



Policy brief on youth mobility with general EU recommendations

August 2018

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Introduction - On enhancing youth mobility in Europe

This policy brief is based on findings from the MOVE research (May 2015 – April 2018). The overall aim of MOVE is to provide a research-informed contribution towards improving the mobility of young people (aged 18-29) in Europe and to reduce negative impacts of mobility by identifying good practices, thus fostering sustainable development and wellbeing.

The project has investigated different patterns and types of mobility of young people with quantitative and qualitative data collection and analyses in six European countries: Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Norway, Romania and Spain. With regard to the youth, the project has focused on six mobility types:

- pupil's exchange
- higher education students
- vocational education and training
- international volunteering
- employment
- entrepreneurship

Key Findings

The MOVE results have been examined at macro, meso, and micro levels: the macro level covers country characteristics and more general reasons for youth mobility; the meso level looks at the social networks and transnational activities of young mobile people. The analyses developed by multiple methodologies yield rich results. The main findings (grouped by source of data of the project) are formulated according to four main pillars (see also Annex for further findings):

1. *(Pre)conditions to youth mobility vary across countries in Europe, which in turn might lead to inequalities in accessing mobility and mobility-outcomes on individual level;*
2. *Hindering factors and motivations differ between mobility types as they follow different logics: the main differences are between work-related mobility and education-related mobility (i.e. student, pupil and VET mobility);*
3. *Young people approach mobility in different ways, depending on their overall biographical situation and institutional embeddedness, young people change their agentic strategies as they respond to new situations;*
4. *Social networks and peers play an important role in mobility, both as fostering and hindering factors.*



Recommendations

Based on the MOVE results, the focus of further policy actions should remain on *improving the quality and accessibility* of the mobility programmes, not only the quantity. As such, MOVE suggests ensuring a more integrated approach to *EU policy development and implementation* (e.g. education, youth, social affairs, employment, entrepreneurship, inclusion, regional and social cohesion, etc.) and *closer cooperation between different EU funding schemes*, especially between Erasmus+ and the European Social Fund (ESF), since the ESF promotes employment and social inclusion. The MOVE project welcomes the cross-sectoral approach that will be developed under the new EU Youth Strategy. Creating a cross-sectoral systematised collection of mobility data to be used across Europe, so that different sectors do not carry out the same research, could also ensure such an integrated approach.

Tailor-made support for social cohesion:

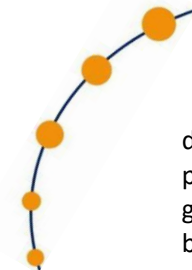
- *A new remuneration formula to calculate scholarship and grant amounts* should consider a more differentiated perspective *regarding the socio-economic situation of individual applicants* and diverse reasons for *regional inequalities* (e.g. child allowances differ greatly within member states);
- *Foster private-public partnerships and engage the private sector in the funding of mobility programmes* (especially for VET and employment);
- *Enhance the provision of youth information and counselling services* to ensure that young people have *tailor-made support*. Topics could cover fundraising, an action plan for raising money, finding a summer job and information should also be made available via sending/receiving institutions, NGOs, social workers, youth workers, youth information workers, social media. Share information in classroom or at mobility events in educational institutions and through youth organisations and youth services.

Raising awareness for all:

- As well as students, young people in general need to *have more possibilities to access mobility opportunities*. The different mobility programmes should ensure their visibility and better promote the opportunities via youth ambassadors, peer-to-peer activities, and online (via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), and promote campaigns on social media and other emerging channels;
- *Peer-to-peer knowledge transfer and advice* should become central to mobility promotion. Youth organisations and services should support and collaborate with experienced and mobile young people who are involved in presenting their mobility experience. Offer space for exchange between non-mobile and mobile by engaging youth to talk about motives and experiences, the consequences, benefits and disadvantages of staying/moving (during the events at sending/educational institutions, e.g. speed-mobility-dating, city halls, youth centres and via vlogs, blogs);
- *Actively involve parents and relatives* in the information sessions and provide them more facts and details regarding mobility experience of the young people;
- *Increase funding options for youth under 18 years old* to create more mobility options for those without plans to study at a home university.

Increasing possibilities for all:

- Mobility promotion/support should be incorporated within *appropriate youth network channels*. To reach young people from various backgrounds, especially from lower socio-economic backgrounds, mobility programmes should be better promoted: in their respective environments (youth centres and clubs, youth information services, training schools, sport clubs, etc.); on the local level; with social workers, NGOs etc. During the application process, they should receive support so that this process will no longer be perceived as an obstacle. Mobile and non-mobile should support each other; otherwise, the respective National Agencies should offer special advice sessions to reach out to disadvantaged youth in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, such as educational institutions, youth and social workers, and youth information and counselling services. Involve parents, relatives and peers in info-sessions and group workshops (this contributes to changing mindsets);
- *Differentiated and individual approach at selection*. Barriers to youth mobility are especially high for young people with disabilities, so their particular situation needs to be considered, and thus better supported, both before and during their stay abroad. Awareness-raising and trainings for staff in sending and hosting institutions could help to address the difficulties. Since the diverse programmes reveal



diverse *gender ratios*, especially in programmes with a gender imbalance in numbers (for example, promote volunteering among men and promote entrepreneurship among women). Initially, obstacles to gender equality must be identified in more detail; mentoring and special sub-programmes should then be introduced to be able to achieve a more balanced gender distribution.

Multiple languages – multiple opportunities:

- The *language barrier* is seen as a major obstacle by young people; the fear associated with this should be reduced by supporting various methods of language learning (free online courses, tandem databank, promoting more European languages and at the same time *lowering the level of pre-existing language skills as a selection criterion*, in addition to offering intensive language courses at the beginning of the stay abroad;
- *Intensive foreign language education* should start at a very early level in the education system and enhanced in non-formal and informal education settings.

Ensuring a supportive surrounding system before, during and after the mobility stay:

- *Support the work of one-stop-shop youth-friendly and up-to-date databank* gathering all different mobility opportunities and programmes available in all EU languages. The role of the European Youth Portal should be enhanced and promoted;
- *Better monitor hosting and sending institutions at EU level* to avoid negative experiences (e.g. feeling of exploitation, different tasks than announced in the application process);
- *Establish a common way of recognising studies, transversal skills and non-formal learning* acquired during the mobility experience;
- *Raise awareness at job agencies and employer organisations*, use online platforms and social media (e.g. LinkedIn);
- *Provide appropriate information and counselling*, (psychological) support, and personalised guidance at every stage of the mobility process (before: fear, during: homesickness or cultural shock, after: reintegration and reversed cultural shock);
- *Set up an emergency contact person/mentor/tutor/support person* abroad to be a first-to-contact-partner for the mobile youth;
- *Help with accommodation after mobility* (stakeholders can host young mobile people for six months).

Should they stay or should they go?:

MOVE found asymmetric patterns of human capital movements across different EU countries. This leads to the following recommendations:

- Provide *differentiated strategies*: support should be adapted to the needs of specific country types (e.g. fostering incoming mobility and return mobility for countries with a high outgoing mobility due to a more favourable economic situation in other countries);
- Ensure *labour market integration* upon return as a prerequisite to tackling the brain drain;
- Ensure more coordination and integration of social security systems at the European level.

Further Readings

Policy Brief I (2017). available in English, French, German, Hungarian, Nynorsk, Luxembourgish, Romanian, Spanish, available at: <http://move-project.eu/reports-publications/policy-briefs/>

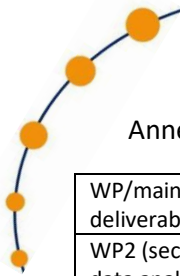
Policy Brief II (2018). available in English, French, German, Hungarian, Nynorsk, Luxembourgish, Romanian, Spanish, available at: <http://move-project.eu/reports-publications/policy-briefs/>

Project website

<http://move-project.eu>

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Annex: Methodology and Main Findings (by source of data) in nutshell: for more details see www.move-project.eu

WP/main deliverable	Methodology	Main findings
WP2 (secondary data analysis) Main deliverable: Final report WP2	A macro-database on European youth mobility and related socio-economic indicators; based on EUROSTAT, OECD, UN, and World Bank.	By focusing on the creation and exploitation of human capital on the basis of different youth mobility macro-indicators, a country-typology was developed, distinguishing <i>four country types</i> : (1) mobility promoters: countries prone to losing their skilled workforce (e.g. Poland, Romania) (2) mobility utilizers: countries that produce and make use of human capital (e.g. Norway, Germany) (3) mobility fallers: countries that educate youth but cannot retain them (e.g. Czech Republic, Belgium) (4) mobility beneficiaries: countries that make use of and integrate the highly skilled into their economic and societal structures (e.g. Latvia, Estonia. Croatia)
WP3 (interviews) Main deliverable: Final report WP3	Problem-centred qualitative interviews conducted with young people from six mobility types (N=206), complemented by insights from youth mobility experts (N=40).	From the qualitative material <i>six patterns</i> arose: (1) <i>peer relationships</i> are the main context within which youth mobility is bred, induced or hampered; (2) <i>mobility is a learning process</i> and framed as “doing something else”, mobility itself is not sufficient and needs to be enriched by additional processes and activities (3) <i>mobility contexts</i> are not only personal (peers, family) but always <i>interwoven with forms of institutionalization</i> (education/ work) (4) mobility mainly take place if youth become <i>members of organisations (membership)</i> , in order to gain access to funding, information and guidance (5) youth connect their mobility to <i>the wish to become independent</i> . These ambitions can be framed as a specific set of youth practices, but within the process of youth mobility, they receive a diverging connotation (e.g. learning, achieving something) (6) youth connect their mobility and leaving home with the wish to break out. Youth mobility should be seen rather as an <i>initiation</i> , an <i>entrance to contexts of society</i> (i.e. education, work and family): While becoming mobile, young people experience practices that introduce them to bureaucratic structures and procedures, to new practices of everyday life, to norms and practices of working society, etc.
WP4 (survey) Main deliverable: Final report WP4	Online-survey for mobiles and non-mobiles (N= 8,706: a merged dataset from panel sample = 5,499, and snowball sample only for mobiles = 3,207) with both mobile and non-mobile youth	<i>Main results from the survey show:</i> 74.7% of young respondents <i>evaluate</i> their mobility experiences positively 91.3% report themselves as the major influence in the <i>decision to become mobile</i> <i>The main motivations for mobility are:</i> (1) to learn or improve languages (46.3%) (2) previous knowledge of a language (33%); which is considered to be an advantage for mobility (3) to improve working conditions (31.2%); (4) to improve the opportunities for personal and professional development (28.7%) <i>The most useful sources of information are:</i> (1) informal sources such as internet search engines (48.5%) or friends (35.7%) (2) advises by teachers/tutors (32.1%) In regard to <i>future plans</i> , 35.4% of mobile respondents have doubts about returning to their country of origin, while non-mobiles consider that it is unlikely that they will move to another country or another region