



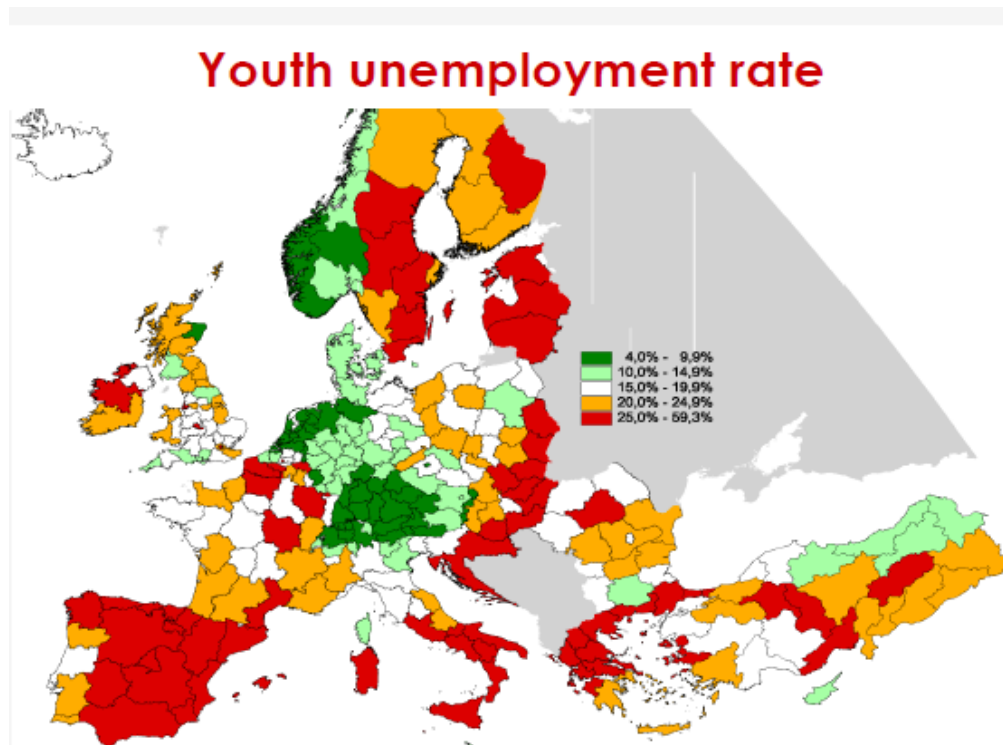
13 Partners from 6 European countries, to rethink dual learning: EuroDuaLE project

by Chiara Mancini

The new [EuroDuaLE website](#) is now online. EuroDuaLE is a project funded by European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme, aiming to develop and test dual learning mobility in higher education. The project is promoted by Università degli studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia and involves 12 other organisations: SOPHIA R&I, Fondazione ADAPT, Camera di Commercio Italo-Germanica, Otto-Von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg, University of Southampton, Fondazione Politecnico di Milano, University College Leuven, Cofora International Projects BV, European Foundation for Education e.V., Universidad de Sevilla, Università degli Studi di Padova, Università degli Studi Roma Tre.

EuroDuaLE aims at paving the way for the development of an integrated transnational dual learning framework and dual learning programmes in higher education. The main goal of the project is to help tackling youth unemployment, through the improvement of youth employability and the reduction of the mismatch of competences between education and labour market. The project wants to clear the path of synergy between HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) and labour market actors, giving students the chance to test new academic curricula and combine formal training (in class) and training on-the-job, geographical and virtual mobility.

EuroDuaLE is about framing and testing a model that may be replicated after the end of the project, and on which designers of similar experiences, ie: HEIs, companies, social partners, policy makers, may rely in the future.



European countries show very different levels of youth unemployment rates, with some countries, above all Southern countries, characterized by unemployment rates around 40%. This situation pairs with the phenomenon of the so-called NEETs (youngsters of 15-29 years, not in education, employment or training) which are always increasing in some European countries: in 2013 in Italy NEETs are 26% of 15-29 years old, while in Germany and Scandinavian countries NEETs rates rank around 10%.

These differences are certainly influenced by different kind of factors, such as economic juncture, structure of the production base, economic policies and so on. But high youth unemployment and differences in national rates also origin in the supply side of labour market. **Basically, where the education system and labour market are more integrated through complex but efficient systems** - Germany is the best practice here - **the unemployment rate is lower, because the mismatch of competences required in school and in companies is considerably smaller**. This is generated by a system that is more able to answer to evolving needs of societies and economies. This is crucial in a world that is technologically changing faster and faster. Without challenging the independence of science nor the quality of education, dual systems enhance the capabilities of all actors to provide quality education to students. On the one hand, institutions in the education system do not need to provide knowledge and technical competences for highly specialised professions, and have the opportunity to focus on teaching methods, soft skills, independent thought and, mainly, the ability to constantly learn through the whole working-life. On the other hand, it is trough on-the-job training that students learn the know-how related to productive environment.

It is important to stress that dual learning systems, such as the German one, are not only tools for youth to access the labour market once the school is over. They are actually an important part of education curricula, that are normally undertaken in the educational path of youngsters. Their value lies not only on the placement effect for the first job - even if it is one of the main outcomes of the system - but mainly on the impact on the whole future careers of youngsters, on country's economic performance and on some of the biggest social challenges we face nowadays, such as sustainability of welfare systems, demographic and quality-of-life problems.

The German system works because all the stakeholders recognize the value that such a system produces for each of them, so they invest on it. HEIs recognize that being in constant relationship with companies does not make them less prestigious but, on the contrary, helps them fulfil one of their main duties. On the other side, companies invest on real and qualitative training of students because they know that economic system would benefit from this and so does the single company: moreover, dual learning represents a chance for companies to get in touch with high-skilled, talented and creative youngsters that may effectively enter the company afterwards, giving new lifeblood to the company.

Transferring the German model as it is in other countries is not possible and would not produce expected results, because of different cultural, institutional, social, economic backgrounds. That's why EuroDuaLE project exists, with the main objective being to produce a framework for dual learning that could be replicated in different contexts.

EuroDuaLE started in September 2015 and is going to end in August 2018. The project is challenging, both for its dimensions in terms of partners and duration, and for its goals. It is composed by three main phases.

The first phase, corresponding to the first year of the project, is focused on the study of the current situation of dual learning in several European countries (regulation, practices, general context) and of job-related mobility of youngsters. Results of this phase will be soon uploaded in the [website](#) and will be disseminated also through the [EuroDuaLE Facebook page](#).

The second part of the project is about the definition of a framework or model for transnational dual learning. Since it's not possible to transfer the German model as it is in other contexts, the aim of this phase is to **create a model that works around concentric circles: the core circle is about common principles and practices that define the model, while the other circles introduce specifications related to national, regional, field - contexts.** The model will be developed, primarily, from a theoretical perspective, on the basis of the study of the context and taking advantage of the expertise of partners. After that, a Practical Handbook will be created, to guide designers through the real implementation of the


model - it will also contain a toolkit to help different stakeholders with management practices.

The third and last phase of the project is the test of the model through a piloting experience, during which some students of partner HEIs will be involved in dual learning and (physical and virtual) mobility.

In conclusion, **EuroDuaLE project has an important potential**: it could represent an innovative experience and a stimulus to introduce in several European countries a successful model, that could benefit youngsters, companies, economies and societies.

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