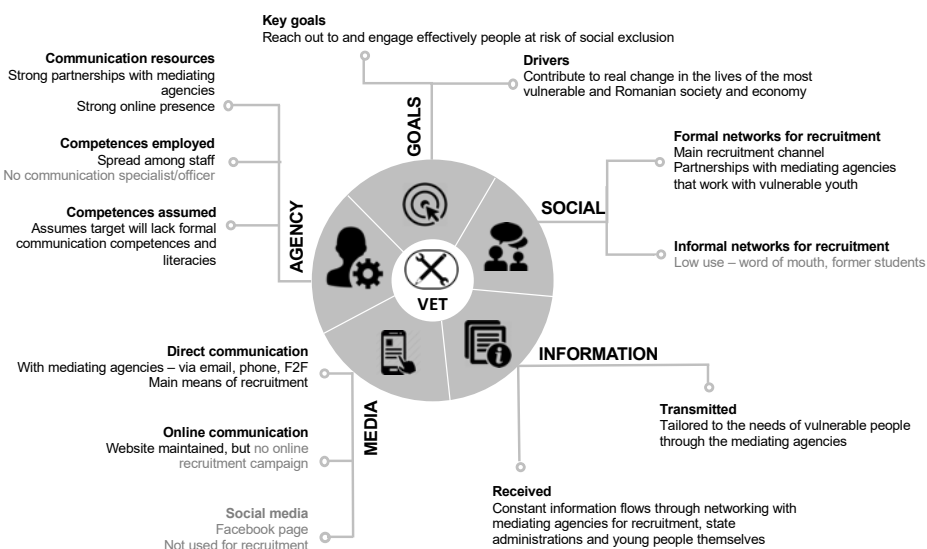


Figure 3.2. Communicative assemblages mobilised by an Adult Education organisation to recruit young people at risk of social exclusion
(VET programme for integration on the labour market, Romania)

Communicative assemblages are mobilised around **communication goals**, exemplified in Figure 3.2 by the key goal of reaching out to and engaging effectively people at risk of social exclusion. Other potential communication goals for recruitment are:

- Making the AE provider and its programme known
- Generating interest in the programme
- Generating interest among prospective learners to find out more information, enrol or register

More subtle communication intentions can be embedded in these goals, for instance:

- Positioning the AE organisation as a trustworthy education provider who cares about quality and excellence
- Enhancing the reputation of the programme in terms of its educational outcomes and opportunities

- Attracting a diverse range of students with high levels of interest, motivation and suitable prior education levels

AE providers mobilise diverse media and resources to reach these goals in relation to diverse communication contexts and scenarios. The following part of this report illustrates a few typical scenarios from the EduMAP good practice programmes studied, pointing to how social networks, media, and diverse competences and literacies are mobilised to reach recruitment communication goals.

Social networks, word of mouth and informal contacts are the most widely mentioned means of successful information provision to potential students. Two typical ways of integrating social networks for passing on information about a programme are mentioned:

- (1) Informal social networks and word of mouth
- (2) Mediating organisations and professionals

(1) Informal social networks are effective vehicles for passing on information quickly and effectively as they are associated with trust and familiarity. This is evident in community and neighbourhood-embedded programmes such as UK_GP2, UK_GP3, and DE_GP3, where the history and achievements of the programme have started to become known over time among local residents. For example, in UK_GP2, the information and communication processes that lead to young people accessing the programme are mostly based on 'word of mouth', i.e. young people knowing about the college (or the centre) because they live in the local area and have either used other services there, or know someone in the college. The particular character of the local neighbourhood which retains a fairly close-knit community of residents plays an important role in this form of information access. A senior college official (Senior manager, Edu4, UK_GP2) confirms that despite the organisation *occasionally advertis[ing]*, historically the number of learners who found the college and programme by word of mouth has provided sufficient amounts of learners to keep it going. Likewise, in **DE_GP3**, almost all interviewed participants accessed the Youth forum thanks to informal communication and personal social networks.

More generally, social networks are important channels for recruitment when young people come from closely-knit groups and communities. This may extend to the case of migrant and refugee groups when social and group ties are maintained, such as the

beneficiaries of TR_GP1, TR_GP3, UK_GP3 and local minorities such as the Roma. For example, as the coordinator of TR_GP1 mentions, the degree of success in recruiting Syrian refugees for the programme depends on the transfer of this information to the social networks of Syrian refugees. If this is accomplished, "(S)omething you announce to 10 people can easily reach 1,000 people within 10 minutes."

(2) Alongside informal social networks, outreach activities often rely on **mediating organisations**, professionals or hubs that can pass information on to young people or host promotional events by AE providers, thus enabling the latter to communicate directly with young people. The nature of mediating organisations varies: they can be social care organisations, community hubs and centres, or organisations with very specific agendas in caring for or supporting young people at risk of social exclusion. For example, mediating organisations may encompass:

- Social care and youth centres, such as those accessed by some learners, for example in RO_GP1, RO_GP2, IE_GP2, ES_GP1, GP2 and GP3.
- Schools, accessed by programmes such as UK_GP1, UK_GP2, and ES_GP3.
- State and local administration offices, used in particular by national programmes carried out at local level, such as DE_GP1, UK_GP3, FI_GP3, and ES_GP2.

The role of these organisations in mediating information also differs: Some organisations are channels for information, while others play a substantive gatekeeping function and can influence and drive young people's decisions through tailored information and advice. The latter is the case, for instance, for UK_GP2's advice service, AT_GP1's Youth Coaches, the social care centres that advise care-experienced youth on attending a VET course within RO_GP1, or the Migrant Information Centre that selects migrants and refugees for accessing AE programmes such as CY_GP1. For DK_GP1, the municipality selects and directs migrants to the course, without the need for learners to decide to take part or apply in the programme.

In the case of the **UK_GP2** programme, an advice service fulfils both an informative and a gatekeeping function, to ensure that young people are not overwhelmed or 'swamped' [Edu1] by information on programmes from education providers. The advice service is responsible for keeping a list of young people who are categorised as 'NEET' at the ages of 16 and 17 in the local authority area, and this list has the potential to provide a powerful marketing tool for education providers. The gatekeeping function in this context goes beyond mere data protection concerns, but also includes an awareness

that for some (particularly the more vulnerable) young people using the service, having to engage in a variety of professional relationships can be very challenging. Additionally, due to the variety of options and choices in the 16-19 education and training sector, the advice service manager considers that not all offers represent programmes of good quality. For example, there may be specific concerns that young people's welfare, health and safety are not addressed sufficiently within the learning environments or that there is a gap between what a programme promises to provide and what is actually provided. In this sense, the advisors try to work impartially, without making specific recommendations, but where they have concerns about the quality of a programme they may take actions such as informing providers that the concerns need to be addressed.

Most AE providers involved in the study rely on a rich array of **media platforms and practices** to reach out to young people, which they try out and often improve through adjustments. These may include traditional media and advertising such as newspaper and radio adverts, posters and leaflets; events and testimonials; digital and social media etc. In studying the use of media, it is important to look at how this is embedded into social practices and how diverse types of media are used jointly to reach various programme publicity and recruitment purposes. For example, many programmes report that large numbers of applicants hear about a programme through word of mouth and personal recommendations. Yet they continue to maintain a social media and web presence for providing additional information. This mutual complementarity between online and offline information resources is evidenced across the data of various countries. In Barcelona, for example, a ES_GP2 participant said he was recruited by one of the municipal "street educators" (*educador de carrer*, in Catalan) who walk around some neighbourhoods in search of idle youth to inform them about a Facebook page where courses are advertised.

Text box 3.1 provides some examples of how AE providers mobilise diverse platforms and channels to reach out to potential students.

Text box 3.1. Media practices for AE information provision and student recruitment

Turkish basic skills and VET programme GP1: The organisation running TR_GP1 provides information on AE programmes targeting Syrian refugees through three channels: SMS, a web page and social media, publicity posters and field trips. Their use both relies on and augments a database of contacts who may be interested in or are in need of AE programmes.

Informational SMS are prepared in Arabic, Syrians' mother tongue and can be directed to the Syrian people who may take the programmes or pass the information to their parents and family members. The organisation maintains a web page and social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which use two or even three languages (Turkish, Arabic and English) for the announcements of current programmes.

Information about AE programmes is provided through notice boards displayed in the Association building and through the placards and publicity posters hung and distributed in public places that are intensively used by refugees. The area where the banners are most effective is the association building. The building is designed with a multi-service centre or "community centre" concept. Inside the building, there is a migration management unit where the legal processes regarding refugees are provided, along with a multi-faceted polyclinic and a rehabilitation centre in which health services are supplied, with a particular focus on women's health. For this very reason, the building hosts about 1000 people on a daily basis, including diverse profiles of refugees, both new comers and the ones well accustomed to the place. This makes the association a particularly suitable venue for spreading information about AE programmes.

Finally, field trips consist of home visits conducted to provide assistance after notifications. These trips also contribute to keeping the database of contacts of Syrian refugees up to date.

Agent resources, competences and literacies can be distinguished between those pertaining to the AE provider and those of the targeted potential learners.

AE provider resources may range from possessing or having easy access to media tools and platforms (e.g., an up and running website; a well maintained range of social media channels), contacts, networks and established communication flows with these (e.g., long-term contacts with social care centres and schools in a neighbourhood; but also a vibrant Alumni community that can be involved in communication); to a database of yearly evaluations that assess the role of past communication campaigns on the type and number of students that came to enrol.

Sometimes these resources need to be cultivated before reaching their full potential. For instance, it may take some time to invest in growing an Alumni community, however this may have effects in improving the quality and effectiveness of the pre-programme communication through testimonials and direct referrals.

Organisations such as the ones running RO_GP1, RO_GP2, UK_GP1, UK_GP2, UK_GP4, ES_GP2, all nurture good relations with former learners. These contacts are cultivated mostly informally, however some of them occasionally call upon their former students or benefit from their presence to provide testimonials to future cohorts of students.

Targeted potential students also employ specific competences and literacies in order to be reached by, comprehend and act upon the messages sent by the AE provider. Specific resources and competences are assumed by AE providers when they design the outreach campaigns. For instance, AE programmes such as TR_GP1, DE_GP3, ES_GP1, UK_GP4 use social media to reach out to their potential students. This implies that they assume a few things about their target groups: that they have access to Internet connectivity and digital devices, digital competences, that they use social media and the specific social media platforms on which they recruit, and that they also come across social media posts and nodes that can lead them to the AE organisation's or programme's page. While this may often be the case, mismatches between these assumptions and young people's actual competences and practices can occur. For instance, although ES_GP2 and the foundation that coordinates it had each a Facebook page and a blog, learners ignored them. A focus group participant said he did not even know about its existence and a second participant remembered that an educator had mentioned it but he had never visited the websites. These statements were confirmed by the rest of the focus group participants.

3.2.3 Student selection and enrolment

The process of selection and enrolment of candidates is a very important moment in adult education provision when information about the programme can be conveyed in a direct and efficient manner to potential students, students' goals and predispositions can be matched to eventual options among programmes, and their interests and motivation to attend gauged. Typical communication goals encompass:

- communicating the programme goals, activities and outcomes and clarifying any eventual doubts and questions on the side of candidates
- understanding whether a programme offering is suitable for candidates' skills, experience and interests
- gauging candidates' real interest in the programme
- selecting candidates according to interest, abilities, programme fit, etc.

Most typically, selection interviews are employed with the main objective to assess the individual's suitability for the programme, often accompanied by tests. For instance, in RO_GP1, RO_GP2, UK_GP2, UK_GP4, and NL_GP1, the selection process involves an interview (which can be selective) and for some programmes also aptitude and

knowledge assessment tests are used. For some other organisations, such as in the case of UK_GP1 and ES_GP1, 2 and 3, there is no selection interview, however there is space for communicating, clarifying doubts, answering questions and aligning expectations.

In terms of **media**, most encounters take place face to face with prospective learners, although sometimes they can be arranged by phone or by voiceover services, as is the case for AE programmes studied in Cyprus, Malta and Italy.

The most important element of the communicative assemblages around recruitment and selection has to do with **the information conveyed**. These can make the difference as to whether a potential learner will embark on an AE programme that is of real benefit and fits their interests and prior skills. Text box 3.2 illustrates how providers balance goals related to ensuring a candidate's profile suitability by aligning and clarifying expectations.

Text box 3.2. The role of the selection interview in AE enrolment

Romanian VET programme GP1: For RO_GP1 staff, the interview is an important part of the selection process, when they ensure that the applicant is a good fit for the programme. The selection criteria considered crucial by the RO_GP1 team include:

- Applicant's interest and motivation. This is the most important criterion; it is important to assess that an applicant really wants to follow a course, to ensure they will be committed and engaged during the course. Some applicants apply under pressure from state centres for child protection, when they reach 18 years of age and need to arrange study or work options for their future. Thus, during the interview RO_GP1 staff want to ascertain the applicant's genuine interest to enrol.
- Their employability potential and profile match. While the course is for young people in vulnerable situations without discrimination, RO_GP1 also makes a commitment to facilitate access to internships and jobs. Through the interview, they ensure they recruit young people who have the appropriate set of skills and aptitudes to receive training and be able to perform well in a certain occupation. Sometimes the team may advise an applicant that they may actually fit better in another course than they had applied for.

The interview is also an important moment to inform applicants about the course and create the right kind of expectations:

[It is important to] explain and tell them concretely what we do, what exactly we offer them, so that they know from the beginning what we can offer and not come up with different expectations. It is very important that what we tell them is also what happens throughout the year. (AE professional, Edu6, RO_GP1).

The programmes studied also reveal unique processes and procedures of recruitment and selection, where there are case-specific procedures and rules to follow. An example is the process engendered in prison education in Finland (Text box 3.3).

Text box 3.3. The selection process for AE admission in Finnish open prisons

Finnish prison education programme GP2: A unique feature of prison-based VET programmes is the process of selecting students. There are multiple parties involved in the process: the prisoner, relevant prison staff, the regional CSA (Criminal Sanctions Agency) assessment centre and the educational provider. In the cases studied, we focused especially on education provided in two open prisons. The first requirement is that the prisoner can be transferred into an open prison, if they are not already residing there (which was rarely the case). In order to be eligible for a transfer to open prison, a prisoner needs to meet certain criteria. A regional assessment centre assesses if a prisoner can be transferred or not, with statements from sending and receiving institutions. At this stage, assumed security risks and possible connections to organised crime, for instance, can block a transfer to an open prison.

Understandably, open prisons are more appealing than closed ones. Thus, when prisoners apply to education in open prisons, it is important to ensure that the applicant has the right kind of motivation. Our studied cases of open prisons both emphasised incoming prisoners' motivation and plans to study as a decisive factor.

In terms of **information flows**, the educational provider stands at the very end of the chain. Information about potential students is first filtered through multiple actors within the CSA organisation. The process begins when a student applies, in most cases with the help of his prison student counsellor (or other staff member), to a suitable VET programme. After first contact and sending out an application, the VET provider and the responsible CSA officer of the receiving institution go through the application and organise an interview with the applicant. During interviews, a representative of the educational provider (usually a teacher) and a CSA officer try to find out more about the student's motivation and capabilities needed to participate in the programme, but also how the student would "fit in".

If the student is found suitable, their transfer may be initiated. However, in the CSA system all information of individual prisoners is never available to all parties involved. VET providers, especially, can never be sure if the students they have selected will pass the security assessments and can actually start attending the programme.

The VET providers and CSA officers responsible for the provision of education were all aware of the many assessment criteria applied to the prisoners who apply for transfers and to their programmes. In addition, they knew that the assessments always introduce a level of

uncertainty in to the selection process, “...it’s a feature of the prison world in general that all information can’t be given up to another authority...” (CSA officer, Edu2, FI GP2). Although the CSA officers also communicate with assessment centres and provide their own views of students’ suitability, the assessment centre always makes the final decision.

3.2.4 Programme delivery

The way information and communication are structured and the flows and practices that occur during the provision of the course are the richest, and yet in some sense the least visible part of AE communication. This is due to the pervasive nature of communication, and the way it both embeds and nestles into educational practice. For instance, are the practices below related to communication or to education?

- Organising small group work and encouraging peer exchange and interaction
- Encouraging students to volunteer in local youth forums
- Listening to a student expose his learning gaps outside regular lecture slots

All of these have both an informational and an educational side to them. For the purpose of this chapter and report, we disassociate information and communication from the actual educational content and structure, by drawing attention to how communicative assemblages are created around purposeful goals that embed and support the educational experience, and further look at how these mobilise the elements introduced above: social networks, media, information, and agent competences and literacies. This is illustrated in Figure 3.3, applied to a VET programme for computer repair and maintenance from Spain.

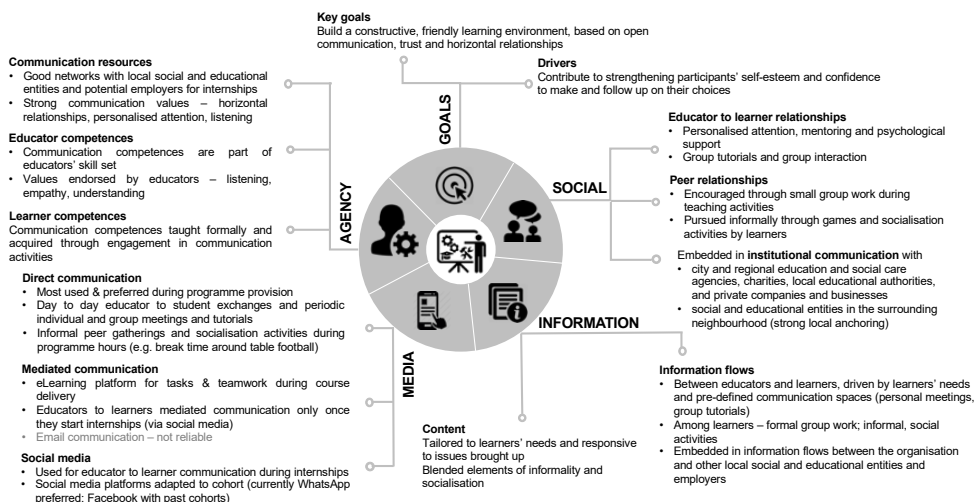


Figure 3.3. Communicative assemblages mobilised during the delivery of a VET programme

(VET programme for computer repair and maintenance, Spain)

Typical **information and communication goals** during the delivery of an AE programme include:

- Increasing learners' engagement during the course
- Nurturing trustful relationships between learners and AE practitioners
- Fostering interactions among students and encouraging peer exchanges and learning

Each of these goals will set the mobilisation of communicative resources in motion in certain ways and encourage specific information flows and models of communication. Let us look at some illustrative examples. With respect to social networks and practices, several models of communication during the provision of a course emerge, for example:

- One on one/personalised relationships between AE professionals and learners [e.g., mentoring]
- Communication structured among multidisciplinary teams and learners
- Learner-led interaction and participation

One on one personalised relationships between AE professionals and learners are nurtured in particular in AE programmes that include a mentoring and coaching

component (for example, RO_GP1, RO_GP2, AT_GP1, ES_GP1, 2 and 3, UK_GP2, IE_GP2), or are uniquely focused on mentoring (such as UK_GP1). These imply structured, often long-term communication flows between learners and coaches or mentors, that in time come to sustain a relationship of trust and confidence. As further argued in Chapter 4, this relationship is one of the most significant aspects of building self-confidence and resilience in young people. The Scottish National Improvement Hub has examined meta analyses of studies on the impact of mentoring over a ten year period, and find that community based approaches are more successful than school based approaches which are found to have little impact, although the focus on those studies is on academic outcomes, are mostly undertaken in the USA and cover a wider age group than we focus on here.¹⁰ They suggest, as our research supports, that long term mentoring arrangements that are community-based are the most effective. Crucial in our research, focussing as it does on young adults in situations of vulnerability or at risk of social exclusion, are relationships that build trust.

Multidisciplinary teams are devised in AE organisations in order to offer a richer, more holistic educational and social experience to young people in vulnerable situations, by covering different areas of education and personal development. Communication among the members of these multidisciplinary teams and with learners is essential to ensure that their actions are synchronised and complement each other. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, some of the EduMAP programmes studied such as RO_GP1 and RO_GP2 establish fairly complex communication systems and case management procedures that ensure effective information flows among multidisciplinary teams as and when needed, putting the learner at the centre.

Learner led-interaction and participation: AE programmes routinely encourage activities that foster communication, interaction and exchange among students, where they are used effectively as ways to build competences through peer learning and interaction. Among these, programmes such as DE_GP3, ES_GP2, NL_GP1, IE_GP1 and IE_GP2 stand out for their focus on open-ended, fluid communication that is process rather than outcome oriented. In IE_GP1 and ES_GP2, for instance, learners' agency is promoted allowing them to give voice to their experiences and feelings, whereas educators step back into the role of facilitators. The roles and intricacies of such open ended communication processes are further elaborated in Chapter 4.

10 See <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/pages/EEF-Toolkit-Results>.

The models described above are often found in one and the same programme. For instance, RO_GP1, RO_GP2, UK_GP4, ES_GP1, 2 and 3 are structured around multidisciplinary teams, and at the same time they offer mentoring, coaching and vocational guidance services to learners. They routinely encourage socialisation among learners and peer exchanges. These and other models are elaborated in greater depth in Chapter 4, looking as well at how they integrate media platforms and the resources and competences they mobilise.

A wide variety of **media platforms and tools** are employed to support communication during the provision of the programme. These can be integrated in the learning activities, or support information access and communication between educational sessions. Programmes such as EL_GP1, IT_GP1, PT_GP1, MT_GP1, and NL_GP1 use eLearning platforms, while FI_GP3 is a distance based programme relying exclusively on a virtual platform. Programmes also make increasing use of social media. The most used platform during course communication is WhatsApp, used in programmes such as AT_GP1, DE_GP1, IE_GP1, UK_GP3 and the Spanish GP programmes studied. Their use varies from informal to formalised, and from widespread to more limited scales. They can mediate information and communication practices between learners and educators, among learners, or just among educators. For instance, in DE_GP1 the use of WhatsApp varies from class to class and is not taken up by all learners, while in ES_GP1, 2 and 3 it is used as a quite significant means for educators to pass on information to students.

However, we also found that face to face communication is often preferred as a means to strengthen personalised, trustworthy relationships. This is also programme dependent; for instance in VET programmes such as FI_GP2, RO_GP1 and RO_GP2 that teach hands on skills, digital media are not considered necessary or very important, and direct face to face communication is preferred.

Text box 3.4. Analogue vs digital communication: contrasting scenarios

Finnish prison education programme GP2: While outside prisons, more and more educational material is only available in digital form online, inside prisons the world of adult education is still very much based on analogue modes. Information comes directly from the teacher, often in face-to-face meetings when the teacher is visiting the prison, or via phone, when students are allowed to make calls. Meanwhile, in one of our prison cases, the teachers had tried to solve the problem by providing their students some old laptops and USB-sticks

with all the material they might need in digital form. However, those computers were not freely available to the students, but instead they needed to apply for a permit to use them. For many, who were perhaps already lacking ICT skills or struggling with written material, this was considered an unnecessary complication. On the other hand, the VET programmes we studied were mainly considered “hands on” (carpentry, construction, catering); developing practical skills needed in specific occupations.

Dutch coding skills programme: In contrast to the example of prison education in Finland, digital communication plays a significant role as an educational tool in the coding skills programme for refugees, migrants and other young adults at risk of social exclusion in the Netherlands. This starts already at the recruitment stage when applicants need to submit a video explaining what motivates them to learn about computer coding. Learning during the programme is to a large extent based on self-directed approaches based on online programmes while a specific online communication platform is used for real time exchange with peers and educators. However, despite this strong focus on digital communication the programme emphasises the need for learners to develop their communicative skills in face-to-face communication and networking. For example, there is a ‘daily stand-up’ session where learners present their progress in learning and any challenges they are encountering. The programme coordinators also highlight the importance of the course being based in a ‘campus’ environment which promotes networking opportunities between learners, educators as well as external stakeholders (such as technology experts or NGOs who benefit from some of the project work undertaken by the learners).

With respect to **information flows**, one important aspect concerns the formation and tacit acceptance of **formal and informal spaces for communication** where communication styles differ. The rules that guide communication, and the possibility to partake or not in communicative acts can also be circumscribed to these formal vs informal spaces. For instance, in AT_GP1, practitioners tend to distinguish between communications relevant for the programme provision and informal and personal interaction with learners. As far as the latter is concerned, trainers and coaches in one school shared the approach of not communicating privately with participants. Apparently, it is the organisation’s implicit rule to protect its staff. In RO_GP1 subtle differences can be noticed regarding tensions between formal and informal registers of communication. The value of rules and structure which characterise RO_GP1’s conduct is appreciated by some learners, but for others the formal communication spaces lack flexibility. Some of the communication channels most appreciated by staff, such as regular large group meetings are considered too rigid and formal by some learners for expressing their views.

Communication during the course both elicits and builds **communication competences and literacies** on the side of learners primarily, but also teachers. Digital media practices such as using eLearning platforms and social media require the existence of such competences and literacies among teachers and learners alike. While often taken for granted, the assumptions underpinning such practices only become obvious when some participants, lacking the required competences, are excluded from communication. For example, young refugees taking part in DK_GP1 found it difficult to use the intranet platform used in the course, due to limited digital literacy skills combined with a limited command of Danish.

3.2.5 Post-course communication

Communication after an AE course finishes is an often overlooked aspect of AE, yet our study indicates that this may constitute an important, even fundamental part of the AE experience for young people at risk of social exclusion. Programmes such as RO_GP1, RO_GP2 and UK_GP4 invest into post-course communication for the acknowledged benefits offered to former participants by this continued support and connection. Figure 3.4 exemplifies the communicative assemblages mobilised for post-course communication in the case of a British gateway programme for young people not in education, employment or training (UK_GP4).

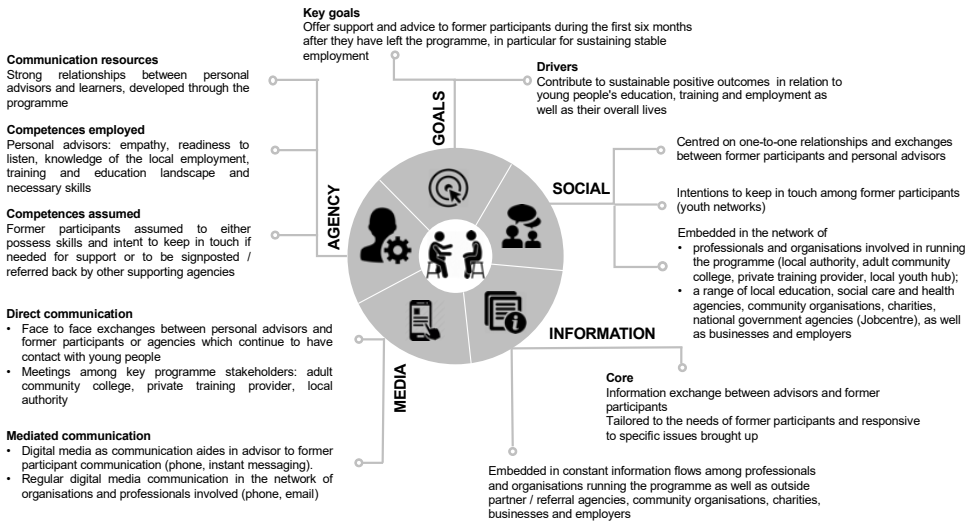


Figure 3.4. Communicative assemblages mobilised to offer advice and support for former programme participants

(Gateway programme for young people not in education, employment or training, UK)

Goals of after-course communication may range from

- maintaining relationships and networks, with a general purpose of connecting, sharing and keeping in touch, to
- supporting young people in their personal and occupational lives and preventing set-backs.

In most programmes analysed, educators mention that former learners often keep in touch, just to express their gratitude, send greetings and updates about life events, or as a means to find out what is happening in the AE organisation or with particular educators. While in some cases, communication after programme completion can fulfil more substantial goals of support for learners: supporting them to get internships, jobs, connecting them to organisations or mediating contact for services, or just demonstrating support in cases of need.

According to their degree of structure and formality, **communication practices can be structured or unstructured; formal or informal**. Degrees of formality and informality interweave and at times overlap, yet they also bear quite distinctive features.

Structured or formalised forms of after-course communication typically have standardised procedures in place for keeping in touch, contacting and taking in feedback from former students. For example, programmes such as UK_GP1 and ES_GP2 maintain an active network of Alumni. This implies keeping an updated database, sending occasional communications, inviting Alumni to events and organising activities for them, etc.

Programmes like RO_GP1, RO_GP2, ES_GP3 and UK_GP4 maintain communication as a form to support students and prevent set-backs for a determined period of time after graduation.

Text box 3.5. Formalised after-course communication practices

UK mentoring programme GP1 keeps in contact with former programme participants through its alumni network. There are two reasons for this. One is to follow young people's destination once leaving and the other is to utilise ex-participants' knowledge and experience, and 'marketise' UK_GP1. Participants in this particular case clearly demonstrates this. The three alumni interviewees were readily available to participate in the research. The group interview happened in the UK_GP1 office and former programme participants' behaviour in the office suggested that they were comfortable in the environment and knew UK_GP1 staff well. All three interviewees have been supportive of UK_GP1's future work with young people in vulnerable situations once leaving school and they have continued showcasing UK_GP1 in schools and at external events.

Romanian VET programme GP1: Communication between the organisation and learners is maintained after programme completion at the formal and informal level, with the informal level being more intense and of longer duration. **At the formal level**, the most regular contact is maintained with the job coach, who keeps in touch both with young people and the employer after graduation for at least 6 months. Learners who have completed the course are encouraged to discuss any upcoming issues with the job coach, for instance regarding extra hours, delays in receiving their salary etc. This is part of the services that RO_GP1 offers, as the students who have completed the course are also connected with an employer and start a job after graduation. RO_GP1 thus extends their responsibility for some months after, to ensure that the job is suitable, employee's rights are respected and both the employer and the employee have a mutually satisfactory professional relationship. Where relevant, RO_GP1 also keeps in touch with former participants for housing and other types of support that they may have been offered. Those learners who go to work in cities where the umbrella organisation RO_GP1 has a presence are offered social housing at a preferential rate until they manage to become independent.

UK AE programme for young unemployed: In UK_GP4, keeping in touch with participants for up to 6 months after they have found training, employment or another course of education is a key part of the programme. AE practitioners on the programme view this support as vital in order to try and make positive outcomes sustainable over time and thus achieve a real impact in learners' lives, rather than just meeting performance indicators (as can be the case with some programmes). One practitioner who leads a related programme considers the communication after the programme an important safety net which makes the difference between *positively mov[ing]* young people *on* or seeing them *drop off at the end* [of a programme] (Edu4, UK_GP4).

Informal communication practices are less structured, often sporadic and dependant on the initiative of individual former participants or educators. These practices may be focused on courtesy visits and greeting messages; but they may also be in response to real needs for support or information, as in the examples of ES_GP2, FI_GP2 and IE_GP1 (see Text box 3.6).

Text box 3.6. Informal practices in after-course communication

The Spanish VET programme GP2 has a strong focus on emotional education and social bonds as part of the training of future leisure time monitors, promoting their self-knowledge to be better prepared to work with children and teenagers. This pedagogical approach often facilitates strong and deep relationships among participants and with educators, with whom many keep in touch informally after the course. Former learners interviewed communicate with their course tutor, the programme coordinator and some course mates through WhatsApp and usually meet in celebrations and social activities organized by ES_GP2. They said they enjoy visiting educators and letting them know how they are doing. Sometimes they are invited to participate in other ES_GP2 projects related to youth and leisure. For example, Ana (pseudonym) finished the training three years ago and continued communicating with a ES_GP2 reference person through WhatsApp messages and phone calls as a project collaborator but also for anything she may need. Once she worked in a bakery where they did not want to offer her a proper job contract, she felt very disappointed and frustrated. Then the ES_GP2 referent comforted her and even helped her to get a better job. In all, Ana appreciated that ES_GP2 has some continuity through other projects and events, so educators do not "just disappear" after its completion.

They always keep the doors open to us. They would always tell us 'if you wanna come and ask for one of us [please do]' (Lea2, F, ES_GP2).

Her feelings reflect the importance of providing spaces of encounter and interaction after learner training is over, as a way of showing interests in participants' progress and eventually help them with difficulties they might face long after the programmes are over but strongly related to them, when they are about to face a tough labour market.

Finnish prison education programme GP2: FI_GP2 students often stay in contact with their teachers informally after they have completed their studies. This of course depends on teachers and the kinds of communication practices they have encouraged. Many of the teachers relate stories of their former students dropping by or sending messages and cards years after they had graduated. The teachers considered this sort of communication highly motivating, "He has called and thanked and sent cards many times afterwards that 'now I'm doing well'" (AE professional, Edu3, FI_GP2)

Both students and AE practitioners recounted different communication activities after the learners' release from prison or after completion of qualifications, or both. It is not uncommon that a student does not manage to complete their VET qualifications during imprisonment. There are many reasons for this; many of them are structural or otherwise not under the learners' control (e.g. not enough suitable sites for work-based learning and skills demonstrations or the sentence is too short for the purpose). If a student is released before they manage to complete their qualifications, the subsequent educational path needs to be planned beforehand. The key is to make sure the student has the information needed to continue their studies after release. According to the interviews with teachers and CSA officers, communication breaks and uncertainty at this phase increases the risk of dropping out and ending up among the former offenders' old circles. After prisoners have completed their qualifications teachers often help them find work by utilising their professional connections and networks in the field, or sometimes give advice on how and where to pursue further studies.

The Irish informal education programme GP1 was a short term and time-limited project, but the young people participating in it have remained in touch with each other and with the educators involved after its official completion, despite their busy lives studying on other programmes, job searching or working. In fact, because of the unanticipated extent and level of reactions which the young people received (from other young people and from professionals) in response to a video resource they produced as part of the project, their work on the project has continued in various ways—by participating in some formal meetings with professionals and by keeping in touch with each other, for example to discuss the unexpected positive impact their work has had on other young people in similar situations. Young people also continue to stay in contact with the main project worker who informs them about participation opportunities or helps out with things such as preparing a CV.

Communication can occur **among former participants**, mostly informally. However, this will depend on the type of environment created in the programme and the kind of experience former participants had. In many programmes, learners interviewed

manifested the intention to keep in touch with some of their peers. Yet, for some, like the ex-inmates in FI_GP2, they consider it best to cut all ties with the environment they leave behind.

3.3 Information and communication within the adult education organisation

Our study revealed that the information and communication flows and practices occurring inside and outside the AE organisation can have a significant effect on the quality of the educational experience delivered to learners. This section suggests a few dimensions of organisational communication that should be taken into account, clustered around typical information and communication goals that mobilise resources across the AE organisation and with relevant external stakeholders.

Typical **information and communication goals** that can subsume such practices encompass:

- Organising recruitment, enrolment and selection communication
- Coordinating staff and educator activities around offering educational activities
- Coordinating teaching, coaching and student support activities
- Collecting, storing and using (as appropriate) information about learner profiles and learning performance

These goals will be set in motion differently according to the profiles of **staff and stakeholders** involved in delivering an AE programme. A first aspect to clarify is that each of the goals listed above and many other potential ones could equally involve internal staff affiliated to the AE organisation, and external stakeholders. In some of the AE programmes we have studied, this difference between internal and external staff and stakeholders is not clear-cut, and processes of communication are sometimes borderline between the two. DE_GP1, FI_GP2 and UK_GP1 illustrate how external stakeholders can become or be perceived as internal to the AE processes, and also how AE staff can be deployed in key hubs where AE is delivered, or from where potential learners are recruited.

Text box 3.7. Fluid boundaries between internal and external stakeholders in AE organisations

In the German Youth Integration programme GP1, the services offered by JMD—Youth Integration Centre Points—even though they are not always offered by the same providers and are external to the education offer, can be considered an integral part of the programme provision.

The UK mentoring programme GP1 is a school based programme. While initially schools that negotiate the integration of UK_GP1 in their schools can be considered as external organisations, once the programme is implemented they very much become part of UK_GP1. The charity lead emphasises this shift in their involvement and their importance:

The head teacher is a really important part because they are the gatekeeper, they'll either [sign] up or not. (Pol1, UK_GP1)

Finnish prison education programme GP2: In our VET in prison cases, it was sometimes difficult to draw clear separations between employees of the Criminal Sanctions Agency (CSA) and employees of the AE providers; they all participated in the provision of the programme in close collaboration. According to our interviews, key CSA employees and key AE employees were in frequent, often daily contact. In one of our cases, the CSA officer in charge of education in that prison practically ran the whole AE programme together with a teacher of a local AE provider. Their communication seemed seamless and active. They met face-to-face weekly, but also phoned or sent email to each other daily.

The Dutch coding skills programme GP1 is a programme run through a social enterprise which supports young adults (refugees, migrants, as well as other young people at risk of social exclusion) in developing skills for working in the IT industries (specifically computer coding). The programme depends on a wide range of external stakeholders who contribute to its success and unique character: this includes a local social enterprise incubator which was instrumental in providing space and access to networks at the start of the programme, a network of technology development companies who are involved in teaching master classes, as well as non-governmental partner organisations which contribute to a very important element of the programme, namely the opportunity for learners to develop IT-based solutions to real life problems as part of the 'impact week' (internship).

Our study identified a series of communication models that mobilise networks, information and media in certain configurations that are often routinised and become part of the regular practices of an organisation. These may involve both internal staff and what would normally be considered external stakeholders to equal extents and on a regular basis. We will illustrate the most important models among our research

in Chapter 5, looking at their role in the successful delivery of AE programmes. In this section, we illustrate a few of these models, which may involve only internal staff or expand over external stakeholder networks.

Networks for recruitment information and communication are most likely to involve internal staff as well as external stakeholders, with a role in spreading information, reaching out to young people and providing needed support to select and access AE programmes. Apart from internal staff, networks involve a wide range of external stakeholders, from state and local authorities to social care centres and community organisations. Communication in these networks and steady information flows are essential, and nurtured through events, one on one relationships and in some cases platforms for sharing information.

Distributed networks for educational provision are found in programmes such as UK_GP1 and IE_GP2, that offer educational services in conjunction with external professionals and organisations. This may involve mentoring networks such as in UK_GP1, or accessing some of the educational programmes and activities through various partners as in IE_GP2.

Structured information and communication within multidisciplinary teams. When AE organisations include a variety of staff profiles apart from educators, there is a need for a structured model of communication and collaboration to make certain that their work is coherent and serves the needs of the learner. Some AE programmes such as RO_GPs 1 and 2 offer examples of how communication is structured to coordinate and channel the inputs of multidisciplinary teams, often using learner-centred models. Programmes such as FI_GP2 illustrate how such networks expand to include a large variety of stakeholders within and outside the AE organisation.

With respect to **media**, a wide range are used, spanning email and phone communication, management portals and databases but also written documentation. However, in most of these models the value of face to face, direct interpersonal communication comes out most strongly.

3.4 Policy-making and the adult education sector

In terms of AE policy, the focus of this report is on analysing the role of information and communication in improving the link between AE policy making and implementation on the one hand and the AE field and the young people benefiting from it on the other. It

is important to convey that this report is not concerned with a thorough appraisal of AE policy-making processes, which are complex, context-specific and beyond the scope of this study. Rather, the aim is to highlight the role of information and communication that links the policy-making establishment with AE stakeholders and beneficiaries. Thus, the report does not cover the intricacies of information and communication processes inside policy-making and state/administrative organisations, which are bound to differ significantly across country contexts and at national and local levels. Rather, the analytical focus is situated at the interstices between policy-making professionals and institutions and AE stakeholders and beneficiaries. The aim is to understand to what extent and how are these spaces populated by information exchanges and practices of consultation and collaboration, and further how these mediate the impacts of AE policy on the capacity of AE to include young people in vulnerable situations in active citizenship.

This section should be read in conjunction with Chapter 6. The role of this section is to highlight some aspects that are important to consider in the information and communication practices relating to the influence of policy on the AE field. Most of these are highly relevant when referring to the design of new policies, hence some specific cases of information and communication in policy design are used as illustrations. The analysis will focus on how communicative practices are assembled around information use, involvement of certain groups of stakeholders and the role of media, as well as the information and communication resources invested in these processes. On this basis, Chapter 6 will look at challenges and routes to effective practice for harnessing the power of information and communication to increase the capacity of AE to include young adults at risk of social exclusion in APC.

To cut through the complexity of diverse contexts of design and implementation of AE policy, we focused our analysis on three areas of relevance for the AE field and specifically for AE programmes offered to young people in situations of risk:

1. national level,
2. local level,
3. the intersections between local authorities and AE organisations that deliver AE programmes of relevance for young people in vulnerable situations, which may span both national and local levels.

Diverse communicative assemblages are constructed at each of these levels; below we illustrate some typical assemblages through examples from the AE programmes studied. The first aspect in the analysis concerns the formulation of **information and communication goals** for specific initiatives that may involve for instance:

- Consulting stakeholders on the design of a new policy
- Sharing information with respect to the scope and intended effects, and implementation procedures of a revised AE policy
- Gathering information to document the impact of an existing policy on a range of AE beneficiaries
- Ensuring ongoing communication flows between local authorities and AE organisations involved in the delivery of local programmes that are highly relevant for some of the most vulnerable local groups.

Just as for AE organisational communication, when analysing communicative assemblages in AE policy, it is useful to bear in mind **the interconnection between the informational, social and media layers** in crafting communicative assemblages to achieve goals such as the ones listed above. This concerns the way information circulates through networks of stakeholders and organisations (the social layer) and by mediation of platforms, channels and specific media portals (the media layer). A great deal of these processes are standardised, including the means of stakeholder consultation or information gathering for developing new laws and policies. For instance, in Finland, the principles of legislative processes at national level are standardised but variations in implementation can be traced to differences in complexity and volume. The Ministry of Justice issues instructions and guidelines for the Government legislation processes. A general legal drafting process including a description of communication and information during the process is provided in “Legislative drafting process guide”¹¹.

At the core of the interplay between informational, social and media layers stands the need to back up policies with reliable information, which often is equated with evidence and **expert knowledge**. Evidence and expert knowledge can be circulated in various ways. In most cases, there are standardised procedures for generating expert knowledge by means of consultation and working groups tied to an area of expertise. For example:

11 The visual guide can be consulted here: <http://lainvalmistelu.finlex.fi/en/>

In Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture influences the Government concerning adult education during the preparation and implementation of the Government Programme. The stakeholders are included in the legal drafting or other policy processes through working groups and committees. A typical law preparation process for adult education would involve forming an expert group including adult education experts and practitioners and utilising stakeholder feedback from public hearings. This transparent process is a standard procedure that is expected to lead to a well-prepared and widely acceptable legislative outcome. In addition, in order to provide the opportunity for anyone (citizen, stakeholder, organisation) to comment on official proposals, a digital platform developed and maintained by the Ministry of Justice has been set up. Comments can be sent through the designated web portal “Statement service” (*lausuntopalvelu*)¹². All officials of the public administration may use the service to request statements from the public. Policy makers often have a background in education /AE and, when the time is short for gathering information, they may rely on their own background knowledge and contacts to retrieve needed information.

In the UK, responding to government consultations is an important aspect of influencing policy design in AE and there are organisations focusing on providing evidence from practice through networks with AE providers and groups involving young people in order to feed into such consultations. However, there are different views within the UK-based research on the extent to which central government takes this evidence into account when designing policies, especially at a time when austerity policies have severely curtailed the budgets for adult education. For example, as outlined below, from the perspective of an interviewee at an AE policy influencing organisation, for civil servants to hear the voices of young people who speak about their difficulties within the system ‘*can really make quite a difference*’ [UK_Pol2]. On the other hand, some local policy makers and AE practitioners are more pessimistic, with individual interviewees pointing towards a failure of central government policy-making processes to take into account and be influenced by the extensive bodies of knowledge from educational practice and research.

A theme of interest is to what extent and how young people are involved in processes of policy consultation and deliberation. Examples of young people involvement range from direct to mediated (through educators, AE or social organisations and interest groups), as illustrated in Text box 3.8.

¹² <https://www.lausuntopalvelu.fi/FI>

Text box 3.8. Mediated and direct involvement of young people in policy consultation

In contexts such as the ones we have studied in Finland, information between the education practice and policy level travels long and sometimes complex routes and the voices of vulnerable learners are mainly mediated by educators or interest groups. The mediator is in a position of power and has the responsibility to deliver the messages to policy forums. When asked about hearing vulnerable adults themselves in the decision-making process, a policy-maker (Pol2, Finland) responded that direct hearing would be difficult to arrange at Ministry level, whereas they consider different interest groups such as student organisations and practitioners as experts and “spokespeople” for their students. However, many vulnerable people do not have a specific “interest group” and certain interest groups involved with the most vulnerable represent rather marginal groups. Thus, they are not easily seen or heard on mainstream forums, or, for instance, in large-scale population statistics.

Direct, unmediated involvement of young people is valued in contexts we have studied such as the UK and Ireland. In **Ireland**, Youth services policy expert Pol2 (F, IE_GP1) provides examples of communication directly with young people through a range of initiatives, for example a movement against hate speech. Providing platforms for young people (through documented meetings and conferences) to speak about their experiences and become involved in campaigning about specific issues is a key aspect of this work. Aside from *talking directly to young people* Pol2 also engages a network of youth and migrant-led organisations who in turn consult with young people about key issues.

In the **UK**, there is similar emphasis on the centrality of young people’s views and voices in the policy influencing work of UK_Pol2 [F]. While a core principle of the work itself is *that it needs to be located around the experiences of the young people themselves*, the communicative practices by which the views and voices of young people are sought are varied. For example, UK_Pol2 participates in a national forum for young adult carers, which brings together young people with civil servants from a range of government departments as well as stakeholders from key third sector organisations, AE providers and practitioners. The role of young adult carers at these meetings is crucial as they can provide first hand experiences about how they are affected by policies and practices. Other examples of engagement include focus groups or individual interviews, as well as seeking the views of mediating organisations and professionals who have close relationships with the young people.

With respect to information texts and media, typical sources include policy texts, ad hoc reports, statistics and information databases. These are selected with respect to their relevance for the particular area and scope of policy-making. For example, when designing locally run or commissioning programmes in line with local requirements, an

advice service for young people associated with UK_GP2 relies on a range of sources of information relevant to programme /strategy design, taking into account the local economy plan (developed by the local authority in consultation with local stakeholders):

...obviously we look at things like labour market information so we know where there's a skills gap and where there's going to be job vacancies. So trying to like promote quite early on – and we do it with schools as well—where things that we know are going to be needed in the future. So that's like part of the local economy plan as well. (AE professional, Edu1, UK_GP2).

Infrastructures and associated networks for the constant production and circulation of needed information, especially when it concerns wide-scope national information and statistics, are set up and used in most countries, or at pan-European level. For instance, in Finland, numerical data is regularly collected from AE providers on students and programmes and the data is used for statistics. Moreover, the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) and the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre¹³ (FEEC) conduct constantly various surveys and evaluations that burden education providers. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, when it comes to the efficacy of information use, this strongly depends on the adequacy of the data gathered and archived in these portals and databases for the purpose of a specific scenario. Disaggregation of data by specific parameters such as gender and age comes to be important in those cases. Differences in systems, protocols and vocabularies is often at the heart of challenges in appropriate information retrieval and use. IE_GP1 specifically identified a lack of disaggregation of relevant data according to ethnic group, making it more difficult to gather evidence on discriminatory practices (for example in the work place).

However, while media and social layers can be isolated for analytical purposes, when it comes to documenting policy design or implementation processes, most often information is sourced jointly from the two. By way of example, in preparation for some amendments to the Basic education Act, the Ministry for Education and Culture of Finland formed an expert group to examine the nexus of integration training and basic education of adult migrants. The working group was preceded by an external expert report that utilised statistics, data collected in previous policy studies and relevant research. Based on the findings and group discussions during the time of drafting the

13 www.karvi.fi

report, the working group suggested some interventions and amendments in the Basic education act. (Ministry of education, 2014).

The issue of **resources, competences and literacies** is particularly important at all the levels discussed beforehand. Participating in educational programme and policy design processes demands good communication skills and knowledge. One needs to interpret and utilise national curricula and to be able to comprehend statistics and legislative documents. At the local level, AE providers need to be able to access and assess available information sources (databases, practitioner networks, decision-makers etc.). The ability to influence the formulation of the written policy material as well as communicate to politicians are still other forms of communication skills that are needed to deliver expert knowledge. Even if public consultation services such as Finland's "Statement service" (*lausuntopalvelu*)¹⁴ are in theory available to all, in practice questions of language use, empowerment and mediator guidance need to be addressed for the engagement of young people, especially the most vulnerable ones. The language of jurisdiction and policy is not easily accessible to a person with low education level and little exposure to the intricacies of policymaking. Issues of resources, competences and literacies will be further taken up in Chapter 6 in particular to identify challenges, gaps and needs.

Finally, apart from the three levels of analysis identified above (national, local, and linked to AE providers and programmes), our study mapped two areas interesting for analysis, which go either vertically from local to national in the AE field, or cross-sectorially, linking between the AE field and other socio-economic and policy fields. In both of these, the role of information and communication flows is crucial for linking and bridging between actors and ensuring smooth information exchange and cooperation. We briefly outline these two areas here, and further describe and analyse them in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, to highlight challenges and effective practice cases.

The first area of interest regards the **connection between the AE field and other sectors** which are involved in the design or delivery of AE programmes that are offered to young people in situations of risk. Professionals and organisations in these fields may either refer young people to AE programmes, counsel and advise them, or be involved in offering social services together with AE organisations. Examples include social care centres along with social workers, public employment services, criminal sanctions and justice authorities for prison education, etc. The importance of ensuring smooth

14 <https://www.lausuntopalvelu.fi/FI>

communication flows between AE providers and these organisations is emphasised more in Chapter 5 on organisational communication. In terms of policy, it is important to consider that these organisations are tied to state administration, i.e. national and local authorities whose remit may be, at the core, removed from education. Thus, their way of work and information practices may be oriented exclusively towards covering their own field, and nurture few connections if at all with educational actors. Yet, evidence from our study indicates that for several issues pertinent to AE, APC and vulnerability of young people, the cooperation across these sectors, including policy-making, is vital. Two specific aspects will be further taken up in Chapter 6 as matters where cooperation could reinforce beneficial policy: preventing school drop-out and language learning, particularly for migrant and refugee groups.

Secondly, we draw attention to the importance of adequate information and communication flows concerning policy within the AE sector, **linking between national and local levels**. National to local linkages may concern for instance the design and implementation of national programmes; or they may focus on the process of harmonising policy implementation from national to local levels. Information sharing between these levels and collaboration among distributed actors (from different organisations and fields of policy and practice) are crucial for the success of either policy implementation or AE programmes. Examples of both challenges and good practices with respect to the local implementation of national programmes will be offered in Chapter 6. Further, we exemplify the process of harmonising policy implementation from national to local levels in Text box 3.9, tackling policy on immigration and integration in Denmark.

Text box 3.9. Information and communication spanning local to national levels in the area of immigration and integration (Denmark)

The area of immigration and integration is of high interest in Denmark's politics and therefore, information is regularly gathered and reported. The GVMT division "Dansk og Beskæftigelse" works between the central Government and the municipalities that implement the legislative framework. The Ministry of Immigration and Integration has collected information concerning their refugee integration policy on their website.¹⁵

The work process includes GVMT initiated tasks and organising working groups that prepare proposals for solutions. The working groups consist of experts from universities and other expert organisations (National policymaker, Pol1, Denmark). They gather and publish data concerning immigrants' integration measures on a designated website called "The integration barometer".¹⁶

The Ministry collects information from language centres using electric forms that are available on the website. The language centres are obliged to report regularly about their activities.¹⁷ The Ministry publishes an annual report on the Danish language tuition activities providing information on the participants and their placements in different tracks, for instance the share of students in different tracks by each AE provider (Aktivitetsrapport 2017).¹⁸

15—<http://uim.dk/arbejdsomrader/Integration>

16—https://integrationsbarometer.dk/tal-og-analyser/copy_of_danskuddannelserne

17—<http://uim.dk/arbejdsomrader/danskundervisning-og-prover-for-udlaendinge/indberetning-af-dansk-for-sprogcentre>

18—The reports concerning policy issues are mostly available in Danish, but a recent report for OECD summarising the trends, figures and policies is available in English. <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/tal-og-analyser/filer-tal-og-analyser/SOPEMIRReport2017.pdf>

Part II

Matches, mismatches and routes to effective practice

Part II answers the main research question of work package 4.1. Each chapter in this part covers the challenges and gaps, achievements and ways to improve information and communication practices in AE programmes at one of three levels. Chapter 4 explores the programme level and the interface between AE practitioners and learners. Chapter 5 explores communication in AE organisations. Chapter 6 explores communication at the level of policy that affects the AE sector.

Chapter 4. Information and communication in adult education programmes

This chapter reports on challenges and effective practices in communication in adult education programmes, at four levels:

1. Programme design and improvement
2. Student recruitment, selection and enrolment
3. Programme delivery
4. Post-course communication

The chapter should be read in conjunction with Section 3.2.4 in Chapter 3, which lays out the principles and premises of the analytical framework.

4.1 Programme design and improvement

This section focuses on the role of information and communication in the design of new AE programmes and their revision and improvement. It assesses effective communication practices and challenges by focusing in turn on the Social, Information, Media and Agency components of the analytical framework and how they underpin access to and production of information and communication.

4.1.1 Gaps and challenges

The most widely reported challenges across the AE programmes studied relate to difficulties in accessing relevant information about potential learners. The following patterns of information gaps have been identified:

Access to learner data and lack of disaggregated datasets: There were several reported issues about the lack of individualised learner information required for assessing young people's access to AE and thus APC. One aspect is related to a wider question about the underlying values and systems endorsed by the state: nationally available statistics are often centred on working life and formal education. For instance,

during the adult basic education reform process in Finland, the low educational level and need for adult basic education could not be directly drawn from statistics, but they had to be pulled from the public employment service (PES) database—purely a result of an administrative practice which requires immigrants to report on their educational background when they register to PES. The available (or lack of) statistical information can thus affect the education providers' chances of detecting specific vulnerable groups, their characteristics and needs, and thus it is important both to be aware of information sources that do exist, and of their limitations (Finnish Ministry of Education, 2014).

Some programmes refer to the need for disaggregated data. For example, by ethnicity. In Ireland, national statistics on youth unemployment (for example), are not disaggregated in a meaningful way by ethnicity:

it's like young people are taken as a whole genus, like a group, and it's like we're all the same—no we're not, we all have different needs and those needs need to be taken into consideration to get a bigger and clearer picture that would inform on policies and the methods, the practice that we use (Lea1, F, IE_GP1)

This may relate to the different procedures and protocols or media systems of diverse organisations that handle learner data. In some cases, this blends with confidentiality and data protection issues. In Finland, many of the problems concerning information flows that could inform programme design are linked to various authorities' separate procedures and information systems. However, data protection is necessary for assuring individual privacy. A current problem concerning data on educational backgrounds is expected to be solved by the new KOSKI-system that collects data across all formal education in Finland. Providing various service providers are aware of the KOSKI-service they can access information on educational history.

Information gaps on students' needs and profiles before programme start:

Courses are typically designed before the new cohorts of students enrol, which means that essential information about new cohorts of students (such as age, skills, special needs for support) is missing and cannot inform the design of the course. This issue was reported in many contexts, especially when it is essential to tailor the course to the student needs and levels, such as in language and basic skills and remedy courses. The data from the Finnish GP1 and GP2 clearly shows that education providers and teachers need more information to support programme design, not only information on a student's education history but also on other issues such as learning disabilities and interruptions to education. According to one Finnish AE practitioner (Edu4, FI_GP1),

this important information is available to educators at the start of August, leaving only a couple of weeks to plan the programme. Individuals entering the programme flexibly during the study year also add to the challenge of acquiring student information beforehand.

In Spain, ES_GP1 courses are quickly implemented in compliance with the fast and changing dynamics of contemporary labour markets. This means that once a specific job profile is detected as a company need, educators must organise the information, design the training and look for the candidates for the following month. Some ES_GP1 educators admitted they feel constrained by such tight schedules to know participants in advance and to prepare the course contents in more depth. “Sometimes I miss the chance of doing a previous job to better know the group participants, maybe make first interviews, both individual and in a group” (AE professional, Edu4, SP, GP1). Some participants are derived to GP1 from other social entities that include some background information, but there are also those who arrive on their own and educators have no references about them or time to ask their interests and previous experiences. This information would be highly valuable to, for instance, adapt the training contents to participants’ interests and start creating friendly learning environments.

In this way, the flexibility of the course design is of critical importance, so that additional tailoring can occur after students enrol. This requires additional resources. In the ESOL course UK_GP3, the tutors draw on a prescribed set of learning outcomes for designing the course content, broadly considering the needs and requirements of their learners before the course starts and before the tutor actually meets the learners. Although the ESOL learners in the target groups (learners with limited English-language skills) share some common characteristics, the tutors note that they can’t be considered a homogenous group. Not being aware of the specific requirements of the learners beforehand makes it more difficult to match the course content and approaches to the needs of the learners. As a result, the tutors often have to redesign and reshape some parts of the course content when the programme commences, as communication with the learners provides the tutors with opportunities to understand their needs better.

Lack of information on student pathways after programme completion: An issue brought up by many AE practitioners is that educators are not able to follow the students’ pathways after programme completion. This information is essential for assessing the long-term impact of the programme. Collecting information about former students’ (educational/professional) whereabouts could increase the understanding of

the impacts of the programme on young people's lives and thus prove useful for the education providers in developing the programmes. For instance, particularly in the case of VETs such as TR_GP1, it is not known what percentage of programme learners who have completed the course are able to pick up employment or generate income using what they have learned.

Despite this need, our research shows that it is often near impossible for AE providers to undertake follow-up with the learners who have completed the course and those who did not complete, due to privacy protection or lack of staff resources. The privacy protection requirement was clear, for instance, in prison education in Finland. The Criminal Sanctions Agency is the only stakeholder who can follow-up on prisoners' pathways after release. This was understood from the education providers' and practitioners' point of view, who are not permitted to follow the individual students after programmes finish, because,

in Finland the employment of the prisoners in civilian life is protected information. The only information is gained through discussing with the CSA, for example how many prisoners have not committed a crime after completing a degree. (Education organiser, Pol7, Finland)

Lack of or underutilised student feedback. Feedback from learners is still partly an untapped resource for designing and developing AE programmes and was reported as largely due to lack of resources to collect and use it in a systematic fashion. Systematically collected and analysed student feedback is considered important for continual programme improvement and for tackling widely encountered issues such as high drop-out rates. Programmes such as TR_GP1 and TR_GP3 both face rather significant rates of student drop-out; information concerning the specific reasons for this and what can be done about it would be helpful but is largely missing.

At times the feedback collection system is in place but the feedback is not adequately analysed and utilised in programme improvements due to reported lack of available resources for this task. Feedback was usually collected in one form or another in our good practice cases. The Finnish GP3 Virtual School in particular is rather advanced in collecting different forms of feedback but this was not yet being fully analysed and utilised for programme development.

Lack of information on other AE programmes and good practices: Information about other AE programmes is considered useful for understanding the current AE offering in a locality and for positioning one's own offer. It is also useful to be exposed to

good practices driven by forward looking, innovative organisations. Some organisations studied point out that this information is not easily accessible, which can be seen in terms of lack of aggregated information about providers, and lack of effective networks to access this information in a more direct, systematic fashion. For programmes such as the VALMA Finnish GP1, access to this information is essential for its offering. VALMA providers feel disadvantaged by the lack of knowledge of which programmes are carried out or not by other education providers in the same year. The pieces of information they get are random and often gained through personal contacts. The following quote indicates that information sharing between the VALMA and other programme providers about the programmes offered could be improved:

It makes no sense of starting up a programme if there are no applicants or if it is not useful for them or if they don't get subsidised or they are for some reason incapable of starting the studies. We keep our ears open and of course we know a little bit which programmes other education providers are offering or not offering. But as far as I'm concerned, we get very little information on the regional education provision. (Educator, Edu1, FI_GP1)

A similar issue is encountered by the TR_GP3 programme, concerning the content and structure of similar AE programmes offered by other organisations. This information would help not only to make the AE provider's programmes more competitive and state-of-the-art; but also, to prevent the programmes from being isolated, outdated, repetitive, and out-of-touch.

4.1.2 Routes to effective practice

Alongside the gaps and challenges identified above by research respondents, the GP programmes studied also offer examples of effective communication practice that can be analysed at three levels:

1. Effective information sourcing—people and media
2. Stakeholder engagement in design
3. Student feedback loops for on-going course improvement

1. Effective information sourcing

Two strategies to access relevant information stand out: accessing through key people and accessing readily available data through portals, databases and statistics.

Infusing expert knowledge in design: The Netherlands case shows how an exemplary AE programme can be designed by pooling information from local and international experts and learning from good practices. In putting the programme together the Co-founders talked to engineers, academics and professors, *‘the conversation was driven by “how would you build this curriculum, how would you build this school”. And that was useful because you had people that said “I think it will work that way” but you also had people that said “that will never work”’* (Pol1, M, NL_GP1). The programmes’ educational approach has been designed through a process of pulling in elements from the best practice and processes of different organisations, *‘things we see in our experience ... we saw what other people do and we try to draw on the things we enjoy and we see that works from other people’* (Pol1, M, NL_GP1). They chose this approach to designing the programme because they do not see social entrepreneurship as an isolated and competitive process,

we’re not here to be unique and we are not here to innovate on our own. So we don’t live in a black box, in a vacuum. For this reason a lot of the ideas that we had here in the beginning and a lot of the idea were also input today come from for example other schools, other programmes, you know things we see in our experience. (Pol1, NL_GP1).

The Co-founders have close ties with the technology industry at both local and international levels and have ‘developed a large network of volunteers’ [Board member Pol2, F, NL_GP1]. They also work with companies to find out what is important for students to learn, *‘the technologies that are being used more often is what they make us learn for example, and that’s based on what the companies want’* (AE professional, Edu4, NL_GP1).

Open data and information portals: Open data and information portals share multiple flaws, from impediments posed by data protection and privacy concerns, to the rapid out-dating of information. Some good practices are available and some promising practices are being designed, though both involve ongoing development. As mentioned above, the recently launched national KOSKI-database is expected to solve many problems related to information on educational achievements in Finland. It collects information on individuals’ educational pathways throughout their lives. The national Studyinfo.fi- platform contains information on the educational system in Finland including all available educational programmes, joint application procedures and application forms (www.studyinfo.fi/ www.opintopolku.fi/). Our research shows that if information on interrupted education could be included in these databases, it would

become easier for local authorities to locate and reach out to young people in need of support early on and to target supportive measures accordingly. However, there was no information available during our data collecting period about the databases' usability for these functions. Issues regarding protection of privacy and access to the students' personal information need to be taken into a careful consideration.

2. Stakeholder engagement in design

This covers different strategies for multi-stakeholder design, spanning involvement of key categories of stakeholders: young people to gain a direct understanding of their needs, local organisations to infuse relevant knowledge of the local landscape, and local authorities to endorse the programme.

Cultivating strong (local) networks: As Text box 4.1 illustrates, effective stakeholder engagement comes from cultivating strong networks over the long term. These are especially powerful at local level, they can develop in local ecosystems for constantly documenting needs and wants and designing programmes in a responsive mode. These networks are particularly effective for engaging young people who are hard to reach, as the UK_GP4, ES_GP1, IE_GP2 and FI_GP3 examples illustrate.

Text box 4.1. Strong networks for stakeholder engagement in design

UK AE programme for young unemployed GP4: The design of the programme was led by the local authority together with other stakeholders, particularly the local adult community college and the private training provider delivering key aspects of the programme, but also local organisations and young people:

I think the uniqueness of [GP4] is that when we developed the programme we brought a multi range of staff together to design it with us, including young people. ... And the key thing running through all of that [...] is flexibility. It's about the flexibility to be able to do things differently, and to recognise that sometimes they don't work. (Local authority, Pol2, UK_GP4)

The design of UK_GP4 used data relating to the local labour market conditions, including information from the Local Enterprise Partnership¹⁹, as well as data related to young people not in education, training and employment. To a great extent, the design of the programme also drew on the existing knowledge of local factors among the key professionals and organisations that put the programme together.

Senior manager Pol2 emphasises the advantages of programme design at local level, with local authorities being able to benefit from in-depth knowledge about the local context and the needs of local young people who are vulnerable and hard to reach:

... you need to look at what we've done, how we are really engaging with the most hard to reach. [...] we [local authorities] have got a localism agenda and actually we are best placed, we know what the landscape looks like. But I think what happens is you get a number of national initiatives which is, you know absolutely fine, but it's this scattergun approach. And it feels at times that everybody's chasing the same learner; and you've got a significant cohort of learners that are not being chased at all. (Pol2, UK_GP4)

Spanish labour integration programme GP1: Stakeholders networking is “one of ES_GP1 key features,” explained one of the coordinators in Catalonia. Indeed, this umbrella AE programme takes place thanks to the networked participation of hundreds of social entities and companies. The former work with commercial prospectors to detect companies' labour force needs in a given territory and offer job seekers with training programmes accordingly. They follow a standardized learning model set by GP1 protocols, but also have some flexibility

¹⁹ Local Enterprise Partnerships are based on local authorities working together with local businesses to determine local economic priorities and undertake activities with the aim of driving economic growth and creating local jobs set out in the government. Their role was set out in the UK Government White Paper ‘Local Growth: realising every place's potential’ (HM Government, 2010, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32076/cm7961-local-growth-white-paper.pdf)

to adapt it to each specific training. The latter request trained workers on demand, according to their workforce needs at a particular moment. GP1 coordinators engage companies directly or indirectly, in all the stages of the training process: from clearly defining their specific labour force demands to giving talks to trainees, providing them with real environments for their internships and, ideally, hiring at least some of them once the training has been completed. By employing job seekers trained by GP1, they comply with corporate social responsibility practices that might both improve their public image and facilitate them access to tax exemptions and incentives.

Irish informal education programme GP2: In terms of the information and data accessed in the process of designing activities, the extensive networks maintained at local, national and international levels seem to play a crucial role as well as a key tool. Relying on and strengthening networks with like-minded (in the sense of promoting inclusion and human rights) organisations and actors supports the informal information exchange which is part of what the Organisational Co-founder describes as something that looks *ad hoc* but which does follow a structure:

... be responsible for it, you know, looking at the potential that people have in themselves, and I encourage that and then point them in the right direction and then it's up to themselves then to develop in that process. (Pol2, IE_GP2)

Finnish Virtual School GP3: As for developing the programme in general, a practitioner in a management position expressed the importance of the management having various competences and ability to network (AE professional, Edu4, FI_GP3). As expressed by a practitioner in management position, observing the signals from the surrounding society is crucial for developing the programme according to the arising needs. Different projects and collaborations were seen essential in responding to the society's needs and in finding new ways of combining expertise of different stakeholders for producing innovative educational models. The aim is to find and serve new groups that are in danger of falling out of the educational system.

Safe, flexible spaces for involving young people in design: The engagement of young people as a key stakeholder category deserves special attention. Reliable local networks help mediate access to young people and foster engagement, through links of trust. At the same time, the participatory practices in some programmes suggest that it is important to create safe, flexible spaces for engaging young people directly and encouraging relevant feedback. IE_GP1 offers a relevant example.

Text box 4.2. Involving young people in programme design

Irish informal education programme GP1: The design of the programme was characterised by its participatory aims and nature. The role of practitioners included facilitating the process and creating a safe space in which young people could share both their experiences and relate to associated emotions such as anger about work-related discrimination:

it was very much we were there as facilitators, we were not there to see a very specific sort of message come out of this, it was very much led by what the young people were saying. And it was to enable them to have their voice heard and have that being their participation in society and putting it out there. (AE professional, Edu1, IE_GP1)

The project design was open-ended in the sense that the idea of producing a video about their experiences and as a message to others only emerged through the course of the programme, through discussions and decisions led by the young people. In this process, the young people confirm that the trust placed in them by the practitioners facilitating the programme was essential:

Because all the youth workers [...] they have full confidence in young people, they do not come in with a paper and be like 'this is what you should do'. They are like 'what are you going to do?' ... So they like to empower you and kind of leave you to it. ... Or we had moments where we just dropped everything and were like 'oh yeah let's play games and stuff'. Well that brought about like the best thing that we could have produced, you know. (Lea1, F, IE_GP1)

3. Student feedback loops for on-going course improvement

Getting systematic student feedback to improve course redesign or improvement is a widely encountered challenge. Programmes such as RO_GP1, NL_GP1 and FI_GP3 have student feedback integrated in their designs. However, it is important not only to collect feedback, but also to devise mechanisms for infusing it appropriately in programme revision and improvement. Vignette x exemplifies how NL_GP1 achieves this, while FI_GP3 still encounters difficulties in using student feedback to inform design.

Text box 4.3. On-going student feedback for course improvement

Dutch coding skills programme: The programme ensures input on course development from a variety of sources including an independent board and *'pretty active feedback sessions'* for learners every week where they can share the views on how the programme is going and the *"co-founders will 'accept notes, comments, criticism and ideas'"* (AE professional, Edu2, NL_GP1). For example, if learners come across a useful YouTube video during their study, they will suggest that this is added to the programme's curriculum. After each Masterclass there is a survey which can be completed anonymously and the co-founders also *'read a lot of books that usually reflect research papers'* and *'we try to get external input as well'* (Pol1, M, NL_GP1). The Co-founders also look at the data concerning drop-out rates and applications and use this information to further improve and develop the programme and to increase *'the success rate with which they're able to get people into jobs'* [Board Member, Pol2, F, NL_GP1]. So, for example if students are lacking basic programming knowledge the programme will put on extra classes at the weekends and they can ask for help and clarification on anything they do not understand. The two Co-founders then *'sit down and look at all these inputs together'*. (Pol1, M, NL_GP1). They also read books and research paper and *'we make a decision based on our best guess really in the end but with more data to start from.'* (Pol1, NL_GP1)

The Co-founders' approach to developing the programme is underpinned by the belief that *'quality comes from quantity ... if you really want to know what works you have to try a lot of things out. We are trying to do that to kind of like balance out that we don't know actually what works and what doesn't'* (Pol1, NL_GP1)

Finnish Virtual School programme GP3: According to the local Virtual School curriculum (2016), all students of the folk high school have a chance to respond to a feedback questionnaire annually. The results are presented to staff members. There was no mention of common discussion or actions based on the results, however, the teachers and counsellors reported using student feedback in developing the Virtual School programme. In addition, feedback is collected systematically after a course has finished. For instance, the educators get information on the students' workload per course which can in turn be used in designing the learning tasks for the next course. The virtual platform stores information automatically on all online activities, for instance which students participate in a particular course, student and teacher time within the system etc. Thus, besides collected feedback the software collects user data.

Programmes may also integrate student feedback in a less systematic manner, drawing on discussions and individual feedback sessions. This is inherent in the vision of the programmes studied as good practice, which operate on a holistic and learner-centred approach, and where educators generally recognise the importance of student

insights. Based on the interviews with educators, other practitioners and students, it seems possible that significant amounts of “hidden” development takes place based on constant feedback and input given by the students in teaching/counselling situations. This information may never become explicit at organisation level nor benefit other staff in general programme development. However, teachers are considered important spokespersons able to express their students’ needs even if the information from student-teacher communication is not documented formally. This implies as well that teachers are considered as mediators and responsible for communicating their students’ needs further. Given that, teachers might highlight student roles in the programme design process as a form of active participation. They might be offered space to reflect on their own contribution and progress, which would enhance the understanding of the correlation between one’s efforts and achievements and thus further strengthen the development of APC.

The role of educators in the design of tailored courses is illustrated as well by UK_GP3 in Text box 4.4.

Text box 4.4. The role of educators in integrating student feedback

UK ESOL programme GP3: The design process of the course has been described by practitioners as having both ‘prescriptive and inventive’ elements [Edu1]. The prescriptiveness of the course is down to the fact that this qualification delivery should be in line with the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and the National Standards for Adult Literacy. The ESOL Core Curriculum specifies the skills, knowledge and understanding that non-native English speakers need in order to demonstrate achievement of the National Standards. The inventive dimension of the course design process is in the degree of flexibility for the course tutors/ESOL department team in shaping individual lessons, types of classroom activities and tasks, as well as strategies that the tutors employ in working with the learners.

Contextualising the requirements of the ESOL curriculum within the contexts relevant to the learners’ personal and/or professional settings permeates the underlying philosophy of the course design. The inventive element is afforded by integrating student feedback while the course is on-going. Specifically, as Edu1 noted, empowering learners and identifying the needs of those who might be in vulnerable situations is considered when designing the course content. Embedding ‘more personal and contextualised topics’ into the course design is considered to be an important element of the process:

[...] usually the first or the second class I will ask them what’s important for them. I give them lots of alternative things, like education, hobbies, talking about London, finding your way to places, shopping, those sorts of subjects, and they tell me what is a priority for them, what they use for

the discussion topic. And I ask them to sort of put things in order or priority. And from that I can usually see what's the most important thing. (Edu1)

Designing the course, therefore, becomes a dialogic process involving a careful consideration of both the ESOL set of learning outcomes and the needs of the target group.

4.2 Student recruitment, selection and enrolment

4.2.1 Gaps and challenges

Reported challenges in recruiting young people in situations of risk fall into two main categories: (1) those related to reaching out to young people; and (2) those related to generating interest in and motivation to take part in the programme.

1. Reaching out to young people experiencing vulnerability

Some groups are difficult to reach through regular channels and are persistently found outside regular recruitment channels, even when programmes specifically target the disadvantaged. Failure to reach to these young people boils down to a combination of factors, including:

- Absence of connecting networks
- Absence of information hubs in suitable locations such as schools
- Mismatches in digital and social media use

The absence of connecting networks is the most widely mentioned reason for failing to reach out to young people, especially networks that include professionals and organisations that young people trust and are in regular contact with. State-run or funded programmes often over-rely on official mediating organisations, which do not reach out to young people at risk or whose messages are not accepted, trusted and followed up on. In these cases, the importance of informal, personal networks is neglected and not tapped into. For instance, the mediation exercised by Job centres or by the Youth Integration Centre Points (JMD) in the German Youth Integration programme GP1 matches with the needs of the target group, since the former are the first interface services with whom migrants and refugees enter into contact. However, young people tend to rely on recommendations by other persons for the final selection of the provider

once information is obtained from the concerned offices. This reveals either that they do not trust these mediating actors, or that the courses offered by the providers differ from each other and the peculiarities are not detected or explained adequately by the Job centres and the JMD, who simply hand out a list of organisations.

In the case of the Austrian preparatory education programme, they reach out to potential learners either through school or through Job centres, both institutional entities. This presents an important mismatch, since people outside the labour or educational systems, such as Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs), are not detected and cannot receive adequate information about the education offer of the Production schools through these mediating agencies.

Absence of information hubs in suitable locations: Young people who are in real need for AE may come from disadvantaged groups in schools, poor neighbourhoods or other areas and locations with low educational achievement or financial difficulties. In Finland, policy makers expressed concern about education accumulating to those already well educated whilst the most vulnerable are at risk of becoming excluded altogether. In cases of negative school experience and drop-out, it is probable that these young adults will not actively seek education opportunities on their own (Ministry adviser, Pol2, Finland; National education authority, Pol8, Finland). Information about AE options was considered too scattered for young people to find independently, and our learner interview data confirms this. Several learners from the Virtual School GP3 in particular commented on the lack of information both during compulsory education years and later. According to policy makers, educational opportunities and collaboration between different actors in the field also differ locally (National education authority, Pol3; Ministry adviser, Pol4, Finland).

Mismatches in using digital and social media for reach out: There is a widespread assumption that using the media that youth typically use will yield results on its own. Our study revealed that this is hardly the case. Firstly, social media preferences are highly varied across age, geographical location and other group characteristics. For instance, while WhatsApp is the most widely used across diverse locations, Facebook is the norm in some contexts (Romania and Hungary cases), Snapchat and Instagram in others (especially the UK). In essence, the preference for a social media platform cannot be assumed, it has to be assessed in context. Additionally, young people's media platform preferences evolve. Research on media usage for specific groups should precede the choice of platforms used by AE.

This issue was highlighted in the research involving an advice service connected to the UK basic skills and vocational education programme GP2. In terms of digital communication and information preferences of young people, the advice service manager observes a trend for young people to be more likely to pick up messages on smart phones via social media rather than answering a telephone call. However, it seems that young people's social media preferences change fast, and while the service spent some time and bureaucratic effort to establish an interactive information page on Facebook, the service manager reported that young people's digital communication practices seem to have already moved on to other social media platforms:

....and we got a new logo and we got a Facebook page and all that stuff. [And] ... apparently they don't use Facebook any more, they use Instagram and Snapchat. So now we've got a Facebook page, we're probably going to have to get Instagram and Snapchat, ... (Edu1, UK_GP2)

Our research reveals that even when there is a match in terms of platform, chances are that young people will not come across the relevant pages and information without advice or being pointed to them by someone they trust. Thus, digital and social media communication needs to be complemented by contacts and communication through trusted social networks to reach out effectively to young people. More broadly, any innovative use of media, both traditional and digital, should first be checked against current use practices. Another example comes from the Turkish GP1 programme for refugees where the AE provider provides information about the courses to be opened via a telephone hotline. However, we observed no use of this method in interviews. Rather, students and friends who are in or related to the association, get basic information about the courses through the people they know. They then decide whether to apply for registration. The periods of unemployment are decisive in the intensification of seeking such information.

2. Generating interest, motivation and follow up

Receiving information about an AE programme is just a first step, concretised when young people follow up to ask for more information or apply to be accepted to a programme. Yet, there is a widely spread assumption that if provided with enough information young people will follow up and enrol. An AE practitioner affiliated to UK_GP2 pointed to a mismatch between the expectations of professionals (and policy

makers) on the one hand and of the action/inaction of some young people who are categorised as 'NEET' on the other. The expectations of professionals included that, with support, young people should be able to 'follow up' on opportunities they have been introduced to—i.e. attending regularly or at least communicate with providers if they are unable to attend for some reason. The described action/inaction of some of the young people, on the other hand, suggest that there are barriers to taking these steps. The practitioner (Edu1) suggests that this may be due to young people '*being a barrier to themselves*' but in another part of the interview also points towards other barriers, linked with '*their situation and [that] they're not getting the right support*'. These barriers link to a complex array of vulnerability factors. Many young people need support and constant communication to follow up on information and actually enrol or register. It is often the most vulnerable young people who need this support, for example those with mental health problems that make it difficult for them to leave their homes; those lacking motivation due to excessive drug use; those from difficult home situations or in care; as well as those who have had negative experiences in education so far.

Other issues have to do with the way the information is transmitted: use of language, style and register, jargon words, or simply failing to account for very specific needs and interests of young people in the messages transmitted. A widely encountered issue regards communication in the local language for refugees and migrants. Often, language levels are too low to afford easy comprehension and may deter young people from following up on information received. For instance, learners interviewed within the AE programme for migrants CY_GP1 suggest that AE practitioners communicate with them in English most of the time and that they do not always understand. They communicate with the AE practitioners by e-mail as well but only for small requests. They wished there was a platform they could use to assist them with their learning. They use their mobile phones a lot when they communicate between them (phone calls and SMS).

Some of the issues that affect follow up are related to the educational offer rather than communication *per se*. The most widely encountered are mismatches between available educational possibilities and the needs of young people, and mismatches between skills levels and the pre-requisites for programme entry. These are however worth mentioning as a communication component is often present: programmes advertised for young people are not suitable for the group addressed; the missing skills regard language competences and communication skills; gaps in communication flows affect the possibility to take action and redress the situation. For example, a notable barrier brought up by

the policy makers in Finland is the lack of suitable educational options for students with special support needs. Particular situations of vulnerability mentioned were immigrants with poor language skills and prisoners without the compulsory school diploma. These young people cannot participate in virtual educational options and are not able to take up the option of fully independent “cell studies”, reading textbooks and taking exams. (National education authority, Pol1, Finland; National educational authority, Pol3, Finland; National policy adviser, Pol6, Finland). Educators also mentioned that it is often difficult to guide immigrants to proper educational organisations, indicating the problem of a predominant concern with provision rather than a needs-based rationale in the field (Educator, Edu4, FI_GP2). The rationale of securing finances for the organisation and jobs for teachers are suspected to guide the education providers’ choice of students and programmes, favouring the so-called “low-hanging fruits” in situation of national, regional and local rivalries (Kuusipalo, 2018).

In a national assessment report it was noted that barriers to accessing adult education in Finland are related to lack of Finnish language skills or previous upper secondary level education (FIN_GP1_Valmasta_vauhtia). Lack of study abilities or need for special support were less commonly mentioned causes, however the learners of GP1 reported that learning difficulties alongside poor language skills were their main challenges regarding access to further studies. Those migrants or native Finnish learners who have not gone to school or have dropped-out early do not have experience as learners and their difficulties are linked to them not having practiced their learning skills. The adult learners who either have learning difficulties or don’t have learning skills due to short school history need extra attention from the educators. As reported by some of the Virtual School GP3 students, asking for help is not easy for many students, which suggests that the provider and learning environment should be pro-active in developing students’ learning to learn skills.

This suggests an emphasis should be placed on mediators and advisors to support and encourage young people to apply. However, in many cases advisors are overwhelmed by having to manage vast amounts of information and communications about available programmes. This can take a lot of time, especially because the advisors often are responsible for large numbers of young people. An advice service manager connected to UK GP2 describes a need for better information management tools and systems to mitigate this challenge:

I think it would be helpful if there was some kind of data system where it held all these different like providers and it said exactly what they do and it was up to date. Because the other thing is there's a lot of training providers lose their funding and off they go, and then you're trying to find someone that does something similar to what they do. So it's quite time consuming. (Edu1, UK_GP2)

4.2.2 Routes to effective practice

The analysis of the EduMAP cases reveals a series of strategic ways for reaching out to young people in situations of risk:

1. The pivotal role of social networks and mediators
2. Alumni networks and programme ambassadors
3. Multipurpose information hubs in go-to locations
4. Blended models for reaching out and communicating
5. Multi-step information provision
6. Relevant, tailored content
7. Capitalising on communication during the selection and enrolment process

These strategies are underpinned by diverse tactics and approaches which are further illustrated below.

1. The pivotal role of social networks and mediators

Social networks and mediators are among the most widely used strategic approaches for reaching out to young people. While we can distinguish between informal social networks made of personal contacts and mediating agencies and professionals, the lines of division are blurred. For instance, mediating organisations are most effective when they nurture relationships with young people based on trust, often through long-term relationships. From young people's point of view, advisors and support officers can be trusted friends, and part of their trusted social networks. For instance, in DE_GP1, some young people report they have obtained information about the Youth Integration courses through the Job centre, the Youth Integration Centre Point, and/or by counsellors of other services, for example the Red Cross. In this latter case, it is interesting to highlight that the advice came from a person speaking the same language as the respondent, a point that the respondent wanted to emphasise, as though this element contributed to the trustworthiness of the source. Actually, most of learners have had a specific

recommendation about one specific provider by former or current participants, who are part of their personal social networks, such as friends, family and community members.

Social networks fulfil two essential functions for engaging young people in AE programmes: firstly, reaching out; and secondly support to encourage interest and motivation to follow up on information.

Effectively reaching out to young people: In their most successful forms, agencies mediating access to young people converge in effective networks for information exchange and communication, which makes access to young people and follow up much more efficient.

Text box 4.5. Mediating agencies and networks for reaching out to young people

German Youth integration programme GP1: Information provision and programme access occur through mediating offices. Providers offering Integration courses cooperate with institutional actors, who usually have a first contact with refugees and migrants, such as Job centres, immigration offices and JMD—Youth Integration Centre Points. These services act as gatekeepers, providing a list of organisations offering courses and addressing young people to the first available one. Courses start continuously due to the high numbers of requests, contrary to the past when they were activated only twice per year. With regards to information access about the JMD services, it mainly works through word of mouth, as they do not use social media platforms, such as Facebook, to advertise their activities.

Austrian basic skills and remedy programme: The access to the Production school is mainly mediated by the Youth coaches and by the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS), as stated in the Guideline of the Austrian Network for Professional (NEBA) and confirmed by interviewees. In particular, the Guideline²⁰ defines Youth Coaches as gatekeepers to the Production schools. They play a crucial role both in identifying potential beneficiaries and in mediating access to the school. In their counselling function, Youth Coaches provide students with information about alternative educational opportunities to the formal system, and among others, about the Production School offer. They work in the formal education system and in cooperation with practitioners of the formal sector. This enables them to potentially reach all people in need of a specific support or at risk of exclusion, such as people who are likely to drop out from school or students with special educational needs.

20 Bundesministers für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz zur Förderung (2015) *Richtlinie NEBA—Angebote zur Durchführung der Angebote des „Netzwerks Berufliche Assistenz“—Jugendcoaching, Produktionsschule, Berufsausbildungsassistenz, Arbeitsassistenz und Jobcoaching*. P. 12. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2t5aAKv>

All I can say is that I believe that the transition to the Production school through youth coaching is very good. Young people do not come in [Note: the Production schools] by accident (Regional policy officer, Pol7, AT_GP1).

Alternatively, potential applicants can also be reached through the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS). Young people who are already out of the formal education system without specific qualifications and a professional orientation, who are looking for a job can be guided to the Production School. From their side, Production Schools also use other channels of communication, in particular web presence, brochures in easy-language and flyers in multiple languages (German, English, Polish, Romanian, Slovenian, Turkish, Hungarian, Albanian, and Bosnian). Each provider also has its own website and marketing strategy to advertise its offers. In addition, they offer Open Days during which young people interested in the schools can visit them, talk with other participants, and ask questions. The programme coordinator of one provider mentioned the use of social media platforms, in particular Facebook, but more as a secondary and complementary instrument.

Learners' views: Most of young participants confirm they have accessed information about the Production School through Youth Coaches. Others mention they found further information on the internet, while a couple of interviewees reported having heard about them from friends or parents. Some reported they visited the school during the Open Days.

Romanian VET programme GP1: One of the most effective strategies is to reach out through direct visits in relevant institutions, discuss and showcase the benefits of taking a course. In general, young people from care centres often trust persons in the centre where they grew up, or a social assistant. They are prone to take their advice for a VET course, thus RO_GP1 strategy of recruiting through DGASPC centres and social assistants is particularly appropriate. Also, the testimonials of current or former students—most of them coming as well from state care centres—are particularly valuable.

In some of the cases covered such as some programmes for immigrants and asylum seekers, mediators also decide/allocate students to AE programmes. For the AE programme for migrants in Cyprus, for instance, communication is initially made in person between the migrants and the Migrant Information Centre (MIC) agency that allocates them to the AE programme. The MIC communicates with the migrants via SMS and telephone to provide information to those selected onto the programme. The learners interviewed claimed that information provision is the best service they receive from the MIC and that the process of allocation to the AE was very smooth. Communication was face to face during the information and allocation process and learners suggested that the only thing that they felt as negative was that it took too long (4 months).

On-going support and advice: Addressing barriers to accessing AE requires coordinated joint work by different services and agencies. As an AE practitioner affiliated to the basic skills and vocational programme UK_GP2 suggests, this enhances young people's access to support and contributes to

building up their confidence and making them feel good about themselves, thinking outside the box about things that [...] they've never thought of doing before and then they suddenly think 'wow I really like this' (Advice service manager, Edu1, UK_GP2)

However, in the most challenging cases ongoing communication requires patience and persistence and the ability to deal with frustrations:

...it's just that constant chasing, chasing, chasing, chasing and not getting anywhere, it's really frustrating. I mean we have lots of successes and it's lovely to see that, but it's just you want everyone to be engaged. (Edu1, UK_GP2)

2. Alumni networks and programme ambassadors

Several AE organisations rely on networks of alumni or programme ambassadors who have completed or are attending a course. This is very effective as these young people are likely to be perceived as peers, equals, and role models.

Text box 4.6. Programme ambassadors for reaching out to young people at risk

The UK mentoring programme GP1 mainly targets young people (14—19) who have experienced care. However, this programme is also offered to those whom the schools consider vulnerable and disadvantaged which impacts on their ability to get the best out of education and the best out of their school experience. This is a school-based informal education programme and young learners are identified and approached through their school. Consequently, information about the programme is provided by UK_GP1 staff directly or mediated through designated school staff. UK_GP1 pays attention to information provision to learners prior to the start of the programme and have designed strategies to capture young people's interest.

Young people who are new to the programme are informed about its aim and the availability of mentoring through information that is developed by young people already on the programme. The lead of UK_GP1 summarises this as:

The programme is presented to young people in schools that 'we are all here to help you as a young person find, go and use your talent, it's all future facing so it's aspirational, it's positive, it's upbeat, it's all...you know the language is really, really, really important... So [young people on the programme] do the marketing for us, they do the design, brochures and all this kind of stuff. ...it's an accolade. So we get a lot of young people asking for a mentor. (Pol1, UK_GP1)

Ambassadors act as links between UK_GP1 and potential participants, supporting further developments as one school-based member of staff describes:

We help recruit young ambassadors, so we have up to five ambassadors, or sometimes more, per school. ... and they sort of have become the voice of young people for our schools, representing their peers within the school but the whole kind of programme overall, and making sure their voice is heard and they're giving their opinions and ideas about what they think is going to work for them, high maintenance, helping them, and how we can sort of shape the service a bit further. (AE professional, Edu8, UK_GP1)

Many interviewed young people 'work' as ambassadors of UK_GP1 and are more than willing to share their stories in order to make a difference. UK_GP1 uses ambassadors to inform, for example, other schools, policy makers, enterprises, local communities and young people about the impact the programme may have. As one young person says:

I'm helping other people by telling my story which they've made me do many, many times... I'm helping to make a difference to other people's lives. I'm showing people that yeah I have been through it, I've had a bad time, but like I've come out the other end, and I want other people to know they can come out the other end too. ... We have events and we'd speak to you about what we'd been through and how amazing [UK_GP1] is. We write [the speeches] ourselves, they don't write them for us. (Lea2, F, UK_GP1)

Some other ambassadors are actively engaged with other young people in schools, offering them information and some experience:

they're saying like to make [other young people] want to join, so we would make up like a PowerPoint or do like flash cards with them, we take them out of class, we sit in a group, and you'd ask them how they felt and if they had any problems, and then we'd find ways to prevent the problems from happening in school. (Lea3, M, UK_GP1)

3. Multipurpose information hubs in go-to locations

Spaces such as schools, community centres, youth clubs are particularly suited for providing information about multiple AE options. Finnish policy-makers interviewed suggest that providing information about different AE options in schools is an untapped opportunity. Contacting the vulnerable via active youth-work practices and early interventions were considered as important measures preventing drop-out, since it was

acknowledged that many problems are evident already during school years. This strategy is also used by the mentoring programme UK_GP1, where learners are approached in schools and receive information directly by meeting UK_GP1 or school staff.

In some cases, mediating organisations can act as information hubs—the go to place for information for all sorts of matters related to young people at risk of social exclusion. These can be community-embedded organisations, social care institutions and so on. In some cases, AE providers can be embedded in such organisations that provide a diverse range of services for vulnerable groups, as exemplified by the TR_GP1 programme for Syrian refugees. Our research reveals that GP 1 is a very significant organisation that provides essential information and facilities to refugees such as legal protection, health services, language training, and inclusion in social networks. It is the only provider of information about AE. A typical example of this from our interviews is as follows:

[Interviewer] *Where do you intend to get information about such courses in the future?*

[Learner] *I'm going to come and ask here; where else am I going to learn?* [Learner, TR_GP1]

Other interviews with learners from the same good practice case points out that refugees would approach institutions that they know provide relevant information and services. If not TR_GP1, then well-known and trusted associations like Red Crescent and Blue Crescent.

4. Blended models of reaching out and communicating

The importance of digital and social media cannot be under-estimated for reaching out and communicating with young people. However, our study suggests that the most effective communication models blend traditional and digital media as well as social media in ways that involve social networks, word of mouth and recommendations. In other words, they capitalise on human relations and the power of direct communication. Thus, digital and social media are important **complements** to good information. Appropriate media utilising appropriate modes of communication can work well to attract new cohorts of learners, but these need to be understood and designed within local contexts. Furthermore, they are unlikely to follow up on information provided without support and advice from trusted networks.

Many practitioners interviewed suggest that keeping a digital and social media presence is important, but not to the detriment of direct communication. For example, while the Youth forum's activities in Germany GP3 are mainly communicated through its dedicated website, through videos on its own YouTube channel, and through its Facebook page, personal and informal communication is considered the most effective. The role of the Youth Forum Facilitator and Coordinator makes a big difference in reaching out to young people and in motivating them to take part.

Even when reliable information systems are used (such as databases of contacts), it remains important to maintain social contacts and direct communication, for example for updating databases and other data useful for media communication. For instance, TR_GP1 has a database of Syrian refugees that they use for communication. Keeping the database up to date, situated as it is at the centre of all institutional communications, is directly related to the ability of the association to deliver its services. The sustainability and quality of communication via SMS and telephone is directly related to the continuity of consulting, health, cash aid and training services. Research tells us that the refugees frequently change their phone numbers and so the database needs to be continuously updated.

5. Multi-step information provision

Information provided to young people about AE programmes is not a one-step process. From the perspective of a young person, the process of finding out about a course, deciding whether it is suitable, following up to ask for more information and then deciding to enrol can be a complex and broken up process. We can think about the process as consisting of related but separate, cumulative but not necessarily consecutive 'moments', from information receipt to decision to enrol. Different media, platforms and messages may be implicated in these different moments. For instance, reaching out to young people in their own communities or schools may be complemented by social media contact, web page visits, events such as taster days, all designed to give access to information about an AE offering. Taster or Open days are considered to be particularly effective for marking transition from initial interest to decision to enrol. At the VET programme RO_GP1, an Open Day is organised each year where information about the programme, activities, and demonstrations of work across the five courses (such as baking and carpentry) are offered, with the participation of current and former students. For AT_GP1, potential participants can visit the Production Schools during

the so-called *Schnuppertage* (literally taster days), during which they obtain adequate information about the school offer. This time is given to young people to let them understand whether the school fits their needs and expectations. On this occasion, young people can meet the school's practitioners. Most learners interviewed confirm having benefitted from the *Schnuppertage*.

6. Relevant, tailored content

The most effective messages are those that emphasise aspects of the educational programme that respond directly to interests, perceived needs and barriers that young people experience.

Text box 4.7. Tailored information for young people

The recruitment messages of the **Romanian VET programme GP1** emphasise some key aspects:

- The educational approach that focuses on practice (75% practice and 25% theory) and is learner centred, with elements of mentoring (Learn coaching) and vocational coaching
- Supportive services—especially the full accommodation and tuition offered
- The officially recognised qualification earned at the end
- Graduation opportunities, including finding and support for keeping suitable employment.

With respect to messages, there are two aspects that RO_GP1 communicates well: the experience of taking the course, and the opportunities opened after the course. For some learners, the actual experience of being on the course and the supportive services (including housing, meals and pocket money) was just as important as the future opportunities the course opened. The practical approach, which is emphasised in the communication, is also one of the aspects that attracted young people. For instance, a young girl enrolled in the Bakery course remembered that when she found out about the courses, she was impressed by the experience of being at RO_GP1, particularly the generous living conditions with full accommodation and meals covered.

Learners interviewed emphasise how important it was for them to understand the benefits of taking a course before deciding to enrol. Benefits encompassed both the experience of taking the course and the opportunities opened after graduation. For instance, a young girl enrolled in the Bakery course remembered that when she found out about the courses, she was impressed by the experience of being at RO_GP1, particularly the generous living conditions with full accommodation and meals covered:

I lived in an orphanage. In there I found out about RO_GP1. I was 16 and I had only the 8th grade completed [lower secondary education]. The chef master and two young people from our centre who were taking courses here—cook, waiter, carpenter,—were visiting us during holidays and told us ‘it is really good in there, they also pay you a little, they compensate you, you have food, accommodation for free. You have a room to share in pairs, and there’s a bathroom for every room’. Whereas, in our orphanage, the conditions were not as good as here. (Lea2, F, RO_GP1)

For some others, the benefits opened after graduation outweighed the educational experience. They aimed to take a course that paved their way to a future job and an independent life—and for this it was important to know that the course earned them a recognised qualification and facilitated their access to the job market.

[I had found out] through the social assistant, the one from Child Protection, who comes every month to see if you are ok, if you are living in good conditions. He called me and told me: ‘Do you want to take a course?’ I said OK, I had already finished 12 classes [high school]. ‘Look, we offer you a chance to take a post-high school course and continue to receive the placement money. Like this, you can put money aside for the rent and then you’ll be able to stand on your own feet.’ This is also what I thought, and after I will finish the course, I will rent something and I will stand on my own feet. (Lea3, F, RO_GP1)

There is also a stakeholder group that is often neglected—parents. Due to the age of some young people, parents often play an important role in the information and communication processes involved in young people choosing a programme or career path. Thus, providing specific information to help parents understand options is important. In some cases, such as the advice service linked to the basic skills and vocational programme UK_GP2, agencies and advisors may also have a role in mediating between young people and their parents, for example when parents insist on academic pathways and qualifications, but young people want to pursue more vocational directions. Sometimes advisors may ask to speak with a young person on their own if a joint meeting with parents achieves limited progress.

7. Capitalising on communication during the selection and enrolment process

As anticipated in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3, the selection and enrolment of participants is an important moment where key information can be conveyed and exchanged. In first instance, it is an occasion to clarify expectations and ensure that the course is a good fit for the applicant. In the VET programme RO_GP1, the interview is an important moment to inform applicants about the course and create the right kind of expectations:

[It is important to] explain and tell them concretely what we do, what exactly we offer them, so that they know from the beginning what we can offer and not come up with different expectations. It is very important that what we tell them is also what happens throughout the year. (AE professional, Edu6, RO_GP1).

Organisations such as UK_GP2 mitigate against the lack of information about new student cohorts through extensive interviewing processes. At an individual level, designing the programme to meet each student's need was made more challenging because the college did not get access to some of the students' Education, Health and Care Plans. However, an extensive interviewing process (see below) mitigated against this:

So I didn't really have much access to HCPs because they're from different boroughs, it's really difficult to get hold of people—but then again what could I learn from a piece of paper that I can't learn from a conversation (AE professional, Edu2, M, UK_GP2)

The adequacy of information exchanges needs to be assessed in relation to the type of programme. In programmes such as the Cyprus and Denmark cases for migrants and asylum seekers, students are assigned to AE programmes by authorities or migrant centres. Other programmes have no selection of participants, or the process is entirely managed online. In programmes such as PT_GP1, IT_GP1, MT_GP1, communication is made by e-mail when they are recruited to the programme, and applicants receive a message about whether they have been accepted or not. The effectiveness of such enrolment processes is often judged by young people in terms of speed rather than richness of information provided or received.

In general, young people perceive the enrolment process (whether selected or not) as more of a formality. Nevertheless, our data suggests that appropriate, tailored information provided at this point can make a difference for many young people in terms of programme relevance and match to previous aptitudes and interests.

4.3 Programme delivery

Information and communication processes cultivated during the course of a programme can be a determinant for the effectiveness of the educational experience. In this section, we look at challenges and effective practices in communication focusing on social, media and agency (resources and competences) dimensions.

4.3.1 Gaps and challenges

The gaps and challenges reported for communication during programme provision are mainly related to resources (such as time), communication competences and tackling diversity in learner groups:

Communication competences and language: A widely reported challenge regards participants' communication competences. For migrants and refugees involved in AE programmes, this is related to language competences. In programmes such as MT_GP1 and CY_GP1, the use of English language is sometimes problematic because the level of English used by the practitioners is higher than the level of English capacities of learners. Use of interpreters is essential in some cases. Learners suggest that they cannot understand the technical language used by the practitioners, but then they address their questions to the platform and they always receive a response from the practitioners. They also have access to a glossary that is uploaded in the platform. More broadly, young people often lack competences for formal communication, underpinned also by certain values and attitudes such as punctuality, concentration on tasks, etc. Some make little distinction between formal and informal communication and the different registers needed in each. This is often one of the reasons for drop out, as the AE spaces are perceived to be rigid, with specific rules of conduct and communication. Some programmes however, as we will further elaborate below, specifically target the acquisition of communication competences.

Another competence-related challenge is associated with transitions to digital forms of communication. This has been observed most closely in the Finnish Virtual School programme GP3. According to our analysis of the data, one of the most significant things hindering the expansion of the programme is its accessibility to those with difficulties in written forms of communication. This is more an issue of accessibility than communication per se, but it excludes many significant groups from the programme which might otherwise fit them well. Some of these groups recognised by the providers were migrant stay-at-home mothers and other non-native Finnish speakers and people with dyslexia or visual restrictions. On the level of communication this is strongly related to the programme's nature as a virtual learning space. Where in a traditional classroom the communication between students and teachers and other staff is mostly relying on speech and non-verbal interaction, in a virtual environment the written form takes this place and hence things such as writing assignments and study materials must be viewed as forms of communication, not only as materials, since the teachers are trying

to “get the message through” via written materials. The programme providers have recognised this challenge and are planning how to improve the programme to better suit these groups.

Time: Both learners and practitioners indicate the time consuming nature of communicating, setting up and participating in meetings, and in general cultivating the layer of communication and relationship building that occurs outside formal learning scenarios.

Tackling diversity in learner cohorts: This stems from an issue reported above, regarding the difficulties tutors and educators encounter as a result of finding out too late about students’ profiles, when the course has already been designed. In programmes where learners’ prior skills and knowledge is very important—such as language and orientation courses for migrants—educators need to invest additional effort in order to match their planned teaching approach and content to the level and needs of individual learners.

Student participation: In the learner-centred programmes studied, student participation is often one of the strategies used for engaged learning. Depending on course, participation can be difficult to achieve, for issues related to competences but also personality styles. In the Finnish Virtual School FI_GP3, the main communication issue seemed to be that the students do not always ask for help immediately. Hence their study related problems can cumulate, which may cause delays and interruptions. According to the AE practitioner interviews a part of the problem is the lack of resources for study counsellors to reach “the silent ones” as often as needed. The students’ hesitancy to speak to the educators and take part in more social forms of course activities was another issue noted by the programme providers. All these issues were recognised by the programme providers and there were constant efforts in developing the programme and the web platform in order to solve the problems and to encourage the students to communicate more.

4.3.2 Routes to effective practice

The research suggests clear routes to effective practice in relation to communication during programme delivery. We have structured these across four areas:

1. Relationship building
2. Effective use of media

3. Values in communication
4. Cultivating communication competences and literacies

1. Relationship building

Several models of communication and social relations underpinning learning provision emerge, illustrated below with examples:

Encouraging peer collaboration and group dynamics: As anticipated in Section 3.2.4, Chapter 3, most programmes studied encourage peer collaboration and horizontal exchanges as part of the educational experience. Some programmes such as IE_GP1, EL_GP2, DE_GP3, ES_GP2 and ES_GP3 encourage learning by experience and learner-led activities. Learners in EL_GP2 speak for instance about the “friendly atmosphere” as one of the things they appreciate most about the programme, while educators point that all activities are experience-based. Communication is always face-to-face within the team of participants or small groups, and group dynamics is essential. Text box X illustrates strategies for encouraging such a collaborative atmosphere and learner initiative for experiential learning.

Text box 4.8. Learner-led activities for experiential learning

The practitioners involved in the Irish informal education programme GP1 emphasise the significance of group processes involving young people as facilitators. The direction of the project was not set out beforehand or determined by practitioners, but rather emerged through a process of the group coming together on various occasions, most significantly, during a residential workshop over several days. Overall, in the context of the project, communication was strongly influenced by the open and loosely structured approaches of youth work, mainly through the facilitation of two project workers.

Following such an approach requires practitioners to step back from funder-driven targets and outcomes, because the process of young people being able to give voice to their experiences and feelings could in some contexts become an aim and end in itself. Another aspect of the informal and process- rather than outcome-oriented approach is that a lot of things happen during what might seem every day or unrelated tasks.

The pacing of the processes follows the group, based on the paramount principle of a *safe space*. As a result, the pace at the beginning of the project was slower, but after the residential *something clicked and everything came out* (Edu3). Helping the young people to channel their experiences and feelings into a message that could carry outside of the project was a next step.

The chosen medium for young people conveying their messages was a video which they produced, facilitated by the practitioners and a technical team. In this sense, the communication *during* the project led to communication *about* the issues that young people had uncovered and become more confident in expressing through the project (see below). Overall, however, what becomes very clear from the accounts of the practitioners is that their skills and abilities to facilitate group communication processes combined with the young people's willingness and capacity to engage in such processes are probably the most essential elements leading to a successful outcome.

ES_GP3 encourages participatory and innovative contents agreed between educators and learners. Although educators must comply with a compulsory list of VET contents as stated by the Catalan Education Department, they use distinctive and innovative methodologies to improve participants' experiences and engage them in the learning process. For example, one educator highlighted gamification, which is very attractive to their participants' age cohort (16—19). ES_GP3 educators usually ask participants how they prefer to work on each of the programme mandatory topics, offering them the possibility to try different methods and languages, such as comic, narrative, poetry, theatre and music. These participatory and multidisciplinary methodologies motivate participants and make them an active part in their own educative pathways:

We do these small projects so students can choose the best way to communicate, because we also consider that every means of communication is valid: one might prefer drawing, another one might use a song, but basically they are the ones to choose it (Programme coordinator and educator, Edu3, ES_GP3).

One on one personalised relationships between AE professionals and learners are developed in programmes in order to provide personalised support, mentorship, advice, coaching and guidance. It is used to develop reciprocal trust or nurture the feelings of mutual reliance and support among learners. The personal relationship is an essential part of the educational or teaching and learning scenario. The preparatory vocational programme AT_GP1 exemplifies this through the role of the Youth Coaches. Young people have a reference person in the Youth Coach, who also takes care of information provision matched to the needs of learners. UK_GP1 cultivates relationships between learners and mentors who listen to, counsel and guide learners throughout long-term periods. Learners often participate in the programme over a number of years. This offers UK_GP1 the opportunity to help learners to experience and learn about different

jobs over time and build transferable skills. The support from mentors in this process is central.

Structured communication in multidisciplinary teams: In Chapter 5, we will look closely at communication within multidisciplinary teams as a particularly effective way of bringing together expertise in the service of the learners. From the point of view of the programme and relationships with learners, communication is just as important in order to allow this expertise, information and support to converge in attending to learners' needs and facilitating the teaching and learning process. RO_GP1 exemplifies a structured approach to communication between a team and learners. At formal, or institutionalised level, the bulk of communication between learners and AE practitioners is structured around the case management process. A systematic plan is drawn up for each learner, starting from their aptitudes, current skills and objectives for the future, to identify priority areas, constantly monitor progress and take appropriate action where needed. Case management is led by a case manager and involves frequent communication with the members of the team and educators, for each individual student. Educators are in touch with the student to work on some specific aspects that have been identified as priorities. Members of the support team, such as the vocational counsellor and the psychologist also have regular meetings with students. Students can ask for appointments when there is a need, outside these slots. Regular sessions are organised every three months, to share updates and monitor progress for each student. Students also have a representative that brings their view to the fore in meetings.

2. Effective use of media

A variety of media uses have been observed during programme provision across the AE programmes studied, among which some aspects stand out:

Intensive digital media usage and eLearning platforms: Programmes such as FI_GP3, GR_GP1, IT_GP1, PT_GP1, MT_GP1 use eLearning platforms. For the Virtual School FI_GP3 especially, all communication for the distance-based course takes place through the platform. Specific attention is provided to elements of interactivity, feedback loops, learning support and teacher to student communication to be afforded by the platform. Programmes such as GR_GP1, PT_GP1, MT_GP1 and IT_GP1 use eLearning platforms based on Moodle or Blackboard. All the relevant material, televised communication, learner questions, messages, forums, weekly assignments etc. appear

in the platform for all participants to access. A special application for mobile phones (Android) for the GR_GP1 programme participants is in development.

Use of social media: Programmes report using social media either informally or formally, and the most effective and widely used platform is WhatsApp. This is variously used for communications about courses, sessions and meetings, and to build relationships among the groups of students.

Blended models: Most programmes, irrespective of their strategic use of digital media, emphasise the value of direct and interpersonal communication. Social media is generally considered an extension of this, used for relationship building and fast communication across groups. In the informal education programme IE_GP1, which values experiential learning, face-to-face communication played an obviously important role. This is supplemented by communication through other media, most notably a WhatsApp group not just used for practical information exchange and planning, but (as the young people describe below), for ongoing relationship building. The young people described that they used WhatsApp, Facebook and email as communication tools outside meetings, however, WhatsApp was particularly useful not just for jokes and banter among the group, but also as reminders for any tasks that needed completing within the project. This was especially the case because the project was something that young people were involved in alongside other aspects of their life (e.g. other education commitments, internships, etc.)

Friendly physical spaces to encourage personal communication: the premises where ES_GP3 takes place offer a simple but spacious and cosy leisure time room with sofas, games, musical instruments, a football table and a ping pong table, so participants can take breaks and interact in recreative ways. One of them (Lea2) said that no other communication media is necessary because their meeting point is the football table.

3. Values in communication

Many AE practitioners and learners interviewed hinted at the underlying values that guide their communication practices. These include values of listening, empathy and horizontal relationships. At RO_GP1, AE providers consider that there is a well-established culture of communication at RO_GP1, which is formalised and structured, but also leaves space for informal, fluid processes of communication. Communication also abides by a series of shared values, interviewees stressed the importance of open dialogue and communication, listening and empathy. In the Advice Service connected

to UK_GP2 basic skills and vocational programme, the information and communication approach is based on building up young people's confidence, providing *someone they can go and talk to* and providing support with the steps necessary to find, choose and apply for a programme. One AE practitioner interviewed emphasised the importance of listening in this process. An important part of the communication approach in this service is that advisors do not tell young people what to do but instead provide them with information and support to allow them to make their own choices.

A educator from ES_GP3 highlighted how besides technical expertise, their skills for personal communication are also important qualifications to work with young adults at risk of social exclusion. This encompasses being able to look "inside" learners and understand them, which makes the difference between educators and mere trainers (formadores), whose tasks are limited to give lessons without getting involved with participants' well-being.

I think it's important to have an active listening, [to take] a deep look into the student. This is more important than giving that lesson or learning that subject: it is about observing each student and being able to realize if something [wrong] is happening and deal with it at that very moment (Programme coordinator and educator, Edu3, ES, GP3).

4. Cultivating communication competences and literacies

Teacher competences and training in communication: Communication competences are cultivated by educators in many programmes studied, often informally, shaping attitudes and skills in listening and empathy but also at times through specific courses and training. The team in the Advice Service connected to UK_GP2 are trained in 'Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)', a qualification which provides a framework and tools for communication with young people (as well as their parents) about learning options and choices:

...we're not meant to give opinions, we're meant to listen, and it is around encouragement and support. And also it's about the right thing for the young person. (Edu1, F, UK_GP2)

Cultivating learners' communication competences: Some programmes specifically cultivate learners' competences for formal communication, including concentration on tasks, punctuality, responsibility for one's work etc. Text box 4.9 exemplifies how this is achieved by punctuating spaces and registers for formal and informal communication within a programme.

Text box 4.9. Cultivating competences for formal and informal communication

Communication within the **employment insertion programme RO_GP2**, with its focus on structured formal and informal activities, enables participants to get acquainted with the rigours of formal work environment communication, while also benefitting and being engaged by the free socialisation and informal communication spaces. **Formal and informal communication spaces** are punctuated and reinforced through rules of conduct. There is a **formalised space** of communication, marked by the working schedule, where communication needs to abide by certain protocols. These are the protocols that participants learn during the first 2 months of the programme, the gradual entry into the ethics and ethos of a working environment. This space is configured by working activities, but is punctuated as well for each learner by social support and professional and self-development activities. While the work day is 8 hours, in reality they work in general about 4 hours intensely. For the rest, they may have one on one meetings with the support team, vocational guidance, take courses outside RO_GP2, or take time off for addressing personal issues such as house finding or medical appointments. Thus, specific moments of communication are inserted in the programme for each learner, structured according to the case management system in place. For instance, a learner may take part in regular counselling and vocational guidance sessions, or be coached on their rights and administration aspects in their personal lives.

Informal moments of communication take place during breaks and in organised socialisation events, such as grill parties, where learners who have completed the programme are also invited. Young person to young person communication is not regulated, however it is nurtured through interactions during work hours and breaks. RO_GP2 tries to instil a team working spirit, and for this communication and collaboration during task completion are just as important as the moments of informal socialisation.

RO_GP2 staff emphasise that in communicating with learners it is important to have patience and empathy. Some participants need to perform a task multiple times before being able to remember it and do it well. Some forget easily or are discouraged after first attempts. Thus, these qualities are important not only for ensuring good work performance, but also as a means to instil self-confidence, perseverance and trust.

Learners' views: The most important aspect emphasised by young people is their increased capacity to understand and acquire the competences for formal communication. They get used to the rhythm of the work day, starting promptly at 8 am, and the split between working hours and breaks. They do not use mobile phones and social media during working hours and some of them emphasise that due to these restrictions, they are now more aware of the value of their free time. The social side and the relationships formed are appreciated by learners. They appreciate the role of the workshop coordinators in creating this supportive

atmosphere. Some emphasised that it was difficult for them at the beginning to understand what they were supposed to do and remember the task they had been allocated. These aspects improved as they continued to work, and now for many of them one of the best qualities of RO_GP2 stands in its collaborative atmosphere and supportive supervisory approach, where their efforts to learn are met with patience.

4.4 Post-course communication

As anticipated in Section 3.2.5 of Chapter 3, not all AE programmes surveyed cultivate, or desire to cultivate post-course communication. However, many do at formal or informal level, largely for two purposes: 1. keeping in touch with Alumni and drawing on these networks to access information about the impact of the programme which can also be used for marketing; 2. to sustain and support learners who have completed the course for at least part of their journey after programme completion. It is for these two purposes that communication with Alumni is also considered very important by the organisations that sustain it. Below, both the challenges and effective practices are described according to the capacity of AE organisations to sustain fruitful communication with Alumni, looking as well at the role that Alumni communication may have for both organisations and young people's lives and the cultivation of APC.

4.4.1 Gaps and challenges

Challenges experienced by organisations that seek to sustain post-course communication generally fall in three categories:

- Lack of resources
- Formal impediments to maintaining contact (privacy, data protection)
- Transiting from informal to structured practices

Lack of resources: Maintaining contact with Alumni in a systematic manner is time and resource consuming. It is quite rare and only in large organisations that resources and staff specifically cover Alumni relationships. In most organisations, it is rather a matter of keeping in touch and cultivating relationships on top of other regular job-related activities.

Formal impediments to maintaining contact and collection of information (privacy, data protection): As mentioned in the Design sub-section above, even when collecting data on Alumni lives after graduation is considered fundamental for impact assessment, organisations may run against formal impediments to follow up. Among these, chief are considerations related to data protection and privacy. This may apply in high security settings such as prison education, but also relate to standard data protection regulations that require special permissions to be able to maintain regular and systematic contact and collect data from former students.

Transiting from informal to structured practices: Often as a consequence of the above two challenges, many organisations rely on informal networks, which depend on personal relationships, often initiated and continued by learners who have completed the course, who keep in touch to express their gratitude or ask for advice, rather than systematic communication practices. While informal communication has its benefits (more on this below), more formalised practices could provide much more reliable, systematic information from former participants and be used for a variety of purposes. A senior manager of the Romanian VET programme GP1 mentioned that he would like to develop more structure and formalise these processes to enhance their value for both young people and the future activities of the organisation. For instance, they would like to gather data about the former participants and their experience after the programme to understand the long-term value of their training and to offer examples to current cohorts. However, such a process may make the communication more rigid, and lose some of the spontaneous contacts created. Thus, one of the challenges currently considered is how to keep the post-course communication process fluid while bringing some degree of formality and structure to it.

Transition to formalised communication also poses issues about the benefit for former participants: why should they stay in touch? As long as communication is informal, it is fluid and mutually agreed as an extension of personal networking. For formalised practices to be sustained, however, there should be some form of tangible benefit for learners, to justify their investment of time into such processes.

4.4.2 Routes to effective practice

Effective practices are exemplified across the cases studied at both informal and formal level. This division is blurred rather than firmly delineated and strategies for cultivating

post-course communication most often apply to both. We are presenting these strategies according to four key practices:

1. Leveraging personal relationships
2. Acknowledging mutual benefit
3. Integrating post-course communication in programme design
4. Cultivating peer networks

1. Leveraging personal relationships

Personal relationships are what keeps informal post-course communication active in most cases. They rely on the development of trustful relations between learners and educators or other support personnel, which may well be nurtured after a course is completed. Informal contacts are among the most valuable forms of relating and communicating after graduation, according to staff in the Romanian VET programme RO_GP1. Their value has much to do with their informality, they are not controlled and come from learners themselves. Former participants tend to keep in touch with their tutor, the coordinator of the course they took, as this is usually the closest relationship they experienced. They usually keep in touch by phone or social media but they also visit and may offer testimonials for current or potential students, or do some volunteering or for example they may cook if they followed that course,

Young people who have been here and graduated, some of them pay us visits, they come, talk about themselves, the ones who have been in the kitchen cook for us. Two weeks ago a young girl came, she had finished the waiter course, now she is working and just passed by to see how it's going. Someone came who graduated four years ago. 'I came to see how are things, if I can help or do some volunteering. Can I stay here for 3 days?' she was working abroad. 'I have one week leave and for 3 days I want to do volunteering. RO_Org1 gave me a lot and I want to help as well.' These are all positive feedbacks, I think. Or they say 'This chance, this school changed my life.' And you see them that they also want to give something back. (AE professional, Edu4, RO_GP1)

These relationships can in themselves bring benefit to former participants and programme educators can provide support, advice and help. Furthermore, they can open other opportunities for current learners, for instance linking them to their professional networks for jobs, education and internship opportunities. For example, in ES_GP2, some former learners continue participating in GP2 foundation projects and keep in touch with the coordinator, educators and peers. They mostly use WhatsApp messages,

phone calls and they usually meet in the celebrations and social activities organized by the foundation. A former participant felt happy about the way in which they are warmly welcomed after the training, so it has some continuity through other projects and events and not “just disappear” after its completion.

[GP3] *coordinators and educators always keep the doors open to us. They always tell us 'if you wanna come and ask for one of us [please do].* (Lea2, F, ES_GP2).

She remembered once that she got a precarious job in a bakery where they did not want to make her a contract and she felt really frustrated. Not only did the GP2 coordinator comfort her, but she also helped her to get a better job.

They can also mitigate some of the challenges mentioned above. Even in prison education, and despite the requirements regarding follow up on inmates' whereabouts after graduation, former inmates can keep in touch with educators to ask for advice, tap into professional networks for jobs, or even continue their education if it was not completed during the time spent in the prison programme.

2. Acknowledging mutual benefit

As specified above, acknowledging the importance of post-course communication can motivate a more structured approach to investing in it and sustaining it. This incurs identifying and communicating the benefits derived on both sides. We have documented some tangible benefits on both the AE providers' and the learners' side.

For AE providers, maintaining contact with Alumni may be considered a part of the educational mission, when post-course communication is thought to contribute to supporting learners who have completed the course. Apart from this, they can also draw on Alumni networks to access information about past learners' pathways and the impact of the programme, or to provide testimonials and be involved in other ways of marketing their programme to other young people.

For learners, benefits can include: support structures they can tap into in times of need; on-going advice and support; connecting to professional networks for jobs, internships and education; and, getting advice for future studies and employment.

Text box 4.10 illustrates acknowledgement of benefits derived by learners from their own point of view and that of practitioners in RO_GP1.

Text box 4.10. Benefits derived by learners from post-course communication

Romanian VET programme GP1

AE providers' views: Communication after course is particularly relevant and important for RO_GP1 learners. Most attending young people come from foster homes or state care centres; some of them have some persons or organisations they trust, but most often that support is limited. Thus, RO_GP1 takes responsibility for ensuring a smooth transition from the course experience (10 months of daily care, support and training) to an independent professional and personal life. There are two aspects where support is essential—the job (which for most participants is secured through RO_GP1) and housing (offered where needed and possible through the umbrella care organisation). Apart from these, however, RO_GP1 seeks to offer an open spot for communicating and getting feedback and advice for any issues or questions a young person may have.

Learners' views: From the learners' point of view, post-course communication is important for

- Having access to needed information, such as job openings. Some students and especially those enrolled in the cooking course mentioned they would be in touch with their course coordinator for future job seeking. However, learners did not mention the formalised relation with the job coach, but rather keeping in touch in the future for job finding if needed. Most learners already have a secured job when graduating.
- Needed support such as housing. Some learners appreciated the possibility to have access to social housing through the RO_GP1 umbrella organisation.

Beyond an actual need, however, most learners emphasised their intention to keep in touch for nurturing a relationship, as a sign of friendliness and appreciation for the positive experience during the course.

3. Integrating post-course communication in programme design

Programmes such as RO_GP1 and RO_GP2 acknowledge that maintaining contact with learners after course completion is part of the educational and support services they offer. Thus, they integrate a limited time period after graduation during which they are in touch with learners who have completed the course. For RO_GP1, this is related to job finding—a job coach monitors the experience of the graduate at the workplace secured through RO_GP1. At RO_GP2, learners are monitored for 6 months by the support team after completing the programme. This 6-month monitoring involves regular phone calls, availability to intervene or help when needed, visits or contacts with a new employer etc. Apart from this, on an informal level the contact between learners who

completed the programme and RO_GP2 is maintained for much longer. RO_GP2 sends invitations for events, grill parties and happy hours, and other times past learners just drop by. However, the most important part of post-course communication is during the first 6 months, because the risk of challenges and issues is greatest within that period. By proposing themselves as a support structure, a reference point for help and advice for young people, RO_GP2 contributes to lowering the risk of setback, inspires more confidence and can strengthen young people's resilience.

These examples indicate that if considered at the design stage, post-course communication can be conceived in such a manner as to overcome some of the challenges mentioned. Including it in the programme activities means its role and benefits for the learners are acknowledged, specific resources are allocated to this end, and learners themselves have a more coherent vision of the role and benefit of post-course communication for themselves.

4. Cultivating peer networks

This is a less encountered yet a promising practice, which has the potential to develop into communities of interest where Alumni support each other as well as new cohorts of students. The role of the AE provider, in this case, is rather to facilitate and provide spaces and resources for relationships among Alumni to be strengthened and evolve. The transgender programme GR_GP2 offers an example of this. Young people communicate among themselves via e-mail and SMS messages, also by phone and Facebook. In addition, the AE provider hosts websites within which an online forum exists, but practitioners and young people claim it is not very popular. To support opportunities for face to face networking the provider also organizes weekly meetings every Sunday at a coffee house in the city centre for all the participants who have completed the programme. These meetings are open to non-participants as well. Briefing and update events on the programme as well as info days for those who wish to participate are also available each month in the same place. The coffee house provides a more informal space for exchanging experiences and ideas both on how to access the programme and also on how to make it work for the LGBTQ community.

Another example of peer network maintenance after programme completion can be found in ES_GP2. Leisure time training is a bit different from other GP analysed in terms of the social and emotional education it fosters among participants as part of their training, to know themselves better and be well prepared to work with children

and teenagers. This pedagogical purpose resounded in the creation of stronger and deeper relationships among participants, who often were happy to keep in touch after the course.

Chapter 5. Communication within the adult education organisation

I like how we work as a team. Because each of us does their job, but at the same time we are all gathered around the needs of the young person. (Councillor, RO1, Romania)

Chapter 3 suggested that the information and communication practices in an AE organisation can affect the quality of the educational experience of learners. It also proposed a way to apply the Communicative Ecologies framework described in the introductory chapter to analyse how organisational communication comes to influence educational experiences and outcomes. This implies looking at how communicative assemblages in an AE organisation are mobilised around the five key components Goals, Social, Information, Media and Agency. This chapter therefore considers the communicative assemblages of the AE good practice cases according to the drivers and goals, social networks, media repertoires, information and content, and the agent resources, competences and literacies involved in such processes. It outlines the most important findings, elicited through the application of the analytical framework to understand how organisational communication processes affect the capacity of AE programmes to include young people at risk in APC practices. Whereas Chapter 3 provided examples of informational practices and processes without an assessment of their impact or effectiveness, in this chapter we will look at particularly effective practices but will first outline key gaps and challenges from the perspective of AE practitioners, policy-makers and learners.

5.1 Gaps and challenges

The research explored gaps and challenges experienced by AE organisations with respect to the potential to create effective flows of information and communication both internally and with external stakeholders. Cross-cutting challenges have been identified across five areas:

1. Information exchange and cooperation across complex structures
2. Differences in values, ideologies, standards and vocabularies
3. Networking and communication with other AE providers
4. Capacity and resource shortages
5. Image building and positioning

1. Information exchange and cooperation across complex structures

Given the strong interdependence between AE and other organisations for ensuring holistic educational and service provision to young people at risk of exclusion, information exchanges and cooperation are essential. The quality and effectiveness of the student recruitment, programme delivery and follow-up for Alumni may all depend on smooth cooperation between support entities. Thus, this challenge is not uniquely related to organisational communication, but spreads equally across AE policy and AE programme design and delivery. While this will be commented upon as well in the report chapters relative to the AE programme and policy, where organisational communication is concerned, challenges in information and communication have been identified at different levels. First, having an awareness of the entities that are relevant to the area covered by an AE provider, or in other words, having access to a map of social services in the locality. For instance, the RO_GP2 support team emphasised that the “map of social services” in Bucharest (and Romania) is not well drawn, and it is difficult to know immediately who does what for specific intervention areas and issues, with whom to speak, and who has the right expertise and contacts in a field.

Second, challenges are related to maintaining a stable flow of information exchanges and communication for day to day operations where such cooperation may be needed. There are intensity moments—such as student recruitment, or finding jobs and internships for student cohorts, when communication must be particularly efficient. However, the efficiency of such communication depends on steady information exchange that builds relationships, common vocabularies and ways of working together. In the absence of relationships of trust and enduring cooperation, communication can be hampered by different systems, procedures, norms and terminologies.

2. Differences in values, ideologies, standards and vocabularies

Just as AE practice is rooted in specific values consolidated in specific contexts at particular times, information and communication practices and understandings also

reference underpinning values and meanings. These are often implicit, yet are no less important and consequential for communication. For example, value clashes can occur when considering the importance of privacy and data protection versus goals of open data, transparency and evidence-based decision-making that requires accurate, detailed, often disaggregated datasets. This is complicated by different standards, vocabularies and terminologies used in different institutions. As the good practice cases researched suggest, such issues are particularly poignant at the beginning stages of collaboration, and can make or break partnerships and coordinated actions among diverse actors. They are attended to over time in the case of long term collaborations, during which understandings are forged and new vocabularies may be developed.

This issue was reported from all Finnish GP programmes, with some respondents reporting difficulties in collaboration and information sharing between different service providers. For instance, complexity concerning social cash benefits was described as problematic by all interviewee groups. Several examples were offered regarding public employment service and social security service practices. Some learners reported that even the language that is used in documentation and face-to-face communication with the service providers is difficult to understand and thus in many cases they needed assistance from peers or mediators to deal with authorities.

3. Networking and communication with other AE providers

While a lot of attention is given in this report to AE collaborations with other entities such as state administration and service providers, we found that horizontal exchanges among AE providers are just as important—for exchange of knowledge, good practices and learning from each other's work. Yet, many of the GP organisations encounter difficulties in liaising with other AE providers with relevant profiles. This challenge can be related to the mixed profile of organisations covering AE and attending to situations of vulnerability. In countries like Germany and the UK, where there is already a tradition of organisations tackling AE and vulnerability together, the occasions for networking and exchanges are very rich. In other countries such as the post-Communist countries of Eastern Europe, organisations dealing specifically with the intersection of AE and vulnerability (or even more so—AE, vulnerability and APC) are not as strongly represented. This has consequences for the educational offer and the effectiveness of the programme, as occasions for improving practices and innovating through collaboration are not fully tapped.

Another layer is added by the diversification of AE organisation profiles. AE providers have diversified and might currently include adult schools, community centres, private organisations, municipal facilities and neighbourhood associations, to name but a few. New institutional actors that have emerged with force in the increasingly diverse AE scene bring innovative practices and ideas to the field but may face specific challenges when networking with more traditional AE actors. In Barcelona, a City Council informant found it difficult to coordinate mentoring actions for young people in situations of risk with school teachers, since these have not implemented support programmes to these young people until very recently. She regretted that these actions took so much time due to professional cultures resisting change. Other challenges she mentioned regarding networking relate to overlapping efforts, practical difficulties in coordinating services and budgets and setting clear priorities.

4. Capacity and resource shortages

This refers to the capacity required to maintain efficient networking, information and communication processes. To an extent, most organisations studied are affected by this issue. The more complex some programmes are in their organisational structures and the services they provide, the more information and communication resources are needed to maintain smooth internal and external communication processes. Programmes that are offered in cooperation with external stakeholders (such as in SE_GP1, UK_GP1, ES_GP1) or which depend on maintaining constant communication flows either inside or outside, report that they are particularly affected by shortages in resources.

Many of the GPs we have researched started as small-scale pilots which scaled up and continue to expand. For these, capacity is or will become an issue. For instance, UK_GP1 was engaged with 26 schools in the City at the time of fieldwork (2017). Their ambition and aim is to offer this programme in every school and support 1,500–2,000 learners. The success of their programme is based on a complex communication network. In order to keep the quality of their programme, this requires extensive communication with external partners; recruiting mentors and further widening their taster sessions, which is a challenging task.

Challenges also escalate when programmes have to be delivered or scaled up to respond to emergency situations or to increased flows of student intake. For instance, at the time of the research, the AE providers in Sweden were struggling with shortage of teaching staff. Due to the 2015 migrant influx, all Swedish teachers and interpreters

in refugee languages were fully employed. The languages that have few speakers are sometimes difficult to cater for so that guaranteeing equal instruction for each student is a challenge.

Even the ability to maintain public-facing communication is challenging for smaller organisations. The employment insertion programme RO_GP2 faces challenges regarding resources to maintain their online communication. They run four websites and they also communicate through Facebook and emails. The management team is aware of the value of communication not only for the image and relations of RO_GP2, but also to evidence the value of their various collaborations. However, this is time and resource heavy, and would normally require additional capacity specifically for communication.

5. Image building and positioning

AE providers offering programmes that rely on distributed networks of stakeholders or which are part of larger umbrella organisations that offer multiple related services may encounter issues with crystallising a consistent well-articulated image and communication identity, especially for public-facing communication. This has consequences for relations with other service providers and stakeholders. In Germany, the inclusion of the Youth Integration courses with the programme targeted to adults, which is far larger, is a challenge for the image and the relationships of the youth-focused programme. The fact that there are no institutional meetings among stakeholders involved in Integration courses for the youth provision may lead to loss of focus on the issues concerning young people which present specific and distinct challenges. In the specific GP case covered in this research no particular issues in this vein emerged but it has been reported that in bigger cities, relationships with other providers can be competitive.

For some programmes, the challenge comes from the hybrid profile of organisations that offer AE to young people at risk of exclusion: on the one hand they are AE providers, on the other they may be perceived as social care organisations. The challenges with image building depend on the context where the organisation is located and already engendered public perceptions of either education, social care, and the link between the two. An illustrative case comes from Romania. The organisation running the vocational education programme GP1 is known locally and regionally as a VET entity, however its umbrella organisation, a social care institution, is much better known and the latter's image prevails. This is quite significant for instance when it comes to employment opportunities for learners who have completed the course: while RO_GP1

would like their students to be perceived as well trained, responsible employees, some organisations perceive them rather in terms of the vulnerabilities that young people have experienced. RO_GP1 wants to be perceived in terms of educational quality, and works constantly to change this perception, through direct communications, its Open Day event, and especially by leveraging the performance of the students who have completed the course and appreciation by employers.

5.2 Routes to effective practice

What precisely makes an effective practice in adult education organisational communication? As amply argued elsewhere in this report, the theoretical perspective we endorse is that we need to regard communicative practices as ecologies—assemblages of highly interrelated, interdependent processes, flows, and agents. This aspect is particularly resonant with organisational communication processes—which are complex and multi-faceted. It is not the use of one media platform, access to a media resource, or the use of a powerful message that makes communication effective. Rather, effectiveness emerges from complex, context-embedded communication assemblages. Thus, in the rest of this section we propose that routes to good practice can be conceived in terms of complex, multi-faceted networks that mobilise communication resources in an organisation towards specific purposes. The first part illustrates five types of networks according to the goals that animate them. The second part looks at factors underpinning the success of such networks, with a focus on the role of information, engaging relevant stakeholders, media used and the resources and competences required.

5.2.1 Goal-driven information and communication networks

The AE GPs researched offered a range of examples of networks that are harnessed for various goals, related to the programme design, student recruitment, course delivery and follow up. These networks can be analysed in terms of the organisations and agents involved (social component), the media that enhance information flow and communication (media component), the informational content they circulate (information component), and the resources and competences invested (agency component). In this section, we illustrate how such networks come together around five possible goals, along with strategies for creating, sustaining and growing them:

1. Networks for recruitment information and communication
2. Multidisciplinary networks of expertise
3. Distributed networks for educational provision
4. Distributed networks for service provision
5. Networks to influence policy and practice

1. Networks for recruitment information and communication

These are some of the most well represented strategies for recruitment communication found in the GPs studied. The value of these networks emerge in particular for hard to reach and particularly vulnerable groups. A strong theme emerging from a variety of cases is that young people in situations of vulnerability are unlikely to look for information on their own. Enhancing information structures that connect several entities thus remains one of the most effective solutions for reaching out to these groups in an effective manner.

The experience of the AE GPs reveal a few strategies and lessons learnt for creating and nurturing these networks. Chief among these is the need- or interest-driven nature of the cooperation. A great number of programmes rely on external organisations to recruit learners. Each of the organisations involved fulfil a specific need related to the young people, and their missions and interests converge in providing a good service. In the Cyprus study, the Migrant Information Centre recruits migrants and refugees for the GP. The organisations maintain constant communication either in person between staff or via phone and e-mail. Similarly, in Romania the VET organisation GP1 collaborates with a network of organisations which includes state centres for child care and protection, city halls and NGOs that can mediate contact with young people in situations of vulnerability. The interest of social care centres converges with that of the Romanian VET programme GP1: the state centres are responsible for young people who upon reaching 18, need to leave the establishment but whose futures very much depend on the opportunities opened up to them at that point. Providing them a VET qualification heightens their chances of moving towards an integrated and independent life after leaving the centres.

In many instances, the collaboration with recruitment agencies continues outside specific recruitment activities, with a preoccupation to attend to the needs of young people and collaborate in this process. A senior manager of the Romanian social enterprise GP2 emphasised that RO_GP2 takes a holistic approach to the development

of young people and their preparation for a working life. However, they recognise they cannot do this on their own. Instead, RO_GP2 collaborates with external organisations (such as state social assistance centres, social care foundations, and agencies for the protection of certain groups, such as minorities, victims of abuse and trafficking, the homeless, and young people with disabilities) to ensure that by drawing on shared expertise, they maximise positive impacts on socio-professional development. Before starting the programme, the mediating agencies prepare and assist young people with social, medical, and life issues such as hygiene and living arrangements.

Therefore, [the mediating agencies] do some operations beforehand, and we conduct the part on preparation for the job market. But we do exchange some services, for example we refer them to emergency night shelter services from the social assistance directions and such. (..) And our insertion employees can go and benefit from some services, for instance substitution medication or psychological counselling, or psychotherapy screening, or various. (Senior manager, Edu1, RO_GP2)

To conclude, efficient networks for recruitment require effective cooperation and partnership, converging in a joint interest to attend to the needs of young people. Thus, an effective recruitment strategy is to liaise with agencies and organisations that cover the needs of specific vulnerable groups as part of their mission. In Finland, FI_GP3 formulated a recruitment strategy that involves conducting management level communication with several possible collaborating partners, representing different interest groups, such as migrant women or young athletes who might benefit from virtual study options.

2. Multidisciplinary networks of expertise

Some of the most effective environments for developing APC are created in organisations that cover a wide range of expertise and support areas, linking the specific educational content with services such as vocational and life coaching, social assistance, psychological support, mediation in the job market etc. However, to be effective, these multidisciplinary teams require structured approaches for producing and sharing information, coordinating and ensuring coherent support for learners. AE programmes such as FI_GP2, RO_GP1, RO_GP2 (Text box 5.1) illustrate some strategies, all under an overarching learner-centred model. In short, the information and communication structure is conceived around learner needs and interests, considering

not only the pedagogical dimension, but also the social, emotional and economic needs of the learner.

Text box 5.1. Communication strategies for multidisciplinary networks of expertise

The cases below illustrate three strategies for communication in multidisciplinary teams. There is an underlying principle underpinning them all, and this is a learner-centred approach.

Multi-angle approach: The prison education programme FI_GP2 illustrates “the multi-angle approach” where different AE professionals (student counsellors, teachers, job coaches, social workers etc.) working within the same educational organisation and frequently meet in a working group where they share information about the students they all work with to find solutions to pressing issues or distribute communication tasks: who talks about what issue with which student etc.

Virtual communication in multidisciplinary distributed teams: For the virtual basic education programme FI_GP3, since AE practitioners of the Virtual School may live all over Finland, virtual platforms and channels are an important form of communication. They utilise instant messaging, phone calls and various virtual meeting tools. An important part of the staff communication regards communication and cooperation links across multiple disciplines or expertise areas. The staff of the Virtual School operates in teams, including a counselling team and broader web education team, in which all student counsellors participate. The same practitioners can be in more than one team. ICT staff collaborate with teaching staff in order to constantly improve the web platform. The team leaders collaborate with each other and the management team. Knowledge sharing and working together to solve possible issues is considered imperative for the development of the programme. Planning is done partly together, partly independently according to everyone’s responsibilities and expertise. The teams hold regular weekly meetings as well as broader meetings about upcoming events and development of the programme. The management and staff highlighted the low hierarchy and team-based organisation. Different staff members complement each other’s expertise in order to make full use of the virtual learning environment that is designed to provide tools and opportunities for accomplishing large programmes and achieving formal qualifications.

Case management: Communication inside the VET programme RO_GP1 is optimised to bring together the services of a multidisciplinary team to support the development and competence building of each young person. The director emphasised that sharing and bringing together expertise across the multidisciplinary team was one of the most important aspects for RO_GP1 to function well as a VET organisation with a mission to support the learners:

The most important thing is ideally that you look beyond your own field of expertise. Because if you want to get into a holistic vision, and to a whole scale approach to the individual development

on those three levels of each teenager, then you need to share expertise, and that is a challenge. A challenge for all of us to say—ok, I wanna be involved, I wanna share, I wanna give away, and share with my colleagues for the sake of getting a better result. Otherwise you remain with individual interventions—from a psychologist, from the learn coach, the case manager, from the social assistant, from School of life. And you have lots and lots of inputs and interventions, but do they really make sense, are they really structured, are they really geared towards a certain goal? And who establishes those? (Senior manager, Edu2, RO_GP1)

Communication is structured to enable the team to gather evidence about the aims, objectives and progress of each student and the expert opinion of each professional involved in the process and to further share it among the team. At the centre of this is **the case management system**, run by a case manager whose role is to gather information about each learner and to keep in touch with all colleagues involved in the school. The case manager is responsible for running a personalised intervention plan for each learner, which includes evidence about their personal background, interests, objectives and priority areas and plans activities to achieve these objectives. Objectives are established with each young person, and progress is monitored and discussed in case management meetings that take place every three months, with the participation of the multidisciplinary team, including the course coordinators, the social assistant, the case manager (who also has a counselling role), the psychologist, the job coach and educators from School for life. In these meetings, the team takes note of the objectives established with each young person, where they perform well, where they could improve, how they can be better supported. Then each team member follows up on the decisions according to their area of expertise.

3. Distributed networks for educational provision

The specificity of all of the GPs relies on their being delivered (and at times also designed) at the interstices of different organisations, one of which is an AE provider. While many of the GPs use a multi-stakeholder design or rely on external stakeholders for some aspects of the delivery, this varies across cases and contexts. The authority and capacity for offering the programme is variously distributed across relevant stakeholders, rather than being entrusted simply and singularly with an AE provider. This implies that an effective system of communication and coordination needs to be set up and maintained, to ensure that the educational provision through this distributed network runs smoothly.

Examples such as FI_GP2, UK_GP1, ES_GP1 and SE_GP1 suggest that in terms of educational effectiveness, one of the most effective models is entrusting clear sections of the educational experience to each stakeholder. Information and communication,

then, are important for ensuring complementarity and convergence into a rewarding overall educational experience for the learner.

Text box 5.2. Distributed networks for educational provision

Programmes such as ES_GP1, FI_GP1 and SE_GP1 are designed on the basis of distributed networks that aim to match the employers, AE providers and people in need of skills and employment.

In the Finnish prison VET context, different stakeholders communicate and work together at different phases. During the selection and provision of educational programmes, AE providers work in close cooperation especially with prison student counsellors and the Criminal Sanctions Agency officers in charge of educational matters. According to our interviews, close cooperation and frequent communication between the Criminal Sanctions Agency and AE staff while planning and running a VET programme in prison is the only way to keep things working and to be able to produce qualifications. A network of different professionals representing key institutions (Criminal Sanctions Agency, the AE provider, employment services, social services, NGOs, Social Insurance Institution) communicate to support a prisoner about to be released by making sure he will be able to continue his education outside of prison uninterrupted. Interruptions and communication breaks increase the risk of recidivism if a released prisoner has no secure source of livelihood (benefits, allowances or work) or no means to continue his education (no contacts to the AE provider or information on how to continue), or no one to turn to if problems arise. The network starts working together with the prisoner on different fronts before he is released to ensure there is a clear educational continuum extending beyond prison walls and time of release.

Another example of networked AE provision comes from **Spain GP1**, a national AE initiative promoted and funded by the social branch of a big private financial institution in Spain. It self-defines as a “model of labour intermediation between companies’ opportunities and job seekers’ needs” (Programme coordinator, Edu1, SP, GP1) with the main aim of promoting the labour integration of people in situations of vulnerability. It started in 2006, offering training to imprisoned people so they could get a job once they were released. This initial model has reinvented itself since, adapting to new social groups and socio-economic challenges so that today it also targets some of the age cohorts most negatively affected by the recent economic crisis: unemployed adults above 45 y.o. and young people, among other groups at risk of social exclusion. Today GP1 works as an umbrella AE programme under which several “training actions” (*acciones formativas*) take place thanks to the networked participation of hundreds of companies and social entities that serve as “training spots” (*puntos formativos*). In 2017, the GP1 network encompassed 395 social entities, territorially organized in 22 groups, each of them managed by a coordinating entity. For example, the 86 participating social entities work

as a network to cover the different territorial needs in Catalonia, coordinated by one social entity based in Barcelona. ES_GP1 has clear guidelines and protocols on its approach to AE provision, its methodologies and outcomes, as well as the communication strategy that each participating social entity must comply with. Territorial coordinators are in charge of mediating with the funder, designing a strategic plan, evaluating participating entities' performance and creating spaces to encourage networking, such as meetings and events. Fluent and clear internal and external organisational communication, both through personal and digital media, are important to succeed in the coordination of the numerous and diverse stakeholders involved in the process.

4. Distributed networks for service provision

As the EduMAP WP3 report argues, the effectiveness of AE programmes is often related to the capacity to cover a variety of young people's needs in addition to educational provision—from coaching and vocational guidance to mediation on the job market and financial support. These services can be offered internally (e.g., RO_GP1, RO_GP2, ES_GP1, ES_GP2, ES_GP3) or externalised (e.g., DE_GP1). Most challenging to coordinate are the ones that include external service providers. The GPs illustrate some effective strategies to enhance information and communication flows and improve coordination:

A first strategy is to cultivate multiple connections, to rely on a multitude of providers. As DE_GP1 and RO_GP1 exemplify (see Text box 5.3), if the organisation relies on a capillary presence in the territory, then chances are that the opportunities for activities to be offered to young people are multiplied; connections can open up further connections, and so on.

Text box 5.3. Cultivating multiple leads and connections

Romanian VET programme GP1: Communication with employers is an essential part of the RO_GP1 vocational education model, which includes two internships for each student and opportunities for a secured job after they graduate. Relationships have been nurtured over time with some employers such as hotels and bakeries long-term partners that receive students for internships. Most effective is direct communication, through visits and phone calls. Also, the experience of each intern and employee coming from RO_GP1 is valorised; internships are closely monitored, and so is the graduate's job experience during the first 6 months.

RO_GP1 maintains constant communication with employers in the fields corresponding with its courses, especially restaurants, hotels and bakeries. These are essential contacts to

maintain for ensuring that students have good internship options and also job opportunities after graduation.

The fact that we, as organisation, as a school, we have formed an image, helps us to develop partnerships with employers. And the fact that these employers come to meet these young people during internships, when the implications on their side are not significant, further convinces them to take them as employees. This helps a lot. (Coordinator of education programmes, Edu1, RO_GP1).

Germany Youth Integration Programme GP1: Despite the federal nature of the programme, the type of provider can still make a difference in course provision. For example, the GP investigated counts on an earned reputation in the youth and social sector and on a capillary presence in the territory that enables it to network and offer diverse activities. The multiple structure of this specific provider means that young people, once they enter the Youth Integration Courses, can learn about and access other opportunities.

They have social work in schools on the ground. They have cross-institutional training. They have vocational preparation. They have schools, kindergartens, family centers, and so on. And there we have good internal networking, so that the young people if they are on an integration course, can also go right there and do indeed go there, or their parents and so on. And I think this is a positive synergy which is brought in by the [name of the provider] [...] And I think this is why the [name of the provider] is particularly well prepared when it comes to the youth integration courses. It also just makes sense. The internal networking there simply works quite well (Local programme coordinator, Pol2, Germany).

Context-related considerations need to be taken into consideration as well, and they are particularly significant when it comes to differences in national or regional programmes with local chapters. Effective practices can often be related to local approaches and conditions, which is the case for DE_GP1. Positive collaborations with supportive services seem to work well because of their location in a small city, whilst in larger cities there is potential competition among providers that can impair collaborative relations, as suggested in interviews with the JMD counsellor and the local programme coordinator.

Greek Transgender Intervention GP3: Communication outside GR_GP3 organisation is not dispersed (e.g. tackling many stakeholders) but focused on two key entities for their goals of supporting young immigrants' well-being: The General Workers Association and the Greek Ombudsman. This example illustrates how effective multi-stakeholder approaches do not necessarily involve tackling many actors but just a few key ones with whom trustful and sustainable institutional relationships can be developed.

Another strategy is to rely on collaborative relationships, formalized through agreements. This ensures the reliability of services offered by a certain provider. For the German Youth

Integration programme GP1, relationships with **supportive services** are collaborative. In the GP case, the services provided were external to the school and offered by another provider, who works in close synergy with the school on the basis of a cooperation agreement. As mentioned by the counsellor, the two organisations also arrange extra activities together, such as short educational tours for migrants and refugees.

5. Networks to influence policy and practice

These networks fulfil an important function not only for delivering effective programmes, but especially for influencing the AE field and AE policy so that good practice gets infused into widely embraced procedures, ways of working, collaboration structures and policies.

Often, organisations decide on some strategic areas of influence tied to specific goals. This may be connected to exemplifying and sharing good practice or broadening the uptake of the model they propose. The folk school that is involved in running the virtual basic education course FI_GP3 is widely considered a provider of expertise in web study options for other education providers in the municipality and beyond. Also, a management team member emphasised the need to remain an active and innovative part of the municipal establishment in order to secure funding (AE practitioner, Edu4, FI_GP3).

Organisations such as DE_GP1, UK_GP1, IE_GP1 and DE_GP3 are already very well networked and their involvement with wider practice and policy is integrated in their work.

Text box 5.4. Integral models of policy engagement

German Youth Integration programme GP1: At the federal level, the provider is involved in meetings with the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees, which include the associations of the organisations providing Integration courses which includes the German Adult Education Association, the Euro schools, the Association of German Private School Associations and others. During these meetings, providers present their interests to the Ministerial Agency and negotiate funding and programme content. It is an opportunity for information exchange. As specified by the local programme coordinator, the meetings concern all Integration courses, not only the Youth Integration courses.

German informal education programme GP3: The Youth Forum together with its organisation provider is well networked with the main city stakeholders in the youth sector. It collaborates on a regular basis with the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb),

promoting projects together. It also cooperates with schools in the formal education system, youth associations, religious and social service organisations, local media, and political youth organisations. The purpose is to exchange knowledge and information and create a basis for project or initiative collaboration, but also provides the possibility for young people to get known other associative bodies in the city.

Influencing practice and policy is particularly significant in contexts where, as discussed elsewhere in this report, convergences between the AE, APC and vulnerability are not yet well articulated. Text box 5.5 exemplifies this for Eastern Europe and the case of the social enterprise RO_GP2.

Text box 5.5. AE providers as agents of change

For the social enterprise RO_GP2, **communication with external organisations** is designed to not only help RO_GP2 perform its activities well and maximise the impact on its learners. It is also to influence broader policy and practice at national and international levels. Thus, they collaborate with local organisations for participants' recruitment and continue to collaborate with them during programme provision to ensure a consistent and holistic coverage of needs. They also collaborate with other organisations nationally and internationally to influence policy and practice and advance the agenda of social economy and social inclusion through socio-professional insertion of people at risk of social exclusion.

RO_GP2 is affiliated or collaborates with institutions in Romania and internationally in the social domain to **influence policy and practice**, advance the social inclusion cause and promote a social enterprise model. RO_GP2 is one of the founding members of RISE Romania, a network of social enterprises established to provide consistency and scale to the efforts of promoting social inclusion through social and employment insertion opportunities. They are part of the NGO coalition for structural funds, in which capacity they take part in consultations on European funding programmes for social assistance projects, and also participate in several thematic networks linked to social inclusion but also ecological and environmental awareness topics.

We are also part of The National Coalition for the Environment, The Social Economy Coalition, the Coalition for Sexual Education and so on, so diverse themes. And there are many associations, foundations that start from fieldwork and the needs identified in the field, and try to bring this to the sphere of public policy, in the form of public policies, improvements to the current legislative framework, or new proposals for necessary laws, things that are based on these needs from the field. (Senior manager, Edu1, RO_GP2)

These collaborations are important as they enable RO_GP2 not only to better conduct their activities and maximise positive impact on learners, but also to have an impact on the socio-

economic and political environment, and contribute to macro-scale, systemic change that benefits those in situations of most vulnerability. In 2016, they partnered in the Anti-Poverty Network along with other NGOs and governmental bodies, to contribute to a systematic plan for combatting poverty in Romania.

So, we try to bring needs from the field to the level of elaborating public policies or proposals of public policies, or integration of existing public policies, which often are seen here each in their own square, each in their own drawer and are not interconnected at all. (...) At national level, it seemed very coherent to me to get involved with RISE, Romania in the Anti-poverty Coalition, which was an initiative of the former government, so called the technocrat government, because they wanted to co-opt the civil society from which many of them were coming, as actors with equal voices in public debates, to create a mechanism of integrated consultation and a mechanism for elaborating integrated public policies. And one of the most important aspects of this Coalition, and why I wanted to get involved so actively, was its proposal for an integrated and inter-ministerial approach of public policies. (Senior manager, Edu1, RO_GP2)

At the international level, RO_GP2 is involved in the European Network for Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE), a network of 27 national and regional networks, representing 23 countries across Europe, which works on improving European public policy on the social economy. ENSIE is in turn part of larger networks such as the Social Platform, Social Economy Europe and RIPESS, an intercontinental network of social and solidarity economy.

5.2.2 Key factors for building effective networks

The previous section illustrated how networks can be mobilised around five different goals, mobilising resources from both inside and outside the organisation. In this section, we take a closer look at the elements that come into play for making such networks function efficiently. Four aspects are emphasised:

1. Clear and relevant information and communication goals
2. Value-laden information and communication practices
3. Complementarity of online and offline, mediated and direct communication
4. Embedding information and communication activities in organisational practice

1. Clear and relevant information and communication goals

The networks exemplified above are all driven by specific goals, which drive specific information and communication strategies. The cases surveyed suggest that the efficiency of these strategies relies firstly on how clear and relevant the goals are. This applies equally to internal networks, such as multidisciplinary networks in an AE organisation and distributed networks involving different organisations.

Where internal structures are concerned, making communication goals explicit brings coherence to coordination and joint work processes. Clarifying goals also involves linking to the educational mission of the institution. For instance, the multidisciplinary expertise coordination strategies exemplified in Text box 5.1 (above) all converge in a learner-centred approach. To be able to respond adequately to learner needs, a team can devise specific information and communication strategies, from the multi-angle approach exemplified by the Finnish GP2 case, to case management structures and processes exemplified by the Romanian GP2 VET programme.

When it is about distributed networks involving different organisations, then it is important to consider how communication goals are aligned to the mission of the collaborating institutions. Text box 5.6 exemplifies how efficient coordination in a distributed network relies on clarifying goals attuned to organisational missions.

Text box 5.6. Information and communication goals aligned to organisational missions

In Sweden, the **work-oriented integration training programme** studied is organised under the umbrella and coordination of regional administration in cooperation with the job centre (Public employment services—PES), the regional branch of the National Board of Forestry (FA) and the education provider which is a folk high school (FHS). The jobcentres together with the students follow their individual integration plans and the education provider together with the students follow their study plans. The regional coordinator (Länsstyrelsen) is evaluating the outcomes of the studies and their matching to labour force need in the region and the jobcentre is following the participants' employment after studies. At the national level the government agencies monitor SFI and other educational programmes.

Effectiveness relies on efficient coordination spearheaded by the regional administrative body, but complemented by all the other actors:

- The regional administrative body has a coordinating role in actively searching for and matching adult education and employers who need workers. The coordinator makes suggestions to education providers and PES about gaps in educational opportunities and acts as a link between different parties. It is responsible for actively enhancing the connection between the municipalities in the region, the employers in occupational branches that were lacking labour force, the AE providers and PES. The coordinator maintains a website that assembles information about regional provision of available on-the-job-language learning courses.
- The PES is a central actor in the cooperation, since they are responsible for running the on-the-job Swedish language course that are part of the larger provision of Yrkes-SFI and integration programme. The PES case workers for instance inform the AE provider administration about the

duty to include information about working life, searching and applying for jobs, writing CVs etc. in the curriculum. They also provide study material, e.g. video clips about various occupations.

- The AE provider works actively with PES, the employer organisation and the field work instructors developing communication for the learners' benefit.

The collaboration of different stakeholders has led to the creation of a specific provision of AE in the region that matches both employers' needs and the language level /track system of the national integration programme. Several activities are devised to enable the representatives of each organisation to better understand the work remit, system and languages of the others. For example, teachers cooperate with field workers and FA to immerse themselves in the vocabulary and communication of forestry. Some teachers had even themselves taken the course for chain saw and clearing saw licenses in order to familiarise themselves with the vocabulary and practice in the field. The FA provided text book was rewritten by an SFI teacher into a more fluent, easy to understand Swedish. FA has adopted the easier text-version for their other education purposes, indicating that many Swedish students appreciated the easier text format.

When properly aligned to institutional missions, these networks are also **generative**—they lead to the creation of new initiatives, programmes or extensions of the programme. For the Swedish GP case, the National Board of Forestry runs nationwide activities in cooperation with the job centre to engage groups other than newcomers to Sweden in internship training organised in cooperation with education providers. They have experience of engaging with long-term unemployed to work with maintenance and landscaping in the nature reserves. The AE provider noticed that not only the National Board of Forestry but also other employers in the green sector need labour and could offer job openings for the students after the forestry related course. They plan to create networks with possible employers in order to find more jobs for learners who have finished the course and were not employed by the National Board of Forestry.

2. Value-laden information and communication practices

When describing the information and communication practices in their organisations, AE practitioners and policy-makers often referred to certain values they embraced, either implicitly or explicitly. Organisations such as the Romanian VET school running the GP1 programme place value on communication as a value and an end in itself. The AE professionals interviewed consider that there is a well-established culture of

communication at RO_GP1, which is formalised and structured, but also leaves space for informal, fluid processes of communication.

Other programmes emphasise values such as freedom and responsibility, empathy and respect. For the Finnish virtual basic education programme GP3, data indicates that the management places a lot of trust in their staff and gives them a relative freedom to pursue their goals in developing the Virtual School further. Attributes such as trust, innovativeness and multi-professionalism were seen as key principles of communication and indicators for successful work. In the on the job language learning programme studied in Sweden, the organisation's informal and respectful atmosphere and low hierarchy are considered key to successful communication. The teachers consider each other as resources and it seemed important that everyone accepted the philosophy. The administration and teachers developed a level of closeness to each other and to the learners, allowing natural and respectful daily encounters.

3. Complementarity of online and offline, mediated and direct communication

While digital communication brings speed, convenience and efficiency to organisational communication processes, we found that direct interpersonal communication is still valued and considered paramount to effective practice in the GP organisations. Most organisations studied rely on a blend of mediated and direct information and communication practice, adapted to specific communication scenarios. Regular team meetings are considered valuable and often the norm for sharing information, especially to afford information exchange across multidisciplinary teams.

For example, the institutional communication of GPs analysed in Greece is conveyed through various media (personal, emails and phone calls). The most effective media varies according to the GPs and the actors involved. Thus **GR_GP3 and GP6** informants report that *intra*-institutional communication is better held face-to-face, while *inter*-institutional **communication is more reliably held by email**. This was agreed by both practitioners and policy officials interviewed in other GPs analysed in Greece as well, evidencing the pervasiveness of written word in formal communicative exchanges.

GR_GP4 practitioners communicate mainly personally but they can also use phone calls and Facebook messages. Their work demands to be in constant communication with multiple stakeholders—e.g. other NGOs, local community, other Roma communities in Greece, employment services and local businesses. To this end, the chosen communication modalities—mainly e-mail, phone or face-to-face—are not **fixed, but**

depend on the content and goal of the communicative event in each case. This is also reported in **GR_GP5**, which unlike other GPs studied in Greece, uses Facebook platform quite a lot for communication inside the organisation. This GP is foundationally inclined to innovative solutions of digital interaction to support its activities, using e-learning platforms, e-mail and even an automated tool/guide for youth.

Thus, examples such as the ones reported from Greece suggest that although mediated communication is the mark of our times and one of the most relevant resources in the day to day functioning of organisations, **face to face** communication is as important and sometimes it is regarded as the most frequently used and valued, such as reported in the Greek programme for unemployed young people (GP6). All these GP activities are experience-based so personal interactions between participants, practitioners and other staff are a constitutive element.

On the other hand, distributed networks such as the Finnish Virtual School rely on the power of networked media. Yet even in this case, interpersonal communication and regular meetings are considered important. Since AE practitioners of the Virtual School may live all over Finland, virtual options are an important form of communication. They utilise instant messaging, phone calls and various virtual meeting tools. The staff of the Virtual School operates in teams, including a counselling team and broader web education team and student counsellors participate in these teams.

Thus, the organizational practices surveyed in various GP programmes remind us that **organisational communicative ecologies are context dependent**, shaped according to entities' goals, needs and institutional cultures.

4. Embedding information and communication activities in organisational practice

The information-intensive nature of AE organisational activities means that specific resources have to be invested to sustain information and communication flows as a regular part of everyday activities. Some of these activities may relate to internal communication, communication with current students, with external partnerships and collaborations, and some may be dedicated to public-facing communication either with potential students, other stakeholders or the general public. In larger organisations, communication and media teams may take responsibilities for some of these. However, in smaller organisations, these activities are often covered by just one person or distributed across a team with other responsibilities.

For instance, ES_GP1 has established a very well-defined communication protocol for participating entities, placing emphasis on producing news and content for traditional media, websites and social media to ensure the programme has a public presence and to disseminate their activities so that they get more support and participation. Besides the AE providers' regular work, they also have to regularly report on their achievements in an effective and professional way. Protocols require that each territorial coordinator:

- keep their website updated by sending new contents to the main GP1 website central services for its validation
- create GP1 related news to ensure its presence in local media
- join events in the territory to disseminate GP1 activities among companies and if such events do not exist, try to create them
- think of new social marketing strategies and encourage social entities to become empowered in communication through both new and traditional media and design their own communication plans (GP1 report, 2018).

This indicates the importance of taking into account the information and communication competences possessed and needed by an AE provider organisation. Professional development and training programmes might account for such competences in for the specific roles filled by an AE practitioner.

Chapter 6. Policy-making and the adult education sector

This chapter looks at the role of information and communication in policy design and implementation and highlights challenges and effective practices. Effectiveness is assessed in relation to the capacity of policy to create a favourable environment for AE and inclusion of young people at risk of social exclusion in active citizenship. From an information and communication viewpoint, effectiveness concerns the availability, access and opportune circulation of relevant and needed information around structures that involve policy-makers, educational authorities, stakeholders and beneficiaries in the AE field of practice. The focus is on AE policy, however policies from other sectors—such as APC, immigration and social inclusion—are also relevant. One of the key findings that will emerge from this chapter is that mono-sectoral ways of working and lack of cross-sectoral links are some of the most important obstacles to creating policies that are responsive to real needs.

Thus, as specified in Section 3.4 of Chapter 3, the analysis focuses on:

- Cross-sectoral flows in policy-making, such as linkages between AE policy and immigration or APC policy
- Vertical, bi-directional flows from international/EU to national, regional and local
- Links between policy-making at different levels (particularly national, regional and local) and the AE field stakeholders, with a focus on
 - AE organisations
 - Young people at risk of social exclusion and representative groups.

Patterns in both the challenges and examples of effectiveness are identified from a network perspective, looking respectively at:

1. Information **flows** in terms of needs, use and sources, asking questions such as:
 - What information is needed to enable effective practice? What information is typically accessed through which sources? What information gaps are there?
2. Information flows across networks of **actors** and media
 - Which structures are already well-represented and effective in enabling smooth information flows among relevant stakeholders? What gaps are there?

3. Information and communication resources and agent **competences**
 - What resources are necessary to make information access, production and circulation and communication efficient? What competences should be possessed by agents to enable effective communication and cooperation in these structures?

Importantly, this chapter does not attempt a thorough mapping of challenging and effective practices in all EU countries researched. What it does is to look at policy contexts that regard AE for APC and/or AE for addressing vulnerability in close connection to the GP cases studied. This focus leads to the highlighting of different aspects in each country. For instance, policies on VET, care-experienced young people and the Roma minority in Romania; immigration policies in Germany, and so on. This facilitates the goal of this information and communication research, which is to identify a large variety of cases in various contexts leading to either effective practice or challenges, rather than detailed cross-context mapping which would not be comparing like with like. Thus, the findings are presented as cross-cutting findings spanning a wide variety of (or all) contexts researched, with occasional focus on special contexts that deserve particular attention.

6.1 Gaps and challenges

6.1.1 *Obstacles in information flows and data sharing*

Free and fast information flows and access is considered ideal for successful information management. However, several ethical and political issues stand in the way, such as data privacy, representativeness, disaggregation and immediacy. Moreover, our findings suggest that information flows between the AE field and policy or across policy sectors are hampered by the absence of consolidated channels and procedures.

Data privacy, representativeness and disaggregation. Cases from **Scandinavia (Finland, Sweden, Denmark)** indicate that while open access to information is important, particularly for locating the most vulnerable and invisible groups, this raises questions such as who has access to an individuals' personal data and information and how this data can be shared. One initiative that aims to tackle this challenge is the national KOSKI database (KOSKI-tietokanta) developed by the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE), which collects educational information about all students in Finland. The database does not, however, offer encompassing information on those outside education and the workforce, i.e. those most challenging to reach. It is also

important to continue the conversation about who has the responsibility to not only reach out to young people in general, but also to focus on those in most need of guidance and support. Often this sort of support is dependent on individual initiatives by educators and practitioners.

Additional issues are posed by the absence of disaggregated datasets. In Spain, a major challenge when designing AE and other social inclusion policies for minorities and people in vulnerable conditions is the lack of official statistical data disaggregated by ethnic origin. This was pointed out by informants working in policy-making designed to improve the social inclusion of the Roma population, through the Integral Plan for the Roma People (PIPG):

Data is always based on estimations and approximations (...) therefore we design measures according to recommendations by different organizations and the scientific community. (Regional policy technician, Pol6, Spain).

PIPG technicians said they also face barriers in accessing specific data on Roma children and young people's educational performance, which they request from the Catalan Department of Education: "The education of Roma people is one of our priorities, [education] from zero to a hundred years [laughs] but we have a barrier to access data, for example, on school failure of Roma children in Catalonia." Although they cannot ask for specific data on the Roma population due to lack of disaggregated data, informants explained that they know the schools that are mostly attended by Roma students and request information about them:

We ask [the Catalan Department of Education for data on] competency test results, absenteeism rates, we ask all this but it was very difficult for us to get this information from them (...) it has been a very intense dialogue process, because it was not a pleasant picture (Regional policy technician, Pol6, Spain).

Data immediacy. Relevant information on AE issues might be available within a given institutional setting but its normal flow might be hindered and delayed by, for instance, bureaucratic procedures or administrative timings required to process it. In a context of instant communication and rapid changes, the speed of information flows has become as important as its content.

In Spain, the Barcelona Education Consortium (CEB) works in close collaboration with the AE centres as well as with other CEB areas in order to organize an efficient and effective distribution of resources and AE courses. By streamlining information

flows, important decisions can be made in relation to the redistribution of demand and offerings across districts when mismatches are detected, e.g. if a course has too many vacancies in one neighbourhood but a waiting list in another one.

Because the administration can also get this information, but it gets it late, and I'm interested in immediacy (...) but when General Services ('Serveis Generals') do a data dump and send it to me, maybe it has already been two months. (Local AE coordinator, Pol3, Spain)

Lack of consolidated channels for policy-to-practice, cross-sectoral and multi-level information flows. In Latvia, the education policy makers interviewed recognised that they lack information on the most vulnerable social groups that do not access education, which augments the challenge of designing effective AE policies. In 2017, an Adult Education Government Board (AEGB) was established in order to improve AE policy. This constitutes an **example of multi-stakeholder and multilevel collaboration** between representatives of ministries and institutes involved in AE, together with different organizations such as the Confederation of Employers and Trade Unions. However, the AEGB faces many challenges, including **limited information flows between the central and regional governments**. According to informants, national Ministries are not effective in sharing information with the regional governments (e.g., what activities should be carried out in local communities), creating discrepancies between national and regional policies.

Similarly, fieldwork in Estonia pointed to the lack of effective AE multi-stakeholder networking that promotes collaboration, coordination and information sharing between key stakeholders, namely vocational schools, unemployment offices and employers. Despite this being gradually tackled by national authorities (e.g., the Ministry of Education), it remains a challenge that impact negatively on young people's chances of succeeding in training and employability.

6.1.2 Challenges in involving relevant actors: Young people and representative groups

A complex set of factors come into play in relation to involving relevant actors, among which we highlight:

- Difficulty in reaching out to young people, in particular those in vulnerable positions
- Difficulty in engaging them and getting them genuinely interested in participating

- Lack of interest in genuine forms of participation on the policy-makers' side, leading to tokenistic forms of participation
- Absence of consolidated channels and structures for involving young people and AE stakeholders in the policy shaping process.

The difficulties in reaching out to and engaging young people are interrelated. The GP cases suggest that a core issue is **the absence of (or gaps in) networks that can liaise with young people and engage them effectively**. In the UK, it is most difficult to reach out to young people who are not already in touch through other organisations and services. Most policy makers in national organisations, by the very nature of their work, rely on their networks with AE providers and other organisations which work directly with young people on a day-to-day basis. As UK_Pol3 points out:

It will have been the provider that has somehow engaged that person from non-participation into participation. Our resources to go beyond that are quite limited.

As with any specialised consultation and participation process, reaching out to young people in the most vulnerable situations can present a challenge, particularly bearing in mind that for some learners, there are a multitude of barriers that prevent them from engaging in education or training in the first place. In the context of working with young people not in education, employment or training, advice service manager Edu1 (UK_GP2) put it as follows:

...if they don't engage in anything they're not going to engage in things, that's our problem, there's not an engagement in anything at all.

This can limit communication between policy makers and the most vulnerable young people and turn into a vicious circle. While the views of the most vulnerable and 'non-engaged' young people would be the most significant for policy makers to hear, the very barriers that prevent them from engaging in education or training also hamper such communication efforts.

In Spain and in Scandinavia [FI, SE, DK], fieldwork data evidenced that, in general, there is minimal to no communication and information sharing directly between young people and policy makers. On the other hand, young people being represented by NGOs, AE providers and other service providers with experience may be more functional, but one might question whether their voices and needs are truly heard in policymaking,

especially considering the recent demands for financial savings and effectiveness of educational services. Reaching the young people often requires a network approach from professionals working in the field, but effective platforms for sharing information are lacking or not systematically implemented. One policy-maker in Finland also described how important she considers the opportunity to be in direct contact with learners and teachers on the field to see the practical implications of their policy work. However, there are not enough resources for such activities.

While the participation of vulnerable groups is part of the rhetoric of policy-making, we found that these **forms of participation are often tokenistic**. Local policy makers in the UK reported that there is often a gap between the government's rhetoric about consultation with stakeholders including AE providers and learners, and the way policy development follows its own 'logic'. Senior manager Pol1 in UK_GP4 is critical of management processes used by government departments which follow prescriptive and set patterns rather than being open to meaningful consultation and evidence:

...unfortunately, in the public sector, [...], if you haven't thought of it at the beginning of the programme you can't do anything ...you can only go in this linear direction because that's what you said you were going to do. There's no flexibility, , there's no improvisation allowed. And the assumption is that everybody knows what they're doing in the first place was right, which is utter madness 'I can see what's over the hill—yeah right'. But that unfortunately is how central government works. And so not only are they not very good at what they're doing, they use the most inappropriate ways of doing it. [...] (Pol1, UK_GP4)

According to this key informant, sometimes policies are developed as in a vacuum and lacks,

any reference to the bodies of knowledge, the research, the experts etc, and without any understanding of the potential perverse consequences of what they're talking about because they don't understand the full landscape and all the interactions that already exist.

AE practitioners, local policy makers and learners themselves may be in a position where they are trying to sustain good practices “despite the system, not because of it” (Pol1, UK_GP4). Examples of this are funding regimes which have reduced the variety and sustainability of AE offerings and consequentially failed to reach many potential young learners in situations of vulnerability.

The gap between rhetoric, reality and tokenism have to be seen in context, and in relation to another issue we came across: the difficulty to follow up on suggestions and requests that people may bring up in consultations. For instance, in Romania, the General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) reported a positive experience of community engagement in decision-making, stretching over a long period of time, and already integrated in their participatory approach to designing and running AE, educational and social assistance projects for children and youth. However, they also encountered challenges, one of them being the inability to respond to community needs and integrate and follow up on people's requests. One interviewee commented:

At some point, you have to address some concrete needs and we are not able to satisfy all the needs we identify in the field. What works as well [apart from community visits] is to organise café gatherings, this is how we called them, where people come and tell their issues. But when you cannot find solutions to all their issues, you start losing them, because "I came, I told my problems and what did you do about it?" In the end our resources are limited, institutionally, materially, legally, given also that marginalised communities have many problems to solve, not just one or two priority problems. (Local education authority, Pol3, Romania)

Another example of **a lack of consolidated channels and structures for involving young people** and AE stakeholders in the policy shaping process comes from Spain. Sometimes educators and learners have suggestions to improve some aspect of the AE system or a complaint but they cannot communicate it effectively. At least two of these cases emerged during fieldwork in Barcelona. First, when a GP coordinator had problems with the official educative calendar set by the Catalan Department of Education, she discussed it with the VET coordinator but felt that nothing changed. She said she was aware that decisions "come from above" through a hierarchical decision making system in which educators like her do not have real influence. "Maybe I could write a letter to the local school board (*Consell escolar del distrito*)" she concluded, without showing much optimism that this would have any impact (Programme coordinator and educator, Edu3, ES_GP3).

Another case was expressed by a former learner in ES_GP3. After finishing this VET programme, he realized it was not enough for the labour market because employers also required a minimum level of secondary education. He was very critical about the current educational offer because neither Compulsory Secondary Education (too theoretical)

nor VET programmes (too practical) trained one well enough to face the labour market. He said there should exist something in between and wanted to take this suggestion further to appropriate decision-making structures, however he did not find a way to do so through any formal channel.

The consolidation of communication channels cross-sectorally and between policy and the AE field is likely to vary according to field of practice and policy, and as some cases suggest also conditions of vulnerability of young people (often conceptualised as types of vulnerable groups or areas of vulnerability). Fieldwork conducted in Greece evidenced that effective communication between policy actors and AE providers varies greatly and its **effectiveness largely depends on the profile of vulnerability of a given social group**. AE providers and programmes that target Roma, transgender, refugees and immigrant people are better known by policy officials and representatives, some of whom might also belong and/or have direct relation to those groups. By contrast, AE providers for long-term unemployed and NEETs report being less visible for policy representatives, who tend to only have general overviews of their field. As a general challenge, the majority of AE providers feel the positive impacts of their work are not appropriately recognised and disseminated to the rest of society by policy representatives.

6.1.3 Lack of specific competences and procedural knowledge for effective communication and engagement

The involvement of civil society, AE stakeholders and young people in the law and policy making process is one key element underpinning effective information flows and debates that shape the policy making process. Apart from the challenges described above, serious issues are posed by lack of competences and procedural knowledge for effective involvement.

One of the Romanian policy makers interviewed remarked that in Romania civil society and NGOs often lack the procedural knowledge for engaging with politics. Law making and policy making need to abide by a formalised, rigid process. Anyone who wants to intercede and influence that process needs to first know how the process unfolds and where they can intervene. There are spaces for intervention by civil society, and the process itself is made transparent in public documents. Despite this, many NGOs try to engage by sending letters and documentation, thinking this is the right way to engage. This is not sufficient, *“One has to know the rules of the game”*. This

respondent worked in the NGO sector before becoming a member of the Parliament, and told us he was well aware of how the sector works, knowing both sides. He pointed out the inadequacy of NGO attempts at influencing policy. A second interviewee nuanced this view by suggesting that the protocols for policy making could be drafted in a way that encourages civil society participation. For instance, the presence of relevant stakeholders could significantly add to debates around a specific new measure, where their views are pertinent (such as representatives of unions for work laws, or vulnerable groups for social inclusion laws). However, it is at the discretion of policy-makers to involve other stakeholders.

6.2 Routes to effective practice

What makes effective practice in information and communication around policy-making and AE? The overarching finding emerging is that, at the heart of effective policy is the ability to produce, circulate and enhance access to timely, relevant and accurate information. This relates on the one hand to the work of decision making actors and on the other to the circulation of information about policies and procedures making their way into implementation. This involves complex webs of information flows which come into play and shape both policy decisions and pathways to implementation. Our findings tell us that this multi-directional flow of information can best be achieved through the interplay of three factors:

- Distributed network structures for information production, access and circulation
- Engagement of relevant actors and stakeholders
- Cultivation of information and communication competences

These three are tightly inter-related, with a focus on networks: strong, wide-ranging distributed networks spanning several sectors and levels are the heart of effective information production, access and circulation. In this section, several types of networks are assessed and elements of good practice identified, in three parts:

- The first argues for the importance of **networks** for efficient information flows, considering constitutive elements of good practice in making these networks work
- The second focuses on the special case of involving young people as **relevant actors** in these networks

- The third one looks at the importance of information and communication **competences** to take advantage of networked resources and contribute effectively.

6.2.1 Building effective networks for information production, access and circulation

As discussed in previous sections, we look at networks as dynamic interplays between social, informational and media layers, where these layers are tightly interconnected and mutually determining. These networks are usually driven by a higher-level goal, which is often inherent in their set-up and organisations—such as working groups or committees in diverse legislative domains or for drafting new laws. Networks formed at the interstices between policy and the AE sector are particularly complex. They are **nestled, interconnected structures** that enable information flows between different categories of stakeholders. They can be situated, for instance:

- Across various national, regional and local levels
- Between AE practice organisations and policy makers either at local or national level
- Across sectors, for instance linking AE to immigration and integration when it comes to inclusion of immigrant groups

Why are networks at the heart of efficient information flows?

We found that relying on media alone (such as databases and portals for information provision) is not enough, as information gets quickly outdated, and the situations that a sector may face require constant changes and shifts in interpretation of data, addition of new data, or new ways of collecting data. For instance, the influx of immigrants and asylum-seekers into Europe caused by conflicts in Africa and the Middle East required new sets of data and new ways to interpret it in order to inform effective policy. Moreover, when topics are as complex as immigration that impacts many fields and national contexts, knowledge is distributed in structures and people, rather than databases. Interpretive capacities are required to make appropriate assessments and inform decisions, which is beyond the current power of databases and information processing units, and beyond the power of individuals. Thus, a first reason for the crucial importance of networks stands in the **capacity to afford collective knowledge production**, interpretation and infusion into decision-making. Collective knowledge production can be afforded by various network structures, situated at different levels and interstices between policy making and the AE sector—such as local, regional, national and transnational.

Some of the most powerful practices with a direct impact on the situation of young people are **local networks**. For example, in the Danish and Swedish GP cases the practitioners (and in the Swedish case the students) have been influencing the development of language instruction, initiating new practices and participating in working groups. This highlights the importance of communication at local level, engaging in relations and enhancing dialogue between various partners and learners as well. Local relations and constant communication is necessary for understanding the learner's needs and to gain up-to-date information, since statistics are limited to the areas of collected data and they always have a time lag. Not all beneficiaries of the integration programme are heard at policy level, but the learner voice is entrusted to NGO and AE provider representatives in the development of the programmes. EduMAP GPs provided examples of cases where either the volunteers (Denmark) or AE providers (Sweden) were advocating learners needs to policy level change. In Denmark, the Integration Act is to ensure that newly arrived foreign nationals get an opportunity to use their abilities and resources to become active citizens on equal terms with other citizens in Danish society. When a newcomer receives the letter concerning the granting of their residence permit, it also states whether the Integration Act applies to them and thus makes them eligible to participate in the programme and receive an allowance. The process is monitored by a government agency and the municipalities are responsible for providing services for all who have statutory right to the integration programme. The process is rendered efficient not simply through the automation of the procedures, but rather through local level collaborative interventions. In the Danish case, at the local level, a coordinator works as a link between the educational provider, students, local employers and the municipality to guarantee the flow of information between all stakeholders.

A second aspect underpinning the power of networks resides in their **capacity to engage stakeholders**, particularly AE practitioners and organisations and young people in situations of risk. Involvement of young people can be either direct or mediated through interest groups, representatives of youth structures and coordinators. In most countries and cases surveyed, national level policy-makers were not in direct contact with young people or specific educational providers, but utilized coordinators and interest groups to mediate information between stakeholders and different layers of bureaucracy: municipal, regional, national. This involved structures formed to serve specific goals—from young people's integration in the job market to combatting discrimination against minorities. The **Swedish** case exemplifies regional cooperation

in matching the employers' need for labour and newcomers' need to find local contacts and jobs. The regional administrative body coordinated the work supported by the municipalities that were responsible for integration. The project-initiated model was established in the regional administration and the coordinator was actively promoting matches between employers and AE providers.

UK and Irish contexts offer more examples of direct involvement of young people, which often value first person sharing of experience (expanded further below). Network structures prove important in reaching out to young people as they are more likely to engage effectively when they are involved through familiar and trusted people and organisations. In reality, as will be described in the next sub-section, mediated and direct communication are interconnected and work best together, as Youth services policy expert Pol2 (IE_GP1) emphasises

we have good relationships with people who work with [vulnerable] people, and because we have [gained their] trust, gatekeepers would say 'you're OK with the [name of organisation Pol2 works for]'. So if we need to hear a voice of, for instance, the undocumented, we would have a close relationship with the person that would work with them. So from that point of view we build those close relationships, and where we need access to the young people or where we want to hear their voice we will hear it through them, or there will be activities, there will be events and we will be there. So yeah, we've built good relationships and good networks with people. (Youth services policy expert, Pol2, IE_GP1)

Key factors for building effective networks

Cross-cutting factors that influence the effectiveness of networks include:

1. Values and traditions of collaboration and participation
2. Thinking locally and involving communities
3. Mixed policy and civil society structures
4. Informal communication, connections and relationships

1. Values and traditions of collaboration and participation

Our study found that most effective practices, especially as far as the participation of young people and AE stakeholders is concerned, are found in **contexts that have a tradition of participation**—which is associated with:

- Stronger and more reliable structures that often have been rendered stable through time
- Genuine values of participation counteracting tokenistic forms

- Building up competences in communication and collaboration as side-effects of being involved in these structures
- Building specialised cells, departments or job roles that specifically handle collaboration and cooperation activities

For instance, the Finnish policy-makers interviewed found collaboration with AE providers important during the planning phases of national adult education regulations and curricula. A long tradition in education-related policy-making in Finland is to involve representatives of stakeholders and groups (unions, NGOs, education providers etc.) in the process as widely as possible to create consensus and ownership of reforms. Policy-makers who had been involved in the Finnish “VET reform” emphasised that representatives of students and various minority groups had taken part in working groups that had developed the new policy. The AE practitioners from different programmes also observed close collaboration and sharing experiences with the policymakers as important for developing AE programmes. In many cases, national level development reports were commissioned by national agencies or ministries and implemented by educational actors working in the field. Some good practices have been identified from the field and used as models in national policymaking.

Youth engagement in policy consultation is also most effective when it happens in structures infused by strong values and traditions of participation (see Text boxes 6.2—4, below).

2. Thinking locally and involving communities

Values of collaboration and participation cultivated at the local level are often the main engine for creating and supporting new AE programmes

In **UK_GP4**, there is an emphasis on communication with a range of partner agencies to promote the programme and to recruit more learners. The aim behind the approach is to offer a seamless journey for learners, where they can meet with an advisor and learn more about how the programme might benefit them in the ‘*here and now*’ [Local authority project manager, Pol2, F, UK_GP4] rather than being told to come back at a later time. Attending network meetings with a range of stakeholders, including government agencies and voluntary organisations and groups forms part of the effective communication strategy within this. At the same time, a key focus of the programme is on building a legacy for when the current funding (from European and

national government sources) comes to an end. Communications are therefore focused on presenting the programme as a successful model *that could be utilised in other areas* (Local authority, Pol2, UK_GP4).

As the case above suggests, genuine and effective participatory practices are rooted in tradition, involve strong values, or are forged over longer periods of time. In some of the cases analysed, policy and strategy changes were documented through community participation—which means involving local people, civil society organisations, schools etc. Text box 6.1 (Romania) exemplifies such a process and singles out a few important factors driving it: constant flows of information that can facilitate peaks of participation in high activity times; making space for direct communication—not only through NGOs and representatives, but also with community people directly.

Text box 6.1. Community participation in local strategy and policy making

The General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC) has branches in cities and in the capital, a branch for each city sector. The director of DGASPC Sector X [Anon.] outlined that they take a participatory approach to identify community needs, priority action areas, and directions for financing. This participatory approach became particularly important since 2004, when the two previously separate directions for Child Protection and Social Assistance were joined. The activity focus and vision of the new institution changed from an orientation towards children in need, particularly orphans, to child rights in general and prevention services to ensure that cases of child abandonment and separation from family, as well as school drop-out, were diminished. Old types of residential centres for orphans were closed and replaced by smaller ones in family-like structures, run by foundations. The strategy for the expanded Direction was conceived by means of community consultation—including local NGOs, foundations, residential and day care centres, and employers.

The strategy was written in collaboration with [the community] over more than one year. There were meetings almost weekly with community representatives, not only NGOs, but also patronages, employers and other institutions. (Local authority, Pol3, Romania)

NGOs and foundations also receive financing to run some of the state-driven care centres and services, for instance the family-type residential centres for orphans. Communication with these entities is constant, and has peaks when new projects are started, when financing has to be awarded, or new strategies and directions for future activities have to be drafted. DGASPC is also very active in collaborative projects, including EU-funded projects, which is another occasion for collaboration with other organisations.

Apart from meetings and consultations with NGOs and other organisations, DGASPC staff also get in touch regularly with community members, in a direct manner. They conduct community visits and hold consultation sessions, also community engagement occurs in many of the collaborative AE projects in which the Direction is involved.

3. Mixed policy and civil society structures

These can be set up at national, regional or local level or bridge among several levels. They are particularly effective when they are designed to respond to a specific issue or thematic area—such as immigration and integration. The Danish case reported in Chapter 3 *Text box 3.9. Information and communication spanning local to national levels in the area of immigration and integration (Denmark)*, and those reported below draw attention to how several processes are weaved together to ensure efficient information flows among relevant stakeholders:

- Dedicated structures with clear goals
- Mixed expertise
- Regular information flows
- Access to information for informing policy and effective implementation

In Romania there are several structures and protocols at the national level for ensuring the views and input of the civil society are integrated in new measures, policies and laws. These can have an influence at governmental or parliamentary level. Some of the structures are enduring, and some are created around, run or supported by an initiative of the party or government in power. A major initiative was the Anti-poverty coalition, launched by an interim democratic government in Romania in 2016 (Decision 133/2016²¹). The Anti-poverty Committee, functioning under the coordination of the prime minister's chancellery, was charged with monitoring the implementation of the national Integrated Package for Combatting Poverty. The committee was made of members of public institutions and NGOs, and other civil society representatives could participate in meetings. One of our interviewees, President of the Coalition, outlined the importance of the multidisciplinary approach taken by the initiative:

[The Coalition] wanted to involve the civil society as equal actors with an equal voice in public debates, to create a mechanism of integrated consultation and a mechanism for

21 <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/geydiojwhe3a/decizia-nr-133-2016-privind-infiintarea-comitetului-coalitia-anti-saracie->

elaborating integrated public policies. The great merit of this coalition, and why I wanted to engage so actively, it was because they proposed an inter-ministerial, integrated approach of public policies. For the first time, ministers, councillors, state secretaries and public administrators were sat at the same table with NGOs on the thematic expertise areas of each. (Former President of the Anti-poverty Coalition)

Building effective structures across civil society and the state benefits from endorsing strong values and traditions of participation, as the following case from Spain exemplifies (Text box 6.2).

Text box 6.2. Mixed structures for crafting the Integral Plan for the Roma People (PIPG) in Catalonia, Spain²²

Values and traditions of collaboration and participation. Since its first implementation in 2005, PIPG has relied on collaborative and participation networks with various stakeholders, mainly the academy and the Roma community, in order to generate evidence-based measures and recommendations. Data was obtained from a scientific European project (“Work Caló”, funded by the Fifth Framework Programme and led by Universitat de Barcelona) and from the first research on Roma people in Catalonia, commissioned to inform policy by the Department of Social Affairs and Families (*Departament de Benestar i Família*) in 2003. It was based on a “communicative methodology” that required the active participation of the Roma communities at various stages of the process, mainly data collection and knowledge production. The collaborative spirit of the PIPG has continued over the years hand in hand with the scientific community and, particularly, with the Roma community, reinforcing their commitment and common goals.

Thinking locally and involving communities. Local community involvement has been promoted by taking the plan to neighbourhoods where Roma people live:

We have gone to the territory presenting our actions proposal (...) all very concrete, very understandable for the [Roma] communities and they have been able to make their contributions to see if it was related to their daily life, right? Because sometimes there is a lot of distance between politics and people's lives, and we wanted to overcome this by going to the territories. We've made an open, long process of participation (...) with different deadlines so that they can contribute things in different ways, orally, by raising their hand, [online] or in any way that a person can express their point of view about those policies. And try to reach women and men, of different ages, non-literate Roma people and Roma University students (Regional policy technician, Pol6, ES).

²² The first PIPG was implemented in 2005 until 2008; the II PIPG between 2009—2013, the III Plan in 2014—2016 and the IV Plan in 2017—2020.

Mixed policy and civil society structures. In this regard, there has been an interesting process of professionalization of former civil society actors' participation. The informant explained that the last two PIPG editions have consisted of a more intercultural group, with the participation of Roma technicians in the plan design and drafting. Besides office workers, the PIPG also has territorial referents: people based on the neighbourhoods and districts where they want to implement PIPG related activities.

There has always been some Roma presence in the Government, but initially they were older Roma people or linked to some political party, but it was not like all the others, Technicians who had studied and could develop their work in equal conditions. The figure of this Roma advisor without academic qualification and who had a more political figure, has changed: now it is an intercultural work team, both here and in the territory (Regional policy technician, Pol6, Spain).

4. Informal communication, connections and relationships

Often overlooked, we found that in multiple country contexts and at different levels informal connections are very important for nurturing effective information exchange and collaboration. The UK and Finland offers good practice examples of communication between AE providers and local policy-makers or educational authorities, often focused on specific AE programmes. In Finland, most policy makers we interviewed also had their own educational backgrounds and previous work experience in the field of education (adult, vocational, special needs, Finnish as a second language etc.) which positively affects their collaboration and communication with AE providers/organisations in the field. In UK_GP1, communication between the local education authority and the organisation delivering the programme has been effective. One of the contributing factors was that the programme director had links to the education authority from previous employment there. The education authority was also approached for support in the form of encouraging some of their employees to become volunteer mentors. One of the mentors has been involved in the senior leadership team of the local authority and has acted as an informal advisor and advocate for UK_GP1. The programme and the city's education services have also jointly commissioned an evaluation of the programme. The report for this acknowledges the support of the local authority for the programme.

6.2.2 Effective practices in engaging relevant actors: young people and representative groups

We gave particular attention in our study to reaching out to and effectively engaging young people. As specified in the *Challenges* part, reaching out and effective engagement are

key challenges when it comes to young people's involvement. The most vulnerable are often the hardest to reach and when participatory values are not fully embraced, tokenistic forms of participation ensue.

Cases from **Scandinavia [FI, SE, DK]** indicate a need to develop communication between different stakeholders and the national policy-making level to ensure that individuals who have fallen outside of support networks could be located.

UK and Irish cases exemplify effective ways to go about this. UK findings point to the importance of establishing trust and designing inviting formats and media that facilitate sharing of experience, which are close to young people's regular media and communication practices.

Text box 6.3. Involving young people in policy consultation

In the **UK**, there is similar emphasis on the centrality of young people's views and voices in the policy influencing work of UK_Pol2. While a core principle of the work itself is *that it needs to be located around the experiences of the young people themselves*, the communicative practices by which the views and voices of young people are sought are varied. For example, UK_Pol2 participates in a national forum for young adult carers, which brings together young people with civil servants from a range of government departments as well as stakeholders from key third sector organisations, AE providers and practitioners. The role of young adult carers at these meetings is crucial as they can provide first hand experiences about how they are affected by policies and practices. Aside from this, young people are invited to participate in a range of activities and events such as interviews and focus groups, or asked *to share their stories with us either through blogs or through videos* (UK_Pol2). The desired effect of these practices is that young people will realise *that when they do say something to us, although we can't promise that it will lead to immediate or tangible change, that we're doing all that we can to get their messages to the right people* (UK_Pol2).

The importance of networks of trust

It is acknowledged, however, that for some young people forums such as these or even focus groups with young people may pose too many barriers. The organisation where UK_Pol2 is based therefore relies strongly on their networks with organisations that support young people directly and who have existing relationships of trust:

...we ran a number of focus groups with young adult carers. For young people who weren't quite confident taking part in focus groups, we either did telephone or face to face interviews. We also gave the opportunity for the carers staff to conduct the interviews themselves, as we know that for many groups of young people they're most confident talking to the staff who support them on a day to day basis, they trust those people and they're more open with them. (UK_Pol2).

Acknowledging that young people sometimes talk about very personal experiences during such consultations which might be linked to strong emotions, UK_Pol2 describes taking a careful approach which both allows young people in situations of vulnerability to express their views and share their experiences but also protects them from any potential impact this may have on them:

... some of those experiences are very difficult for them and it's about getting the balance between understanding the impact of the experiences they've been through and the impact of those experiences upon their access to education and employment, but also not imposing upon their privacy and not making them feel under pressure. (UK_Pol2)

Young people's involvement is not direct in all cases, and the role of intermediaries is crucial. Policy influencer UK_Pol3 emphasises how his work involves engaging in a range of research and consultation projects with learners and AE providers, such as

going out to different kinds of learning providers and talking to different kinds of learners doing functional skills qualifications about their experiences and what they valued about the qualifications and what they would like to change. (UK_Pol3)

In some cases this work might even involve learners speaking directly to politicians or being interviewed in national media about their experiences of learning. Working with AE providers as intermediaries is an important aspect of this consultation work with learners, although there are some examples where telephone surveys are used to contact learners (or potential learners) directly.

Ireland, with a strong participatory tradition, exemplifies the importance of inclusive practices that reaches out to the least visible and most disadvantaged.

Text box 6.4. Inclusive practices for youth engagement

In **Ireland**, Youth services policy expert Pol2 (IE_GP1) provides examples of communication directly with young people through a range of initiatives, for example a movement against hate speech. Providing platforms for young people (through documented meetings and conferences) to speak about their experiences and become involved in campaigning about specific issues is a key aspect of specific campaigns. Aside from *talking directly to young people* Pol2 also engages a network of youth and migrant-led organisations who in turn consult with young people about key issues. Building up relationships with gatekeepers is an important aspect in making this communication effective.

In her view, participation essentially involves *hearing the young person's voice* and making it a central aspect in relation to issues that affect them. However, not only is this communication between young people and policy makers essential, it is also very important that it does not happen in a way that Pol2 describes as tokenistic:

...the whole idea is that nothing happens that impacts on young people without hearing the young peoples' voice. [But] you can't make a young person to come along and speak to something as a tokenistic thing: it needs to be meaningful. And young people will tell you very quickly when it's not meaningful or it doesn't make sense. (Youth services policy expert, Pol2, IE_GP1)

Pol 2 emphasises how important it is to reach out for the least represented and most vulnerable, something which is now part of the Irish participatory tradition:

...in Ireland I think we would be known across Europe as probably having the most inclusive and participative way of working with that. I think in other parts of Europe you get a lot of young politicians involved. Whereas in Ireland we work really, really hard to make sure that it is the voice of the most vulnerable and the most inclusive voice. [...] And there will be a series of consultations and where we feel there is a particular voice needed we will go out and do a focus group with the particular vulnerable group [...] For example, we've been working very closely with a group of young people who have been campaigning around being undocumented migrants and we've been backing that as much as we possibly can. So one of those ways is making sure that they're represented in the structured dialogue space, so that their situation is picked up by other young people but also it moves forward into the reports and into policy and implementation plans. (Youth services policy expert, Pol2, IE_GP1)

6.2.3 Cultivating information and communication competences

The Danish and Swedish examples described above highlight the efficiency of data gathering and sharing as part of administrative work. The reporting of figures and activities is a job that requires labour at the practitioner level to gather and submit the data and at national level administration to process and deliver the information further: drawing the figures from databases, writing annual reports and communicating them to different audiences. Competences required to conduct these activities come to be integrated in the know-how and skills set of professionals through repeated practice. However, it is important to acknowledge that these are skills require environments and opportunities to be cultivated and nurtured.

In Spain, the informant in Barcelona Education Consortium (CEB) explained how their coordination tasks with AE centres are mainly based on mastering some digital information tools:

I send an excel sheet [to AE centres] or we share documents on Drive or through Google or Moodle and each centre fills in its memory [data]; graphics come out later. They have to indicate me what objectives were initially planned and which ones they have been able to cover and provide me all the information (...) All this is introduced in different management programs—the Saga, the Sfera— (Local AE coordinator, Pol3, Spain)

Involving young people in policy consultations also requires honing competences. One British policy-maker interviewed remarks that a strategy for enabling effective participation of young people is to open up occasions to build communication competences along with confidence and self-esteem. At events, young people are invited to speak alongside senior civil servants or even government ministers. This helps build young people's confidence and self-esteem:

Our Patron is [a member of the Royal Family], so just for them to be at a conference with those types of people sharing their views, I think gives them a much stronger sense of confidence, that they do have the right to an opinion, that people will listen and take note of what they say. (UK_Pol2).

Another example comes from the Irish GPs. In the context of the dialogue between policy makers and young people that took place after the launch of the video that young people produced as part of IE_GP1, service manager Edu1 (F, IE_GP1) explains the consequences of a meeting that took place between the young people and an association of education professionals

And then, as a consequence of the video, we have made contact with [the association of educational professionals] and we had a meeting. We accompanied them, [Edu3] and myself, but really it was a conversation between the [educational professionals] and the young people. They do seminars twice a year and [they promised] that one of the seminars, probably next year, will focus on issues around working with minority ethnic young people. So that was very positive. (Edu1, IE_GP1)

IE_GP2 also relies on a wide range of local, national and international networks to develop their activities. There is a strong focus on capacity building among young people, and opportunities are sought on a regular basis for young people to lead on activities such as international exchanges or speaking as delegates at conferences.

Competences of young people can be cultivated also in contexts that may not be focused specifically on policy-making but be more wide-ranging. Another specific example of communicative practices involving young people and stakeholders was

a project run by UK_Pol2 and her organisation in which young people interviewed potential employers through an action research model. Turning the dynamics of the traditional interview situation on its head, young people were enabled to interview potential employers to find out more about the skills and qualities employers are looking for when recruiting staff:

So it was really about reversing the traditional job interview situation placing the young person at the heart of the process so that they're really in control of who they interview—so they select the employers; they decide which questions they want to ask; they're responsible for planning the interviews; and obviously having the dialogue with the employer. [...] I think the most interesting thing is that the young people are at the heart of the process, they're empowered to talk to the employers, they're in control, they develop skills and confidence, they develop networks. (UK_Pol2)

Part III

Implications for research, practice and policy

Chapter 7. Implications for research

In this section, fieldwork findings presented in Part I (Mapping Communicative Ecologies) and II (Matches, mismatches and routes to effective practice) are considered in relation to interdisciplinary literature on communication, education, citizenship and vulnerabilities, as key concepts in the EduMAP approach to answering the research question:

How can communication inside of and around Adult Education (AE) programmes be improved in order to:

1. *Reach out to and connect effectively with young adults at risk of social exclusion?*
2. *Enhance interaction and learners' engagement?*
3. *Enhance engagement and collaboration within the AE organisation and with relevant external agents?*

This part is structured in two main sections in which information and communication practices are looked at from the perspective of

- Vulnerabilities and social exclusion (section 7.1)
- Adult education routes to APC (section 7.2)

Section 7.1 describes the role of information and communication in either deepening or providing resources for overcoming vulnerability and social exclusion. Section 7.2 shows how these insights can be taken up in AE programmes that contribute to overcoming exclusion and cultivating APC competences.

The findings from the EduMAP research are interpreted from a **theoretical perspective** that embeds the communicative ecologies and assemblages (CEA)

analytical framework described in the introductory chapter. Information and communication are approached through an ecological perspective, nuanced by a social constructionist stance, converging in the four principles described in Section 1.2.2: contextualised construction of meaning, emergence and process, holism and a relational perspective, and a distributed view of agency.

7.1 Information, communication and vulnerability

The perspective on vulnerability endorsed in this report reflects the one described in detail in the WP3 deliverable of EduMAP, as well as the EduMAP concept note on *Adult Education as a means to Active Participatory Citizenship* (Pitkänen, 2017). Vulnerability is defined as a limitation on people's choices and capabilities, which can be analysed in terms of limiting factors and conditions and is "complex, dynamic and context-dependent" (Pitkänen, 2017:3–4). Overcoming vulnerability is based on an empowerment approach (Abrisketa et al., 2015), which aims to augment choices and capabilities by building the resilience of people in situations of vulnerability. In this section, we look closely at the interplay between communication and vulnerability thus defined, in relation to notions of access to information and communication resources (7.1.1) and the role of agency and resilience in overcoming situations of vulnerability (7.1.2).

7.1.1 Vulnerability and access to information and communication

From an information and communication perspective, social exclusion and vulnerabilities have been widely theorised as divides regarding access and use of information and communication resources, with a strong focus on issues of access to media and particularly digital media. We enrich and expand this literature by offering:

- A broadened notion of access, defined from an ecological perspective
- Insights on the role of social networks and social capital in processes of inclusion and exclusion.

A multi-dimensional view of access to information and communication

The relationship between social inclusion and access to information and communication technology (ICT) has been widely theorised on the premise that in an increasingly connected society and economy access to media determines possibilities for

communication, civic engagement, exercise of citizenship and ability to engage in diverse forms of association (Warschauer, 2003). Theory on this relationship has passed through several waves, which also reflect diverse terminologies: from digital divides to e-inclusion and e-exclusion. The concept of digital gap or divides emerged in the 1990s and was initially concerned with measuring ICT access (mainly in so-called third world regions) from a normative, linear and quantitatively driven approach. In the early 2000s attention shifted “from access and ownership toward skills and literacies” (Leurs, 2015:19). Since then, critical approaches acknowledge digital divides as plural, qualitatively nuanced and multiply located (Frissen, 2005; van Dijk & Hacker, 2003; Tsatsou, 2011), paving the way to more refined and multidimensional analyses that highlight the embedded and embodied nature of people’s relationships with technology in their everyday lives.

Although debates about digital divides have receded in contemporary wealthy societies by assuming digital media is increasingly available to everybody, fieldwork data evidences there are still pervasive layers of inequalities in the ways many social groups at risk of social exclusion, including young persons, access and use digital information and communication resources. EduMAP fieldwork confirmed the presence of multiple and overlapping divides among the young persons interviewed, mainly regarding use, due to literacies shortages, but also access, due to lack of material resources, as illustrated in the next subsection. The situations of vulnerability studied were diverse within each analysed case, each country and across countries, based on the intersectionalities of age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, and refugee status, among other factors. Young adults constitute an age cohort directly associated with high levels of new media appropriation, growing up in already digitally infused sociocultural and economic contexts. However, their exposure to socioeconomic and political difficulties due to ethnicity, homelessness, (forced) migration and special needs—to name just a few of the situations covered by EduMAP—put them in disadvantaged positions with respect to their peers. Thus, their information and communication practices should not be taken for granted but thoroughly analysed against the background of vulnerabilities, which evidences multiple divides at play.

The cross-context analysis performed during the project, framed in a communication ecology theoretical perspective enabled us to articulate a broadened notion of access to communication resources that in turns affects situations of vulnerability. This builds

on and carries forth insights articulated in the literature throughout the past 20 years, premised on a series of observations, theorised as follows:

- In information-intensive or networked societies, access to information and media is interlinked with the ability to participate equally in socio-economic, cultural and political processes (Manuel Castells 1993, 2000; Warschauer, 2003).
- The information society is characterised by inequalities in access to and use of information which tend to exacerbate social and economic inequalities (Warschauer, 2003: 8–9; Kaplan, 2005). Thus, digital divides can also be found at the core of wealthy societies such as in Europe (Tsatsou, 2011) and in ICT-skilled social groups such as second-generation young migrants (Leurs, 2015) or young adults moving within affluent—though unequal—European regions (Gordano Peile and Ros Hajar, 2016). These divides relate to the unequal distribution of other social and economic resources, thus creating mechanisms by which these patterns are perpetuated (Eubanks, 2007; Fortunati, 2008, Sabiescu, 2013).
- Acting on divides implies acknowledging that media and social spheres cannot be treated in isolation but are strongly interconnected; thus acting for overcoming exclusion and vulnerability implies multi-dimensional approaches incorporating media, social, economic and cultural levels. It also implies considering both individual and collective dimensions of deprivation and exclusion (Sabiescu, 2013).

Based on these considerations several multi-dimensional models of access have been theorised in the literature. For instance, Warschauer (2003) proposes that e-inclusion relies on meaningful integration of media and communication in social practices, which requires access to four sets of resources: physical (technological infrastructure), digital (content and materials made available online), human (skills, especially literacy), and social (the social and institutional infrastructure that supports usage of ICTs). These resources condition use, but they are also reinforced or can emerge from effective use.

Building on the CEA framework, we further expand on this by proposing that to link notions of access with inequality and social exclusion, we need to consider access as not only multi-dimensional, but also dynamic. This dynamism is centred on the agent, it resides in the agents' capacities to make use of and mobilise resources available for goals and targets they formulate. Thus we propose that:

- Access to information and communication resources is multi-layered, and encompasses media, informational, social and competence-related dimensions (Media, Information and Social layers of the CEA framework).

- Access and use are interconnected and mutually reinforce one another, and both converge in the agents' capacity to act using personal, collective and contextual resources, competences and literacies (Agency layer) towards self-formulated goals (Goals layer).

This perspective acknowledges that resources related to media, social, informational and competences are interconnected and mutually reinforce or limit each other. It also proposes that access needs to be considered in a dynamic relationship with use: we do not look only at what young people have available, rather we look at their capacity to mobilise these resources towards a goal. This draws attention to the key importance of goals and aspirations. It is not of much consequence in a young person's life if they have all sorts of resources at their fingertips but are not animated by any impetus to use them. This stands at the crux of the empowerment approach to tackling situations of vulnerability: empowerment resides in the young people themselves, and this implies their capacity to mobilise resources at hand to fulfil goals they cherish.

Social networks and social capital as communication resources

EduMAP findings suggest that social networks are essential resources for cultivating resilience and overcoming situations of vulnerability. Mainly families and peers, but also teachers, are central components of young people's **social networks**, broadly understood as linkages and connections between people. These may present different features (e.g. tight or loose, close or open, dense or sparse, etc.) and they often provide mutual support among members, though they are not limited to it and they could serve other purposes as well (Heaney and Israel, 2008:190).

Our findings echo previous research on social capital, the concept used to embody the value of social networks and the embedded norms that guide interactions among members (Putnam, 2001). Putnam distinguished between bridging and bonding social capital. The former refers to networks that are outward looking and involve people spanning different social stratifications and cleavages. The latter refers to networks that are inward looking, characteristic of closely knit groups, with strong social bonds and identities (Putnam, 2001), such as "family and friend care but also, in extreme cases, 'superglued' networks based on aggressive exclusion and harmful to society; that is, excessive bonding, such as in the instance of the KKK" (Putnam, 2000: 21, quoted in Patulny and Haase, 2007:33).

Our research suggests that bonding social capital (of the kind cultivated in closely knit communities) is important for young people to cultivate resilience, while bridging social capital is important to open up opportunities outside their immediate circles, which can thereafter be connected with skills development, access to further resources, and so on. Among the young people involved in the EduMAP research, some benefit from very rich social networks and others rely on just a few points of contact. In most cases, however, an inner community or group focus appear to prevail over relations with outside groups, as evidenced among Roma women in Romania and Spain, homeless youth in Greece and Syrian refugees in Turkey.

In each case, bonding social capital is “embedded in a web of interaction-supporting artefacts” (Licoppe and Smoreda, 2005: 3), mainly smartphones and WhatsApp interactions, but also personal communication, whenever possible. Roma women benefitted from other Roma community members’ support, in particular, other women in their family with whom they worked, who looked after their children or who even encouraged them to study (as in Tamara’s case, presented in Text box 2.1 in Chapter 2). WhatsApp interactions complemented face-to-face communication, highly valued among interviewees and allowed by families’ physical proximity, when they live in the same city, neighbourhood or even buildings.

Syrian refugees in Turkey also maintain robust social networks with family, though members are often scattered in Turkey, Syria or other countries, so mediated communication through smartphones is essential to support their interactions. They also participate in social networks made of other refugees like themselves, sharing news as well as legal and economic and educational resources to settle in new countries or reach their final destinations. These interactions in Arabic and with culturally similar actors means rich bonding capital, though at the detriment of their bridging social capital with the host Turkish society and culture, which remain quite poor and underdeveloped.

The examples above show a prevalence of bonding and a lack of bridging social capital. This opens up the perspective to the role of social mediators and AE to close this gap and offer opportunities for connected social networks to actors beyond one’s immediate community (bridging social capital). We will further discuss these aspects in section 7.2.2.

In the case of the homeless young people interviewed in Greece, research evidences a prevalence of bonding social capital with other homeless youth that, despite offering some support for short term issues, such as sharing food search and resources to live

on the streets, perpetuated their vulnerability because they could not provide information or resources to leave the streets (e.g. housing or job opportunities). These examples, as Putnam mentioned above, confirm the theoretical debates that underscore how social capital is not always positive for its members (Portes, 1998) but needs to be interpreted against the backdrop of specific socioeconomic and cultural contexts. This is another insight that has to be acknowledged by AE when considering what resources young people already possess when they enter AE programmes, which can be leveraged, and which may constitute impediments to social change.

7.1.2 Agency, resilience and aspirations

The considerations above illustrate at least four relevant issues:

- First, the central role of social networks -be it social workers in a care facility or family- in mobilising resources for a given purpose.
- Secondly, how young people's agency, understood as their ability to pursue their goals, can be found beyond their individual possibilities, in other participating agents, such as their social and family environments. In this sense, we understand agency as a distributed process encompassing human and non-human actors, in accordance with the work of Latour (2010) and Slater (2013).
- Thirdly, how young people can devise coping strategies and innovative ways to employ resources at hand to pursue their goals despite difficulties in their living conditions.
- The central role of goals and aspirations as mobilising factors that can incentivise young people to overcome situations of vulnerability.

Four concepts allow us to analyse young people's information and communication practices as embedded in a concrete social *milieu* (**social networks**), recognising their ability to mobilise resources available in the particular spatiotemporal locations they inhabit (**agency**), often facing multiple social, cultural and economic difficulties but achieving their goals one way or the other (**resilience**), emphasised in situations when they cherish goals for their future (**aspirations**). They provide useful ways to consider how disenfranchised social actors become empowered in their own right and have the potential to overcome situations of vulnerability if appropriately accompanied/supported.

Both agency and resilience have a long tradition in the Social Sciences, though their meaning can be elusive as they are applied differently in diverse disciplines and studies. Above all, they are dynamic (changing in time) and multilevel (they involve individuals and their environment: family, school and communities) (Windle, 2011; Ungar, 2006).

Resilience is broadly defined here as

the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and ‘bouncing back’ in the face of adversity. Across the life course, the experience of resilience will vary (Windle, 2011:163).

Rooted in developmental psychology, the concept was initially defined in relation to children and adolescents experiencing stress and trauma caused by economic constraints, impaired parents, abuse or other critical situations. It then spread to other disciplines to refer more generally to “exposure to a significant threat or adversity”, which in turn could be counterbalanced by a series of “protective resources or assets” (Windle, 2011:163). Such resources are mainly accessed, shared and mobilised through social networks, mainly family, friends and peers, but also acquaintances or professionals seen on a daily basis (e.g. social workers and NGO volunteers).

Resilience can be applied to various spheres of life, including media access and education. For instance, the literature on ICTs for Development (ICT4D) as well as on migrant communication has shown people’s resilience when faced with economic constraints to access digital devices. Numerous studies document how low-waged migrants take advantage of low-end ICT devices and services (Cartier, Castells, & Qiu, 2005; Sabaté i Dalmau, 2014) and developing their own strategies of appropriation such as pay-as-you-go mobile services, collective internet access points, and multiple SIM card ownership, among others (Sey, 2009). Shared mobile phones and Facebook profiles detected among Roma women in Bucharest, add one more “protective resource” or resilience strategy to the list.

Aspirations and the capacity to aspire

Our study revealed that aspirations are some of the most powerful mobilising factors encouraging young people to devise innovative coping strategies despite difficult situations and increasing their capacity for resilience. We build on the work of Arjun Appadurai (2013) and Debraj Ray (2003), which emphasise the socially and culturally embedded nature of aspirations and the capacity to aspire. According to Appadurai, the socio-cultural environment in which one grows up and is educated determines their capacity to aspire—in other words what they feel entitled to hope for and able to achieve. According to Ray (2003:1), individual desires and behaviour are socially grounded, in

the sense that they will be influenced “by the experiences of other individuals in the cognitive neighborhood of that person”.

In our study, we analysed how a young person’s environment determines the capacity to build aspirations or to act upon them (see Section 2.3). Social networks and social capital are essential elements affecting the development of the capacity to aspire. Ray theorises this relationship by sketching the concept of ‘the aspirations window’: “formed from an individual’s cognitive world, her zone of “similar”, “attainable” individuals”. (p3) Based on exposure to the background and achievements of people in one’s environment, a young person may develop both aspirations and an inner confidence as to their capacity to reach them or not with the resources and competences they possess, or may be able to cultivate. Of interest in our research is how aspirations can drive behaviour, especially behaviour that can drive a young person to cultivate skills or otherwise be encouraged to act to change one’s situation. According to Ray, behaviour is driven by the aspirations gap—distance between current and desired condition—it is the gap that determines behaviour, by driving the individual to attain and thus close the gap. Too high a gap and too low or zero gap are both likely to generate low or no drive or incentive to close the gap.

If economic betterment is an important goal, the aspirations window must be opened, for otherwise there is no drive to self-betterment. Yet it should not be open too wide: there is the curse of frustrated aspirations. There must be individuals in our immediate cognitive neighborhood who do better than we do, yet if they do a lot better, there will be no investments made even if the cognitive neighborhood to such individuals is unbroken. In short, the experiences of others may have little effect on us either because they lie outside our aspirations window, or even if they do, their living standards (which form our aspirations) are far away from ours. (Ray, 2003: 4)

7.2 Information, communication and AE routes to APC

This section focuses on how the resources described above can be mobilized by young people in order to overcome situations of vulnerability and cultivate APC. The perspective endorsed with respect to the role of AE and AE programmes is that these can become catalysts, fertile environments for cultivating a series of competences, attitudes and values that further empower young people to overcome vulnerability and become agents of change in their own lives. This is premised on the understanding

that we need to look at capabilities or competences beyond a narrow view. We need to consider how young people also embrace values and attitudes that make them feel more self-confident, connected and able to mobilise resources effectively to act towards their goals. Thus, the model of competence endorsed in this study is multi-dimensional and reflects the Council of Europe project still in progress (2014—17) that aims to conceptualise and document the competences required to participate in a culture of democracy (Council of Europe, 2016). Competence is defined as “the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by a given type of context” (ibid: p. 23). The definition specifically includes values, not only skills and attitudes. This is to underline that competences are not used only in the limited sense of ‘ability’, but rather to point to “psychological resources” that individuals possess and can make use of in their daily life. The competences for participating in a “culture of democracy” involve not only skills for the exercise of citizenship but also democratic values, attitudes and practices, including respect for the rule of law, the public sphere, human rights, diversity and engaging in intercultural dialogue (ibid: p. 15). Furthermore, the focus is on the mobilisation and use of these individual resources (values, skills, attitudes, knowledge) in concrete practical situations, and particularly challenging ones such as coming to grip with a different culture. The competences are modelled in 4 categories: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding, defined as follows:

Values: “general beliefs that individuals hold about the desirable goals that should be striven for in life. They motivate action and they also serve as guiding principles for deciding how to act.”

Attitudes: “the overall mental orientation which an individual adopts towards someone or something (e.g. a person, a group, an institution, an issue, an event, a symbol)”.

Skills: “the capacity for carrying out complex, well-organised patterns of either thinking or behaviour in an adaptive manner in order to achieve a particular end or goal.” (p. 44)

Knowledge and critical understanding: “Knowledge is the body of information that is possessed by a person, while understanding is the comprehension and appreciation of meanings. The term “critical understanding” is used in the present context to emphasise the need for the comprehension and appreciation of meanings in the context of democratic processes and intercultural dialogue.” (p. 51)

Further in this part, subsection 7.2.1 focuses on communication-related competences and literacies and subsection 7.2.2 puts into evidence the importance of cultivating other aptitudes essential for overcoming vulnerability, such as resilience and the capacity to aspire.

7.2.1 Media literacies, civic cultures and APC

The potential of digital media to enhance democracy through facilitating active citizen participation and access to information has been widely covered in the literature (Coleman and Blumler, 2009; Castells, 2011). In particular, Dahlgren (2011) looks at youth's political participation in their "process of becoming citizens" (Dahlgren, 2011:17) and asserts that "the forms, contents, specific logics, and modes of use of the media become the most accessible tools of civic cultures" (2011:18). By civic culture, he refers to "those cultural resources that citizens can draw upon for participation because they are available to them in their everyday lives" (2011:18) highlighting the key role of families and schools in this regard. He draws the links between civic cultures, democracy and APC:

Robust civic cultures are necessary prerequisites for participation and for the vitality of public spheres-and, thus, for the functioning of democracy. The perspective of civic cultures is interested in the processes of how people develop into citizens, how they come to see themselves as members and potential participants in societal development, and how such empowered senses of self are maintained. (Dahlgren 2011:19)

However, widespread access to new media does not imply that young people use it to enlarge their civic culture. This apparent paradox can be better explained through the concept of literacies (concerning written texts) and media literacies, broadly defined as "the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and effectively communicate in a variety of forms including print and nonprint texts" (Considine & Haley, 1999). Another definition specifies:

Media literacy encompasses all media, including television and film, radio and recorded music, print media, the Internet and all other new digital communication technologies. It is a fundamental competence not only for the young generation but for people of all ages, for parents, teachers and media professionals. (Hobbs, 2010:50)

Most young people interviewed for EduMAP had basic literacy skills to read and write, with a few exceptions. Lack of basic literacy constitutes a serious limit to fully exercise APC, but it was creatively overcome in the use of digital media, such as a Roma woman in Bucharest who used Facebook by mainly relying on images and icons because she was unable to decode the written interface of the app.

Young people tend to be digitally skilled and fully immersed in new media environments as part of a generation who have grown with the pervasiveness of new media and Web 2.0. This stereotype of the digital native however, has been contested by various authors who warn that, for instance, this view has tended to occlude young people's lack of awareness of privacy and other security issues: "Children's agency should not be overstated, for their practices are constrained by their degree of digital literacy (which is not as high as popularly assumed)" (Livingstone, 2010:79). For Livingstone, it is essential to implement specific training to strengthen young people's media literacies:

As long as definitions of media literacy remain contested and schools remain reluctant to incorporate media education into teacher training and classroom curricula, children's knowledge will lag behind the industry's fast-changing practices of embedded marketing, use of personal data, user tracking and so forth, most of which is opaque to young people as they navigate the options before them. Further, limitations on and inequalities in digital literacies mean not all young people benefit from the new opportunities on offer; indeed, providing online resources may exacerbate rather than overcome inequality. (Hargittai, 2007) (Livingstone, 2010:79).

There is a strong causal relationship between media literacy, civic cultures and democracy, since literate citizens are the ones who can best participate actively in public issues:

Debates over literacy are, in short, debates about the manner and purposes of public participation in society. Without a democratic and critical approach to media literacy, the public will be positioned merely as selective receivers, consumers of online information and communication. The promise of media literacy, surely, is that it can form part of a strategy to reposition the media user—from passive to active, from recipient to participant, from consumer to citizen. (Livingstone, 2003:2).

When analysing the linkages between active citizenship and digital media, Simsek and Simsek (2013) observe that "one can be competent in new literacies but not use these

skills for citizenship practices. New literacies provide opportunities to be more informed and participative.” (2013:129).

In the overall EduMAP sample across countries, most informants’ media literacy is too often limited to one device—smartphones—a few applications—WhatsApp and some other social network sites, such as Facebook or Instagram—and specific purposes—bonding social capital and entertainment. This scenario leaves aside other media use (e.g. computers) and other digital resources non-exclusively associated with entertainment purposes and more related to a critical media use. Very few informants used new media for political participation (understood in the broad sense of engaging in civic and public issues) or information searches, such as news or AE (except Syrian refugees and migrant women in London).

In this scenario, AE could leverage young people’s generational inclination for online environments to motivate their APC, by showing them the potential of new media to empower them as citizens. However, it would be necessary to first make young people at risk of social exclusion aware of their citizen identity through a step by step strategy that first empowers them as individuals, through for instance working on self-confidence and self-esteem, to further empower them as members of a community, affirming their feelings of belonging to society.

Beyond dichotomies: online/offline, formal/informal

Early theoretical discussions on digital media already underscored that “online and offline social spaces are dynamically co-constructed” (Leander and McKim, 2003:223), so that information and communication practices flow between these two modalities, encompassing personal communication, social network sites, instant messages and mobile phone calls, to name but a few. EduMAP fieldwork evidenced that this is also the case in young people’s communicative ecologies, though there is a widespread preference for personal interactions, both in informal (with family and friends) and formal settings (AE, care facilities, administrative offices, etc.).

In turn, the distinction between formal and informal communication also becomes blurred, both from the perspective of young people’s practices where for example WhatsApp might be used for educational purposes, and from the perspective of educators who might use social network sites such as Facebook to communicate with young people. Formal and informal social networks become entangled and complementary so that their differences rely more on larger institutional frameworks

than in the actual everyday communications. Thus, an AE educator might start being part of a young person's formal network and become so close and trusted that s/he might end up as part of informal interactions and networks. Although it is important to keep roles clear (educators and learners) as well as to learn how to use communication styles appropriately (e.g. be formal in job-related environments), these blurring boundaries in youth information and communication experiences need to be considered as a generational feature that, if creatively approached, could lead to successful strategies to engage young people in AE for APC.

As mentioned above, fieldwork evidenced that young people do not tend to look for AE information on their own, but this is successfully delivered mainly informally and locally, especially by word of mouth and through social networks, together with information delivered through trusted local information sources (e.g. community centres, local foundations or informal community leaders) and key mediators such as support organisations, foundations, or caretakers have a central role in this.

7.2.2 Cultivating young people's resilience and capacity to aspire

Nurturing young people's capacity to aspire and formulate goals

As described in section 2.3 of this report, young people's capacity to be active agents of change in their own lives is hampered by a lack of aspirations or lack of confidence in their ability to achieve them. AE programmes such as RO_GP1, RO_GP2, IE_GP1 and UK_GP1 strategically work on developing young people's confidence in their abilities coupled with expanding the horizon for them to be able to identify and work towards fulfilling their aspirations. Based on successful examples of cultivating aspirations through AE GPs, two aspects can be emphasised. Firstly, AE programmes can encourage young people to become aware of aspirations they may cherish but feel discouraged to pursue, and work to build confidence in their ability to reach them. This is linked to skills building and to exposure to role models. Young people may lack confidence in their capacities, therefore skills building can be accompanied by reflective exercises to become aware of progress made, and thus increase their belief in themselves and their capabilities. Second, examples of people that have been in similar situations of disadvantage but managed to cope and overcome them may encourage young people to aspire to do the same. This is a route taken by networking programmes such as Campus Rom in Catalonia, Spain. But it also speaks more broadly about the potential of Alumni networks

that can cherish these relationships among young people at different points in study and employment.

Leveraging social networks and social capital

EduMAP fieldwork showed that the social networks that hold value as information and communication hubs across informal and formal settings abide by three conditions: **familiarity, trust and outside connectivity**. This reflects the literature on bonding and bridging social capital and social trust. These three are closely interrelated. **Social trust** is essential to social capital and social networks (Dheley and Newton, 2007). Lewis and Weigert (1985) propose

a sociological conceptualization of trust extracted largely from the works of Luhmann, Barber, Parsons, and Simmel (...) [as a] collective attribute, applicable to the relations among people rather than to their psychological states taken individually (...) and as more basic for the constitution of solidary groups than even a sense of moral obligation. (1985:967)

The authors highlight the “multi-faceted character” (1985:969) of trust and distinguish between three main facets or dimensions—cognitive, emotional and behavioural—for the purposes of analysis, since they are “interpenetrating and mutually supporting aspects” (ibid:972) of a single unitary experience of trust.

Looking at EduMAP scenarios, it is possible to distinguish how trust is at work when young adults explain their experiences of participating in the GP cases. For instance, in Spain, participants explained how their failures in formal education frustrated them and made them distrustful of education institutions and programmes in general. However, they agreed to try again after a reliable source—e.g. a friend or social worker—recommended the GP to them. Many of them had thought they would contain a lot of theory or “boring stuff”, as reflected in the following excerpts:

I expected the typical thing of sitting at a table and listen to a teacher, but then everything was much more dynamic than I expected, it is very good (F, ES_GP2).

Me too, I thought that [the lessons] were going to be more ... boring, I mean, that we were going to have theory and more theory, but the truth is that I was surprised: we have had a lot of practice, we have even gone outside, to the street, to play and learn games, and the truth is that I liked it a lot (M, ES_GP2).

In the friendly learning environments provided by the GP cases, where educators show them respect and empathy, participants gained self-confidence and self-esteem. Trusting others' recommendation to enrol and becoming the object of educators' trust evidences how the behavioural, cognitive and emotional dimensions of trust articulate. Following Luhmann, Lewis and Weigert (1985), we can conclude:

When we see others acting in ways that imply that they trust us, we become more disposed to reciprocate by trusting in them more. Conversely, we come to distrust those whose actions appear to violate our trust or to distrust us.

Educators, social workers and other actors mediating between young adults and AE programmes provide young people with key outside connectivity resources, that is, bridging social capital, beyond the bonding social capital of their inner social circles of interaction, mainly family and friends.

Cultivating trust with young people at individual and social levels constitute key first steps to promote their future engagement as active and participative citizens, since trust is an essential condition of democracy, as pointed out by Dahlgren (2011), "in the context of political participation and the collective action it requires, horizontal civic trust is clearly vital." (2011:21). Dahlgren considers trust as one of the six dimensions mutually shaping civic cultures, together with knowledge, values, spaces, practices and skills, and identities (2011:19).

One of the EduMAP findings is a confirmation that digital media based resources cannot be assumed as a panacea to involve more young people in AE and/or promote their APC, for at least two reasons. First, there is an explicit preference for personal, face to face communication over digital interactions, since they convey more trust and confidence and demonstrate more success encourage young people in difficult situations to access information on and enrol on AE programmes. Another reason, more subtle and evasive but present in the analysis of young people's information and communication practices, is related to (particularly media and information) literacies shortages, as explained in the section above.

Catalysing the development of resilience

The literature on educational resilience has focused on strategies to promote students' successful integration in academic life, considering the role of schools, teachers and families in the process. A longitudinal study with adolescents and adults in the UK

showed how these cushion the negative effects of vulnerable contexts, concluding that “Positive teacher expectations, parental involvement in their child’s education, and high individual resources such as motivation, aspiration, and behavioural adjustment may override the effects of socioeconomic disadvantage experienced during adolescence” (Schoon, Parson and Sacken, 2004:387). The same study asserted that “family factors associated with educational resilience include parenting style, parental involvement, and expectations for the child’s education” (Schoon, Parson and Sacken, 2004:386).

Regarding the role of schools, they can become “powerful environments [where] students can acquire resilience in educational environments that foster development and competence in achieving learning success” (Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1993:145).

The more ways that a student feels attached to teachers, classmates, the school, and the instructional program, the more likely participation in school functions as a protective shield against adverse circumstances. Student engagement and participation in school and classroom life promote self-esteem, autonomy, positive social interactions, and mastery of tasks. These positive outcomes have been shown to enhance life satisfaction and general well-being among urban teenagers (Maton, 1990). (Wang, Haertel and Walberg, 1993:145)

Robinson proposed various strategies to “help facilitate the building of resilience factors in [learners’] lives” (Robinson, 2000:5) including “reworking of the teacher/student relationship” towards more horizontal approaches. In many of the GPs analysed across countries, educators underscored the importance of building trustful and horizontal relationships with learners as a way of strengthening their self-confidence and empowering themselves.

To understand how resilience can be cultivated through AE, we have investigated the determining factors that enable a young person to manage their lives well after completing a programme, and what drives them to failure—which may mean going back to a toxic life environment, substance abuse, homelessness, etc. Two critical factors that determine a young person’s progress have been listed:

Social, economic, labour market, community and family environment. The environment was for many respondents the most critical factor driving young people either up or down. The environment can be seen as complex and layered, a concentric set of circles, having the socio-economic environment at the periphery and one’s family towards the centre. The closer community can be a nurturing environment for young people, or it can be the very place they should cut off from to change their lives (consider

substance abuse or violence cases). Study participants punctuated the key role of the family in determining life chances and resilience: young people who have a supportive family feel sustained, nurtured, they know they can count on someone. Without a family, they can feel lonely, lost, with no one to turn to in times of hardship.

Young people's psychological traits. On the one hand, this is about having or lacking confidence, trust and an attitude of trying and continuing despite difficulties. Another aspect regards long term and strategic thinking: many young people are caught in a survival thinking circle. They are often aware of their basic needs and eventually of those they have to care about—elderly, children, partner. Thus, they may choose for instance a low paid job that gives them instant financial release; instead of first gaining a qualification to earn a better, qualified job in the future.

These considerations suggest a couple of key elements that enable a young person to stay on track despite challenges:

- On the one hand, they need an external support structure, whether institution, family or person, which can be seen as a safety net, providing needed comfort and security in difficult times.
- On the other, they need a strong inner structure, a “mentality of activation” (RO_GP2 senior manager) that enables them to recover after experiencing hardships, or face challenges with a positive mindset. A learner in the Romanian labour integration programme GP2 called this the ability to be “a fighter”, meaning that he won’t give up until finishing a job, he will try until being successful (Lea2, M, RO_GP2). This is very close to the concept of ‘resilience’.

Building either a support structure or a mentality of activation are very complex targets, and AE programmes can only aim to contribute to some extent to these. The programmes studied offer a series of lessons in this respect:

Building competences—inclusive of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values:

The notion of competences used in this report goes beyond the know-how element and includes as well attitudes and values. These will differ from case to case, the stress here is less on their content and rather on the importance of not bypassing the axiological component of competences. Why are values and attitudes important? The data from the GP programmes indicates that when a young person internalises not only skills but also values and certain attitudes, s/he has a stronger inner framework that is meaningful and shared. Part of its strength comes from the fact that it is shared as well with other persons, it is a social phenomenon, and thus stronger and more

reliable. Romanian labour integration programme GP2 provides an illustrative example. The founders chose productive lines that also embedded a set of values—caring for the environment, recycling, helping people in need (through donations), giving a new life to garbage and thrown away products. Young people had internalised these values, they were proud to be involved in an activity that was valuable and had a positive impact on the environment and society.

Shaping the AE programme as an environment conducive to competence development: Some competences are not easily taught in typical teaching-learning scenarios. Respect, punctuality, team work, confidence, trust—can be developed in an environment that gradually builds them, layer by layer, through interaction among teachers and students.

A reflective approach: The more complex a programme is, and the more competences it builds, the deeper and more complex is the process of negotiation that occurs for each individual learner to be able to absorb, integrate and change. This speaks to the need for a learning approach that encourages learners to be aware of and reflect on their activities, their learning outcomes, their plans and goals and how they fit together.

Networking can provide continuity to the learning experience, by linking learners with external realities, some of which they may continue to access after completing a programme. For a VET course for instance, this may be about networking VYA with employers, or other VET entities, or with support structures that can attend to diverse conditions of vulnerability. Internships conducted during the programme, under the organisation's supervision, are excellent occasions to acquaint learners with work realities and build relations.

Exit and follow-up strategies: The real challenge for young people starts after they have finalised a programme. The GP programmes studied offer examples of how an AE programme can support learners after graduation—by keeping in touch formally or informally, following their job-related experience, providing advice and other forms of support for personal and professional lives. While post-course actions are often devised case by case and not formalised, they offer insights into the importance of a continuous relationship, especially for young people who have no close circle and family or other support structures.

Chapter 8. Implications for practice and policy

This chapter sets out the implications for information and communication in AE for APC, from the research findings presented in this report, across five levels:

- Design of AE programmes
- Access to AE for young people in situations of risk
- Delivery of AE programmes
- Policy-making and the AE sector
- Creating forums for dialogue among AE providers and young people at risk.

8.1 Informing the design of relevant AE programmes

Throughout this report, we have argued that the design of relevant AE programmes for the needs of young people at risk relies on the use of information that is accessible, representative, relevant, and regularly updated. The GP cases offer diverse strategies to this end but two key aspects stand out: reliance on mediated information; and, reliance on information sourced from people, whether experts, AE stakeholders, young people.

Involvement of key stakeholders in design is one of the most effective strategies for ensuring that AE programmes are relevant, tailored to the needs and the interests of young people on the one hand, and the opportunities offered in broader social and economic environments in a locality on the other. Involvement of young people—directly or through representatives—also mitigates against other challenges with information access experienced by AE providers, which we have described in Section 4.1.1 of Chapter 4. These issues boil down to the inherent tension existing between the requirements of AE programmes that have to target needs that change and evolve and the timelines and hurdles experienced with information storage, circulation, retrieval and adequate interpretation. In other words, relevant AE programmes require up to date, relevant, local, customised information. Media portals and databases can hardly cope with the speed at which needs change and evolve. This is not to say that statistics and information storage are not necessary, but rather that in present conditions, the human factor can close gaps in understanding and compliment missing or fragmented

information. Thus, appropriate models of information use for design draw on networks and people on the one hand and available statistics and information databases on the other. To inform the design of future programmes, it is necessary to work in both directions:

- Mediated forms of participation (through representatives) are valuable, yet wherever possible integrating the voices of young people heightens the chances of designing programmes that suit their needs.
- Continuing to invest efforts for collecting, storing and circulating open data that abides by principles of privacy and data protection, but is at the same time useful for enabling AE programmes to draw appropriate conclusions and target the needs of varied learners.

These two directions are nuanced by a series of considerations that we have unpacked in the reporting. Here we highlight two of them: the imperative of aiming for authentic (and avoiding tokenistic) forms of participation especially for young people whose views are considered especially important for design; and, enabling stakeholders to cultivate competences that will make their contributions relevant, informative and appropriate for their integration in the design of AE programmes.

8.2 Improving access to Adult Education for young people at risk of social exclusion

Tackling barriers to accessing AE requires an integrated, comprehensive view of the processes involved in engaging young people in education, grounded in the perspective of young people themselves. Considering which channels, structures, media and approaches are appropriate should include reaching out to young people with adequate, relevant information, and generating interest to follow up to either ask for more information or apply/enrol. Our study synthesised a series of strategies for reaching out effectively to young people (see section 4.2.2). These are all based on harnessing the power of networks, information and media in context-specific, customised ways.

Power of social networks: refers to cultivating networks spanning informal social networks and professional organisations that link to young people, often in informationally isolated settings. Strategies will differ, and may involve starting from hubs in disadvantaged communities, schools marred by disadvantage, social care and protection centres and organisations; using Alumni networks made of cohorts of

students who have completed the course; enhancing information exchange among mediating organisations whose remit covers contact with young people; encouraging learners and Alumni to become programme ambassadors, etc.

Power of media: Best use of media is in blended models that encompass direct and mediated communication. When deciding on the use of digital and social media, it is useful to consider that reaching out to young people is only one step. Furthermore, most young people experiencing vulnerability need supportive structures to understand the value of programmes, the relevance for their needs and how to follow up on information received. Thus, it is best to rely jointly on social networks, mediating organisations and media communication for different moments in the process of reaching out to young people with information and sustaining decision making and follow up.

Power of information: This encompasses the information circulated through networks whose purpose is to engage new generations of learners with adult education and the information conveyed to prospective students, which needs to be relevant, echo their needs, and offer a compelling vision of what the programme can change for the better in young people's lives. We found that the process of enrolment and selection can be a suitable time to provide additional information to prospective learners, ensure that the programme is suitable for their needs, and assess the kinds of skills and aptitudes they require in order to engage effectively with a programme.

8.3 Improving information and communication in AE programme delivery

Information and communication flows are inherent in the process of teaching and learning, whether it is about, for example, mentor-mentee relationships, peer collaboration, or use of eLearning platforms for accessing learning content. All of the programmes we have studied are learner-centred, hence the strategies they offer are all rooted in a perspective that values the needs and interests of the learner. From this common core, we have identified and unpacked a series of strategies for effective information and communication practices that focus on the learner and capitalise on the potential of relationships, media and communication competences (see section 4.3.2 of Chapter 4). The strategies described bear a series of implications for the way AE programmes are delivered, and in particular:

- To maximise the potential of information and communication for effective AE practice, it is useful to think of AE organisations in terms of networks underpinned by relations between agents and media, animated by constant information flows. These networks can be complex and nested (such as those established between organisations) or contained (such as those established within an organisation). Most consequentially, these networks can be purposefully devised to attend to the needs of the learner at several stages in the delivery of a programme. We have seen examples of multidisciplinary networks using case management procedures to adequately source, process and circulate information covering the multivariate needs of learners. We have seen distributed networks of service provision involving entities beyond the AE provider. We have also seen networks that involve different stakeholders in the delivery of a unique programme (in the case of multi-stakeholder programmes run by several organisations).
- Media use is inherent in processes of programme delivery. While no single recipes for success are offered by the GPs researched, they suggest that the use of media should be devised strategically to fit current contexts and learning scenarios. Cases such as the Finnish Virtual School programme GP3 indicate that entirely virtual programmes can successfully reach learners otherwise difficult to engage. Other programmes value, on the contrary, unmediated, direct communication, such as the Finnish prison education case. Yet others (the majority), go for blended models of mediated and direct communication. Social media is increasingly adopted, across formal and informal spaces of communication, with WhatsApp standing as one of the most used platforms across contexts.
- Information and communication competences are necessary for AE professionals and learners alike, irrespective of programme type. Young people in vulnerable situations often lack competences for formal communication. AE programmes should consider how the acquisition of such competences can be integrated into their programme offer. Not least important, AE professionals themselves should benefit from courses and trainings for honing communication competences and especially those tailored for engaging with vulnerable groups.

8.4 Promoting sustainable information and communication flows in policy-making

In the contemporary ‘big data’ era, digital technologies have generated massive amounts of data, highly valuable to make informed decisions in various scenarios, including AE and APC policy design processes. However, new challenges have emerged regarding information access, availability and management. Regarding access, there might be

tensions between the technical possibilities of open information platforms and the ethical implications of data privacy issues, as illustrated by the education databases in the Scandinavian countries (see Chapter 6). In turn, data available in major databases might not be representative enough if some social and minority groups are underrepresented or missing. This might be the case for the most vulnerable actors in society, who fall off the radar of education and work databases. It has become increasingly necessary to collect and store accurate and comprehensive information covering all social groups and disaggregate it according to different sociodemographic variables (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic class, etc.). These disaggregated datasets could help explain actors' political, cultural and socioeconomic position in society.

Data management involves, among other things, facilitating its circulation and sharing in order to produce valuable information. In this sense, it is essential to create and maintain effective communication channels between diverse actors at play in the AE and APC fields, so that fluent information exchanges support collective modes of knowledge production and promote sustainable ways of dealing with information and communication.

Ways forward involve strengthening networks, engaging relevant actors and fostering specific information and communication competences among policy-makers, AE stakeholders and vulnerable groups. In this context, multiplicity becomes a key concept that traverses the various dimensions of effective AE and APC policy making and implementation:

- Multi-stakeholder participation
- Multidirectional information flows
- Multilevel information flows
- Multi- and cross-sectoral information flows

Multi-stakeholder participation should neither be left at the discretion or good intentions of the policy-makers nor become a symbolic gesture, but it should be a systematic approach to policy making processes. Fieldwork data evidenced the need for policy makers to commit meaningfully to the participation of relevant though often ignored actors in AE policy-making processes, such as young people, AE practitioners and related NGOs. Often, they are present in policy rhetoric but their voices, if present, rarely have a real impact on final decisions. Thus, it is essential to overcome the

gap by redistributing power and reshaping relationships between represented and representatives.

Multidirectional flows: Represented constituencies (e.g., young people at risk of social exclusion) and decision-makers (policy-makers) need to engage in more horizontal and networked dialogues in which information and communication circulate in multiple directions, producing valuable top-down and bottom-up exchanges for effective and meaningful policy making. For that purpose, decision-makers should promote authentic spaces of interaction and specific competence acquisition required to participate in decision making processes in equal conditions. As informants in Romania and the UK asserted, policy making has its own rules and timings, made of often rigid, hierarchical institutional logics and cultures that might be hard to penetrate by external actors. This effort should also be multidirectional among all parties involved, instead of endorsing the view that civil society, usually acting with very limited resources, adapts to existing structures without modifying them.

Multilevel information flows: Information and communication flows across different policy-making levels (e.g. European, national, regional and local). In particular, fieldwork confirmed the importance of local level as the most appropriate space to understand the needs of diverse populations, including young people at risk, to get updated information on their everyday lives and implement effective communication channels to foster active participation.

Multi- and cross-sectoral information flows: AE and APC policies cannot develop in a vacuum: they are embedded in complex socioeconomic, political and cultural environments in which other related policies operate. These encompass, for example, those regarding the social inclusion sector and the migrant and ethnic minorities integration sectors. Transversality and effective articulations between them through fluent information and communication exchanges would favour their successful implementation and goal achievement. Moreover, promoting hybrid spaces of consultation and action composed by both policy actors and civil society actors has proved a successful approach towards more inclusive policy making processes.

The considerations above underpin **the role of automation and Intelligent Decision Support Systems** in informing policy and AE programme design. Findings clearly indicate the pivotal role of information for policy shaping and decision-making along with the obstacles experienced in availability of information and its circulation amongst relevant stakeholders in multiple directions related to policy design and

implementation. Different sets of challenges are experienced with information access, flow to relevant stakeholders, and processing in order to fill specific need scenarios. The role of the IDSS is positioned at the end of the chain, for processing large sets of information which can adequately inform design of AE programmes or policy. Our findings indicate that there are a series of conditions to be fulfilled for processing large amounts of information, and in particular data should not only be relevant, immediate, up to date and representative (as argued above and elsewhere in this report), but also gathered and formatted in uniform ways to enable the processing of large datasets from multiple locations. Thus, we need to look at IDSS as a project constantly in the making, rather than solely as an end-machine to be designed. By looking at it as a project or even process, we can envisage the steps needed to make it usable in diverse contexts, from the data formats and datasets types that should be made available, to the consolidation of network structures for information to be circulated in multiple directions for design and implementation scenarios. The design of IDSSs could then be used as a leverage for streamlining processes of data gathering, formatting, storing and circulation, contributing to the consolidation of more effective information-intensive infrastructures where evidence-based policies and programmes can be designed in the future.

8.5 Informing forums for dialogue between AE providers and young people at risk of social exclusion

One of the aims of WP4.1 was to inform the design of forums for dialogue between AE providers and young people, a project objective covered in WP4.2. The communicative ecologies strand of the research (WP4.1) was designed to inform the creation of dialogue forums by investigating and then interpreting the data across two contexts: communicative ecologies in adult education; and, communicative ecologies of young adults at risk of social exclusion. In this process we identified matches and mismatches, gaps and opportunities for engagement, leveraging young people's existing practices of communication (see sections 2.8 and 2.9 of Chapter 2).

Based on our findings, forums for dialogue can be created for specific purposes, or as enduring structures between AE stakeholders and young people, also involving other entities in some scenarios across social care and APC domains of practice and policy-making. At their core, these are participatory spaces, meeting points that invite

interaction and exchange among parties that are not traditionally in dialogue. These forums already exist, in some partial or fragmented form, often created in contexts with a long tradition of participation and involvement of young people in matters of education that concern them—as the Irish and UK cases reported illustrate. These examples can inspire and inform the design of new ones. Based on the analysis of existing forums and the communication practices of young people, we propose that to afford the creation of new forums, we should consider first a series of issues regarding: goals and needs covered; context embedding; and, principles of participation and engagement.

First, and akin to our perspective on effective information and communication practices, forums have to be driven by **relevant, appropriate goals** aligned to young people's needs, and must ascertain that these are acknowledged and endorsed by all parties involved. Formulating relevant goals also guards against pitfalls related to tokenistic forms of participation and generate interest and motivation for participation by young people.

Context embedding points to the fact that young people's needs are always context specific, thus effective forums for dialogue would start from situated contexts. While it is possible to conceive of forums that span digital spaces and multiple contexts, the beginnings are likely to be in each of these situated contexts, opportunely connected through digital media or events and meeting scenarios at a later stage.

Principles of participation and engagement encompass principles and values related to horizontal exchanges and communication, transparency, open dialogue, empathy, and collaboration. It is important to make these principles explicit across participants, and starting from these principles, consider the ranges of **competences** that are both needed in and honed through participation in such forums.

On the basis of the considerations above, we have identified a series of **leverages** from young people's communication practices in the field sites investigated. We use 'leverages' in the sense of opening points or drivers for stimulating the creation of dialogue forums. We identified three kinds of leverages, around social networks, media and content (see Section 2.9 for an expanded treatment of these issues).

Social networks: this refers to starting from and engaging social networks that young people trust, from informal contacts, to mediating organisations and professionals. These structures often exist already in many settings, and forums can build on them in first instance, and especially to reach out to young people, and then expand.

Media, platforms and mediated practices: Our findings suggest that in the creation of dialogue forums, mediated practices and media are particularly useful as part of blended models in conjunction with social network structures and mediating agencies. They are also potentially useful for expanding on initial leads, often opened up through direct contact and mediating agencies. The intervention of supporting networks of trust is in most cases needed as a first step, while digital and social media can augment, expand, and build upon the initial layers created by working in local contexts and directly with young people to settle the bases for dialogue forums. Digital media can also be harnessed to connect between local structures and thus reach distributed networks where information can circulate among several local chapters. When used as the starting point or initial lead, digital media can potentially generate interest in young people if the messages conveyed are highly relevant for their needs. Thus, targeted research is needed to first map young people's communication practices and educational needs, and thus ensure that such scenarios use the power of information and media effectively. As we have argued elsewhere in this report, we can identify leading platforms and associated practices at particular moments in specific contexts (such as the current widespread use of WhatsApp), however these constantly change and evolve, and they are very varied across multiple contexts. Thus, we can use media and mediated practices as leverages for the creation of dialogue forums when such actions are preceded by context-focused research to understand media access and use in situated contexts.

Relevant content and modes of transmission: Young people are likely to resonate with personalised content that reflects their interests and needs and considers the obstacles and challenges they face. Doubling this, young people have consolidated the use of information and communication in personalised forms—spanning choice of media, specific platforms, styles and registers of communication etc. These aspects should be considered in creating forums for dialogue that have real potential for engaging young people.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

The study underpinning this report has been built on the premise that information and communication processes are a major factor in activating the potential of adult education to cultivate active citizenship amongst young people at risk of social exclusion. This can be analysed throughout the entire lifecycle of AE programmes (design to delivery), as well as looking at organisational processes, and the connections between AE and APC policy and the AE field. The question opened up and treated in this report concerns the ways of activating this potential, in other words—to what extent and how can information and communication practices be strategically designed and implemented so that AE can be better accessed and bring greater benefit to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged European young people. In this concluding section, we draw the line and put forth a reflection on the findings of this study, and the space opened up for research, practice and policy to act upon them. We articulate this reflection in two parts. The first concludes on how the CEA framework can be used to analyse information and communication practices in AE, and how based on these understandings, we can infuse this knowledge in practice and policy and inform new action courses. The second part covers the significance of this work for policy and practice, zooming in on one of the most important aspects regarding information use—the role of networks and machine automation.

Employing the CEA framework to analyse information and communication practices in AE

The major theoretical contribution of this research is the CEA framework—which has been shaped through the field research across 40 AE programmes and eight case study sites of young people in vulnerable situations. We propose this framework as an analytical tool for close analysis of communication practices and processes, useful in several scenarios; to map current conditions and processes, to gather knowledge for an educational intervention, or to map progress and effects of a programme or intervention. CEA puts forth an analytical approach embedded in ecological and social constructionist traditions in communication studies, dwelling on principles of holism, relatedness, local construction of meanings, and a distributed view of agency (see sections 1.2.2, 1.2.3). There are a few important implications that we unpack further.

The holistic perspective reinforced by a contextualised approach to research implies that research using CEA needs to reach out to the contexts and people whose views and life conditions are to be assessed. It also implies that we avoid isolating simplistic cause-effect scenarios. Instead, we rely on an understanding of many, complex, mutually influencing processes, where we can isolate a few factors for the analysis, or open a window to investigate closely specific situations of change, without attempting to make our analysis stand for the real, total set of embedded processes and conditions that we analyse. In other words, we are at all times aware of the reductionist nature of our analysis, and of how a multitude of factors come into play to bring about what we may see as the result of a discrete set of causes and conditions. This implies as well that we cannot take a set of understandings from one context and apply it in another with seemingly similar conditions and expect the same results. This perspective is however daunting for translating findings into conclusions and action points for practice and policy. Indeed, how can we ever understand the impact of what we have done and what we should do for better outcomes, if we acknowledge complexity?

With CEA, we reduce complexity in communication processes for analytical purposes (while acknowledging it) by focusing on specific scenarios of action which are centred on the agent. These are the communicative assemblages, where we analyse five aspects: the goals that drive them; the social networks mobilised; media used; content or information accessed, produced or circulated; and the role of the agent in mobilising and using these resources to reach their goal. The agent is the central actor, yet when we analyse their agency (agency layer of CEA), we do so with the understanding that agency needs to be seen in a relational fashion, it is distributed (in the tradition of Actor-Network Theory, see Slater, 2013). This is consequential for analysis and drawing conclusions. For instance, when analysing the agency of young people in a highly disadvantaged neighbourhood, we do not stop at the results of surveys and statistics—these may say for instance that rates of Internet access are low, and mobile phone ownership is not spread. Instead, we look at the resources that are available in the local context, some shared at collective level, some at family level or among friends, and some individual. For the ways media are concerned, we may take note of a library, a community centre, shared mobile devices, individual mobile devices, and shared WIFI connection among neighbours. For social networks, we look at social values and norms, forms of association, well established relationships and groups and barriers and openings for joining them. We also look at resources that agents possess—such as

competences and literacies, and how they are harnessed, improved and even shared (such as the tech-savvy person in a family helping others to search information on the Internet or neighbours to repair their computers). Eventually, all of these converge in the agents and their goals, and how they mobilise these resources. We may discover for instance that resources are there, but young people lack confidence and their outlook for the future is bleak, they lack, as discussed in Chapter 2, the capacity to aspire. Thus, their agency is afforded at some levels, but is lacking in others. We acknowledge that these aspects are interrelated, and each of them can then open up a point of action for practice and policy, starting from the availability of resources and how they are shared, how agents mobilise them, or the failure of aspirations of young people. Each of these becomes, then, a potential point for deeper analysis or intervention.

Analysing communicative ecologies and assemblages in AE is equally complex. To navigate this complexity, but still abide by the theoretical principles exposed, we have proposed a way of analysing AE information and communication at three levels:

- The AE programme level—across its design, recruitment, delivery and post-course communication practices
- The AE organisation
- The AE field and connections with policy-making

The three levels are interconnected—information flows permeate for instance from policy-making to programme design and delivery, and so on. However, by focusing on these three levels, it is possible to analyse more closely the information and communication flows, the actors involved, the typical information-intensive scenarios and the information needs and gaps that exist. The elements of the CEA framework are analysed in each of these contexts, focusing on how communicative assemblages are crafted by agents towards specific goals, and how they employ media, social networks, information and specific competences for reaching defined goals.

By applying this analytical approach in this research, we were able to understand first the spaces of need, action and intervention at the three levels of analysis. These have been related for instance to lack of access to information, limits to accessing certain networks, lack of or insufficient competences, or poorly defined and acknowledged goals (the Challenges explored in the previous chapters). Second, we identified routes to effective practice exemplified in the GP cases, where resources have been mobilised effectively to achieve information and communication goals.

Significance for policy and practice

The previous chapter described the implications of this research for policy and practice. There are a few considerations underpinning the implications, spanning the AE field and AE and APC policy making.

The first regards the value of information and how this value is enhanced by certain characteristics, namely information that is up to date, representative and relevant for the actual scenario or need. Obstacles are posed by lack of data representativeness, disaggregation, different ways of gathering and storing, and the concerns posed by data privacy.

The second regards the combined value of social networks and ICT for fostering better access to information and better ways of processing it, or, as Actor-Network Theory would put it, networks of agents and tools or technology. To understand the roles that people and ICT fill jointly for information retrieval and processing, we call again attention to the specific scenarios of information use—what the CEA framework calls communicative assemblages. To be useful in a specific scenario, information needs to be relevant, for instance regarding a specific context or group of young people, or access to a certain type of AE. One of the biggest hurdles lies in how to make information entering a communicative assemblage useful, especially when sourced from statistics or reports where it has been formatted to fill many potential such scenarios? Some of the field cases we have surveyed rely more on people and social networks, and some more on the capacity of machines to not only gather but also to process data—in both policy and AE practice. For instance, some policy-makers interviewed point out that for them the best way to access information is by calling in experts in the domain of a new policy that is being drafted. Some others rely on existing statistics and fill the gaps with expert views. Similarly for AE programmes, design or refinement relies on a combination of accessing data and bringing in the views of experts, other stakeholders and young people themselves.

Yet the obstacles encountered in both policy and practice indicate that the current solutions for information access and use are less than ideal. This is evident in particular in situations of emergency and crisis, such as the recent wave of migration to Europe, which demands very specific sets of data. With the renewed understanding coming from the research, we reformulated one of the driving questions—*How to improve access to information and ways of processing it?*—in terms of: *How can we better harness the power of social networks and technology in order to bring in relevant, representative*

and up to date information when needed? This question also underpins the design of the IDSS, prototyped in EduMAP WP5. As argued in the previous chapter, automation can offer an answer to the obstacles in information access and processing, yet automation is just the end of the chain—the complex sequence of processes, actions and institutions involved in deciding which data to gather, how to gather it, store it, and offer it for access and to whom. Networks are needed in order to fulfil the promise of automation, at the very least, by feeding back the needed types of information so that the formats of data are updated to the needs posed in the automation scenarios. This is a constant cycle or feedback loop. To afford better data, a once and for all decision, and one size fits all recipe will not work. Especially in relation to vulnerability and exclusion, the type of needed information is likely to have different nuances with new contexts and scenarios, in particular when experiencing situations of major crisis and emergency. Thus, we conclude that to afford related data for specific scenarios (both those routinised and asked for in emergency situations), the way forward relies on consolidating network structures where information is produced and circulated quickly, in multiple directions, harnessing the intelligence and processing capacity of humans and machines. Automation, then, can bring efficiency both to these networks along their routes, and for processing the information used to design policies and programmes at the end of the chain.

Thus, we conclude that when considering the potential of information to improve the relevance and impacts of AE, we should step back from unilateral views and extremes at either end of the technology enthusiasm vs. rejection spectrum. Given the complexity of the AE field, the added complexity brought by interlinkages with APC, and the highly context-specific considerations posed by situations of vulnerability, we had better consider the value of human capacity for information production, transmission and processing and those of machines as two balancing poles. It is through the opportune creation of networks that harness the intelligence of people and machines that we can create the conditions for AE to become and be made constantly relevant for the needs of young people in situations of risk.

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Annex 1. Data collection: Sampling and cases

Table 10.1. Sampling and AE programmes studied per country

These cases have been studied in Strand 2 of EduMAP field research to identify the relevant elements of success in the promotion of APC among young people in vulnerable situations and to gather information about the communication strategies and practices to reach out to the target group.

Country	No cases	No respondents (accessed through interviews and focus groups) per country	No focus groups per country	No participants in focus groups per country
Austria	1	78	2	7
France	1	21	2	13
Germany	3	45	6	13
Hungary	3	46	0	0
Romania	2	42	1	7
Spain	3	62	5	33
Greece	6	67	0	0
Cyprus	1	9	0	0
Italy	1	11	0	0
Malta	1	11	0	0
Portugal	1	9	0	0
Estonia	1	15	1	4
Latvia	1	17	2	10
Sweden	1	20	0	0
Denmark	1	18	3	8
Finland	3	68	2	7
UK	4	75	8	32
Ireland	2	18	2	11
Netherlands	1	16	1	2
Turkey	3	64	9	31

Table 10.2. Composition of samples for the aforementioned AE programme cases investigated

Countries	Cases	No respondents per category			Characteristics of interviewed learners (where known)		
		Policy-makers*	Practitioners	Learners**	Male	Female	Minors
Austria	GP1	11	25	42	26	13	27
France	GP1	3	5	13	8	4	0
Germany	Strand#1***	12	---	---	---	---	---
	GP1		6	13	8	5	0
	GP2		4	1	0	1	0
	GP3		1	8	4	4	0
Hungary	Strand#1***	3	7	---	---	---	---
	GP1		6	7	4	3	0
	GP2		4	7	0	7	0
	GP3		3	9	4	5	0
Romania	Strand#1***	4	6	---	---	---	---
	GP1		7	12	7	5	0
	GP2		6	7	6	1	0
Spain	Strand#1***	5	4	---	---	---	---
	GP1		5	12	5	7	0
	GP2		3	24	9	15	0
	GP3		4	5	5	0	2
Greece	GP1	6	4	7	8	4	0
	GP2		4	10	1	15	0
	GP3		4	7	0	12	0
	GP4		2	5	0	8	0
	GP5		3	7	3	8	0
	GP6		3	5	8	1	0
Cyprus	GP1	1	3	5	7	2	0
Italy	GP1	1	3	7	8	3	0
Malta	GP1	1	3	7	8	3	0
Portugal	GP1	1	3	5	7	2	0
Estonia	GP1	3	6	6	4	2	0
Latvia	GP1	3	4	10	6	4	0
Sweden	GP1	2	6	12	12	0	0
Denmark	GP1	4	4	10	5	5	0

Finland	Strand#1***	9	11	---	---	---	---
	GP1		8	9	6	3	0
	GP2		9	11	9	2	0
	GP3		5	6	4	2	0
UK	Strand#1***	7	---	---	---	---	---
	GP1		11	11	6	5	8
	GP2		5	8	4	4	7
	GP3		2	17	1	16	0
	GP4		4	10	3	7	0
Ireland	GP1	3	5	4	1	3	0
	GP2		2	4	3	1	0
Netherlands	GP1	6	4	6	3	3	0
Turkey	Strand#1***	14	4	---	---	---	---
	GP1		4	10	6	4	0
	GP2		2	12	2	10	0
	GP3		7	11	0	11	0

* Policy-makers could be related to an AE programme or more than one, or related to a sector. They have been interviewed both for *Strand 1 Context analysis* and *Strand 2 Targeted research on good practice programmes*.

** Note that respondents included in the category 'learners' were only young adults participating in GPs and interviewed for Strand 2 targeted studies.

*** In certain contexts, Strand 1 research (Context analysis) has been conducted also interviewing practitioners. This was not always necessary.

Annex 2. Communicative ecologies field sites

Country: Finland

Target group: students with special support needs who often have a history of dropping out of school and have not managed well in traditional school settings.

Sampling: eight Finnish students (five men and two women aged of 20—28, plus one male respondent was over 40 years whose views are utilised in the analysis as a useful point of comparison). They studied in a vocational special education institution aiming at a vocational upper secondary qualification in property maintenance and in hotel, restaurant and catering sector (numbers from 2018). Respondents differed greatly in age, civil status and professional background. Three respondents were single, two lived with their partner or mother, one was married and one did not reveal his/her status. One of the respondents had a child.

Methods of data collection: interviews were held in two groups at the school premises and were included as part of their studies.

Context: According to the Finnish law, students who need special support due to learning difficulties, injuries, illnesses or other reasons are entitled to special education (Laki ammatillisesta peruskoulutuksesta 630/1998). Special education encompass the following situations: perception, attention and concentration difficulties, linguistic difficulties, interactive and behavioral disorders, delayed development, chronic psychological or somatic illnesses, learning difficulties related to autism or the Asperger's development, difficulties in mobility and motoric functions, auditory and visual impairment or other grounds.

Students receive individual guidance and support with their studies in small groups and daily living. (Ameo 2018). SNE is organised in six vocational special education institutions, general VET institutions, folk high schools, adult education and training institutions throughout the country and as apprenticeship training (Jauhola & Miettinen 2012: 7). Education providers define the need for special needs education and how it is recognised (Miettinen 2015: 12). Ministry of Education (OKM) is in charge of authorising the institutions and special needs education is funded by the state.

The Official Statistics Finland (2018) has compiled statistics on the grounds for special education in vocational education since 2004. By year 2015, the amount of

students receiving special education in vocational education leading to a qualification has been increasing: 12,500 in 2004, 18,300 in 2009, and 24,300 in 2015. In total there were 124,220 students in vocational education for young people in 2015, of whom 18 per cent (22,360) were students with special education needs. Gender does not play a crucial role among special education students—57 per cent of special education students were men. (Official Statistics of Finland 2016). Most of the special education students (86%) in vocational education for young people studied in vocational education institutions whereas only 13 percent (2, 907 students) of special education students attended special vocational education institutions (the group in question). Approximately one percent studied in other educational institutions providing vocational education. (Official Statistics of Finland 2016).

Country: Germany

Target group: migrants and refugees²³

Sampling: One organiser and 10 young persons (eight men and two women) aged between 21 and 30+ years. Five of them come from Syria, two from Afghanistan, one from Iraq, one from Palestine, and one from Indonesia.

Methods of data collection: Data was collected between November 2017 and January 2018 through 9 personal interviews and one double interview. Interviews were conducted in German, except for one in Arabic with the support of an interpreter. They took place in three different places in one city of North-Rhine-Westphalia, the German region with the highest concentration of migrants and refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017).

Context: In 2016, more than 1.7 million people reached Germany, of whom 722,000 asking for asylum (DESTATIS, 2018). The German Federal Statistical Office reported that non-EU migrants and refugees mainly come from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Turkey (DESTATIS, 2016). After the peak in 2015, the migration balance decreased and, in comparison to the first half of the 2016, the most recent figures related to the first six months of the 2017 report a reduction of about 17% (Bundesamt für Migration und

²³ Due to the diversity of the group, we prefer to use the broader category of migrants and refugees. As pointed out by the Council of Europe Report (2018), the definition of refugee can be unclear in terms of legitimacy, relevance, identification, and durability of the status.

Flüchtlinge, 2017). Nevertheless, the numbers remain significant. The persons who seek protection in Germany accounted for more than 1.5 million in 2016 (DESTATIS, 2016) and most are young people. According to EASY (*Erstverteilung der Asylbegehrenden*), the system through which asylum seekers are registered and distributed within the country, about 30% asylum seekers who applied in the period of time between January 2015 and April 2016 was part of the age cohort under 18 years old and about one quarter were between 18 and 25 years old, while the most numerous group belonged to the age-group 25—35 (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2016). In recent years, the adult education centres, the main providers of adult education in Germany, has experienced a sharp rise in the number of enrolments to language courses and they were forced to increase their offer, which in 2015 triplicated compared to the previous five years (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2016:191). Yet, beyond the mandatory nature of integration courses, a high discrepancy in the access to adult education still persists between people with and without migration background (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2016:181). The group considered for the communicative ecologies mapping speak Arabic, Persian, and Indonesian as mother tongues; some can speak either Kurdish or English as second languages. Four of the respondents are married, among whom both the two female participants. Five of interviewees came to Germany without family, and two are still living in residential camps. One is an asylum seeker who has applied for protection. All of the respondents but one reported having completed at least high secondary education or a vocational education in the country of origin, four of them had study experience or are attending professional education in Germany. Six of respondents have already had work experiences. The main problems that they report are dealing with a disrupted education, difficulties in finding a job or apprenticeships due to high demanding requirements and know-how of the job market, and pressure to start working and becoming independent. From a social and psychological point of view, they report to have cultural and language barriers, psychological and cognitive problems, social and emotional difficulties, also derived from traumatic experiences, lack of social contacts and trust relationships, difficult living situation without family or in an unstable accommodation.

Country: Greece

Target group: homeless young men

Sampling: In total ten (10) men aged between 24—30 were accessed and interviewed individually. They were contacted through the “Municipal Centre for the Homeless” in Thessaloniki, as participants of a 2 hours daily workshop on social and psychological support (“Reclaiming Life”). 7 were regular participants to the workshop since it started (January 2016) whereas the other 3 had been participating in the workshop since September 2018.

Methods of data collection: individual interviews were held between November and December 2017, together with participant observation in the workshop at the centre facilities for almost a month.

Context: The absence of any agreed and consolidated set of data on the extent of homelessness in Greece overall means that it is difficult to assess the numbers affected and how they have risen over the past ten years since the onset of the financial crisis and economic recession. It also means, in some degree that the scale of the problem is concealed. Only in Thessaloniki, 12 homeless were registered in 2008, while 2.186 were registered in 2018. The majority of them are men (84%). Young people have been disproportionately affected, in part because of their lack of access to social benefits and support services. The rise in homelessness among the young has put increasing pressure on voluntary organisations which are in any case struggling to cope with the increased demand for their assistance as a result of cutbacks in both benefits and social services which have been introduced as part of austerity measures. The continuing emphasis on budgetary consolidation and the limited prospects for any significant economic recovery imply that this pressure is likely to intensify over the next year or two.

In Thessaloniki, the “Municipal Centre for the Homeless” attends 1.866 homeless men and women (of which 261 were aged between 18—30). It was established in 2008 in order to provide shelter food, basic legal and medical services, and educational and training services for the homeless 24 hrs a day. Participation is free for all homeless citizens regardless of age, gender, social and cultural background. The centre keeps a medical record of all registered homeless and has also developed an action team for locating and inviting unregistered homeless citizens.

Country: Hungary

Target group: Roma young adults

Sampling: 7 interviewees (3 current or former mentor HU_GP2 students, 2 mentored disadvantaged HU_GP2 students and 2 current or former HU_GP1 Roma students).

Methods of data collection: Communicative ecology interviews.

Context: The Roma population in Hungary is one of the most vulnerable social groups in terms of education and labor market situation.

Regarding education, the highest educational attainment of the 15–64 age groups in 2015 showed a dramatic difference between the Roma and the non-Roma population, according to the Labor Force Survey data. One of the key objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce the proportion of early school leavers up to below 10% in the EU by 2020. In Hungary, in 2008 this ratio was 11.7% and increased to 12.5% in 2016. In 2014, 61% abandoned their studies by their own decision, 21 % of them lost their legal status because of unjustified absences. 47% of the ESL were vocational school pupils, that is, most of the poor, disadvantaged young people. The causes of ESL play a major role in students' disadvantaged position, who lack pedagogical practice, support and funding of vocational training (Hungarian Parliament Office, 2017). School Segregation of Roma children in Hungary is so significant that the European Commission launched an infringement procedure in 2016. It is estimated that there are five hundred schools where segregated education is being carried out, but in 2017 the Supreme Court urged the state to take measures against it, though substantial changes have not been perceived. Students in Roma ghettos schools, rarely access secondary school and often remain in elementary school until the end of compulsory schooling or they are included in the Bridge Program for 14–16 years old that does not provide them with any qualifications or skills.

State policies have not contributed to improve Roma young people's situation, taking controversial measures instead, such as reducing from 18 to 16 years the age limit for compulsory education in 2012. This is particularly negative for the poorest, most vulnerable students, who often enter in the labour market too young and in precarious part time and badly paid jobs.

Country: Romania

Target group: Roma young people in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Bucharest.

Sampling: 11 young people (8 women, 3 men) were involved in the research, out of which 9 were Roma and two Romanian, with ages between 18 and 33.

Methods of data collection: Data has been collected in the period February 2017—June 2017; it involved interviews and communicative ecology mapping exercises, as well as visits to local schools and a weekly group for women, organised by the NGO. All interviews were conducted in person in two neighbourhood schools, accessed through the NGO.

Context: At the census in 2011, around 621.573 Romanian citizens declared they had Roma ethnic origin, equalling 3.3% of the Romanian population. Estimates are that the actual number of Roma is much higher, since many Roma do not declare their ethnicity, however there is no consensus, with figures ranging up to 1.85 million (Romanian Government, 2015). The Roma are afflicted by poverty, lack of education, poor living conditions and low access to basic services among other conditions of deprivation, making them considerably more vulnerable than the rest of the Romanian population. The following statistics and figures indicate the various layers of vulnerability, which place Roma at a significantly higher disadvantage than the rest of the Romanian population, even compared to the poorest segments. It is important to acknowledge that the **factors that determine exclusion** are complex, and include not only structural conditions, but also socio-cultural ones, some coming from inside the Roma community. Roma communities tend to nurture intra-community relations, and engage with non-Roma sporadically or only when needed. The community is a factor of cohesion, strength and support, but it also dictates and guides individual behaviour based on shared norms. For instance, in traditional Roma communities there are norms for social and dress codes according to age, gender and social status. In many Roma families and communities, patriarchal models prevail, sanctioned by tradition, by which women are not encouraged to study and work and instead should dedicate their lives to family care and motherhood. However, the inner community focus does not mean that community interactions are equal. The greatest factor of division is economic status: poor and affluent Roma don't mix, and tend to live in different areas of a neighbourhood or locality (UNICEF, 2015).

School drop-out and poor education attendance levels are also linked to a variety of factors that come from inside the Roma communities. In traditional communities, young Roma girls reaching puberty are often forbidden to attend school in order to be protected and prepared for marriage, while boys also leave school to take more productive activities. In semi-nomadic Roma groups, children travel with their parents and while some families take the trouble to register them in schools wherever they go, the majority do not. And above all, in many Roma families there is a lack of vision with respect to the value and benefits of education. A study by UNICEF (2015) found out that it was considered a shame for Roma families to send their children to kindergarten. This meant the family did not afford to raise them, and that the mother was careless and negligent. However, it is important to avoid attributing some of the indicators of vulnerability such as poor school attendance uniquely to Roma socio-cultural habits. Rather, factors are complex, and they vary as well in relation to the type of community, Roma group, location, rural vs urban location etc.

Country: Spain

Target group: Roma young women.

Sampling: Nine Roma young women aged between 16 and 36 years were interviewed in Barcelona through three different institutional settings that provided access to them (a second chance school, a Roma women association and a Roma people association). Two technicians of the Integral Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia (PIPG) were also interviewed in their offices through a, held in Spanish and tape recorded.

Methods of data collection: Fieldwork started in September 2017 and finalized in March 2018. It included six semi-structured individual interviews and two double interviews. In the Roma women association, participant observation was also conducted. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and audio recorded.

Context: Estimations made by Roma organizations indicated that there are between 80,000 to 90,000 people in Catalonia “with the percentage of Roma women slightly higher (0.5 points) than that of Roma men” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017: 7). Although in the last decades there have been some improvement in their living conditions and access to opportunities, thanks mainly to Roma activism and social policies, Roma

people have never been fully integrated to Spanish society in equal conditions, facing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.

At the European level, Catalonia is pioneer in recognizing Roma people's rights as early as 2001 (the European Parliament did it in 2005) and in implementing the first PIPG in 2005 until 2008 (at the European level, the first plan dates from 2011). The PIPG was informed by the first big research conducted on the Roma people in Catalonia, commissioned in 2003 by the Department of Social Affairs and Families (*Departament de Benestar i Família*). The final report covered a wide range of issues: Roma culture and identity, family organization, housing, work, health, gender roles, youth, language, religion, media use and media representation, social participation and education (Fundació Pere Tarrés, 2005). This valuable information served to develop action plans and recommendations and remained as a reference for the plans that followed: the II PIPG (2009—2013), the III PIPG in 2014—2016 and the IV PIPG between 2017—2020. Despite Recent improvements, Roma youth continues to remain particularly affected by low educative performance, high rates of early school leaving and unemployment in comparison with non-Roma youth (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017:10—11). In Catalonia, 64% of Roma students (between 16 and 24 years old) do not complete compulsory studies, in comparison with 13% of the general student group (...) While 43% of Catalans have tertiary studies, reach University students ranges between 2.6% and 1% (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2017:8). These numbers coincide with data collected across various European countries,²⁴ which also concluded that “in this age group, the results also reveal a considerable gender gap: 72% of Roma women who neither work nor study, compared to 55% of Roma men” (FRA, 2016:12).

Country: Turkey

Target group: Syrian young adult refugees.

Sampling: 14 persons aged between 18 to 28 years were interviewed at the premises of a NGO in Mamak a poor district in Ankara where Syrian refugees tend to settle. As the capital of Turkey, Ankara host many international institutions of interest for refugees, such as UNHCR and IOM as well as some significant INGOs. The NGO that facilitated access to informants has national presence and is long experienced in working with

²⁴ “On average, 63% of Roma people aged 16—24 did not work or study at the time of the survey, compared to an average of 12% in the EU for the same age group” (FRA, 2016:12).

refugees. Interviewees' profiles were selected in accordance with gender balance, marital status as well as the social, ethnic and education backgrounds.

Methods of data collection: individual interviews and focus groups were held with the presence of NGO coordinators and a translator.

Context: Turkey is the country hosting the highest number of refugee population in the world: 4 million refugees, of whom 3.6 million are Syrian refugees. Although they crossed the South-East border of Turkey, they are all around the country, mostly in Istanbul (563.000) but also in the 22 refugee camps built in ten cities of the region (210.000, a 6% of the total population of Syrian refugees in Turkey). Since the civil war started in 2011 in Syria, 6.6 million Syrians (out of a total population of 26 million) have left their countries, around of whom 1 million live in Europe and the rest live in neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Around 5 million moved to another city and 500.000 people died during this process. Forced migration is not an isolated social phenomena, but affects the neighbouring countries and wider world in social, economic and cultural ways.

Although they constitute a homogenous group as the newly arrived Syrian refugees, their life conditions varied greatly in terms of education, cultural and economic background. The main feature of the Syrian refugee population in Turkey is the high numbers of young people: almost 1.2 million (32%) of the population is between 15—29 years old and they missed formal education both in their country and in Turkey (Erdoğan, 2014, Erdoğan, 2018a). Moreover, there are more than 1 million young children of school age in Turkey, though in 2018, only around 600.000 children were registered at school. In general, school registrations of the young vulnerable groups above 15 years old is very low. It is estimated that 350.000 babies were born in Turkey between 2011 and 2018. The majority of Syrians refugees plan to stay permanently in Turkey even after the war in their country ends (Erdoğan, 2018b). Turkish government followed an open-door policy to Syrian refugees since April 2011, though it limited their legal status as “under temporary protection”, instead of the formal refugee status granted by the Geneva Convention approved in 1951. This hinders refugees' future perspectives and integration opportunities (Erdoğan, 2017). Despite the urgency and uniqueness of the situation, until 2018 long term policies have not been put into force.

Country: United Kingdom

Target group: migrant young adult women.

Sampling: 20 migrant²⁵ women attending ESOL classes at a community centre in South London. In terms of age, the women were in the 25 and over age group. They came from a range of countries, with a concentration of Arabic speaking women from the Maghreb (but others from Brazil or Asian and African countries). Many of the women refer to having young children, and the presence of a creche facility for learners is described by some as the key factor enabling them to participate in ESOL classes at this centre.

Methods of data collection: In February 2018, three focus group interviews and one individual interview (all face to face) were held with 20 young women who were current learners in a neighbourhood centre of the organisation running UK_GP3. All interviews were conducted in English and audio-recorded. Access was negotiated via the college running ESOL classes at the community centre.

Context: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a further education and skills programme run throughout the UK which in England provides English language learning for adult learners (19 and over) as well as separate programmes for younger learners (16–19). The focus of the programme is on skills for living in the UK as opposed to learning English for short-term visitors (Stevenson, Kings and Sterland, 2017). According to statistics published by the Department for Education (DfE), between August 2017 and January 2018 there were 90,800 learners aged 19 and over participating in ESOL programmes in England. In the same period 1,495,300 learners overall were participating in government funded adult education programmes (DfE, 2018²⁶). According to a report by the Greater London Authority (GLA, 2012), 50% of ESOL provision takes place in London. Data for the Skills Funding Agency (2016) for the academic year 2014/2015 indicate a higher participation rate among women (88,000) than men (43,100, out of an overall 131,100 learners in that year—gender breakdown not available in more recent statistical publications). Overall there has been

25 This term describes their situation as someone who has come to the UK from other countries rather than a categorisation according to the reasons why they came here. Some women refer to migration for family reasons (e.g. to get married) while the majority do not talk about their migration experiences. In this sense, the term 'migrant' is used as a generic concept and not (as sometimes the case) as an explicit differentiation from other terms, such as 'refugee'.

a downwards trend in learner numbers in 19+ adult education over recent years—a trend that has also affected ESOL (Skills Funding Agency, 2016, *op cit*). Stevenson, Kings and Sterland (2017) who conducted a mapping exercise regarding ESOL provision in Greater London point out that this decrease is a reflection of funding cuts rather than a question of demand—which AE providers report to remain high.

Annex 3. Good practice adult education programmes

Austria: Support programme for young people to identify their personal and professional path

Short Form: AT_GP1

Focus: The general provisions of the Guideline of the Austrian Network for Professionals state that three principles inform the approach of the NEBA's offers: gender equality, equal treatment of people with special needs, diversity und antidiscrimination. In addition, the educational approach of the Production school is based on the concept of empowerment. The objective is to enable young people through the new learning experience in the Production school to take an independent and appropriate decision about their professional and personal path.

Target group/s: Potential beneficiaries are young people up to the age of 21 years or up to the age of 24 years with physical or learning disabilities or special educational needs, social or emotional impairments, who want to complete a vocational training. Production schools also address people who have completed, or partially completed, a vocational training, but who lack basic competences (including new media and social skills). The definition relies on the Special Guideline on Vocational Integration of job opportunities for women and men with disabilities, elaborated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection.

Requirements and Access: Access to the programme is directly through the Youth coaching counselling or through the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS). In cooperation with school teachers, the youth coach identifies potential participants among students at risk of dropping out from school or people who need further support for the development of social and basic competencies. Young people outside the formal education system also have the possibility to access through the Austria Public Employment Service (AMS). Registration at the AMS is a precondition to be accepted in a Production school, as it gives the right to benefit from the social financial assistance.

Descriptors:

Category ²⁷	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal	Non-profit organisation	School to work transition	National with regional and local implementation	Nine months	Monthly	State funding

27 This refers to the type of AE programme. EduMAP endorsed the use of the following type for programmes: Basic skills and remedy programmes; Second-chance education; Retraining; Vocational programmes; Informal learning and non-formal learning; Selected higher education programmes. These have been elaborated in Saar, E., Ure, O. B. and Holford, J. (eds.) (2013) *Building a European Lifelong Learning Society: National Patterns and Challenges*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Cyprus: Migrants Centre

Short Form: CY_GP1

Focus: CY GP1 supports migrants' access to services and resources they need, such as building new skills to adapt to the host country's cultural and social environment. It advises migrants on key issues such as access to the labour market, accommodation, educational and health services. In collaboration with local adult education centres, they offer language courses, as well as a module on legal and policy issues in order to assist migrants with their social integration. For these purposes, CY_GP1 works closely with various governmental entities, NGOs and voluntary services.

Target group/s: Migrants (carrying legal documents only)

Requirements and Access: All applicants should have completed ISCED 2, be between 18—35 years old, have little or no experience in a job or an occupation at the country of origin or host country, no criminal record either in the country of origin or host country, health certificate from a public hospital and basic knowledge of English. Local language skills are appreciated, but not required.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal	Non-profit, state funded organisation	AE, Migration	Regional	300 hours (5 months)	Continuous (2017—2020) Twice a year (from Feb to Aug)	EU funding (90%) and State Funding (10%)

Denmark: Young refugee integration programme

Short Form: DK_GP1

Focus: DK GP1 is an application of a national integration programme combining work and language training. The weekly programme of the 2/3 model integration programme (IGU) consists of three days of studies at the language centre and of two days at a workplace (internship). The young students' programme includes mathematics, IT, English and job/education directed activities alongside Danish language. The language centre has focused on encouraging students' authentic language use by inviting volunteers (*Venligboerne*) in the activities and allowing them to organise a language café at the school premises.

Target group/s: The programme was tailored for young refugees (18-25) or family members to support them to get the necessary skills to enter the Danish labour market and further studies.

Requirements and Access: Students are allotted to the integration programme as soon as they register at the municipality. The municipality case worker receives information from the national immigration service about the persons that will be placed in the municipality. An individual integration plan ("contract") is made with each person. The refugees' placements in courses and the design of the integration contract are administered and monitored by the municipality office. Internships and placements in the language centre are negotiated by a municipality worker ("mentor") that works with the employers, the language centre and the students. The language centre has to accept new students non-stop.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Integration training + internship for immigrants	Municipal language centre + volunteering (<i>Venligboerne</i>)	AE, young refugees integration	National with local variation in implementing the programme	No fixed duration, appr. 1,5–2 years	Non-stop; 2/3 model: 2–3 days of language learning / internship	State, municipality

Estonia: Work embedded vocational education

Short Form: EE_GP1

Focus: The work embedded vocational education is provided national-wide by different vocational schools jointly with workplaces. The programme prioritises preparing competent staff for the job market, promoting entrepreneurship. The vocational schools, enterprises within the Employers association (<https://www.employers.ee>) and the Ministry of Education agree to offering certain work-embedded curricula. Studies are largely conducted under the guidance of mentors at workplaces, additionally one week per month or one day per week lectures are held at the vocational school. The digital- or paper-based portfolios are used for reporting participants' success. Young people can use digital learning environments where learning resources are shared. Contents mainly cover the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions of APC.

Target group/s: The programme targets diverse social groups, such as NEETs, unemployed persons, or those with special education needs. There is no age limit, though it prioritise to the younger population rather than the elderly.

Requirements and Access: Courses are traditionally held four times a year, with groups composed by 10—15 students. However, the programme can be also tailored to a single student's individual needs. Beneficiaries must have completed basic education or higher, depending on the curriculum, and they should also have a working place. Alternatively, the school together with the Vocational board could find them a place.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Vocational education, work-embedded learning	Vocational school	Education	National		Continuous. Four times a year.	Ministry of Research and Education, allocated from European Union Structural Funds

Finland: Preparatory Education for VET

Short Form: FI_GP1

Focus: As a transition phase programme, which aims to facilitate entry to vocational education and training, VALMA has been designed to suit different types of learners in various life situations. The flexible design of the programme renders it possible for educational providers to offer educational pathways that cater to individual needs of their students. All courses are optional. The education includes Finnish or Swedish language; mathematics; information technology; natural sciences; social studies and cultural knowledge. The students will also improve their study and career skills during the studies and get to learn about different occupations and vocational studies (Opintopolku.fi).

Target group/s: The primary target group of the programme is “youth who have completed compulsory education and need to strengthen their studying capabilities and are in need of guidance and support in choosing education and occupation” and “youth who, for one reason or another, are outside of education and have not found a suitable study place.” The emphasis of the programme is on youth, but adults are also welcome to participate, “adult target groups could especially be immigrants, people changing careers, or people in need of re-education who have deficiencies in their studying capabilities.” (FNBE regulation 5/011/2015).

Requirements and Access: VALMA is meant for those who have not completed an upper secondary qualification, academic degree, or any other preparatory training in Finland or abroad. This rule is flexible however. People who have some of the aforementioned qualifications can participate—on the condition that it can be justified on specific grounds related to acquiring capabilities for further studies. Although student selection is made according to a broad criteria defined in the Act on Vocational Training and Education, providers are free to define their own more specific criteria. Most providers also require a minimum Finnish or Swedish language proficiency of A2.2.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
VET (transition phase training)	Various types of educational organizations offer the programme	VET education, adult education (varies between organisations)	National, altogether 51 ed. providers have the right to offer the programme in Finland	<u>Max.</u> duration one academic year/. Flexible pathways to other programmes anytime.	Continuous, intake annually & flexibly during semesters	State funding backed by legislation

Finland: VET in prison

Short Form: FI_GP2

Focus: VET programmes offered in and adapted to suit prison surroundings. Criminal sanctions clients are in many aspects in situation of risk. Studied programmes follow national curricula and provide identical qualifications to studies completed outside prison. The core curriculum is competence-based. In our cases, learning was organised either at prison workshops under the supervision of CSA employed professionals and VET teachers or at external workplaces supervised by employers and/or VET teachers. Providing education and rehabilitation programmes during imprisonment are considered the best measures to prevent risk of recidivism. This flexible model of VET is one part of the solution.

Target group/s: Prisoners, criminal sanction clients.

Requirements and Access: In the case of prisons, recruitment of students is carried out in cooperation with the educational providers and the criminal sanctions agency (CSA). Prisoners are free to apply to education anywhere, but in order to gain access to open prisons, they must be rated low on the security risk scale. Potential students are assessed according to criteria such as total length of sentence, personal security issues and motivation to study. Priorities, available places and facilities of each prison also affect the intake. Education providers make formal decisions of admission but the CSA and prison management always have the final say.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
VET	Public VET organisers in cooperation with the Criminal Sanctions Agency (CSA)	VET; criminal sanctions	National curricula, VET providers local	Flexible, depending on the skill levels of students (and duration of sentence)	Continuous	State

Finland: Virtual School

Short Form: FI_GP3

Focus: The programme is designed to enable the completion of basic education for adults and to qualify for entering upper secondary education. AE practitioners include teachers, student counsellors, product owners and other technical staff. Courses and communication are provided through a tailor-made virtual learning environment. The students follow individualised study plans. The student counsellors monitor and encourage the students' progress throughout the programme.

Target group/s: Adults without comprehensive school diploma. (Separate programmes have been designed for youth still in compulsory school age.) Due to the highly textual format the programme may not be well suited for non-native Finnish speakers, dyslexics or visually impaired

Requirements and Access: Most of the applicants receive information about the programme from other social or educational service providers. The programme also advertises publicly. Anyone over the age of 16 and without a comprehensive school diploma can enrol. A student can participate in the Virtual School either for the entire curriculum or choose to take courses one at a time. The students enrol independently through the programme's web page. At least one face-to-face or phone call meeting with a student counsellor in the beginning is advised.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Second chance education. Virtualeducation	Folk high school owned by a municipality.	Adult education	National (not limited)	Not limited	Continuous, non-stop	State funded

France: Second Chance Schools (E2C)

Short Form: FR_GP1

Focus: The E2Cs target 16—25 year-olds who are experiencing severe challenges in finding a job. They employ a work-based learning methodology, which takes into account individual participants' learning styles. The E2Cs facilitate school-to-work transition by providing personalised training lasting six to nine months. There are three key elements to the E2C's work-based learning approach:

- The Training Hub, which updates young people's basic competences;
- The Business Hub, which establishes partnerships with local companies; and
- The Social Life Hub, which encourages inclusion in the wider community.

The partnerships forged with businesses are a pillar of the E2Cs' success; a key element of the work-based learning programme is the immersion internships in partner businesses.

Target group/s: The second chance schools in France are considered as institutions under the general name of: *Établissement pour l'insertion dans l'emploi* (translated as institutions for integration into employment). As such they are bodies that deal with the objective of social and occupational integration young people aged 16—25. They are now jointly managed by the Ministry for Social Cohesion and by the Ministry of Labour. In these institutions, for young people heavily at risk of social exclusion and mostly early school dropouts, the approach is based on work related competencies. Preparation to active citizenship is a priority area.

Requirements and Access: The prescribers are mainly the Local Outreach Office (*Mission locale*-a not-for profit organization sponsored by the state) and the Public Employment Service (*Pôle emploi*; formerly ANPE, *Agence nationale pour l'emploi*). The participants are formally interns of the French VET system and if registered and without a qualification they are remunerated

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal	Non-profit organisation	School to work transition	National with regional and local implementation	Nine months	Monthly	State funding

Germany_GP1: Youth Integration Courses

Short Form: DE_GP1

Focus: The youth integration courses are run by the five youth migration services (*Jugendmigrationsdienste*). The provider chosen for the case is an international organisation which runs more than 90 Youth Migration Services in total. The 900-unit language course leads participants through stages A1 and A2 to level B1 of the German language, with 300 units each, according to the Common European Framework of Reference. German is taught as a second language. Teaching focuses on language implications of everyday life (housing, professions, media, etc.), on occupation, education and study, information assistance, exploration of the environment, contact and interaction, on mediation of intercultural competences and sensitisation for culturally different norms and values, on rights and obligations as well as on behavioural expectations.

Target group/s: For accepted refugees with a perspective to stay in Germany, the Youth Integration Courses are compulsory in order to obtain social assistance and benefits. Young migrants (up to the age of 27) without social assistance are also accepted at own expenses.

Requirements and Access: Access to courses occurs through Job Centres or through the Office for foreigners. Learners receive a list of education providers among which they can choose. Youth refugees are especially attended to through the German social security code (SGBIII, §78) which defines specific groups of young people as in need of funding to enable them to start or complete a vocational training or promote their employment after vocational training.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal	Non-profit organisations	Youth, Language learning, Civic education	Federal programme implemented locally	900 hours	Continuous	State funding

Germany_GP2: Culture and Integration

Short Form: DE_GP2

Focus: The programme ‘Culture and Integration’ was initiated by the director of the Adult Education centre and is run by the institution. The aim was to establish a good network between the AE sector and cultural institutions in the city so that refugees and migrants can have better access to the latter. On Friday afternoon entrance to the museums is free for them. The aim is to stimulate curiosity and foster speaking the language of the host country through access to culture which is possible only because of the special conditions established through institutional cooperation. A contract of cooperation exists between the AE centre and different cultural institutions. The director is supportive to the project/programme and all all programme directors meet on a regular base.

Target group/s: Participants of integration courses at the Adult Education Institution.

Requirements and Access: No requirements. Access through course teachers. The Culture and integration project is voluntary. Participants are informed about the possibility to visit cultural institutions of the city for free. There is guidance to the cultural objects by staff of the cultural institutions.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal	Adult Education	Language learning, integration, culture	Local level	Couple of hours	Continuous	Community level

Germany: Youth Forum

Short Form: DE_GP3

Focus: Contextualized in community development activities and developed in the association's interest of offering opportunities to practice democratic thinking and acting, the Youth Forum project promotes the participation of young people in political decision-making processes at district level. Young people become aware that they can help shape their district with their commitment and ideas. The Youth Forum activates the participation of young people aged 14 and over by creating a platform where they can articulate their own needs and interests. Young people can draw attention to themselves with the Youth Forum, get in touch with politicians and learn that a commitment has a positive impact on the living environment.

Target group/s: The Youth Forum is a project within the framework of the 'Action Programme for More Youth Participation', which is jointly financed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the German Federal Youth Council. It is targeted to young people living in the deprived district of a selected city (*Note: a city in North-Western Germany with about 600.000 inhabitants*).

Requirements and Access: No access requirements. The Youth Forum is accessible to all young people living in the district (Main age group 16—26). Some of the young people also visit schools to advertise for participating in the Youth Forum. Thanks to its location inside a Youth Centre of the city district, the additional offers of the centre such as cooking initiatives, outings, projects, group's games can also be attractive and motivate young people to come. The Youth Forum though is more focussed on developing motivation and responsibilities towards acting as a change maker and to generate interest for political issues.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal	Non-profit organisation	Youth, Civic education	Local level	Continuous	Monthly	State + communal funding

Greece: Roma Action Plan

Short Form: EL_GP1

Focus: The programme primarily aims to include young Roma women's voice, needs and interests into the local action plans. As such, the access to goods and services in the community is made available through introducing the specific needs of the Roma communities into the local development strategies; needs that have been identified in the local action plans developed in a participative manner. On the other hand, the project aims to support the local economy through training and consultancy for local women interested in generating income for their area.

Target group/s: It is an AE support programme for Roma women aged 18-35 and operates locally. The programme provides basic training and social support to young Roma women. The initiative initially aimed to cover at least 80 young women of the Roma community and to provide them with an integrated and customized service. The main goal of the programme is to ease the access of young Roma to positions in the private business sector that fit their education and qualification.

Requirements and Access: Roma women 18—35 are only considered. No other requirements are in place. Access is provided as soon as they are enrolled in the programme. Many women dropped the programme many times in the past and re-registered.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal adult education	Non-profit, NGO	Basic adult education and training	Local	175 hours	Continuous (started in 2009) It is provided ad hoc based on interest.	local authority funds

Greece: VET for long term unemployed

Short Form: EL_GP2

Focus: This is a co-funded training programme for unemployed aged 18—29 years old which includes vocational counselling, theoretical and practical training in order to help them enter or re-enter the labour market. The programme is focusing on reducing unemployment and reintegrating the unemployed people into the open labour market. The programme centres on entrepreneurship and capacity building for those young adults with low skills who want to upgrade their competences and also acquire new ones in order to organise their portfolios and also learn how to develop a business plan for a start-up small enterprise.

Target group/s: Low-skilled young adults (18—29) who are long term unemployed (27 weeks or more).

Requirements and Access: All participants must have ISCED 2 (lower secondary general or vocational education).

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Vocational Education and training	Private organisation	AE VET	Regional	150 hours	Continuous (2016—2020), twice a year	Voucher funded (EU 75% and State 25%)

Greece: Transgender intervention

Short Form: EL_GP3

Focus: The programme is about supporting transgender people, as well as their families and companions.

Target group/s: It aims to support the national transgender community, and in general other ways of gender diversity, through health promotion and empowering / enhancing skills in areas such as claiming rights, finding resources, communicating, etc.

Requirements and Access: Beneficiaries must be unemployed (15 weeks or more with or without receiving unemployment benefit) aged between 18—30. The programme lasts 65 hrs. Transgender men and women as well as non-binary and LGB people are also welcome to participate free of charge.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal adult education	Non-profit, NGO	AE, social inclusion	National	60 hours	Continuous (January 2017 and every 10 weeks)	Own funding and through donations

Greece: Non-formal education for the homeless

Short Form: EL_GP4

Focus: This programme is part of a broader municipal network of social structures to combat poverty. The main focus is the prevention of youth marginalisation, the elaboration of policies which defend youth's rights and the implementation of active social support measures for disadvantaged young people. The programme assists mainly young people who live in conditions of homelessness and it operates daily from 9 am to 9 pm, to a specially designed area, offering social services and basic education, bathroom and laundry facilities. Guests have access to primary healthcare as well.

Target group/s: Homeless young men and women aged 18–25.

Requirements and Access: Homeless young men and women are welcomed daily with no admission requirements. The centre is open 12 hours daily. All participants are registered in the centre and must dwell anywhere within the limits of the Thessaloniki city.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal adult education	NGO, social support services, municipality	Education, social support	Local	12 hrs daily	Continuous since 2014	100% funded by the municipality

Greece: Social integration of migrants

Short Form: EL_GP5

Focus: The programme's purpose is the social integration of immigrants, focusing on the critical age cohort between 16—25 years, but addressing other age groups as well. Furthermore, it is designed to complement the law offering citizenship to second-generation immigrants. The first part of the programme involves a series of workshops and seminars on professional orientation, legal issues and empowerment skills (including collective representation and the use of communication skills) and includes the participation of institutions such as the general workers' association. The second part of the programme involves setting up an Immigration Support Desk, which will act as a information hub for immigrants to provide them with legal advice and psychological support as needed.

Target group/s: Immigrants and refugees aged 16—25 years (women in their majority).

Requirements and Access: It prioritises women aged 16—25 who are refugees and asylum seekers but also migrant women from third countries, mostly Arab and African nations.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal adult education	NGO	Adult Education, migrant service	Regional	2 months in total	Every 2 months, since April 2016 (will end in June 2018)	Private foundation

Greece: Empowering NEETs

Short Form: EL_GP6

Focus: The programme responds to the needs of NEETs, working on their empowerment by strengthening, promoting and encouraging their communication and emotional skills (e.g. how to express their feelings, build relationships and find an identity). An important output of this programme is the elaboration of an Automated tool / Guide with integrated methodological designs for social activities with young populations. with this tool the diffusion of acquired knowledge and experience regarding youth is pursued.

Target group/s: The programme essentially aims to strengthen civil society and enhance the contribution of NEETs to social justice, democracy, and sustainable development.

Requirements and Access: Low skilled (ISCED 2) unemployed and no-studying youth, aged between 18—25 years are only considered. “First come, first served” policy applies.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal adult education, VET	Non-profit, NGO	Vocational Education and training	Regional	160 hours of training, and volunteer participation in two youth work camps	Started in October 2015 and was completed in January 2018	EEA Grants Programme

Hungary: College for Advanced Studies for Roma people

Short Form: HU_GP1

Focus: This GP encompasses the analysis of three Roma colleges. The purpose of the training program is to embrace and educate Christian, mostly Roma, and disadvantaged students in order to reach the highest levels in their profession and to represent their people’s culture. 60% of Roma and 40% of non-Roma are included in the institution, supporting their intercultural communication. The College has identified four areas of development in its program, namely “Christian values,” “identity, openness to Roma culture,” “professional excellence,” and “community life”. Their currently complex programs are geared towards talent management, such as a mentoring program with a student’s life course approach.

Target group/s: The Colleges are dedicated to local Roma University students, but they also accept non-Roma students to support communication among them.

Requirements and Access: Every Collage for advanced studies has its’ own application process in which applicants’ Roma origin is not exhaustively controlled.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Basic skills	Non-profit	Education, youth and social sectors	Local level	Continuous	Continuous	State funding, and EU

Hungary: Motivation Workshop

Short Form: HU_GP2

Focus: This student mentoring program, which has been running for 10 years already, supports the learning of disadvantaged (primarily Roma) children and young people, and helps them develop competences to succeed in their studies and to improve their chances to enter the labour market. Besides promoting their professional development and labour experience acquisition, the programme strengthens youth’s social skills through volunteering and civic work in the public space.

Target group/s: The Association targets primary and secondary school children and young people, with a focus on the Roma. It also addresses care takers, mediators and gatekeepers such as educators or social workers (e.g., mentors, animators, community organizers), teachers and other assisting professions.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Basic skills	Non-profit (NGO)	Education, youth and social sectors	Local level	Continuous	Continuous	State funding, and EU

Hungary: Disabled youth programme

Short Form: HU_GP3

Focus: The programme supports young people with disabilities to access IT training and self-development programmes in a particular Hungarian county, to fight against their isolation and facilitate their employability skills.

Target group/s: The target group of the project is well defined: people with physical disabilities, with limited mobility, who completed at least secondary education (school living exam in Hungary), within the economically active age range, and living in the county. People with other disabilities are not excluded (those with mental problems, or partially blind).

Requirements and Access: There is a complex recruiting process, which involves a multidisciplinary team (psychologist and the medical staff) that carefully considers the candidate’s life situation, ambition and abilities, monotony tolerance, learning abilities and competences.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Basic skills	Non-profit	Education and social sectors	Local level	Maximum 1 year	Occasional	State funding, and EU

Ireland: Informal participation project on barriers in education and employment for ethnic minority young people

Short Form: IE_GP1

Focus: IE_GP1 is a short-term one-off project which was run at an education service for ethnic minority young people for approximately four months in 2016/2017. The project was funded by a government grant linked specifically to themes of education and employment. The main methods of the project were based on youth work principles, involving group work and a residential workshop. Practitioners acted as facilitators while young people themselves were in charge of deciding the focus and eventually the outcome of the project. The project culminated in the production of a video in which young people describe the barriers experienced by ethnic minority young people in education and employment contexts. These included: pressures through expectations from within their families and communities which sometimes clash with expectations by wider society; limitations of opportunities through lacking social networks (especially in a country which is portrayed as heavily relying on 'knowing someone who knows someone'); as well as direct experiences of discrimination based on stereotypes and racism.

Target group/s: The project was aimed at young people from ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds. Due to short project funding timescales, a smaller number than initially planned participated in the project (5 young people), however, the work of the project involved consultation across a much wider stakeholder group (of services providers, young people, employers and other organisations).

Requirements and Access: Because the government grant under which the project was funded came with specific conditions, targets and a short timescale within which to deliver these, the organisation hosting the project relied on their existing networks of practitioners to help run the programme and of young people with whom they (or other organisations in the field) were already in contact. Some of the young people had been in contact with youth workers over a period of years, during which the practitioners had been witness to some of their experiences. Another aspect was that specialist services wanted to explore some of the barriers preventing ethnic minority young people from accessing mainstream services (e.g. in relation to employment or education advice).

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Informal	Hosted by specialist education service (part of local education authority)	Youth work, informal education, basic skills support, refugee and migrant youth	Initially local, reached national levels of attention	About 4 months (with some ongoing work)	One-off	Government grant for specific project

Ireland: Socio-cultural/sports-based informal education programme

Short Form: IE_GP2

Focus: IE_GP2 consists of a range of projects, groups and events that take place at a volunteer-led non-governmental organisation in the fields of socio-cultural and socio-political informal education and sports education in Ireland. The organisation works at local, national and international levels, using sports as a vehicle to promote social and cultural inclusion and counter racism and other forms of discrimination. The programme also functions as a 'gateway' to other training and skills development opportunities, which could include team and leadership skills, coaching qualifications and ongoing support for young people who play semi-professional in clubs or are trying to move into professional footballing careers.

Target group/s: The young people taking part in the programme are diverse both in age and ethnic background. The majority are ethnic minority young people, including those who arrived with their families from other EU countries, refugees and asylum seekers. Irish traveller young people are also represented.

Requirements and Access: There are no access requirements apart from the interest in participation. For young people with very limited funds (for example young asylum seekers in 'Direct Provision' centres), the organisation tries to provide material support such as football boots where possible. The programme includes a strong focus on breaking down practical, social or cultural barriers to participation: another example is visiting families and communities of Muslim young women to address any concerns they might have about the cultural appropriateness of young women's involvement in sports.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Informal education	Charity	Socio-cultural education (sports), peer support, campaigning and awareness raising	Local, national and international	Ongoing	Ongoing (various projects and events)	Range of funding sources (some international)

Italy: VET for young unemployed

Short Form: IT_GP1

Focus: The course aims to provide participants with useful tools and knowledge for a focused and targeted research of job opportunities. The structure of the modules is as follows: MODULE 1—Techniques and tools for job search—Rules for access to employment and employment services—Analysis and market strategies; MODULE 2—How to formulate a curriculum vitae and an effective letter of introduction—Personal branding—How to deal with a selection interview; MODULE 3—Rights and duties of the workers administered.

Target group/s: Addressed only to young unemployed and it was fully subsidised by the Lazio Region.

Requirements and Access: Only individuals who are currently in a state of unemployment are considered. Registration takes place through an online platform. Region residents have a priority.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Non-formal, vocational, orientation	Non-profit	Vocational training, counselling and guidance, validation	Regional	24 hours	Continuous	100% subsidised by regional authority

Latvia: Validation of informal learning

Short Form: LV_GP1

Focus: Competence validation of informal and non-formal vocational education (up to competences level—03) for a wide range of professions. The approach assumes that the professional competency acquired in non-formal education is also formed by knowledge, skills and abilities gained through personal life and job experience. It is a broad programme targeting people from 18 years, not specifically tailored only to VYA. The evaluation of professional competencies mastered in the process of the non-formal education of an applicant, is based on a test of the corresponding professional standard at the professional qualification examination.

Target group/s: The programme targets a wide range of socially disadvantaged groups: Young people aged 17 to 29 years NEETs; without previous professional qualifications who may be registered with the State Employment Agency (SEA) as unemployed or job seekers, but are not at the same time beneficiaries of the training or employment measures implemented by the SEA; who have acquired their professional qualifications not earlier than one year prior to admission to educational programmes implemented within the framework of the project and which may be registered with the SEA as unemployed or job seekers, but are not at the same time beneficiaries of the training or employment measures implemented by the SEA; Young people who have not received a targeted scholarship for at least 12 months prior to admission in educational programmes implemented within the framework of the project can be re-engaged in the project. Young people aged 15—29 incl. in prisons. Adults with functional /existential problems, disorientated in life and work situations. Foreign workers/migrant workers or political migrants from Post -Soviet countries (Ukraine etc.) and do not know the Latvian official language. Low educated adults with low motivation to learn and/or to find a job; adults with health problems; officially undefined groups at diverse physical meeting places; adults with low key competences, adults with special needs (autism, handicaps etc.), early school leavers (ESL), young mothers with small children and adults.

Requirements and Access: The requirements of the applicant's previous education, employment or age are not directly specified in the regulatory enactments. It is provided by certified vocational institutions across the country where free counselling is provided.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Formal and non-formal education	Vocational Schools, state-funded colleges	Vocational education	National	Continuous		Governmental, EU structural funds

Malta VET for NEETs

Short Form: MT_GP1

Focus: The programme puts much emphasis on motivating NEETs to be active in the decision-making processes on their lives and futures. This is particularly important for NEETs because the majority of those who do not participate in education and/or employment is because they are indecisive to do so. This programme comprises study modules to which a total of 4 ECVET points are assigned.

Target group/s: The programme’s main beneficiaries are young NEETs (that is individuals aged 16 years and over) and who have an NQF Level 1 in Maths and English Language.

Requirements and Access: NQF Level 1 in Maths and English Language is compulsory for entering the programme. No other requirements apply.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Vocational education and training	Non-profit, state funded organisation	Vocational education and training	National	54 hours	Continuous since 2014	100% State funded

Netherlands: Coding skills development programme

Short Form: NL_GP1

Focus: NL_GP1 is a coding skills development programme, which aims to support young adults at risk of social exclusion (specifically refugees and migrants). The programme lasts for 12 months and is made up of three phases. The first phase consists of three months in a coding 'Boot Camp'. It starts with learning various coding languages (e.g. Html, CSS, Java). During this phase, the programme also organises Masterclasses for the students by technology companies such as Facebook, Google or Booking.com. In the next phase, the learners become Guides [mentors for new starters] for three months. In the Guide, period students learn more advanced programming languages. The final six months consists of an internship with a company as a developer, and these companies are often able to provide scholarships for students. The programme has been described as very intensive (10 hours per day) which involves regular peer/self-assessment and self-directed learning, incorporated into the programme.

Target group/s: The main beneficiaries are young adults from refugee, migrant and low-income backgrounds, and those who are currently under-represented in the technology industry, including women.

Requirements and Access: The admissions/recruitment process involves a set of challenging tests and tasks, but as noted by one of the co-founders, it is 'meant to be hard' because the programme organisers want students to 'to feel like they've achieved something big when they get in'. As part of their application process, applicants are required to submit a video in which they outline why they want to learn about computer science. Those applicants, who are selected for interviews, are required to spend a day at the camp where they are given a scenario and have to talk about what they would do in this situation. The majority of young adults find out about the programme through other people, for example an employment advisor, friends or family, rather than accessing the information themselves. However, some young adults also access the information about the programme as a result of browsing online. The programme uses different channels in order to reach young adults such as Google marketing or through Facebook groups. The programme is free to access.

Descriptors:

Category	Type of organisation	Field of practice for organisation	Programme scope	Programme duration	Programme occurrence/ frequency	Type of funding for GP
Vocational programme/ Retraining	Non-profit organisation	Adult education	Local	12 months	Ongoing	Participating companies through scholarship and sponsorship

Portugal: Entrepreneurship VET

Short Form: PT_GP1

Focus: The overall objective of the programme is to train potential entrepreneurs and promote as many new business projects as possible, as part of an acceleration of innovation and employment model. Specific objectives include to analyse the profile and potential of entrepreneurs; to generate, define and validate business ideas and plans; to grasp the concepts of the legal-fiscal area, useful for the creation of a company; and to identify the main incentives and supports available to finance small and medium businesses.

Target group/s: Unemployed men and women aged between 18—30 years.

Requirements and Access: The course is part of the training course of the Cycle of Entrepreneurship of the provider, and same requirements for access apply.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Vocational education and training	Privately funded organisation, private body of public law	Adult Education, VET	Regional	350 hours	Continuous (2016 onwards)	65% State funded, 35% participant funded. Grants are also awarded.

Romania: Vocational Education and Training Programme

Short Form: RO_GP1

Focus: The vocational education and training (VET) programme RO_GP1 is offered by a vocational training centre that aims to support the social and economic (re)integration of young people in vulnerable situations, through vocational education and social care services. The vocational school is part of a humanitarian organisation with the same name, founded in the early 1990s. Its mission is to support the social and economic (re)integration of vulnerable young people, through vocational education and social care services. The school offers training modules for young people over 18 and for high school students. Each 18+ course is structured in two parts: (1) Domain-focused vocational training delivered in a practice-intensive way (75% practice, and 25% theory), with internships in profile organisations. (2) The School for Life, which goes in parallel with vocational training, and where learners acquire a range of life skills—abilities useful for everyday personal, social and professional life. Other personal development and training activities take place through specialised sessions and activities such as learner-focused case management, vocational coaching, and psychological counselling.

Target group/s: The programme addresses young people at risk of social exclusion from all walks of life, with a focus on care leavers (young people leaving social care centres or foster homes at 18 years old).

Requirements and Access: Students are recruited through mediating organisations, typically child protection centres managed by the General Direction for Social Assistance and Child Protection, City Halls in nearby villages and NGOs that can liaise to possible beneficiaries. Prospective students have to submit an application and go through a process of selection that involves an interview and a test for evaluating basic aptitudes and skills.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
VET	Charity	Social care; VET	Local and regional	10 months or 2 years course	Yearly	International/development funds

Romania: Labour integration programme

Short Form: RO_GP2

Focus: The labour integration programme RO_GP2 is offered by a social enterprise that aims to support the socio-economic integration of adults in difficult and vulnerable situations. The programme offers a pathway for social and professional re-insertion focused on the needs and aims of each vulnerable person, by (re)building trust in oneself and others and self-esteem, contributing to improved family, social and professional ties and (re)integration on the job market and in society as a full and equal citizen. The training and insertion model was adopted from France, and adjusted to the local context. It is based on integration through work, based on a progressive learning pathway that tackles social, emotional, professional and technical competences. The social enterprise offers on the job training in insertion workshops focused on IT refurbishing and reuse, Socialware and Eco-gardening. The formative approach is progressive, tackling gradual competence development along three stages: Adaptation (2 months); Stabilisation (12 months); and Professionalization (up to 24 months).

Target group/s: RO_GP2 addresses adults (no age limits) in situations of risk or those facing difficulties ranging from financial, family issues (including abuse and domestic violence), long term unemployment, homelessness, addiction, medical issues, and physical, intellectual or educational special needs. It targets as well members of minority groups and immigrants.

Requirements and Access: Recruitment is done through the mediation of partners that include placement centres, social care organisations, state directorates for protection of children and young people, as well as prisons, hospitals and centres specialised in recovery from addiction, the National Anti-Doping Agency, different NGOs that offer psycho-social services to vulnerable people, etc. Candidates' selection involves two interviews: the first with members of the support team, and the second with the coordinators of the workshop where they could be inserted. The key selection criteria are applicants' motivation and interest. It is also considered important to select candidates that contribute to creating a respectful and diverse work environment.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Labour integration/VET	Non-profit organisation	Social sector/ social enterprise	Local and regional	2–3 years	On-going	Social enterprise

Spain: Labour integration programme

Short Form: ES_GP1

Focus: ES_GP1 is an umbrella AE programme of labour intermediation between companies' opportunities and job seekers' needs. It is composed by a network of 395 social entities offering training in Spain and companies in need of trained workers. Its original approach promotes companies' involvement, directly or indirectly, in all the stages of the training process: from defining specific labour force demands to giving talks to trainees, providing them with real environments for their internships and, ideally, hiring at least some of them once the training has been completed.

Target group/s: People with some type of physical disability (e.g. sensory, physical, intellectual or mental), which represented 27% of the total labour market integration accomplished in 2016; as well as people who experience difficulties in accessing a job position for other circumstances, for example being long-term unemployed, young or from particularly vulnerable groups, such as women who have suffered episodes of gender violence or immigrants. These latter groups covered the other 73%.

Requirements and Access: GP1 welcomes all persons at risk of social exclusion aged above 16 years and who have been unemployed for at least two years. Beneficiaries access through various channels, including derivation from local social services. They are offered specific trainings (tailored to companies' needs), including internships and possibilities of being hired afterwards. Youth and long-term unemployed are especially encouraged to participate. Some young people access through the European Youth Guarantee programme.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Labour integration programme. Vocational training/ retraining	Non-profit organisation	Education, youth and social sectors	National	3 months	Continuous	Private foundation

Spain: Leisure time monitor training

Short Form: ES_GP2

Focus: GP2 is a leisure time monitor course yearly offered by a non-profit Catalan foundation focused on the provision of educative and leisure time activities, services and trainings for social inclusion and social transformation. It emerged in 2010 after the foundation detected a lack of training programmes for young adults aged above 18. It aims to provide youth with skills to become leisure time monitors for children and teenagers.

Target group/s: GP2 targets young people at risk of social exclusion who have not completed the compulsory secondary education in Spain (ESO). However, they welcome other profiles too. For example, in 2017, many participants had already completed this educational level and some of them were also taking or planning to enrol in undergraduate studies.

Requirements and Access: Participants get to know GP2 by very diverse means, both online (e.g. banner ads in job search websites) and offline. Most commonly, they are referred by a Youth Guarantee referent, Social Services or other social entities, such as local youth information spots or centres, which make a first selection of young people interested in working with children and teenagers.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Socio-laboural inclusion	Non-profit organisation	Education, youth and social sectors	Regional	3,5 months	Continuous	Private and public funding

Spain: Computer repair and maintenance VET

Short Form: ES_GP3

Focus: GP3 is a VET (*PFI* in Spain) on computer repair and maintenance. It is regulated by the Educational Department of the Catalan Government and co-funded by the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce. It is offered annually following the official educative calendar, from September to July, by a cooperative of ICT services for education, social inclusion and social transformation.

Target group/s: GP3 addresses young people aged between 16 to 19 years who have quit compulsory secondary education and are offered an alternative education option in professional training. Participants tend to have complex socio-economic backgrounds, mostly de-structured families and behaviour problems at school.

Requirements and Access: Since GP3 is in the list of official VET providers of the Educational Department, most participants are referred by other schools, social services and institutions. The GP3 coordinator welcomes prospective students in a preliminary interview to probe their profiles, interests and expectations and check whether the GP3 educational programme fits them. Most participants are boys who like informatics, hacker and video games culture.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
VET	Non-profit organisation	Education, youth and social sectors	Local	One year	Yearly	Public and private funding

Sweden: Work-oriented integration training

Short Form: SE_GP1

Focus: The work-oriented integration training is intended for persons who wish to learn Swedish and work simultaneously. SE_GP1 is organised under the umbrella and coordination of the regional administration in cooperation with the job centre and the regional branch of the National Board of Forestry. The education is provided by a folk high school (FHS). The full-time course combines (1) practical work in nature reserves, supervised by a forestry professional, (2) vocation-oriented language learning (3) developing of facilities for applying and keeping a job, and (4) Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) at individual level and track.

Target group/s: The programme is targeted at newcomers with refugee backgrounds who are entitled to participate in the integration programme. Recruiting criteria are not only academic but linked to the student's former work experience and interest to work within the park and forestry field. The National Board of Forestry cooperates with the jobcentre nationwide to also engage other groups than newcomers with refugee backgrounds in internship training organised in cooperation with local education providers.

Requirements and Access: The students are recruited or guided to integration courses by caseworkers at the jobcentre. Most of the interviewed students received information from their individual case workers or had heard about it from a friend or at school. The grounds for recruitment connect with either the students' former experience in farming, garden or forest work or working with machinery. The education provider cannot influence the recruiting process, as the jobcentre determines whether the provider is capable of teaching students with low academic skills. The students meet a counselling teacher in the beginning of their studies to make an individual study plan.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Integration training combined with vocational programme	Non-profit	Non-formal AE (folk high school); forestry, maintenance of the nature reserve and recreation areas	Regional cooperation between municipalities and employers in the Region (SFI is taught according to the national framework)	Six months internship + six months study/ work practice	Courses are organised according to the regional need of labour.	State / municipality

Turkey: VET programme for Syrian refugees

Short Form: TR_GP1

Focus: GP1 is an example of how an ad hoc initiative has quickly turned into a much more integrated institution with a solid structure and a strategic vision. It operates in its 5-floored premises, with each floor being specifically designed to serve a specific function in service of the refugees from emergency services to VET, personal development and psychological/legal counselling and so forth. The first floor contains a very busy information and guidance desk that receives queries from refugees as well as handling their first time registration. There are medical clinics, a pharmacy providing free medicine, psychological and legal guidance services, a cafeteria serving free meals, and finally several classrooms and VET training workshops offering a wide variety of educational courses.

Target group/s: GP1 is an NGO affiliated with a local municipality that serves refugees from all backgrounds, but a vast majority of the people it serves are Syrians living in this district and its immediate neighbourhood. Sultanbeyli is one of the smaller and poorer districts in the peripheries of Istanbul. However, it has received and is currently hosting a large number of Syrian refugees. The number of registered Syrian refugees in Sultanbeyli is more than 20,000, accounting for around 4% of Syrians living in Istanbul.

Requirements and Access: The programmes are open for all the refugees. However, in terms of main beneficiaries, the language and hairdressing courses are attended by women, while the construction courses are attended exclusively by young men. There is a greater variation in the ages of the women who attend the courses that ranges from 18 to 50+ year-olds. GP1 offers medical/legal/psychological support as well as economic advice and emergency needs for refugees, all in their own language through experts who are refugees themselves, so access to the programmes are easy to them. They are informed about upcoming courses, they can demand prospective courses and provide feedback on previously attended ones. In order to attract male learners, GP1 provides cash payments for those who are attending fully.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
VET	Non-profit organisation	Education, Advocacy, Consultancy, Health	Local	4 months (each level) 3+4 months	Continuous	External (project based)

Turkey: Women entrepreneurship programme

Short Form: TR_GP2

Focus: The programme consisted of a combination of trainings in two specific vocations, machine tailoring and ornamental planting, with several modules of training in entrepreneurship, marketing, advertisement, body language, leadership, time management, and so on.

Target group/s: This adult education programme was designed and implemented for the vulnerable women of the mining town [Anon.] in Western Turkey. Soma had just been devastated by a tragic mining disaster that killed several hundred miners in [Year anon.]. This programme primarily targeted women that were directly affected by this disaster by losing their relatives.

Requirements and Access: In principle, the programme was open for application of all women in Soma. The application process was very simple and the necessary documents were limited to passport photographs and identification documents. The machine tailoring course accepted 30 female learners and the ornamental planting course accepted 20 of them aged between 19 to over 50 years.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
VET	Non-profit organisation	Women entrepreneurs— Economic sectors	Local	3 months	Continuous	External (Private)

Turkey: Vocational Course for Syrian Women

Short Form: TR_GP3

Focus: TR GP3 provides hairdressing courses for Syrian refugee women, as part of an integrated service-provision framework which flexible AE programmes are designed according to the needs, demands, and conditions of refugees. Based on the strong rapport established between the organisation and the refugee community, GP3 has been able to identify AE contents, design programmes, effectively reach out to targeted groups, make sure the maximum number of learners continue up to completion, and remain in contact with former learners.

Target group/s: The general target group is the Syrian refugee community in the Syrian-border city Gaziantep. However, thanks to its Multi-Service Support Community Centre concept, which relies on external funding for various projects, TR GP3 has been able to target more specific groups within the Syrian refugee community such as women, disabled individuals or illiterate men.

Requirements and Access: All Syrian refugees are eligible for the services, including AE programmes, provided by GP3. There is an initial process of registration, during which the NGO learns about the profile of the individuals as well as their needs, demands, and existing skill sets. Once new AE programmes are designed based on this information, relevant and targeted individuals and groups are informed individually. Attendance to a certain percentage of the classes is mandatory and there is usually no other financial or otherwise requirements for accessing the courses.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Basic skills VET	Non-profit organisation	Education, Advocacy, Consultancy, Health	Local (several local branches of a national NGO)	4–5 months	Continuous	External (Project based)

United Kingdom: Mentoring programme, Scotland

Short Form: UK_GP1

Focus: UK_GP1 is a mentoring programme in schools in a Scottish city, run by a charity in cooperation with the local authority and local secondary schools. It is usually accessed by young people aged 15—17 but support can continue beyond that age, as negotiated between young people and their mentors. Mentors and young people meet regularly, with the focus of meetings mainly driven by the young person. The overall aim of meetings is to help the young people discover and develop their ‘talent’, to guide, support and boost self-belief. Based on young people’s talents and interests the mentor guides and advises them to various opportunities available and will set up opportunities themselves.

Target group/s: UK_GP1 is specifically designed and intended for vulnerable young people, particularly those who have been or currently are in the care system and those who have had support from a social worker and who have experienced particular disadvantages impacting on their ability to fully participate and succeed in education. Often the disadvantages young people have experienced relate to the lack of a supportive adult in their home / family life, while young people at risk of offending or young people with mental health issues are also targeted for this support.

Requirements and Access: Young people may be identified by professionals that they are working with (particularly those within their schools or their social workers), or they may self-identify. This is often the case when a young person has heard about the programme from a peer who recommends involvement. The mentors are recruited by a volunteer recruitment team that recruit the volunteer mentors, train and support them in communities both face-to-face as well as online. The mentors are put forward to the ‘matching panels’, the aims of which are to try and match the mentees with mentors who share similar interests. The limit to student numbers is determined by the number of mentors available. At the time of the research there was a waiting list of young people who would like to be involved.

Descriptors:

Type of programme	Type of organisation	Field of practice for organisation	Programme scope	Programme duration	Programme occurrence/ frequency	Type of funding for GP
Informal education	Charity	Mentoring	Currently just available in one city	Varies but usually two-three years	Ongoing	State

United Kingdom: 16—19 VET programme

Short Form: UK_GP2

Focus: UK_GP2 is a (pre-) vocational programme leading either to further training (such as a course at a higher level or an apprenticeship) or employment. Learners study key skills subjects (English, Maths, ICT and Personal Development) alongside a vocational focus (e.g. childcare, business and administration, computing, sports and youth work) at different levels. The programme runs on a continuous ‘roll-on, roll-off’ basis, allowing young people to join throughout the academic year. The duration and intensity are flexible and depend on learners’ previous qualifications and their ability to reach the next skills level.

Target group/s: The programme is open to learners aged 16 to 19 (and beyond, in some circumstances) who wish to study one of the available vocational qualifications at the level offered by the college. Young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan studying on the supported internship scheme are aged 17 to 25. There is also a separate cohort of young people studying ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages); these young people tend to have arrived in the UK more recently as asylum seekers, refugees or migrants. In practice, most of the young people attending the college tend to be from the local area or from neighbouring boroughs.

Requirements and Access: Learners wishing to join the programme go through an initial assessment process and interview. There are separate access processes for learners on the supported internships scheme and for those on the ESOL programme. Some learners on the main vocational programme also re-sit their secondary school leaving certificates (GCSEs) in English and Maths or other accepted qualifications (such as Functional Skills in English and Maths). This is a government requirement for courses for learners aged 16 to 19 (unless they have already achieved a certain grade level in these subjects).

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Vocational and basic skills	Non-profit organisation [faith-based charity]	Education, including further education, youth work and early years provision	Local	Varies depending on individual needs	Continuous	State and local authority funding

United Kingdom: ESOL programme

Short Form: UK_GP3

Focus: The programme presents an example of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision in an Adult Education College in England. ESOL courses traditionally aim to provide English-language skills for non-native speakers, specifically targeting those newly arrived in the UK, such as refugees and migrants. The ESOL qualification is accepted as evidence of English-language proficiency for settlement and naturalisation.

Target group/s: The programme supports learners whose first language is not English aiming specifically targeting those newly arrived in the UK, such as refugees and migrants. ESOL learners often share some common disadvantages, such as a risk of unemployment and social exclusion. The learners in GP3 have been described as adults experiencing or being at risk of experiencing multiple vulnerabilities, which may hinder their social and economic participation.

Requirements and Access: This course requires assessment and interview, so, depending on their learning needs and capabilities, the prospective learners could be assigned to appropriate types and levels of the programme. Recruitment to the programme takes place through a variety of approaches, from leafleting to local libraries and GP surgeries, at the Job Centre and at information stalls and open evening events in the college, through the internet / social media, as well as through recommendation / word of mouth from a range of local organisations and networks.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Basic skills and remedy	Adult Education College	Adult Education	National	Runs termly, in 12-week blocks (most commonly it takes 3 terms)	2-hour classes, twice a week	Government

United Kingdom: Gateway programme for unemployed young people

Short Form: UK_GP4

Focus: GP4 emphasis is on personalised support to help learners consider their options, provide choices, opportunities and practical support. The programme can run for up to 12 months for each learner, but a further 6 months follow-on support can be provided once a learner has found employment or started education or training. The programme functions as a portal programme, providing access to a personal advisor who supports participants in considering their educational, training or employment plans and options and who provides information, advice and guidance throughout the duration of a learner's journey on the programme. The programme is tailored to each learner's particular situation and needs. There is no set curriculum or route and some learners might only attend one-to-one sessions with their advisor, while others take part in a range of classes, volunteering opportunities or embark on other courses. The overall

Target group/s: The programme is open to young people aged 16 to 29 in the local area who are unemployed and / or not in education or training. There is a lot of flexibility in the programme and learners can continue to receive support even once they have found employment, education or training.

Requirements and Access: There are no restrictions regarding qualification levels: although in practice many of the learners may have experienced some problems and challenges in previous education, training or work contexts, there are also learners who have completed university degrees but struggle with entering employment. Recruitment to the programme takes place through a variety of media and approaches, from leafletting to local households, at the jobcentre and at information stalls and events in the local town(s), through the internet / social media, as well as through recommendation / word of mouth from a range of local organisations. Before starting the programme, prospective learners meet with a personal advisor for an initial assessment which involves discussions around their goals and aspirations, skill levels and preferred learning styles.

Descriptors:

Category	Provider	Sector	Scope	Duration	Occurrence	Funding
Basic skills, second chance, vocational elements	Adult community college and private training provider	Adult education, further education and work-related learning	regional	Varies depending on individual needs	Continuous	European (ESF), state funding and additional funding streams