Third COUNTRY REPORT : Italy

Update Thematic Dossier #3:

Youth mobility, exchange, study and training opportunities through the Mediterranean Area

Insight:

Experiences and good practices in the field of Youth mobility in the Med Countries

proposed by Claudia Maffei (Oxfamitalia, Arezzo, Italia) and Maria Calabrese (Rondine Cittadella della Pace, Arezzo, Italia)
Introduction

Youth mobility and exchanges have been recognized by the Italian Government as a tool to create global citizens, improve educational and training quality, increase knowledge and competences as key factors for the enhancement of knowledge and awareness. However, the main (not to say exclusive) support to mobility programmes and initiatives mainly come from the European Union and there is a huge lack of reinforcement by the national youth policies. For this reason, among the missions of the Italian Youth Forum (FNG) about mobility, we can find:
- promoting the active participation of young people to mobility programmes through lobbying and advocacy actions towards the local, regional and national institutions in order to spread and promote mobility programmes throughout any school level and age;
- promoting the transversal aspect of mobility for different life sectors such as education, training and work;
- recognizing the competences, titles and professionality acquired by participating in mobility programmes;
- going beyond the current bureaucratic obstacles linked to the participation in youth mobility programs and projects (ie. Visa).

Youth mobility within the country and abroad as a tool to fight youth unemployment has been highlighted also by the Labour Ministry that is conducting a weekly monitoring on the development of the Italian Youth Guarantee Programme and that states that “the choices of young people have underlined an evident inclination towards mobility”. National and transnational mobility is foreseen by 2 measures of Youth Guarantee, the extra-curricular internship and the professional mobility, in synergy with EURES network and other measures like the EVS. The impact of these measures though is still limited if we consider that just 16,000 young people out of 560,000 will be given the chance of starting a professional experience abroad or in another Italian Region. Another EU programme that supports Italy in offering mobility opportunities all around the world (and not only in EU like the Youth Guarantee) is the European Social Fund, for which Italy also participated in the final “Coordinated Call on ESF Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults”. Among its conclusion is the fact that “Making such experiences more widely available in Europe requires cooperation between Member States/regions.”

1 http://www.forumnazionalegiovani.it/chi-siamo
2 http://www.governo.it/approfondimento/garanzia-giovani-dal-1-maggio-line-il-sito-dedicato/3123
3 https://www.tln-mobility.eu/SharedDocs/Downloads/PDF/Coordinated%20Call.pdf?__blob=publicationFile
The European Union confirms a good trend and has widened mobility within its programmes, but it is necessary that each of them is combined with national and regional resources, as the benefits of mobility can have a huge impact on the whole country both for employment and the personal development of young people. It is therefore necessary to financially strengthen existing programmes through significant investments from institution and to improve communication channels and networking in order to reach as many people as possible, especially those with fewer opportunities and at risk of social exclusion. As the FNG has underlined in its GEM Report (Youth and Mobility)\(^4\), “international mobility is a fundamental means through which a person can best face daily challenges” and it is therefore an empowerment tool for all young Italian people.

A higher dissemination of the information about calls and programmes is required and dialogue between young people and main stakeholders has to be supported. Competent authorities and institutions also have to implement recognition measures that foster young people to actively participate in mobility initiatives.

Does youth mobility just have bright side for the Italy? Not really. Youth mobility is now used also as a tool to leave the country and look for better jobs and a better life, which is contributing to the constantly growing “brain drain”.

Recently, Luigi Bobba, Under-Secretary General of the Ministry of Labour, also in charge of youth policies, has declared in an interview released to “Linkiesta\(^5\)” that incoming mobility must be increased:

“If the approach is to consider youth mobility positively. The Erasmus programme started as something small and then has become the main mobility element in education. The issue that the country has to deal with is rather the human capital balance, which is negative right now. Many young people leave the country but there are few people coming to Italy. If mobility is just one way, being a need rather than a choice, it leads to an impoverishment of the human and competitive fabric of the country”.

When asked about the several foreign talents that would like to move to Italy and then face the bureaucratic obstacles of the country, with visa issues and so on, he explains that an immigration country like Italy has laws that penalize also those young people that are not claiming for asylum. “I really believe that something attracting young people is missing, a policy or a tool that seriously analyses the imbalance of the human capital and try to fix it. We would like to do it through a programme funded by the youth policies, but we also have to make sure

\(^4\) http://www.forumnazionalegiovani.it/media/11792/gem_-_giovani_e_mobilit_.pdf
\(^5\) http://www.linkiesta.it/it/article/2015/05/22/cosi-riporteremo-in-italia-i-giovani-talenti-fuggiti-allestero/26019/
that Embassies and Consulates are oriented in the same way when releasing the visa to Italy.”

**OXFAM ITALY EXPERIENCES IN PROMOTING MOBILITY**

Oxfam Italy believes that mobility is a great tool to empower young people and make them global citizens and active change makers. For this reason, lately it has increased the mobility possibilities offered to young people.

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**MEDNET - Innovation, Exchange and Networking for a New Leading Class in the Mediterranean Area**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financing source</th>
<th>Region of Tuscany</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of project; Who involved (Number of people; please indicate age, gender and origin of the participants.)</td>
<td>MedNet is a project financed by the Tuscany Region and led by Oxfam Italia that aims at reinforcing the awareness and the work of youth associations of the Northern and Southern Mediterranean area that want to play an active role in understanding the ongoing processes of cultural, economic, political and social change. By engaging youth associations in a path of online dialogue and mobility, MedNet involved 100 young people (boys and girls) 18-35 years old and 38 youth associations from Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Israel in a 2-day-workshop on common topics. Study and mobility, unemployment, youth participation in politics and gender equality and equal opportunities were the central focus of the four thematic working groups during which youngsters reflected critically on these issues, creating Mednet Network statement.</td>
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<td>When</td>
<td>23 – 24 September 2014</td>
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<td>Where</td>
<td>San Rossore Park, Pisa – Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Description of the activity;</td>
<td>The mobility can be considered as a milestone of the project. In fact, firstly Oxfam Italia identified 8 youth associations coming from the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt; secondly, young people were involved in different online paths on Oxfam Edu platform (<a href="http://edu.oxfam.it">http://edu.oxfam.it</a>) in order to start sharing experiences, projects and good practices also through non-formal education activities related to the 4 topics. This helped young people reflect on them in a safe online educational and social space, promoting mutual knowledge. Thanks to the involvement of expert</td>
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organizations, like The Hub Florence, SocioLab Florence, Rondine Cittadella della Pace, plus the Lebanese partner (DPNA), MedNet produced the 4 Thematic Dossiers to be used as the basis for the workshops’ discussion.

Having said this, the mobility represented a real opportunity for representatives of youth associations, institutions, foundations, NGOs and decision makers to analyze the state of the art of youth policies and whether they are able to meet youngsters’ needs or not.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outcomes of learning</th>
<th>Good practices, Thematic Dossiers, Network statement. To know more: <a href="http://edu.oxfam.it/it/project/mednet2-innovation-exchange-and-networking-new-leading-class-mediterranean-area">http://edu.oxfam.it/it/project/mednet2-innovation-exchange-and-networking-new-leading-class-mediterranean-area</a></th>
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| Financing source | ENPI- CBC MED  
New Euro-Mediterranea Initiative for the Promotion of Young People Employment |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purpose of project; Who involved (Number of people; please indicate age, gender and origin of the participants.) | MOBNET involves four countries: Italy, France, Morocco and Tunisia. The goal is to help reduce the rate of youth unemployment in the four countries of intervention through a mobility scheme for new or aspiring entrepreneurs, in order to encourage business start-up and development of their business ideas.  
The project facilitates the organization of 52 mobilities. 52 young entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to experience working abroad in one of the four countries involved. Young entrepreneurs will be welcomed by experienced entrepreneurs who work in a field of interest, for a period of 1 to 3 months, during which they will have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills and share their business ideas with the possibility of establishing and develop new international networks in their areas of expertise. |
| When | February 2014 – August 2016 |
| Where | Morocco, Tunisia, France and Italy |
| Description of the activity; | In parallel, to support and strengthen this process of exchange, MOBNET will create networks between 20 intermediary organizations as expert organizations in the field of training, women's associations and youth, socio-professional organizations, institutions and enterprise partnerships, which will improve services. They aim is to facilitate business start-ups in the local labor market, ensuring social cohesion and territorial and become key players to establish a cross-border networks in each country of intervention.  
MOBNET also aspires to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of young people and the promotion of youth entrepreneurship with a special look to companies able to generate innovation in the field of social business: we believe that this new economic model could represent a good opportunity to ensure ' inclusion of vulnerable groups such as women and young people from marginalized areas. policies and whether they are able to |
meet youngsters’ needs or not.

| Outcomes of learning | Mobilities and Guidelines for young entrepreneurs. For more information: http://www.mobnetproject.com/progetto/ |

YallayaShabHUB - Human development, social innovation and support to the youth entrepreneurship in Jezzine, South Lebanon

| Financing source | Italian Development Cooperation |
| Purpose of project; Who involved (Number of people; please indicate age, gender and origin of the participants.) | The initiative aims to promote the active participation of Lebanese youth in the social, economic and political field at the local level, enabling the launch of sustainable and innovative processes of human development. The project foresees the creation of a youth center (Impact Hub) in Jezzine and the organization of vocational training for capacity building. |
| When | April 2015 (study visit in the framework of a 3-year project) |
| Where | Florence, Italy |
| Description of the activity; | From IMPACT HUB network, 7 centers in Italy and 100 worldwide, to South Lebanon, Jezzine, a small city which is full of life mostly during the summer. It seems like a dizzying jump but it’s not, as per the discussion with two experts coming in a mission from Florence for carrying out a first phase of mapping and involvement of the |
promoted project “Yalla Ya ShabHUB”, co-funded by the Italian Cooperation for an amount of 785,000.00 euros and implemented by OXFAM Italia.

How does a HUB works? Specialists coming from different sectors and experiences participate to a joint project, using a common place for co-working, and having in their own professional path a group mission. The IMPACT HUB of Florence works according to ethical principles and values with a social impact through initiatives leading the universe of planning and training.

In this framework, a group of 5 young Lebanese leaders (16-22) has participated in a study visit in Florence (Italy) to be trained by the experts of IMPACT HUB FLORENCE.

This innovative experience has reached South Lebanon, particularly a small center located in Jezzine, where a multifunctional space, currently under rehabilitation, will become a community center for training and supporting entrepreneurship initiatives of social innovation. The management of the center will be entrusted to a committee to be elected soon, composed of representatives of the authorities and of the civil society. During the 3-year project, the HUB will constitute a center of aggregation for youth, local associations, private companies and local authorities. It will provide know-hows, resources and opportunities to implementing local initiatives for the development of the area.

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GOOD PRACTICES – SCAMBIEUROPEI PORTAL

http://www.scambieuropei.info/

ScambiEuropei is an association and a portal (based in Bologna) that was born from 2 people determined to inform other young people on the several youth mobility possibilities in Europe and in the world, which were scarcely promoted, hidded and placed on complex Institutional websites. It has now got to be the most used showcase by people who want to go on a mobility project (Europe and beyond). It has a colored, fresh and user-friendly layout and different main sections:

1 – **Magazine**: it collects different information about the lifestyle of different countries

2 – **Partire (Leaving)**: it groups different kind of mobility opportunities into internship, work, study, contests, European Volunteer Service, Cultural exchanges

3 – **Deadlines**: there is a calendar with all the deadlines of the possibilities to help young people not to miss a single chance!

4 – **SharEurope**: This is a portal in which you can look for the city you are interested in and read the experiences of other people who are or were in the same city for study, work, internship or volunteering reasons. Each person can draft his or her review to support other young people who want to start a mobility adventure abroad.

5 – **Guides to the projects**: This section groups all the different projects or programmes that can fund mobilities, ranging from Scholarships, Erasmus+, Intercultural Exchanges and so on.

**CONCLUSION**

Compared to the possibilities to do a mobility experience in the EU, there are still too limited possibilities for Mediterranean countries. Not all the funding lines of the Erasmus+ are open to neighbor countries, for example. Promoting mobility among ENP partners and the EU has been under discussion since the ENP was launched, but it never came to fruition. Including a mobility dimension is a demand voiced by both the different stakeholders consulted for the review of the ENP and the partner states and their civil society.

As pointed out “To be able to easily move between EU and Northern African countries is a great opportunity for young people, but many Member States are afraid of illegal immigration and emphasise the difficulties for young North Africans to access the labour market. Still, visa liberalisation and facilitation are tools to develop within the ENP in order to empower future generations, especially in combination with measures to prevent the so-called brain drain.”
Apart from mobility, it would be crucial to promote programmes that promote education, technological development, leadership and entrepreneurship.”

Mobility it is so important but still so obstructed, and terrorism is not making things easier.

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6 ENP and the Southern Mediterranean: Youth as the Key Element for Stability in North Africa