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Literature review on initiatives to improve early career conditions across EU member states (WP7)

(Deliverable 7.1)

Authors
Günter Hefler
Eva Steinheimer
Janine Wulz

September 2017
Foreword

Encouraging Lifelong Learning for an Inclusive & Vibrant Europe

What’s gone awry in Europe’s lifelong learning markets? Although it has been a central EU policy priority since 1993, and the European Union’s mechanisms for multinational policy coordination and measurement in lifelong learning are world-leading, one in every five Europeans under 25 is now unemployed. Many are not in employment, education or training. According to the High Level Group on Literacy, one in five 15-year olds lack the literacy skills required to function successfully in a modern society; 73 million EU adults have low levels of education and literacy; while achieving the current EU benchmark of functional literacy for 85% of 15-year-olds would increase lifetime GDP – lifetime earnings – by €21 trillion.

Clearly Europe’s educational markets are failing to ensure that our citizens – particularly our younger citizens – have the education and training they need for their own economic prosperity and social welfare. They are also failing European society as a whole. Social exclusion, disaffection and the long-term “scarring” effects of unemployment are clear dangers to economic competitiveness, to social cohesion, and to the European project as a whole.

This is the starting point for ENLIVEN – Encouraging Lifelong Learning for an Inclusive & Vibrant Europe – a three-year research project (2016-2019) funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 programme. The ENLIVEN research explores these challenges in several ways.

First, we are exploring and modelling how policy interventions in adult education markets can become more effective. We bring together state-of-the-art methodologies and theorisations (e.g. Case-Based Reasoning methodology in artificial intelligence, bounded agency in adult learning) to develop and evaluate an innovative Intelligent Decision Support System (IDSS) to provide a new and more scientific underpinning for policy debate and decision-making about adult learning, especially for young adults. For this, we are drawing on findings from research conducted by European and international agencies and research projects, as well as findings from ENLIVEN research itself. The IDSS is intended to enable policy-makers at EU, national and organizational levels to enhance the provision and take-up of learning opportunities for adults, leading to a more productive and innovative workforce, and reduced social exclusion. The IDSS work organised in two workpackages (WPs 8-9).

Second, we are investigating programmes, governance and policies in EU adult learning. By looking at the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and disadvantage, and the role of public and private markets in reversing – or reproducing – inequalities across Europe, we aim to provide a more holistic understanding of policies, their rationales, operationalization, and role in enhancing growth and inclusion. Beginning with the main European policies and funding schemes for adult learning aimed at tackling disadvantage, inequality and social exclusion, we are identifying the different ways in which social inequality is expressed, constructed as a policy goal, and legitimized by discourses at the European level, and nationally. Combining policy diffusion studies with studies of multilevel governance that map the relations between various adult learning stakeholders and decision makers, their
conceptualizations of the purpose of adult learning and their priorities, we are identifying the main barriers and enablers for access and participation in adult learning in Europe at the programme and subnational levels. This work is organised in three work packages (WPs1-3).

Third, we are examining “system characteristics” to explain country/region-level variation in lifelong learning participation rates – particularly among disadvantaged and at-risk groups, and young people. The “markets” for adult education are complex, with fuzzy boundaries, and the reasons why adults learn vary. Drawing on Labour Force Survey, Adult Education Survey, EU-SILC, and European Social Survey datasets, we use multilevel regression analysis and construct a pseudo-panel to address questions such as which system characteristics explain country and region-level variations in participation rates (overall, and among disadvantaged groups and youth at risk of exclusion), and how government policy can be most effective in promoting participation. This research is organised in Work Package 4.

Underlying the ENLIVEN research is the need for a reconstruction of adult educational policy-formation in Europe. Currently there are two particular problems. One the one hand, the principal beneficiaries of adult education (across Europe as elsewhere) are the relatively more privileged: those who have received better initial education, those in employment, and (among the employed) those in better-paid, more secure and more highly-skilled jobs. The adults who are (arguably) most in need of education and training, such as young, unemployed, low skilled, disabled and vulnerable workers, receive less of it. One the other hand, in contrast to the education of children, adult education is by and large financed by individual students (‘learners’), their families, and/or their employers. Though this is partly the outcome of public policy – in particular the desire to reduce public spending (or restrict its growth), and to utilise the efficiencies inherent in market-based allocation systems – it limits the policy tools available to governments and state agencies. A central feature of public policy is therefore to influence the behaviour of citizens and enterprises, encouraging them to invest in lifelong learning for themselves and their workers.

Finally, we are examining the operation and effectiveness of young adults’ learning at and for work. The availability and quality of work for young adults differs by institutional setting across EU member states. We are undertaking institutional-level case studies on attempts to craft or to change the institutions which govern young adults’ early careers, workplace learning and participation in innovation activities, comparing countries with similar or diverging institutional frameworks. This is the focus of three work packages (WPs 5-7).

John Holford

Co-ordinator, ENLIVEN
University of Nottingham
john.holford@nottingham.ac.uk
Contents

1 Executive Summary .................................................................................................................. 7
2 Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 9
   2.1 The context of the working paper - The ENLIVEN Project ........................................... 9
   2.2 The current working paper ............................................................................................... 10
3 The context of recently founded, youth-led social movement organisations in industrial relations ................................................................................................................................. 13
   3.1 Comparative analysis of youth transition systems ......................................................... 13
   3.2 Industrial relation systems ............................................................................................... 19
   3.3 Framework assumptions for analysing recently founded, youth-led SMOs in the field of employment relations ................................................................................................. 25
4 Examples of recently founded, youth-led SMOs .................................................................. 29
   4.1 Youth initiatives within established trade unions .......................................................... 31
   4.2 Recently founded, youth-led SMOs fighting unemployment/precarious employment ................................................................................................................................. 37
   4.3 Recently founded youth-led SMOs working for better employment conditions for young employed in professional and semi-professional fields (and adult education in particular) ................................................................................................................................. 44
       BUPL (The Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators) Aims for better professional rights of pedagogues in the field of salary and working conditions .......... 48
5 Learning in civic activism and volunteering work .................................................................. 49
6 Conclusions and outlook ........................................................................................................ 56
7 References ............................................................................................................................... 58
Figures and Tables and Boxes

Figure 1 Focus of the review against the backdrop of broader related areas of interest ................................... 11
Figure 2 Unemployment rates (ILO-definition) of the 18 to 25 year olds across EU28, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland 1992-2016 – in % of the employed ................................................................. 17
Figure 3: Involuntary non-standard employment as a percentage of total employment, 2010 .................................................. 19
Figure 4 Collective bargaining coverage, trade union density, employer density for the EU27 – different years ................................................................. 22
Figure 5: Frequency of strikes in the EU28, Norway and Switzerland – 1990-1999, 2000-2009 ...................................................................................... 23
Figure 6: Recently founded, youth-led SMO within the field of industrial relations ................. 26
Figure 7: Youth participation in voluntary activities (EU 28) ......................................................... 50
Figure 8: Youth involvement in sports clubs by country (EU 28) .................................................. 50
Figure 9: Youth involvement in youth clubs, leisure-time clubs or any kind of youth organisations by country (EU 28) .............................................................................. 51
Figure 10: Youth involvement in cultural organisations by country (EU 28) ................................ 51
Figure 11: : Youth involvement in political organisations or parties by country (EU 28) .......... 51
Figure 12: Youth involvement in organisations aimed at improving local communities (EU 28) ........................................................................................................ 52
Figure 13: Youth involvement in organisations active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues (EU 28) ........................................................................ 52
Figure 14: Youth involvement in organisations promoting human rights or global development (EU 28) .............................................................................................. 52
Figure 15: Youth involvement in other non-governmental organisations by country (EU 28) 53

Table 1: Typology of transition regimes across Europe ................................................................. 16
Table 2: Typology of industrial relations systems by Jelle Visser .................................................. 20
Table 3: Hypothesised constellations for founding a youth-led SMOs with the focus of employment conditions of early workers ................................................. 29
Table 4: Further examples of youth initiatives within established trade unions .......................... 36
Table 5 Further examples of youth-led SMOs fighting unemployment/precarious work ......... 42
Table 6 Further examples of SMOs fighting for better employment conditions for young employed people in professional and semi-professional fields ..................... 48

Box 1 Youth initiative of a trade union ACV-CSC (Belgium) .......................................................... 33
Box 2 Youth initiative:: FNV Jong (Netherlands) ................................................................. 34
Box 3 Youth initiative: Mladi Plus (Slovenia) ........................................................................... 35
Box 4 Youth-led SMOs: Geração a Rasca (Portugal) ................................................................. 38
Box 5 Youth-led SMOs The Chainworkers Crew (IT) ............................................................... 40
Box 6 Youth-led SMOs: Example 3: The Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Prekäre Lebenslagen — gegen Einkommensarmut und soziale Ausgrenzung e.V. (BAG-PLESA) ............ 41
Box 7 Professional SMO Example 1: Precarious Workers Brigade (UK) ......................... 45
Box 8 SMO Example 2: IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen (Interest Group of Lecturers and Knowledge Workers) (AT) .................................................. 46
Box 9 SMO Example 3: Génération précaire (Precarious generation) (FR) ................................ 47
1 Executive Summary

This paper reviews research on and examples of newly founded, youth-led social movement organisations (SMOs) working to improve employment conditions for young people. It contributes to the preparation of empirical work within Workpackage 7 of the ENLIVEN project, where similar SMOs will be studied in more detail in Spain, Austria and Slovakia (ES, AT, SK).

The paper aims to provide a framework for studying the targeted SMOs across countries and against the backdrop of typologies of youth transition systems and industrial relations systems.

Social movement organisations refer to ‘a complex, or formal organisation which identifies its preferences with a social movement or a counter-movement and attempts to implement those goals.’ (McCarthy and Zald 1973).

The researchers considered three subgroups of recently founded, youth-led SMOs: a) youth organisations of or attached to trade unions, b) organisations campaigning against precarious employment and c) organisations aimed at improving working conditions during the early career years for people in (semi-)professional groups. It has been possible to document the presence of these types of SMOs in a wide range of EU28 countries. Detailed discussions of SMOs include nine examples of SMOs from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and the United Kingdom.

The frequency of their appearance and the strategies applied by the SMOs considered here is expected to be linked to the industrial relations system prevalent in a country, or in one economic sector or region within one country. Countries with corporatist or social-partnership industrial relations systems are probably more fertile ground for this type of initiatives than countries with a state-centred or fragmented industrial relations system that more likely resort to a broader, more politicised approach to industrial relations. However, all hypotheses highlighted require further research in order to be clarified or refuted.

The literature and examples revealed that recently founded, youth-led SMOs develop approaches to public issues, including their specific focus on areas of political contestation, that quickly diffuse across national borders; mobilisation in other locations inspired many local initiatives. Like their accompanying social movements, many SMOs identify themselves as transnational in their purpose and strategic orientation, even when they focus on changes within the local field of industrial relations.

Active participation in youth-led organisations aiming to improve working conditions for people in their early careers (and beyond) is certainly rare, when considering as part of the total population. However, the available evidence indicates that the absolute numbers of SMOs and their associated activists are significant.

Active participation in youth-led SMOs in employment relations can be analysed as one type of voluntary work. Given the high level of skills required in voluntary activity and the multiple tasks and challenges encountered by activists, their participation in this type of organisation can be expected to be highly beneficial, offering them individual opportunities for informal learning.

Beyond individual learning by participation, recently founded youth-led SMOs should be regarded as laboratories producing qualitative knowledge and practical skills. By challenging established
organisations, including trade unions, these organisations expand possibilities for renewing and enlivening structures of interest representation and strategy within industrial relations.
2 Introduction

2.1 The context of the working paper - The ENLIVEN Project

ENLIVEN ('Encouraging Lifelong Learning for an Inclusive and Vibrant Europe') is a research project supported by the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 research framework (Project No. 693989). The project responds to Call YOUNG-3-2015 ('Lifelong learning for young adults: better policies for growth and inclusion in Europe'). Its duration is 36 months, commencing 1st October 2016.

ENLIVEN’s overarching objective is to provide an innovative model and mechanism to support policy debate, policy formation and policy evaluation in lifelong learning, focussing on the needs of today’s young adults, and integrating theoretical and empirical perspectives from social and computer sciences. It will generate an evidence-based analysis of where, when and why policies have been effective, and develop a computer-based intelligent system to improve policy-making.

The project combines expertise from social scientists and computer scientists in leading research institutions in nine countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, United Kingdom); some research tasks will also be undertaken under a subcontract arrangement by researchers in Denmark. The specific objectives of ENLIVEN are to:

- Map and critically assess key elements of programmes implemented at EU, national and regional levels to support access to and participation in adult learning among excluded population groups and those at risk of social exclusion, assess how these have addressed disadvantage, inequality, and social exclusion, and helped overcome barriers to participation, and in what ways participation in education and training benefits the social and economic inclusion of population groups suffering from exclusion and cumulative disadvantage.

- Assess the impact of “system characteristics” (of initial and adult education, the labour market, the economy, and social protection) on aggregate participation rates (overall, and in various segments of adult education markets), and on the distribution of participation (with special reference to disadvantaged young adults and using gender-sensitive approaches).

- Assess the role of lifelong learning in developing a productive, efficient and competitive economy through investigating what learning potential and innovation ability exists within workplaces, what organisational models favour innovation ability and innovative oriented training, and how effective learning actions are.

- Identify and map the nature and availability of data about adult and lifelong learning, and integrate these with new research findings from across the ENLIVEN project and, using data mining, establish a knowledge base for the development of an Intelligent Decision Support System to support policy making;

- Design and implement an Intelligent Decision-making Support System (IDSS), and test how this could adapt to new knowledge and learn from restoring users’ experience interactively.

The ENLIVEN project comprises 11 work packages (WPs) in 4 clusters:
Cluster 1 examines programmes, governance and policies in EU adult learning, looking at the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and disadvantage.

Cluster 2 studies system characteristics to explain country/region-level variation in lifelong learning participation rates, with particular reference to disadvantaged and at-risk groups and to young people.

Cluster 3 investigates the operation and effectiveness of young adults’ learning at and for work, undertaking cross-country comparative organisational and institutional analysis.

Cluster 4 develops and tests an Intelligent Data Support System (IDSS) for evidence-based policy-making and debate applying ‘case-based reasoning’ technologies.

2.2 The current working paper

The current paper reviews research on and examples of newly founded, youth-led social movement organisations (SMOs) working to improve employment conditions (including pay, career progression and learning opportunities) for early career workers and unemployed youth.

It contributes to the preparation of empirical work within Workpackage 7, where similar SMOs will be studied in more detail in three countries (ES, AT, SK). It also prepares for one aspect of the interviews with early career workers in Workpackage 6, where biographical interviews explore activism as an important source for learning experiences.

The paper aims to provide a framework for studying the targeted SMOs across countries. The organisations in question are, on the one hand, expression of social movements, and belong, on the other hand, to the new actors in the employment field, as studied by recent industrial relations research (Cooke and Wood, 2014). Because of the lack of overview on SMOs across the EU28, this paper seeks mainly to clarify whether or not the type of organisation can be found in a broad range of European countries.

By social movement organisations (SMOs), we mean ‘a complex, or formal organisation which identifies its preferences with a social movement or a counter-movement and attempts to implement those goals.’ (McCarthy and Zald (1973: 1218, quoted in McCarthy, 2013)). In the current paper, however, we are also interested in SMOs in cases where only some formal structures (e.g. a legal entity as a friendly society) are in place but not others (e.g. paid personnel).

By newly founded, we refer to organisations founded since 1990, although some might have been previously operating organisations absorbed by the studied ones. While we do not exclude organisations that have ceased to function, we are particularly interested in currently active organisations.

By youth-led, we refer to organisations originally founded by activists mostly within the first 10 years of their occupational careers and generally younger than 40 years of age.

We are interested in SMOs that seek to improve a broad set of conditions constituting ‘decent work’

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1 The terms industrial relations and employment relations are used interchangeable within this text, however, it is acknowledged, that there is a lively debate on the use of this two terms, where industrial relations is sometimes taught to refer in a more explicit way to the collective dimension of the capital – labour conflict while employment relation is thought to refer more to the employment relationship between individual employees and their managers or organisations. Sometimes the term employment relations is proposed for reflecting better the work in the service sector, however, the term industrial relations is also referring to all economic sectors beyond manufacturing.
ENLIVEN - Deliverable 7.1 – Literature review on initiatives to improve early career conditions across EU member states

for early career workers, including both the type of working contract and related social rights and safeguards against social risks (health, retirement, unemployment) and the features of the day-to-day work in the organisation, including recognition as a valued and stable member of the organisation.

To conclude, the paper aims to reflect on a specific group of social movement organisations (SMOs), which are expected to be positioned in the intersection of (a) broad social movements, (b) the field of industrial relations and its established organisations particularly representing employee interests and (c) the political field, respectively, the field of political representation, including various existing formal structures aiming at giving voice to young people.

**Figure 1 Focus of the review against the backdrop of broader related areas of interest**

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

*Political representation (Political parties, interest groups, youth committees ...)*

*Employee interests*

*Employer interests*

*Social Movements*

*Industrial Relations*

**Focus of the paper: Recently founded (challenging)**

*Social Movement Organisations working towards better employment conditions for young workers/employees*

Source: Own description

The SMOs’ activities are understood in the context of periodically increasing and chronically high levels of youth unemployment and high proportions of young people in non-standard or even precarious work. For more than two decades, many countries have suffered from this situation (see Section 2.1). However, even in countries with — by comparison — better conditions in youth labour markets, considerable numbers of young people have difficulty entering promising careers and therefore want to try improving the conditions for early career workers.

Within the field of industrial relations, newly founded youth-led SMOs are regarded as challengers to long-established SMOs representing ‘labour’ such as trade unions or professional organisations. However, they might also have close ties to these more established organisations (e.g. as an attached organisational unit). The organisations are expected to appeal to: (a) business interest organisations, (b) organisations representing workers, (c) specific partners in collective bargaining processes on a sectoral or regional level, (d) political actors either holding office or representing the political oppositions and (e) state agencies responsible for particular aspects of their concerns (e.g. public employment services) (see Section 2.3).
The rise, activity and decline of recently founded, youth-led SMOs aiming at decent work for young employees cannot be studied in isolation, but must be viewed against the backdrop of much broader developments, including the following:

- Recent social movements rallying for better jobs, fair pay and equal opportunities for everyone and calling for a more active role of the state in redistributing wealth, constraining business action and creating jobs. Recent examples for such movements spreading across various European countries (and beyond) include the movements attached to World Social Form (from 2001 onwards), various waves of the movements of the unemployed (with a peak in the late 1990s), various waves of movements fighting against precarious employment (for example, under the ‘EuroMayday’ banner), the ‘Occupy movement’ and other forms of ‘anti-austerity movements’. These movements typically include many young people, overlap partially or cooperate closely with each other and more or less advocate for the improvement of employment opportunities for everyone, including young people.

- The issues of employment, decent work, fair pay and social justice where multiple established organised actors — including the political parties, trade unions, business interest organisations, the churches and many more — constantly press for change. Recently founded SMOs raise their voices in a constantly ongoing, highly contentious debate on the future orientation of the employment and labour market policies.

Recently founded, youth-led SMOs aiming to improve working conditions for early career workers are expected to be deeply rooted in the national industrial relations fields (Pernicka, 2015) and, moreover, employment systems and cultural frames. These contexts can be understood with the help of the cross-country comparative literature on industrial relations, employment systems and welfare state systems. While acknowledging their embeddedness in local arenas, SMOs simultaneously draw on experiences of ‘sister organisations’ in other countries and often portray themselves as members of transnational networks underpinning global movements.

Certainly, when measured against the whole population, only a minority of young adults volunteers do political work in various organisations, including political parties, trade unions or social movement organisations. Estimates (e.g. based on the Eurobarometer or the Adult Education Survey) for the EU28 average oscillate between 5% and 10% depending on the definition of the organisations and the specific age groups. However, the EU Member States have marked differences in the level of volunteering. Overall, youth participation in any form of civic organisation is high and exceeds 50% in many EU-member states (see Section 6.1 for a discussion).

While the first and main part of this review focusses on research of recently founded, youth-led SMOs in employment relations, a second part reviews literature on the biographical significance of participation in activities related to social movements (Giugni, 2004). Particular attention is paid to the learning available in civic activism as an example for volunteer work in general.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the context by discussing: patterns of youth (un-)employment and youth transition systems (see 2.1), types of industrial relations systems (see 2.2) and a explorative framework for analysing the SMOs in question (see 2.3). Section 3 summarises results from the literature reviewed and provides examples for the subtypes of social movement organisations studied (youth initiatives of trade unions; initiatives fighting precarious employment; initiatives claiming better employment conditions for highly educated and professional groups).

Three subsections discuss SMOs attached to trade unions (see 3.2), SMOs fighting precarious employment for young people (see 3.3) and SMOs fighting for better employment conditions of particular (semi-) professional groups. Section 4 reviews some data on youth participation (see 4.1) in civic organisations and summarises results from the literature on learning available in voluntary work and particularly participation in political work. The outlook section offers conclusions and
recommendations for further work in Workpackage 7.

3 The context of recently founded, youth-led social movement organisations in industrial relations

3.1 Comparative analysis of youth transition systems

Social Movement Organisations (SMOs) working to improve employment opportunities for young people respond to the difficulties for young people trying to find decent – or any – gainful work. Consequentially, they should become more significant when youth labour markets (for all or a particular group of young people) have been particularly strained.

However, while there have been several peaks in unemployment, underemployment and non-standard-employment of young people since the early 1990s, conditions in youth labour markets across Europe have never come close to full-employment. Difficulties in finding appropriate employment for young people (18-35 years) has become the expected, not the exceptional, condition (see
While youth labour markets had been strained practically everywhere over the past three decades, remarkable differences in labour market conditions for young people have prevailed between the EU member states (for a longitudinal perspective, see Blossfeld, 2008). Beyond the business circle or the prevalence of a domestic or transnational economic crisis, cross-country differences in levels of youth unemployment reflect countries' overall institutional set up. Therefore, unemployment figures and figures on non-standard employment are presented following a grouping of countries broadly in line with the country typology proposed in (Roosmaa and Saar, 2012), combining aspects of the varieties of capitalism approach, as well as of typologies on welfare systems, employment systems and education systems.

In all European societies, young people are particularly vulnerable to tight labour markets and to declining numbers of jobs offering opportunities for individual development and learning and progressive career pathways (Blossfeld, Klijzing, Mills and Kurz, 2005). Young people are typically more often affected by unemployment, underemployment and non-standard contracts (see Figure 3) or precarious employment conditions. Vulnerability can be explained in a twofold manner, as summarised below.

First, young people with limited work experience are in a disadvantaged position compared to adults of prime working age, who can typically build on considerable occupational experience — a unique source of productivity which is hard to replace by education and costly to nurture in the workplace. Moreover, while prime-age workers are likely to have found their niche where they can excel or at least survive, many young people compete on equal ground for a broad variety of jobs, with only generic and formal criteria for matching a young person to a job. Finally, employment law, informal seniority rules (‘last in, first out’) and the value of organisation-specific, tacit knowledge put newcomers at a disadvantage compared to established workers when firms resort to staff cuts.

By accepting much lower wages or poor employment conditions, young people might overcome their disadvantaged position, but they then enter a vicious circle where newcomers threaten to undercut established levels of pay and employment rights and possibly damage future collective employment prospects. Acquiring much higher levels of skills and qualification compared to previous generations may be of some help to enter the labour market at the expense of older workers; however, at the same time, it fuels credential competition within the current generation, with little to gain for anyone but the high achievers and much to lose for everyone falling behind in the educational race (Di Stasio, Bol and Van de Werfhorst, 2016). While young people have been disadvantaged practically everywhere in the past decades, significant variations in young people’s labour market prospects result from differences in countries’ economic strength, the business cycle and also the level of impact of the economic crisis. However, as already mentioned, existing institutional arrangements of industrial relations and employment systems continue to greatly impact young people’s opportunities for entering decent work.

Second, steady income from gainful work would allow most young people to successfully complete other important transitions in young adulthood: notably moving out of their family’s home and living on their own, moving in with a partner and considering parenthood. Delays in access to stable and sufficiently well-paid work undercut developmental routes and result in prolonged phases of dependency on parents and extended family. For their level of economic wellbeing, young people

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2 The country typology has also informed the technical proposal of the ENLIVEN project. It will applied with some required variations across the ENLIVEN workpackages and will refined based on the research findings during the project’s life time.
without access to regular work depend on their families’ ability and readiness to contribute to their living costs. Young people who do not have a benevolent family to serve as a safety net are particularly vulnerable (Osgood, Foster, Flanagan and Ruth, 2005). However, during extended transition phases, public assistance may effectively ease the dependency of young people on their families and ameliorate the consequences of limited family resources. Welfare state arrangements regulate access to unemployment benefits or social benefits, to health care and to affordable housing. Moreover, the availability of free or low fee educational opportunities (including higher education) marks another cornerstone of welfare state support for young people. Beyond overall provision of assistance, it is important whether or not welfare states accept young people as beneficiaries in their own right or provide only conditional support in case the family of origin is deemed unfit to provided the required means. In the later case, for whatever reasons, young people might not receive support from their families, however, neither from the welfare state, given that the families are considered as wealthy enough to support their offspring.

Differences in youth labour markets, patterns of school-to-work transition and norms of early adulthood departure from the family home to starting one’s own family reflect distinct ‘institutional packages’ developed from education systems, employment systems, industrial relations systems, types of welfare states and types of institutionalised gender arrangements, including the division of unpaid housekeeping, family and care work between men and women (Mills, Blossfeld, Buchholz, Hofäcker, Bernardi and Hofmeister, 2008).

One frequently cited approach for synthesising the various dimensions has been put forward by Andreas Walther (2006, Walther, Stauber and Pohl, 2013), who has proposed a typology of institutionalised youth transition environments, anchored in a welfare state typology outlined by (Gallie and Paugam, 2000). The typology can bring together a wide range of dimensions (see Table 1) into four regime types (universalistic, employment-centred, liberal, sub-protective). However, it pays comparatively little attention to employment and industrial relations systems and the importance of vocational education and occupational labour markets. Moreover, Eastern European states have not integrated effectively into the typology, leaving all new member states in one ‘mixed’ additional group, instead of positioning the regimes under either one of the existing or in clearly delineated particular types (Saar, Unt and Kogan, 2008). Nevertheless, the typology provides a good starting point and can be linked to other country typologies in research on adult learning (Roosmaa and Saar, 2012) and youth transitions (Eurofound, 2014).
### Table 1: Typology of transition regimes across Europe

<table>
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<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Dimensions of ‘support’ (in a broad sense)</th>
<th>Criteria of ‘success’</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public expenditure for education/families and children/active labour market policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universalistic</td>
<td>Denmark, Finland, Not selective, Flexible Standards (mixed)</td>
<td>State, Open, High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment regime: State; Social security: Open</td>
<td>Social security: Low risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment: Female employment: High</td>
<td>Educational focus: (Pre-)vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country: Denmark, Finland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment-centred</td>
<td>Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands</td>
<td>Selective, High standards (dual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment: Female employment: High</td>
<td>Transition policies: (Pre-)vocational training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country: Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>Ireland, UK</td>
<td>Principally not selective, Low standards (mixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td>Transition policies: ‘Any status’ (work, education or training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country: Ireland, UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-protective</td>
<td>Italy, Portugal, Spain</td>
<td>Not Selective, Low standards and coverage (school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td>Transition policies: High (Informal work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country: Italy, Portugal, Spain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-socialist transformatio n societies</td>
<td>Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia</td>
<td>Principally not selective, Standards in process of transformation (mixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td>Transition policies: High (Informal work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training: Female employment: Female employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country: Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Eurostat data on expenditures for education/families and children/active labour market policies in 2007 as % of GDP

Source: Walther et al. (2013)
Figure 2 Unemployment rates (ILO-definition) of the 18 to 25 year olds across EU28, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland 1992-2016 – in % of the employed
ENLIVEN - Deliverable 7.1 – Literature review on initiatives to improve early career conditions across EU member states

Source: Eurostat Dissemination Data Base; own graphs
3.2 Industrial relation systems

National traditions and institutional patterns of industrial relations are very important for both young peoples’ chances in the labour market as well as the functions of SMOs fighting to improve employment conditions for early career workers.

While a single typology can hardly cover the rich and nuanced nature of industrial relations within one country and across sectors within one country, there have been multiple attempts to develop pragmatic tools by proposing classifications of industrial relations systems. Jelle Visser in the European Commission’s report on industrial relations in 2008 (European Commission, 2009) proposes a typology, (reproduced in Table 3) that builds on various authors. The typology identifies four main industrial relations traditions covering mainly the EU-15 and it subsumes most new member states under one additional heading; however, it is stated, that the author himself find this unsatisfactory.

A typology of the industrial relations systems of the new EU Member States are further developed in a chapter of the European Commission’s Report on Industrial Relations 2012 (European Commission, 2013) and particularly by (Bohle and Greskovits, 2012). Authors identify ‘a neoliberal type in the
Baltic states, an embedded neoliberal type in the Visegrád countries, and a neo-corporatist type in Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania differ also considerably from the aforementioned three groups (Delteil and Kirov, 2017). Complementary analysis can be found in (Myant, 2014, Myant, 2016, Myant and Drahokoupil, 2011)

Table 2: Typology of industrial relations systems by Jelle Visser

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>North</th>
<th>Centre-west</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>West</th>
<th>Centre-east</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Production regime</strong></td>
<td>Coordinated market economy</td>
<td>Statist market</td>
<td>Liberal market economy</td>
<td>Statist or liberal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare regime</strong></td>
<td>Universalistic</td>
<td>Segmented (status-oriented, corporatist)</td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>Segment or residual?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment regime</strong></td>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Dualistic</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial relations regime</strong></td>
<td>Organised corporatism</td>
<td>Social partnership</td>
<td>Polarised/state-centred</td>
<td>Liberal pluralism</td>
<td>Fragmented/state-centred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power balance</strong></td>
<td>Labour-oriented</td>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>Alternating</td>
<td>Employer-oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal level of bargaining</strong></td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Variable/unstable</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bargaining style</strong></td>
<td>Integrating</td>
<td>Conflict oriented</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Acquiscent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of SP in public policy</strong></td>
<td>Institutionalised</td>
<td>Irregular/politicised</td>
<td>Rare/event-driven</td>
<td>Irregular/politicised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of the state in IR</strong></td>
<td>Limited (mediator)</td>
<td>Shadow of hierarchy</td>
<td>Frequent intervention</td>
<td>Non-intervention</td>
<td>Organiser of transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee representation</strong></td>
<td>Union based/high coverage</td>
<td>Dual system/high coverage</td>
<td>Variable (*)</td>
<td>Union based/small coverage</td>
<td>Union based/small coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countries</strong></td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Belgium Germany</td>
<td>Greece Spain France Italy Portugal</td>
<td>Ireland Malta Cyprus UK</td>
<td>Bulgaria Czech Republic Estonia Latvia Lithuania Hungary Poland Romania Slovakia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(*) In France employee representation in firms incorporates both principles, in Spain and Portugal it is dualist, in Italy and Greece it is merged with the unions but based on statutory rights.

Source: Visser in European Commission (2009), slight changes by the authors

While this section cannot fully introduce the typology, some of its key dimensions help when discussing the strongly differing contexts for new SMOs between various countries.

Production regimes depend on the availability and strength of employer interest organisations and their interaction with trade unions. Economies can be described as coordinated (requiring a strong interest aggregation among the employers), statist (where the state intervention compensates for a lack of coordinating power) or liberal (where markets are less organised by the purposeful coordination of employers).

Industrial relation regimes differ by region. In Nordic countries with ‘organised corporatism’ (with trade unions dominating) and the ‘social partnership’ model (balanced power structure), both employers and labour are organised in strong, centralised and widely encompassing interest organisations. Binding collective agreements can be achieved and typically cover all organisations within a sector. In polarised and state-centred systems, both the employers and the workers are less centralised and more scattered; moreover, there is less space for achieving a labour-employer compromise and it calls in more state intervention for strike agreements. The ‘West’ is marked by a ‘liberal pluralism’, referring to scattered interest representation with a low degree of centralisation, in particular among the employers, which makes collective agreements beyond the company level
practically unachievable. Industrial relations regimes are mirrored by the levels of organised workers and organisations integrated in business interest organisations (see Figure 4). They are further expressed by the achieved collective agreement coverage, which is high in the ‘Nordic’, the ‘Centre-West’ and — although achieved in a different way — in the ‘Southern’ cluster, yet, low (with the exception of Romania) in the ‘West’ and the ‘Centre-East’ cluster.

Industrial relations regimes are also connected to different levels of trade union membership as expressed in the union density rate (see Figure 4). Indicators on union density are difficult to obtain in many countries, while in others comprehensive data on trade union membership are collected (for example, in the UK (Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2017); for an overview on available data see Visser (2016), an analysis based on the Visser data set for the OECD countries is provided in (OECD, 2017). Data on union membership are politically sensitive as they might be used to undercut the legitimacy of trade unions’ activities. It is also important to note that union membership typically differ between sectors, with higher density in manufacturing and all sectors of public employment, including public administration, education or health. Differences in trade union membership by gender, educational attainment, migration background, type of employment contract and age reflect partly the distribution of workers across economic sectors with high/low levels of union representation (see (OECD, 2017)). Union policies towards particular groups of employees, however, are likely to have its own share in explaining different levels of membership across socio-economic groups. While union membership is declining across the EU28, it is still important to see that trade unions manage to preserve their power within the industrial relation field in various countries (Kelly, 2015).
Another indicator is the level of bargaining. In the ‘Nordic’ and ‘Centre-west’ cluster, collective bargaining mainly occurs on a sectoral level; this substantially adds to the coordination within one sector and across all economic sectors. In contrast, in the ‘West’, bargaining takes place only on the company level. Mixed patterns are to be found in the ‘South’ and the ‘Centre-east’ cluster.

The public role of social partners in policymaking (e.g. in parliament, in various committees and agencies) is broadly institutionalised and fully legitimate in the ‘Nordic’ and ‘Centre West’ cluster. In the ‘South’ cluster, social partner activism is understood as exceptional and conflict-oriented. In the ‘West’, social partners rarely intervene in public affairs beyond the field of industrial relations.

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3 Data for employer density 2015 or latest year before are taken from OECD 2017; year of references are the following: 2008 in Greece, Hungary, Spain and the United Kingdom; 2009 for Korea; 2010 for Denmark; 2011 for Estonia, Germany, Ireland and Portugal; 2012 for Belgium, France, Italy, Lithuania and Luxembourg; 2013 for Iceland, Latvia, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia; 2014 for the Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden; and 2015 for the Netherlands
Bargaining styles could be described as either integrating, conflict-oriented or acquiescent; styles are partly reflected by the frequency of strikes (see Figure 5; for an interpretation see Vandaele (2016)).

Figure 5: Frequency of strikes in the EU28, Norway and Switzerland – 1990-1999, 2000-2009

Countries’ industrial relations systems are by no means homogenous — one can find the ‘unlikely cases’ of sectors (or regions) with highly organised social partners on both sides of the industrial divide, even in countries where, in general, little collective bargaining takes place beyond the firm level. In a similar vein, even in ideal-type, social-partner-corporatist countries, one may come across subsectors, field of activities, and types of employment contract, which are effectively excluded from the country’s characteristic standard of industrial relations. While it is necessary to be prepared for the exception, it is also important to acknowledge the effects of a country’s broadly institutionalised norms established to treat these exceptional fields: fields not covered by the typical approach may more likely, over time, be reformed to match the most broadly established type of industrial relations approach, such as by closing an existing gap in collective bargaining or by dismantling a strong employer organisation in the case of a liberal system.

Recently founded, youth-led SMOs can experience highly different environments from one industrial relations system cluster to another. Here are the examples of Austria, the United Kingdom and Poland.

In Austria, any new SMO in the industrial relations field finds itself in a supportive environment

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4 Beyond conflict orientation, the frequency of strikes is influenced also by other factors, including the strength of the unions and whether or not a government friendly to trade unions has power.

because representing employee interests is a legitimate and institutionalised endeavour (which of course does not preclude hostile reactions of, for example, employers). Austria has many institutionalised patterns available for improving the conditions of particular groups. For example, negotiations can focus on expanding collective agreements to cover specific group of employees previously not covered. Negotiations can demand but the group can demand employers to end certain practices of non-standard employment. At the same time, any SMO needs to find its place and its allies in a highly centralised and stratified field of trade unions serving exclusively their clientele; a central organisation (Österreichische Gewerkschaftsbund) authoritatively decides on conflicts over which union should represent specific groups of employees. Therefore, SMO’s representatives cannot circumvent a union in charge of a particular field and turn to another union more sympathetic to their cause. While Austria’s industrial relations is well equipped to solve problems for specific groups of employees, SMOs might also find their activities constrained by powerful trade unions fiercely defending their territory.

In the UK, any new SMO might easily find its place in a pluralistic field of employee interest organisations. However, a new organisation may have difficulty demonstrating a unique mission, because various organisations try to accomplish quite similar goals. The UK has many more trade unions than Austria that can be chosen as allies; however, they have comparatively weak positions in the industrial relations field. Any solution beyond the level of a single organisation is difficult to achieve because employers are typically not organised in centralised organisations making binding decisions for their employees. Youth-led SMOs in the employment field cannot rely on a general perception that organising with employees’ interests in mind is either a fully legitimate or a necessary thing to do and that organisations representing employees/ organisations can legitimately engage in a broad range of political issues.

In Poland, as outlined by (Mrozowicki, Karolak and Krasowska, 2017), despite the pressing problem of youth unemployment and a staggering high proportion of young people in precarious employment, any new SMO faces multiple challenges. After the ‘shock therapy’ transformed a state-led economy to a liberal market economy, rebuilding the industrial relations field has not come very far, no employer organisations will enter collective bargaining and parts of the scattered and politicised trade unions are supporting centre-right political forces. In the transition years, the very idea of a need for and the legitimacy of organising employee interests had been strongly delegitimised; the post-transition trade unions seemed reminders of an overthrown regime. In all Eastern European countries, the trade unions’ role in actively pursuing the worker’s interest had to be reinvented, because Communist-period unions were mainly restricted to providing various social service to their members (Myant, 2017). Established trade unions, as well as new SMOs, needed to discover strategies for framing social problems worthwhile of collective action, organising members, attracting media coverage (with the slogans of ‘junk contracts’ or ‘the precariat’), gaining public support and attracting support by policymakers, often of the centre-right. Trade unions may invest heavily in implementing national and European Union laws to advance workers’ rights; for example, lifting a ban on organising employees with non-standard contracts (achieved in 2015 only). This has been an established strategy for many Western European unions with in-depth legal expertise. Without industrial relations capable of forging compromises, new SMOs may need to become protest organisations using strong rhetoric to portray their cause as addressing scandalous conditions that require immediate action; this may further polarise the political landscape. However, they also need to build broad social alliances in a conservative country; for example, supporting the protest of the nurses and midwives in 2011 for better employment conditions.

To conclude, across the EU-28 member states, young people experience quite different employment conditions during their early career phases, which in turn reflect quite different industrial relation
systems and differences in the balance of power between organised capital and labour. Across countries, the probability of being approached by and becoming member of a trade union varies a lot. Young people are much more likely to become part of contentious practices as demonstrations or strikes in some countries than in others. In consequences, across countries, young people are expected to differ in their affinity to enter established organisation of employee interest organisations or contribute to the establishment of new SMOs.

### 3.3 Framework assumptions for analysing recently founded, youth-led SMOs in the field of employment relations

The following section considers the anticipated shared characteristics of recently founded, youth-led social movement organisations working towards better employment conditions for young workers. This project’s literature review on social movement organisations and its desk research to identify examples of SMOs were used to form the following characteristics.

The three subgroups of SMOs studied in this paper (youth organisation of/attached to trade unions, SMOs fighting precarious employment, SMOs working towards better employment conditions of highly educated young people/young professionals) are perceived as:

- being relatively small and with very limited funds, relying predominantly on the voluntary work of their activists, limited non-representative membership;
- being a challenger in the industrial relations field, fighting for visibility;
- requiring the cooperation of similar-minded, new SMOs for sharing available resources and attracting more attention from potential audiences/members;
- depending on cooperation with established players in the industrial relations field or a political party (circumventing the industrial relations field) in order to have any direct impact;
- building an empowering, tightly knit social environment for their activists, who are likely to profit personally from their commitment, even when making little progress for the SMO’s cause;
- relying on strategies mainly focused on agenda setting and public relations, playing the media professionally, engaging in symbolic action, and attracting media attention that brings them into contact with powerful representatives of business, labour or politics because they cannot organise any full-fledged industrial actions.

Figure 6 outlines the assumptions on the SMOs under study. They are challengers among challengers in the industrial relations field. In their work, they address both the established trade unions and the established employer associations. They may try to be heard in the relevant arenas of collective bargaining (on sectoral/regional level or on company level, respectively). They may address representatives of the political field, representatives of the ruling party (or parties) and of the opposition parties alike. In many cases, they may address parts of the state bureaucracy or semi-autonomous agencies (e.g. the Ministry of Education, the Public Employment Service). They may address single employer organisations, attack them for poor decisions or praise them for good

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6 Only in rather exceptional cases, as observed in the Southern European countries in the years after the ‘Great Recession’ of 2008, newly found SMOs may – by cooperating in large alliances – become part of a political movement strong enough to gain broad electoral support (see Morlino, Leonardo and Raniolo, Francesco <<The>> Impact of the Economic Crisis on South European Democracies.2017).
practice. They may reach out to co-workers and their families. They may work towards attracting the attention of broad elements of the public. Typically, they will apply a conventional, but often creative repertoire of protest, refraining from transgressing the laws in any significant manner or violent action of any kind\(^7\).

**Figure 6: Recently founded, youth-led SMO within the field of industrial relations**

A broad literature considers the conditions leading up to an attempt to create a new social movement organisation.

One particularly politically contentious point concerns whether trade unions are likely to ‘trade in’ the needs of the next generations in order to serve the interests of ‘prime-age male members’ (also referred to as ‘median members’). The contentious debate represents poor employment conditions for young employees as if they directly results from trade unions’ neglect (and not as the outcome of the overall industrial relations system and its power differentials between capital and labour). While rational choice models imply that trade unions cannot but serve the particular interests of most of their employees, empirical research on trade unions show that many of them take a keen interest in the affinity of young people, try to improve their situation and apply extended organising strategies to bring new generations of young workers into their organisations, both as officials and as simple members. Only after debunking a generalised assumption that established, employee interest organisations fail to advance the needs of the younger generation, can one properly address cases of conflicting interests within trade unions and the possibility that the interests of young employees are exchanged for other goals.

\(^7\) As stated in Hefler (2017), Hefler, Günter (2017). *Ethical Procedures (Part B)- Further aspects with regard to research on social movement organization in WP7. (Deliverable 11.3). H2020. ENLIVEN. the field work of Workproject 7 will cover only organisations applying a conventional repertoire of contention.*
While this paper does not seek to provide a detailed discussion of the reason for the rise of new SMOs in the industrial relations field, Table 3 summarises the ideal conditions under which the foundation of specific SMOs by and for young workers aiming at better employment conditions are likely to occur. The heuristic typology refers to three dimensions:

1) The strength, the power and the impact of the employee organisations in shaping employment conditions within the specific national and sectoral context vary just as established trade unions have different levels of power, from weak to strong.

2) The sensitivity to the particular needs and difficulties of early career workers varies because of the empirically open question whether established employee interest organisations take seriously the concerns of young workers. However, trade unions may simply lack the power to effectively support young workers, even when they are highly sympathetic to their particular aims.

3) The (occupational) identity of young workers may have already developed a sector-specific, more narrowly defined, stable identity (such as a metal worker, a nurse, or as a future doctor). Or they may lack such an identity, having not yet found the desired sector or even any niche in the employment system, oscillating between different jobs in different sectors, combining education with various work commitments. As ‘workers in transition’, members of the latter group share various common interests and concerns. However, they do not correspond to a sector-specific logic (and even less to a firm-specific approach) which is often important for trade union’s strategies. For organising ‘workers in transition’, trade unions partially apply more open – more political – frameworks of interest representation; they target groups at the margins rather than the established core of the workforce in each sector. However, instead of including the representation of precarious workers within the work of established unions, the creation of new (intersectoral) organisational units (for example, trade unions representing precarious workers only) is often the chosen solution.

When employee interest organisations are quite sensitive to the needs of the next generations within their sectors, the following scenarios arise:

**Constellation A:** When employee interest representation is strong and young workers are firmly anchored in the particular sector, trade unions are expected to be able to attract young workers both as activists and members, and young workers are likely to join the existing organisations or their youth panels with less inclination to ‘do their own thing’ by founding an SMO outside established structures.

**Constellation B:** Strong trade unions might find it difficult to organise young workers who are currently not firmly attached to a sector or occupation. For dealing with young workers in transitional positions, one would expect either trade unions to create broader, less specific organisational forms, organising young workers who currently fall between the tracks. Alternatively, young workers may find it important to create an organisation of their own, focussing exclusively on young workers in transitional or precarious positions. Trade unions may cooperate with or even co-opt these independent structures later on.

**Constellation C:** When trade unions are supportive to young employees but because of poor positioning in industrial relations cannot effectively support the cause of early career workers in their sector, they might find it difficult to organise young workers. The latter are expected to create sector-specific SMOs on their own in order to earn public attention for their course, putting pressure on policy makers to pay attention to their course. Cooperation with established trade unions is expected to take place.

**Constellation D:** When trade unions find it difficult to effectively support the aims of young workers,
they may find it particularly difficult to reach out to groups of young workers in transitional positions. Particular SMOs are expected to be created by young activists, which address the hardships of large groups of young people in precarious positions, non-standard jobs or unemployment. Newly founded SMOs are expected to be characterised by a broader, more politicised agenda. As in Constellation C, they are likely to cooperate with established trade unions.

In the more exceptional case that a particular trade union is unresponsive to the needs of early career workers or particular groups at the margins of their field, the following constellations are envisioned:

**Constellation E:** When a strong trade union fails to address the needs of all or a particular group of early career workers in a particular sector, young workers may found their own SMO, making their cause heard and challenge the legitimacy of the incumbent organisation and try to change the established organisation’s behaviour. Therefore, relationships between established trade unions and recent SMOs may sometimes be adversarial. One example for this constellation is the IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen (Interest Group of Lecturers and Knowledge Workers) (AT), where a strong trade union did not adequately represent a large group of temporarily employed, poorly paid readers in the Austrian university sector, leading to the creation of an SMO in 1996.

**Constellation F:** Strong employee interest organisations might fail to respond in a sensitive way to workers in transitional positions because they might be perceived as outside the scope of the organisation’s core activities. For example, the growing number of self-employed people used to be perceived as being beyond the reach of traditional trade unions, supporting dependent workers only. Similar to Constellation B, SMOs might be founded, however, with a more adversarial relationship between established trade unions and challenging SMOs.

**Constellation G:** In the case of weak and non-supportive trade unions, early career workers of a particular sector may found SMOs to campaign for their cause and to attract the attention of policymakers able to unilaterally impose changes in an occupational field in favour of the affected young employees and thus circumventing both the employee and the employer interest organisations.

**Constellation H:** In the case of weak and non-supportive trade unions, workers in transitional positions may found their own SMOs; however, like Constellation D, they apply a much broader and more politicised strategy, support the general cause of the ‘younger generation’ and pay little attention to the established industrial relations field in their particular sector. Trade unions may be considered inappropriate as an ally and come under attack for contributing to a difficult situation.
Table 3: Hypothesised constellations for founding a youth-led SMOs with the focus of employment conditions of early workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Resources/power/impact of employee organisations –</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) Sensitivity to early career workers/marginalised workers</td>
<td>supportive</td>
<td>(A) Activity within established organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Identity/occupational profile of young workers/employee</td>
<td>Sector-specific/narrow/stable</td>
<td>Overlapping/broad/fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-supportive</td>
<td>(E) SMOs</td>
<td>(F) SMOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own description

To sum up, while recently founded, youth-led SMO working towards better employment conditions of young people are likely to share many features, they are expected to differ in their strategies reflecting the differences in their environments, notably the differences in the national fields of industrial relations. Moreover, depending on the groups of young employees represented by the SMOs, the organisations’ strategies are expected to differ even within one and the same context.

4 Examples of recently founded, youth-led SMOs

Young people all over Europe participate in initiatives and campaigns, in social movements and are active in grassroots initiatives. Young people are often not only key participants in these movements, but also at the vanguard. Young people actively mobilising for change have been notable during many crises, such as in the peace, anti-war and environmental movements of the 1960s and 70s as well as recent global justice and anti-austerity movements. However, young people are not only active in progressive movements but also in conservative, fundamentalist and right-wing initiatives.

Social movements of the 21st century are also often started by a younger generation, with diverse motivations. Activism in young people is triggered by the number of social problems affecting youth directly and disproportionately, such as unemployment and precarious employment or the lack of affordable housing. Social movements include well-qualified young people protesting a lack of career opportunities and the austerity system in many European countries (Estanque and Costa, 2012). Students and graduates engage in social movements because austerity and neoliberal policies increasingly threaten their educational prospects and chances in the labour market (Da Paz Campos Lima and Artiles, 2013). A second group of protesters are young people who face precarious
working conditions or unemployment and those with poor access to the labour market, such as migrants. Although it seems unlikely that precarious workers would become involved in protests, it is a means by which they can engage in social mobilisation, making the most of their access to the political system and discursive opportunities regarding their visibility, the resonance and legitimacy of their identities and their demands within the public domain (Della Porta, 2011).

However, youth engagement in SMOs cannot only be understood as an expression of worsening economic and social conditions but also an expression of meta-political motivation, reflecting the degree of dissatisfaction with the responses of the political system to economic and social problems and the function of democracy (Da Paz Campos Lima and Artiles, 2013). A main reason for young people to become engaged is to enable them to actively participate in making the world a better place, as well as to belong to a group that shares common values and ideas (Murer, 2011). Other reasons for the strong involvement of young people in social movements include the fact that young people have fewer responsibilities and more free time to become actively involved in social movements, as well as being connected to social networks, such as within universities, that can provide an important basis for mobilisation. They are also more familiar with and skilled in using modern technology, which is becoming increasingly important in political protest contexts (Fominaya, 2012).

Recent social movements respond strongly to explicitly non-national but transnational frameworks of action (e.g. World Social Forum, Euro-MayDay, Occupy). The globalisation of protest supports international exchange, helping new grassroots movements to benefit from joint campaigns, the exchange of good practice, the invention of new ideas and new worldviews that can be integrated within the national context (Tarrow, 2005). Many recent movements consider themselves part of worldwide protests, also creating more visibility for the cause of the movement, as well as exchanging information and co-operating to use time effectively (e.g. joint days of action) (Baumgarten, 2013).

However, this does not imply that the nation-state loses importance. SMOs direct their claims mainly towards actors in national arenas and within national industrial relations systems. Because nation-states have specific policies (e.g. levels of state intervention in industrial relations and social welfare systems), historically developed political constellations and unique structures of civil society, any analysis of social movements’ activities must also consider the nation-states (Baumgarten, 2013).

Despite technological developments creating new opportunities for distant cooperation, social movements are mostly organised as local activist groups that, over the long-term, have developed specific subcultures and internal processes of interaction that include specific practices, values and narratives (Johnston, 2009).

Young people’s employment also has an impact on their political participation. Employment is a sphere of life in which people acquire an understanding of the practices of the world and in which they live through socialisation processes; therefore, employment clearly helps form political opinions and influences political behaviours (Gaxie 2002). Moreover, the workplace offers experiences that can help the young person to acquire capabilities and competences useful for political participation (Giugni and Lorenzini, 2010).

Following this argument, young unemployed people are less likely to be involved in social movements because they may lack resources (e.g. money, education, contacts, skills) and fear an unstable situation, with all the implications of the risk of poverty and potential stigmatisation. Moreover, they often have a lower degree of political interest and lower levels of trust in political institutions. (Giugni and Lorenzini, 2010).
However, political activity or inactivity is affected by social class as well as by employment status — unemployed and/or precarious workers are not a homogenous group. Their socio-economic background, as well as their level of politicisation, their family background, interpersonal relations or their involvement in voluntary associations and networks are strongly related to involvement in social movements. For example, the civic voluntary model points to the role of social capital, e.g. the role played by people’s involvement in associations that increase their level of civic skills, political efficacy and political knowledge. Those integrated in associational networks are more likely to participate. (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). While some studies consider those in precarious employment similar to the unemployed, Giugni and Lorenzini (2010) argue that the young people in precarious employment are more politically involved than unemployed or regularly employed young people (Giugni and Lorenzini, 2010). However, one should not assume that unemployed people always participate less in social movements; for example, in the Geneva region, a survey found practically no difference between the employed and the unemployed with regard to participation in social movement activities (Giugni and Lorenzini, 2017).

4.1 Youth initiatives within established trade unions

Trade unions have many roles relating to young employees. They must respond to organisations who approach them, integrate them as members, attract individuals as active representatives and socialise new generations into patterns of organised industrial action. For many trade unions, organising young workers is no simple task. When young peoples’ occupational identities are not firmly rooted within a specific occupation, sector or organisation, then young people have lower unionisation rates than for adults (Blanchflower, 2007). Many unions have fewer young members than older, thus leading to ageing unions (Vandaele, 2010). Sometimes deteriorating employment conditions are attributed to the trade unions, although they may simply lack the power to effectively fight employer’s decisions to undercut existing norms. Perhaps employers cannot coordinate and agree to restrain particular employers who divert from established formal or informal employment norms.

Research reveals possible reasons for young people’s lack of inclination to join a trade union. Individualisation and the declining significance of collectivism and a general decline in political engagement may be a reason (Waddington and Kerr, 2002). However, a critique of this explanation notes that individualisation does not necessarily imply a declining interest in social causes. Although young people might be less likely to have long-term membership in established organisations, other forms of engagement in civic activity seem to co-exist with trade unionism rather than replace it. Moreover, there is little evidence that young workers hold a negative attitudes towards trade unions (Vandaele, 2010). Another explanation is that because of declining levels of trust in existing political institutions and democratic processes, young people prefer to become involved in more autonomous social movement activities instead of entering existing social movement organisations such as trade unions or political parties (Fominaya, 2012).

A third reason for the lower involvement of young workers in unions is their high level of unemployment in many European countries or their precarious work situations (short-term and flexible contracts, frequent job change). Also, young people often work in sectors such as hospitality or retail in which trade unions have less representation than in traditional sectors such as manufacturing. (Keune, 2015)

Trade unions across Europe have increased efforts to become visible to young people, to organise young people, and to better represent their interests in collective bargaining and industrial action (Keune, 2015). Young people are often a key target of outreach that seeks to respond to the more
diverse employment conditions outside a standard work contract (Pernicka and Aust, 2007). This involves setting up structures to represent young workers, such as youth committees. Youth initiatives within unions are targeting workers in their early years of gainful employment, irrespective of the economic sector. (Hodder and Kretsos, 2015) However, these structures often lack financial resources and staff and may offer limited possibilities within the union decision-making structures (Gumbrell-McCormic and Hyman, 2013, Vandaele, 2010). In other cases, trade unions may closely cooperate or even co-opt initiatives founded by young people.

Youth involvement in trade union activities include the following examples. Many unions, such as the Belgian ACV-CSC, establish youth committees and youth departments that actively include young people in the union’s formal structure (see Example 1). In 2012, the trade union federation of the Netherlands, FNV, included a separate organisation of young people as a full trade union (FNV Jong), aiming to represent the specific interests of young workers (see Example 2). Slovenia has a different approach with the Mladi plus organised as both an independent trade union and a youth organisation (see Box 3).
Box 1 Youth initiative of a trade union ACV-CSC (Belgium)

ACV-CSC (Algemeen Vakverbond/Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens) – YOug CSC

Year of foundation: 1970
Youth department since 1970
Year of disruption: continuing
State/region: Belgium

http://www.jobetudiant.be/ [latest access: 4th of September 2017]

Belgium’s major trade union confederations have, since the 1940s, worked with youth issues. The ACV-CSC was organised in close collaboration with the Christian Youth Movement KAJ-JOC (Katholieke arbeidersjongeren/Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne). In 1959, the ACV-CSC announced its first youth programme, demanding cultural leave for young employees and the establishment of youth election committees. In the 1970s the ACV-SCS set up a youth department starting to organise youth – no matter if still in education or already working, because they were considered the future of the union. Regional branches created youth committees to increase youth participation by providing union-related education and training. Since 1999, students and graduates are offered free union memberships within the campaign ‘Enter’ (Pulignano and Doerflinger, 2014).

Union officials only working on youth-related issues involve young people in the union’s structure through youth committees and a youth department. There are two national representatives (one for the country’s Flemish and one for the French speaking part) and at least one regional youth representative in every province. The national and regional representatives of each language zone meet regularly to coordinate the youth work (Pulignano and Doerflinger, 2014).

Recently the union focused on young workers in temporary contracts, programmes for highly-educated young people and services for working students. A main challenge is the many young people employed in temporary agency work contracts. This mainly affects newcomers on the Belgian labour market in their transition from school to work. Temporary agency jobs mostly include workplaces regularly; union representatives in workplace have difficulties to reach these young people and/or pay more attention to permanent staff. As an activity, ACV-CSC and the Catholic Youth Movement KAJ published a ‘Black book on temporary agency work’ (Zwartboek Interimactie) asking ‘Is dit nu de modern Arbeidsmarkt?’ (Is this the modern labour market?) (KAJ vzw, 2013). It aims to increase public awareness of the situation of young agency workers and tackles problems and societal consequences of temporary agency work. It includes general texts on temporary agency work, calls for action, testimonials and statements by young temporary workers on their current situation and experiences. The campaign was supported by a website (http://interimactie.be/) and events in different cities. The campaign gained media attention and raised awareness in Belgium; however, it did not result in any observable, immediate political action to improve the situation of young workers in temporary agencies (Pulignano and Doerflinger, 2014).

Source: Own summary
The trade union FNV Jong has its roots in a network for young trade union members of FNV, established in the 1950s. The Network Jongeren still exists and serves within the Netherlands' Trade Union Federation as a cross-sectoral network that organises members from different sectors working on youth issues. The FNV decision-making structures do not have representation from Network Jongeren, which has created its own decision-making structure (parliament) and often collaborates with other (still existing) networks within the FNV, such as migrants, women, citizens and pink (LGBT). It has no fixed budget, but is supported by two FNV policy officers (European Federation of Building and Woodworkers EFBWW, 2016).

Since 2012, FNV Jong was established as a full trade union and a member of the confederation FNV with about 2800 members, starting at the age of 15 years. They aim to create awareness within the trade union movements about specific interests, positions and perceptions of young people and to recruit members at younger ages. The FNV Jong provides individual support and is active in topics such as promoting decent work-training contracts, combating youth unemployment, improving workers’ rights in flexible employment contracts, high quality and reasonable priced education, good pensions for new generations and combating age discrimination among the youth. However, the FNV still has debates on whether an autonomous youth trade union is better than the previous youth network (Keune and Tros, 2014).

The FNV also focuses on the fight for the right of young workers (between 18 and 23 years old) to receive ‘adult’ salaries, because young workers’ salaries are often only half of adult salaries. The youth network organised a campaign including a survey among young employees, a petition via Facebook and actions such as sit-ins at McDonalds, storming of the Social-Economic Council to deliver a big diaper to the chairman of the employers’ association or handing over a petition to the Minister of Social Affairs (European Federation of Building and Woodworkers EFBWW, 2016). Another campaign of the youth network was on the lack of jobs for young people in the Netherlands - ‘Jongeren wille echte banen!’ (Young people want real jobs, 2014). Based on interviews with young adults, a book-length report describes the precarious labour market situation of young workers and the effects on the individual and society. It includes testimonials, describing their situation of unemployment, dependence on the welfare state, underqualified jobs, precarious jobs, unpaid internships and volunteering and ongoing competition. By focusing on testimonials, it also describes the psychological consequences of precarious working situations for young adults. This is also represented in the subtitle ‘youth unemployment: collective problem, individual shame’. It concludes with policy recommendations by the young unionists to the government, the unions and the society at large. The book was distributed to the union, the government and presented in mainstream media. The campaign was developed and implemented by volunteers (European Federation of Building and Woodworkers EFBWW, 2016).

Source: Own summary
Mladi plus is an independent union and youth organisation and also a part of the association of free trade unions in Slovenia (ZSSS). It represents young people as well as people unable to become economically and socially independent due to precarious conditions (Samaluk, 2017). In 2011, students and trade unions established Mladi plus as a result of the joint campaign against ‘malo delo’ (mini work), marginal part-time jobs (Mladi Plus, n.d.). Today, Mladi Plus has 1500 members, including young people in traineeship, internship or student jobs, also university students as well as young unemployed and precarious workers up to the age of 35 years. Mladi plus offers services to its members such as legal counselling, career counselling, tax counselling, social media training and international studies and work. The Ljubljana Municipality provides funding for organising workshops and counselling to increase youth employability (European Federation of Building and Woodworkers EFBWW, 2016).

As an independent legal entity, Mladi Plus can act autonomously from other trade unions. They are affiliated with the association of free trade unions in Slovenia (ZSSS). In relation to the trade unions, Mladi Plus seeks better outreach to young people, because trade unions have few young members and trade unions do not properly represent youth. Mladi Plus aims for a positive picture of trade unions among young people and encourages them to consider joining a trade union.

Membership fees from 1500 members finance the activities of Mladi Plus; however, they do not have any paid staff. The ZSSS supports Mladi Plus by providing office space and accounting services as well as access to the traditional social dialogue institutions. Within social dialogue organisations, Mladi plus represents the trade union confederation (ZSSS) when the country’s tripartite body (ESC) has meetings about young and precarious workers (Samaluk, 2017). Since 2014, Mladi Plus is not only acknowledged as a trade union but also as a youthorganisation and therefore acting as a social partner in the youth sector. Since then, they have worked with other NGOs to develop the Slovenian Youth Guarantee programme, analyse the situation of interns and young women and help shape public policies. Thus, they have a network with other NGOs, but also government and ministries. Their activities also include surveying all Slovenian trade unions to learn about their methods to approach young workers, precarious and unemployed youth and also motivate unions to reflect internally on the structure of youth involvement in trade unions (European Federation of Building and Woodworkers EFBWW, 2016). Mladi Plus is a unique organisation; as a union, it is involved in the tripartite social dialogue and, as a youth organisation, is involved in the Government Youth Council. Because of this structure, Mladi Plus can apply for funding from the Public Bureau of Youth or smaller projects in the framework of Erasmus+ (Samaluk, 2017). Mladi Young actively communicates with their target groups via websites and social media. Recent activities included a campaign named ‘Giving back pumpkins’ (the pumpkin is a symbol for lies and false claims) an online campaign to monitor public statements regarding youth, employment or working conditions. After identifying false statements, they create a picture of the person (e.g. minister, employer) with pumpkins on it and share on social media the evidence disproving the statement. Social media activism is also used in the ‘Stop Violations’ campaign, where job advertisements are monitored to indicate violations, such as gender and age discrimination or atypical forms of employment instead of full-time jobs. These jobs are published online to raise awareness and are reported to the labour inspectorate (Mladi Plus, n.d.).

Source: Own summary
Table 4: Further examples of youth initiatives within established trade unions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type/Approach</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Youth association within trade union</td>
<td>Confederazione Italiana Sindicato Lavoratori (Youth Association within the CISL, the Italian Confederation of Workers’ Trade Unions) <a href="https://www.cisl.it/">https://www.cisl.it/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Organisation belonging to trade union</td>
<td>NidiL - Nuovidentita’ di Lavoro (New types of work) Belongs to the Italian trade union confederation CGIL. It represents atypical workers in a transversal and trans-sectoral way. <a href="http://www.nidil.cgil.it/">http://www.nidil.cgil.it/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Youth section within trade union</td>
<td>Sekcija mladih SSSH (The youth section of UATUC - The Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia) The youth section is an interest group within the trade union. <a href="http://www.sssh.hr/en/static/uatuc/youth-section-7">http://www.sssh.hr/en/static/uatuc/youth-section-7</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Youth wing within trade union</td>
<td>Unión General de Trabajadores (Youth wing of the socialist union UGT - Workers General Union) <a href="http://www.ugt.es/juventud/default.aspx">http://www.ugt.es/juventud/default.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Youth unit within trade union</td>
<td>3F UNGDOM (3F Youth) Youth association within the Danish trade union 3F <a href="https://www.3f.dk/">https://www.3f.dk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Youth council within trade union</td>
<td>Rada mladých pri KOZ SR (Youth Council, KOZ Confederation of trade unions) <a href="http://www.koz-sr.sk/index.php/sk">http://www.koz-sr.sk/index.php/sk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Youth network of the Confederation of Labour “Podkrepa”</td>
<td>Podkrepa is an organization of young people up to the age of 35 within the trade union. <a href="http://nmf.bg/index.php/organisations/item/46-podkrepa-youth">http://nmf.bg/index.php/organisations/item/46-podkrepa-youth</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own summary
4.2 Recently founded, youth-led SMOs fighting unemployment/precarious employment

As a reaction to labour market changes, young workers, recent higher education graduates and also the growing working class referred to as the ‘precariat’ have often established grass-roots initiatives addressing the working conditions of young people (Estanque and Costa, 2012).

Beyond full-time, permanent employment contracts, the diverse types of employment include self-employment, short-term contracts, temporary work, part-time work, illegal work within the informal economy; these have all been established as a permanent feature of working life. All of these varieties of employment lead to increased precariousness while the traditional working class is decreasing, and work is becoming more heterogeneous, complex and fragmented (Estanque and Costa, 2012). This labour market flexibility also results in a more fragmented workforce not easily categorised as a homogenous block (Mattoni and Vogiatzoglou, 2016).

Recently, interns have become one of the most discussed precarious employment conditions. While internships used to provide students with first-hand work experience to complement their education, interns have now become an exploitable, underpaid or unpaid workforce (Intern Aware; Unite the Union, 2013), because their contracts are often not covered by existing employment regulations. The problem of interns has attracted the attention of trade unions and student organisations in some countries (e.g. in France, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom). SMOs founded during the last years seek to inform interns about their rights and to create public awareness regarding the situation of interns. They create campaigns and also cooperate with trade unions and students unions, including international organisations such as the International Coalition for Fair Internships (Contrepois, 2017).

At the same time, the ‘old’ labour conflicts have gradually become depoliticised and more ‘manageable’. Through institutionalisation in many countries, the working class and trade unions’ struggles have become a process of dialogue and negotiation (Estanque and Costa, 2012). The intensification and expansion of precarious working conditions, the fragmentation of the processes of production and the disregarding of rights and sometimes even dignity associated with labour relations have created new conflicts and new forms of struggle leading to new socio-occupational movements, with alternative forms of organisation, which are sometimes quite separate from traditional political participation and trade unions (Da Paz Campos Lima and Artiles, 2013).

Three examples of social movement organisations are discussed below. The first one is an example of self-organisation of young people in a grassroots movement. The Geração a Rasca (see Example 1) in Portugal, the ‘desperate generation’ who organised itself outside existing organisations to demand better conditions in their situation as unemployed or precarious workers, using social media as an important communication platform. The second example is an activist group, the Chainworkers Crew, who used creative methods of intervention to raise awareness about the precarious working situation of many young people. This SMO was founded in 1999 and, for example, participated in the first EuroMayDay parade in Milano (2001), transformed into a transnational movement and remains active (see Example 2). The third example is the German BAG-PLESA, a national working association with a long tradition. It has its roots in the self-organisation of unemployed people and the self-help movement. Today, it also addresses issues of precarious workers because of interconnecting problems with unemployed people (see Example 3).
The protests of the Geração a Rasca in Portugal were inspired by the songs addressing the situation during the crisis. One of the most famous is Deolinda’s ‘Parva Que Sou’ about a frustrated (educated) youth’s commentary on the precarious working situation.

‘I am lucky just to be an intern…what a stupid world, where to be a slave you have to study… I am from a generation living with their parents… I am from the generation “can’t take it anymore”’ (Deolinda 2013).

The start of the protest was a Facebook event of four young people calling for a peaceful demonstration to highlight the issues of youth unemployment and precarious job contracts for a generation that felt it had no voice (Sloam, 2014). On 12 March 2011, demonstrations with more than 300,000 participants in more than 10 Portuguese cities took place to express opposition to austerity, economic crisis and deteriorating labour rights. Following the protest of the Geração a Rasca, the Prime Minister stepped down on 23 March 2011 (Diaz and Fernandes, 2016).

The protests did not only involve precarious and educated youth, but also diverse groups affected by the crisis, such as youth, unemployed middle agers and also older people. On 15 October 2011, another demonstration was organised, turning the movement into a platform of 41 organisations (Platforma 15 de Outubro) supporting the global day of protest by the occupy movement. The initial focus of the movement was the young precarious generation, but moved on to other generations and concerns also — the so-called ‘precarious generations’ in plural (Da Paz Campos Lima and Artiles, 2013). Social Media played a major role in organising the grassroots movement from the beginning onwards. Social media was used to build networks in the virtual and real world (Sloam, 2014).

Along with the call for protest, a manifest was translated to different languages by supporters. The manifest calls for all precarious workers, such as ‘unemployed, “five hundred-eurists” and other underpaid workers, disguised slaves, sub- and term-hired, fake independent workers, intermittent workers, trainees, scholarship holders, working students, students, mothers, fathers and sons of Portugal’ and demanded changes by politicians, employers and themselves. The large protest led to the Movimento 12 de Março (M12M) as ‘an active voice promoting democracy in all areas of our lives’. The M12M became involved in many actions and also organised protests linked to the Spanish Indignados and the Occupy movement and became part of worldwide protests.

The protests of the Geração a Rasca was the first time civil society activists managed to organise large public protest independently. Although trade unions remain an important factor in Portugal, M12M was the starting point for remarkable changes of Portuguese mobilisations (Sloam, 2014).

Civil society has traditionally been weak in Portugal and also the 2011 demonstrations can be explained in the context of the international dimension of movements at that time and mobilisations in the years before, often organised in participatory processes and without great impact of the trade unions (e.g. global justice movement, social forum, Euro-May Day). For example, those getting involved in the GJM (global justice movement) Portugal, for the first time, applied new practices such as decision-making by consensus. Many of the activists in the M12M protests were already active in social movements before, although most platforms created earlier no longer played a role in the protests (Baumgarten, 2013).

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The M12M movement was organised by diverse active grassroots groups. Baumgarten (2013) divides them in ‘classic’ groups, which protest precarious work and life situations (e.g. FERVE – Faras/os d’Estes Recibos Verdes), emerged in 2007 at the time of the first EuroMayDay protests in Portugal. These groups established cooperation with unions, supported workers strikes and participated in public debates. They included also teacher’s initiatives (3R – Renew, Rebuild, Rejuvenate) and unemployed (MSE-Movimento Sem Emprego). The second group are the ‘participation, public debate and alternatives beyond the state’ groups (PPA groups), most of them initiated after 12 March 2011 with a focus on democracy and policy development, such as the Forum Gerações (Forum of Generations) to debate solutions to the economic crisis which they defined a political and social crisis, Indignados Lisboa or Anonymous Portugal. There is both an overlap between activists who belong to various groups as well as a certain division between groups, which is also based on the question of ‘reform versus revolution’. The groups join forces to protest against common opponents or political programmes and exchange information (Baumgarten, 2013).

Source: Own summary
The Chainworkers Crew was an activist group founded 1999 in Milan. Its name refers to workers employed in multinational chain stores. Its activities aimed to build awareness and to promote unionisation of precarious workers through media activism. Many of the involved activists were precarious workers employed in the communication and information sector. The collective was initiated in a context of ongoing flexibilisation of the labour market, starting in the 1980s. In that context, a new ‘social subject’ was created, the precarious worker in the centre of a new social problem, precarity (Mattoni, 2008).

The Chainworkers Crew was connected to a social centre, the Deposito Bulk, active in Milan from 1997 to 2006.

The EuroMayDay movement and the Chainworkers Crew organised annual parades on 1 May and also used art and ‘subversive’ mass cultural formats such as comics and games or traditional rituals to raise awareness of precarity (Marchart, Hamm and Adolphs, 2011). They used languages, symbols and icons directly related to precarious workers and precarity along with traditional mainstream media tools (such as press conferences). They also used alternative media production (websites, free radio broadcasts, video documentaries). The Chainworkers Crew developed ‘media sociali’, a concept of media practices to be evolved by activists, progressive knowledge processes to inspire reflections on political conflict (Mattoni, 2008). One example was the invention of the patron San Precario, who appeared for the first time in 2004 in a supermarket in Milan. Activists dressed up as priests and monks intoning the San Precario prayer to raise awareness on precarious work and price increases. After that, the patron saint of precarious workers became visible at EuroMayDay parades and other activities together with the performance of prayers and chanting relating to precarity at demonstrations but also in supermarkets or chain stores. It sought to raise awareness among less precarious workers by using traditional Catholic language and signs (Mattoni, 2012).

The Chainworkers Crew also protested against precarious working conditions in the fashion industry. They created a false Anglo-Japanese fashion designer, Serpica Naro and several precarious activists in the fashion industry managed to list him at the Camera della Moda and the Milan fashion week. A fake press office released announcements on disputes between Serpica Naro and activists, who blamed the fashion stylist for exploiting the life style of precarious workers to produce her clothing line. Moreover activists organised demonstrations against Milan fashion week. The final action was a fashion show, where independent underground fashion designers presented clothes to solve precarious workers’ daily problems, such as working wear suitable for pregnant women who, in order to keep their jobs, do not want their condition discovered by their employers. Dozens of precarious workers participated in the fashion show preparation and experienced a new form of political socialisation.

They also created fictional precarious superheroes printed on cards together with their stories of how they survive in precarity. These were first distributed during the EuroMayDay parade 2005 in Milan and sought to create stronger ties between political activists and precarious workers involved in the EuroMayDay movement (Mattoni and Vogiatzoglou, 2016). Other cities picked up the idea with activists dressing as superheroes carrying speech bubbles with their demands (Marchart et al., 2011).

Source: Own summary
Unemployment initiatives have a long history in Germany. The movement is characterised by its diversity and its ongoing attempts to create national organisational structures. The first national organisation was created already in 1918/19 when former soldier held assemblies (Arbeitslosenräte) to initiate ‘Reichskonferenz der Erwerbslosen’. They appealed to the state to create more jobs and they organised activities and protests demanding trade unions solidarity with unemployed. When National Socialists gained power, the unemployed were forced to work and protesting against it led to imprisonment in concentration camps (Rein, 2013b). The next wave of self-organisation of unemployed started with the industrial change in the 1970s and the increasing number of unemployed in Germany during the 1980s. In the 1990s, with even higher unemployment rates in specific regions there also emerged a cleavage between the new provinces (Länder) and the western regions. Diverse initiatives of unemployed started local protest activities and first meetings between initiatives were initiated. In 1992, a first nationwide congress of unemployment initiatives managed first discussions between a broad spectrum of organisations – independent, Communist, religious and unionist initiatives and individuals organised themselves as a grassroots-initiative (BAG Erwerbslose, 1999). A second congress was organised in 1988. One result was the founding of a national organisational structure – the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Erwerbslose (BAG) which cooperated with the national association of self-help groups (BAG-SHI) that was founded at the same time. Also networks of unemployed women was established, who met at congresses to discuss the difficult situation of female unemployment. Main debates of the initiative tackled unemployment compensations and state-funded projects to enable employment, social work and unemployment and self-help initiatives. Moreover, they discussed the inclusion of migrants in the German labour market. The BAG helped create the international unemployment network ‘Itaca’ that existed from 1994 to 1996. They cooperated transnationally to organise protests at the G7 in 1995 and later to organise European-wide demonstrations against cuts in social welfare.

One major aim of the BAG was the representation of all unemployment initiatives, leading to national interest representation of unemployed (which exists as a stakeholder since 1982). However, it did not manage to unify all unemployment initiatives in Germany: in 1986, trade unions started their own project, the ‘Koordinierungsstelle gewerkschaftlicher Arbeitslosengruppen (KOS)’ aiming for coordination of unionist unemployment initiatives.9 After the reunification of Germany, the Arbeitslosenverband (ALV) was set up in 1990 as an association of unemployed in the former German Democratic Republic. It aimed to deal with specific experiences in East Germany, following a different, approach than the BAG, with higher organisational density and a focus on employment opportunities (Rein, 2013a).

9 http://www.erwerbslos.de/
Although the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Erwerbslose (BAG) dissolved in 1995, the long-established, decentralised organisational structure of unemployment initiatives enabled mobilisation of nationwide protests against social cuts in the mid-1990s (Lahusen and Baumgarten, 2006). Monthly protests were organised in more than 250 cities with up to 50,000 participants (Baglioni, Baumgarten, Chabanet and Lahusen, 2008). The unemployment movement was supported by a broad network, such as unions but also churches and independent associations as well as Social Democrats and the Green Party. The cooperation between this large network became ambivalent as the newly elected government in 1998 included Social Democrats with a traditionally strong relation to trade unions and the Green Party (Lahusen and Baumgarten, 2006).

In 1999, a new BAG (BAG-Erwerbslose, Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft unabhängiger Erwerbsloseninitiativen) was founded to represent independent unemployment initiatives (Rein, 2013a). They were involved in protests opposing the government reform programme Agenda 2010 (aimed to establish restrictions in social security, retirement, sickness, and disability insurance, and rules regarding payment and job assignment for the unemployed) and the labour market reform Hartz IV. These protests involved one million people in 230 cities (Roth, 2005) in 2003 and 2004. The structure of these protests changed compared to 1998 and was organised primarily by ‘grass-roots’ initiatives, including independent local associations and local union branches, social forums, ATTAC groups and welfare organisations. They organised large demonstrations with 100,000 participants and the weekly so-called ‘Monday demonstrations’ in 2004. The largest protests took place in the eastern regions of Germany, which were also affected by higher unemployment rates (Baglioni et al., 2008, Lahusen and Baumgarten, 2006).

During these demonstrations, a new nationwide organisation was founded in the tradition of the BAG-SHI and the BAG-Erwerbslose, it became the Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Erwerbslosen- und Sozialhilfeinitiativen (BAG-SHI) e.V, which was dissolved due to financial problems in 2008. The BAG-PLESA is its successor.

Source: Own summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Movimento 15-M (15-M Movement) started in 2011 close to local elections. Protest camps in Madrid and other cities were created to fight austerity measures. <a href="http://www.movimento15m.org/">http://www.movimento15m.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Nuit debout (Rise up at night) Began in March 2016 as a protest against proposed reforms on labour. <a href="https://nuitdebout.fr/">https://nuitdebout.fr/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Génération Précaire (Precarious Generation) Activities such as flash mobs to raise awareness on precarious situation of youth, e.g. in unpaid internships <a href="https://www.facebook.com/GenerationPrecaire/">https://www.facebook.com/GenerationPrecaire/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Occupy London was founded in 2011 as a part of the international occupy movement. It aimed for social justice and democracy. <a href="http://occupylondon.org.uk/">http://occupylondon.org.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>Nie Parzę Kawy (I do not make coffee) Campaign for fair internships in Poland <a href="http://www.nieparzekawy.pl/">http://www.nieparzekawy.pl/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Source: Own summary
3.3 Recently founded youth-led SMOs working for better employment conditions for young employed in professional and semi-professional fields (and adult education in particular)

SMOs founded for working towards better employment conditions for young people in professional and semi-professional fields differ in their focus on specific sectors or specific target groups, as opposed to the more general approach of others. Moreover, they are more often not included in broader or transnational movements but are more focused on a national or even regional causes. For example, they are founded because of changing laws or regulations within a profession, or because specific groups feel they are inadequately represented in their professional field. This can be the case when traditional interest representations in a sector do not include those in precarious working situations or the low-paid internships of recent higher education graduates.

Examples include the Precarious Workers Brigade, an SMO based in the UK, which is mainly active in the field of higher education and culture. Their activities aim for better awareness of the precarious working conditions faced by some in the higher education sector (see Example 1). Another example is the IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen in Austria, which was founded because of a lack of representation of freelance researchers and external lecturers and other precarious workers in higher education and research institutions (see Example 2). Another example is the Génération précaire, founded by higher education graduates in precarious internships and work placements (see Example 3).
ENLIVEN - Deliverable 7.1 – Literature review on initiatives to improve early career conditions across EU member states

Box 7 Professional SMO Example 1: Precarious Workers Brigade (UK)

The Precarious Workers Brigade is a group of precarious workers in culture and education, most of them working at higher education institutions. It was started as the Carrot Workers Collective in 2007, a London-based group of cultural workers, interns, teachers and researchers with a focus on free labour in contemporary society. A carrot was used as a symbol, representing the promise of paid work, meaningful success and stability, which is difficult to achieve in the cultural sector. In 2010, the initiative changed its name to ‘Precarious Workers Brigade’, as they wanted not only to reflect on the working conditions in the cultural sector but also on the different aspects of precarity, reactions to welfare cuts and increasing tuition fees and how to operate in solidarity with other kinds of struggles. The Precarious Workers Brigade (PWB) has a broad network of organisations dealing with issues of precarious work, such as the working situation of migrants, working conditions in times of austerity or the situation of interns. They also collaborate with trade unions and international initiatives on precarious work and internships (Tereza Stejskalová, 2014). The PWB is organised as a grassroots initiative.

They describe their internal working procedures on their website. The initiative organises itself via mailing lists, an online platform and regular face-to-face meetings. Decisions are made through ‘rough consensus’. They also define the conditions in which they will work with other organisations and initiatives in their ethics code. The organisation is involved in activities such as demonstrations and discussions but also in developing tools and sharing best practice with other organisations dealing with precarious working conditions. Their main topics include working conditions in the cultural and educational sector, examining unpaid internships as a form of free labour. For example, they published a guidebook for interns called ‘Surviving Internship - A Counter-Guide to Free Labour in the Arts’ (Carrot Workers Collective, 2009) and developed a ‘Bust Your Boss Card’ with information on a freelancer’s rights that could be used during working-contract negotiations. Another main topic is that of offering critical reflection on teaching in higher education. Therefore, a guidebook for teachers was developed entitled ‘Training for Exploitation? Politicising Employability and Reclaiming Education - an alternative curriculum’ (Precarious Workers Brigade, 2017). The PWB holds a series of regular meetings with people during their internships or precarious working experiences to study together, to discuss issues and to share personal anecdotes. During public events, participants gave public testimony while wearing donkey masks to protect their privacy. Other activities included staging job fairs and offering legal advice as well as creating awareness by envelope-stuffing competitions, tarot card reading or ‘debt forgiveness’ actions (Precarious Workers Brigade and Carrot Workers Collective, 2014).

Source: Own summary
The IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen has its origins in the 1996 university protests and strikes, when a committee of lecturers organised to support the protests. It seeks to represent freelance researchers and external lecturers in higher education institutions and research institutions. Moreover, it tackles issues of other employees in precarious situations, such as temporarily employed assistants, researchers, freelancers and professors.

The association supported protests against cuts in education and social welfare in 2000 and 2001 and published studies on the situation of external lecturers in Austria. It organises lecturers and researchers in Austria, with most active members in Vienna. After a new university law in 2002 enabled interest representation at universities, the IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen became a candidate for the 2004 elections for the work council. They formed a joint candidates’ list together with student employees, greens, socialists and independent university employees. The IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen have been elected to the work council at the University of Vienna.

In 2009, the initiative participated in the Austrian student protest movement (#unibrennt) and mobilised lecturers and researchers to participate in regular assemblies labelled as ‘Squatting Teachers’. In 2015, during the 650 anniversary of the University of Vienna, the IG organised activities to create awareness on the situation of precarious teachers and researchers.

In their role as interest representatives at the university, the IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen addresses the university management as their employer. In general, they address their concerns to all universities and research institutions as well the state and in particular the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Economy. Moreover, they are active with trade unions and the chamber of labour.

The IG LektorInnen und WissensarbeiterInnen has a network of associations dealing with issues of precarious work, branches of trade unions (e.g. Work@flex), interest representations of precarious workers in other sectors (e.g. in architecture or art) and with associations dealing with precarious work situations such as the ‘Prekärcafe’, a meeting and discussion forum with its origins in the Austrian EuroMayDay movement.  

Source: Own summary
The Génération précaire is a grassroots movement, founded in 2005 by interns seeking to raise awareness on the increasing number of unpaid interns and their work conditions. This association of higher education graduates have struggled to find employment and consider themselves exploited by low-paid or unpaid internships that require regular working tasks.

Similar associations were founded in the mid-2000s in Italy (La Republica Degli Stagisti), UK (Intern Aware) or Germany (Generation Praktikum).

Marina Damestoy (Cathy) started the initiative when she found out that she was dismissed from her job during the crisis and replaced by an intern. This theoretically prohibited practice, according to Génération précaire, has worsened in recent years. When Cathy called for a spontaneous intern-strike others joined and founded the Génération précaire. Many activists remain unknown, because they only appear with their first names, wearing white masks.

Since 2005 the Génération précaire has played an active role in the public debate in France protesting against the exploitation of young and educated French citizens who find themselves forced to work underpaid and informal jobs without any kind of job security. In these ‘Junk-Jobs’, wages are declining as a result of increased competition without any social security (Beck, 2013). Moreover, they point to the risk of growing inequalities among students because of the growing number of internships during higher education. This is especially hard on students whose parents cannot support them and who have to work to pay for their internships or take out loans (Génération Précaire, 2006).

The Génération précaire also awarded a ‘prize of cynicism’ to the BNP in April 2010, which had a growth of 68% in interns in 3 years, while fixed-term contracts decreased by 35%. They also systematically reviewed offers to point at the practice that interns are often recruited with job descriptions that should apply to employees (Contrepois, 2017). In 2011, a law (so-called ‘Cherpion’ law) was introduced to improve the working conditions of interns. In 2013 and 2014, Génération précaire actively organised flash mobs and other activities demanding better working right for interns, which were partly granted in a new law in 2014.

Source: Own summary

Table 6 Further examples of SMOs fighting for better employment conditions for young employed people in professional and semi-professional fields.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Union of Private Sector Employees, Graphical Workers and Journalists: work in education (‘GPA-djp: work in education’) – subsection of trade union <a href="http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms/A03/A03_1.10.5">http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms/A03/A03_1.10.5</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>Interessengemeinschaft von Kursleitenden im Bereich Basisbildung und Deutsch als Zweitsprache (Interest Group of Trainers for Basic Education and German as a Foreign Language) <a href="https://igdazdafbasisbildung.noblogs.org/aktuell/">https://igdazdafbasisbildung.noblogs.org/aktuell/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>ALKP - Asociacia lektorov a kariernych poradcov (Association of tutors and mentors) <a href="http://alkp.sk/alkp/o-nas/alkp-poslanie/">http://alkp.sk/alkp/o-nas/alkp-poslanie/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Metal/Construction</td>
<td>UGT, Unión General de Trabajadores (General Union of Workers) Main trade union, including a suborganisation on Metal and Construction (Metal, Construcción y Afines - MCA) <a href="http://www.ugt.es/">http://www.ugt.es/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Iniciatíva slovenských učiteľov (ISU- The Initiative of Slovak Teachers) Founded in 2015 aiming to raise awareness of teachers’ low remuneration levels. <a href="http://isu.sk/">http://isu.sk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>BUPL (The Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth Educators) Aims for better professional rights of pedagogues in the field of salary and working conditions. <a href="https://www.bupl.dk/">https://www.bupl.dk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Geneva Interns Association (GIA) was founded in 2011 by interns and supports interns in international organisations, NGOs and private sector in Geneva. <a href="http://internsassociation.org/">http://internsassociation.org/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own summary
5 Learning in civic activism and volunteering work

The activism of young people in organisations struggling for better working conditions for young people can be regarded as voluntary work, a form of civic or political engagement and a particular type of youth work (where the key aim is to advance the next generation). This study covers these broadly overlapping fields. The following section will consider the learning of young people active in SMOs and use approaches stemming from these three fields of research (voluntary work, civic engagement and youth work) as well as research on social movements.

Volunteering is one form of civic engagement. Europe has a high proportion of young people involved in voluntary work. Volunteers are active in fields as diverse as delivering foods and clothes, firefighting, fundraising, teaching, tutoring, coaching, performing, caring for children, older people, sick and homeless people, organising and supervising events, and serving on boards and committees.

There is no single definition of voluntary work. Voluntary work is chiefly understood as freely chosen, unpaid work as a part of an organisation (normally non-profit) that benefits others.

However, because voluntary work is a broad field, Cnaan et al. have developed a more complex and multi-layered definition, defining different categories of voluntarism (Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth, 1996). The engagement of young people in trade unions and social movement organisations can be seen as a civic engagement that includes both paid and unpaid forms of political activism, environmentalism, community and national service and especially volunteering (Michelsen, Zaff and Hair, 2002).

Young peoples’ civic engagement, volunteering and social movements are also closely related to the field of youth work. Youth work is not clearly defined across Europe; however, it can be generally defined as social, cultural, educational or political activities with and for young people. It also includes sports and services for young people (European Commission, 2015c).

The active engagement of young people in civic organisations is diverse. Young people participate in a range of organisations – from sports clubs, cultural associations, youth organisations to social movements, trade unions and political parties. The European Youth Report 2015 states that 25% of young people across the EU were involved in some kind of voluntary activity in the last 12 months (European Commission, 2015a).

Countries have differing levels of involvement in volunteering, with the highest rates of involvement over 40% and the lowest around 10%. Some countries have long-standing traditions in volunteering; in others, the sector is less developed. However, various countries have quite different reasons for this (e.g. civic organisations might have been either state-controlled or suppressed in former socialist states prior to regime change and might therefore still suffer from low levels of legitimacy). Slovenia, Denmark, Ireland and Netherlands have many young volunteers, while Poland, Greece and Hungary have fewer volunteers.

Data also suggests that active engagement is related to age: In 2014, across the EU, 29% of 15–19 year-olds were active in one form of civic organisation, but only 23% of 25–29 year-olds were active (European Commission, 2015a); this points to differences both in opportunity structures and the time available for voluntary engagement.

Data from the Eurobarometer suggests that overall participation of young people in various organisations might have been fairly stable (with hints supporting the idea of a slight decline in activity). The main areas of activity are sports clubs, leisure-time clubs or any kind of youth organisations (16%), local community organisations (11%), cultural organisations (10%),
organisations promoting human rights or global development (5%), political organisations (5%) or climate change (3%) (European Commission, 2015a).

**Figure 7: Youth participation in voluntary activities (EU 28)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>EU 28 Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A sports club</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cultural organisation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A political organisation or a political party</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A local organisation aimed at improving your local community</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An organisation active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An organisation promoting human rights or global development</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other non-governmental organisation</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)

**Figure 8: Youth involvement in sports clubs by country (EU 28)**

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)
ENLIVEN - Deliverable 7.1 – Literature review on initiatives to improve early career conditions across EU member states

Figure 9: Youth involvement in youth clubs, leisure-time clubs or any kind of youth organisations by country (EU 28)

![Figure 9: Youth involvement in youth clubs, leisure-time clubs or any kind of youth organisations by country (EU 28)](image)

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)

Figure 10: Youth involvement in cultural organisations by country (EU 28)

![Figure 10: Youth involvement in cultural organisations by country (EU 28)](image)

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)

Figure 11: Youth involvement in political organisations or parties by country (EU 28)

![Figure 11: Youth involvement in political organisations or parties by country (EU 28)](image)

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)
Figure 12: Youth involvement in organisations aimed at improving local communities (EU 28)

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)

Figure 13: Youth involvement in organisations active in the domain of climate change/environmental issues (EU 28)

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)

Figure 14: Youth involvement in organisations promoting human rights or global development (EU 28)

Source: European Youth. Flash Eurobarometer 408 (European Commission, 2015a)
Learning in voluntary work and civic engagement happens mainly by the informal learning that results from ‘doing’ activities that develop competences in the volunteers, activists and participants. The following section focuses on types of learning in voluntary work and sheds light on the specifics of learning in social movement organisations.

Learning in voluntary work

Volunteering has been identified as a key source of informal learning. Contrary to many jobs in paid employment, volunteering includes a high level of individual discretion on how to be involve himself/herself in meaningful activities, where control over many features of work remain with the individual, so that a better match between work, involved learning and the individual interests and needs can be achieved. On the one hand, voluntary work offers informal learning opportunities also available in learning conducive workplaces in paid employment (Marsick, Watkins, Wilson Callahan and Volpe, 2009). Voluntary work can therefore partly make up for the disadvantage of lacking paid work. On the other hand, voluntary work allows people to engage in experiences and therefore learning which are not available at all in many workplaces and therefore complement an individual’s overall leaning opportunities. Finally, voluntary work is portrayed as contributing in a unique and essential way to a participant’s identity and adult development (Jones and Gasiorski, 2009).

Voluntary work in political organisations is expected to allow for similar learning experiences as in other fields of voluntary work; however, it is expected that some learning and socialization outcomes of engagement in a political cause, and the related experiences of success and failure, are specific to political engagement.

In the literature, a change in the composition of the volunteer workforce is discussed. Given the rising participation of women in paid employment, homemaking women play a less prominent role in volunteering, being replaced by senior/retired citizens, students (in some countries, mainly in mandatory service learning spells during their education), full-time professionals, people with disabilities and recent immigrants lacking a work permission (Schugurensky, Dauguid and Mündel, 2010). These groups decide to become active rather based on an individual decision of individual participation than understanding voluntary work as a participation in a collective activity. The higher diversity of workforce and the more individualised approach is also considered as a reason for the

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12 Other non-governmental organisations than mentioned in tables 8 to 14.
change from long-term commitment in voluntary organisations to short term activities (Schugurensky et al., 2010).

In a similar way, youth participation in voluntary work and its socio-structural context is portrayed as changing. An attested growing individualization is thought to imply a growing irrelevance for young people in participation in civic organisation (Benedicto, 2015). Moreover, declining levels of trust in established forms of political representation and democratic participation are observed. However, this should not be taken as equivalent to a delegitimisation of democracy or a lack of interest in collective causes among young people (Benedicto, 2015).

The learning taking place in civic activities is linked to the individual, their environment and society. Learning is affected by social, cultural and technological changes (Kiilakoski, 2015). It is influenced by peer relations and family, but is also influenced by nationalism and religion, as well as by the dominance of market economy and neoliberalism (Mayo, 2012). At the individual level, participation often leads to changes resulting from activism, such as personal growth, growing personal confidence or improved transversal skills (Elsdon, 1995).

The individual learning during engagement in civic work is broad ranging, given the diversity of activities in voluntary work and their contexts. Moreover, the way in which learning by participation in civic work is understood has changed over time. Traditionally, youth learning in civic participation has been perceived as another educational exercise, where adults pass on values, norms and competences to young people portrayed as in need of these skills (Walther, 2012). Today, learning in voluntary organisations is understood differently. Young people are recognised as learning by applying themselves and by engaging in a collective experience, thereby creating new knowledge, skills and competences. Through participation, they become empowered actors – political subjects – and gain influence over their social environment (Benedicto, 2015).

Participation in voluntary organisations often implies participation in non-formal educational activities, organised by organisations for their members. Voluntary organisations undertake a variety of educational activities, to support volunteers learning about the organisation’s principles and to enable them to perform particular tasks. They often use methods familiar within adult education, such as workshops, seminars, courses, mentoring, apprenticeships or training manuals. (Schugurensky et al., 2010).

However, forms of informal learning – ‘learning by participation’ – are reported to be the most dominant form of learning. Forms of informal learning include:

a) self-directed learning or deliberate learning projects, where learning is intentional and conscious.

b) incidental informal learning, where learning has taken place in an unplanned and is unintentional but could have been made conscious at a later stage. Incidental learning is often prompted by an urgency to solve a particular problem, by the need to change a particular way of doing things or by the need to reflect collectively about a conflict.

c) the intentional submission of tacit knowledge which forms an important part of the socialization process taking place when individuals participate in a voluntary activity (Schugurensky and Myers, 2008).

Informal learning occurs as a by-product when striving for the particular goals of the civic organisation, which may include providing effective help to people in need, raising the public awareness for a common problem or mobilising fellow citizens for a common cause. (Schugurensky et al., 2010). Learning happens on an individual as well as on a collective level. By reflective practices, lessons learned can be made explicit and passed within and across social movement organisations, allowing for horizontal social movement learning (Schugurensky et al., 2010).

Outside the strand of literature focusing on individual learning progress made by participation in any
voluntary work, another strand of literature is focusing on the collective learning available in social movements; the latter are understood as attempts to create alternative ways of perceiving the social world and are consequently aimed at changes in collective behaviour. Adult education itself is understood as a particular social movement with a broad, society-changing agenda (English and Mayo, 2012, Johnston, 2003).

Learning in social movement organisations

Learning in social movements is understood along four main themes: learning for social change, social movements as learning sites, collective learning processes and knowledge construction (Kim, 2011).

Various authors have described the educational aspect of social movements (Cunningham and Curry, 1997). Social movements are considered learning sites, where individual as well as collective learning processes can be identified. Within social movements, individual transformations take place, and the movement itself develops cultural and collective learning processes (Johnston, 2003); thus, they become privileged sites for emancipatory praxis (Welton, 1993).

Social movements facilitate informal individual and collective learning that occur by participating in social practice and political struggle. This informal learning takes place in communities often opposing the impact of capitalist restructuring and exploitation of social environments, in contrast to formal education which reflects the social relations of capitalism (Foley, 1999). Understanding learning in social movements requires not only a concept of the group as learner and constructor of knowledge, but also an understanding of the centrality of the group’s vision of social justice that drives it to act (Kilgore, 1999). In the collective learning process, a group’s collective identity is constructed in processes of solidarity and consent but also by conflict and diversity (Kilgore, 1999).

Moreover, social movements create knowledge (Holford, 1995). They are communities engaged in the generation and distribution of knowledge, culture and theory as a ‘cognitive praxis’, constructing knowledge on the basis of alternative values, challenging what is legitimated as knowledge based on alternative values (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991). The knowledge created in this way is also described as ‘fugitive knowledge’, which might not be included in ‘official’ knowledge controlled by government or professional intellectuals (Hill, 2004). Social movements do not only create knowledge but ‘interpretive frames’, cognitive schemas that enable people to identify, interpret and allocate significance to events and experiences. Frames are dynamic and the process of involvement in generating frames is considered a process of social learning (Della Porta and Diani, 2006).

Learning in social movements is understood as situated in a specific social environment and community, where it is ‘neither wholly subjective not fully encompassed in social interaction, and it is not constituted separately from the social world (with its own structures and meanings) of which it is part’ (Leave and Wenger, 1991). Activists learn in spaces and places, in communities of practice, in social processes through time and in opportunities to observe and interact with others. Learning occurs through immersing into a practice with others (Ollis, 2011). The dynamics of social interaction and conversation are a part of activism that lead to learning processes; skills are acquired by working with one another and are often not recognised as learning processes by activists themselves (Newman, 2006). This leads to a learning process in social movements that can be more passionate, self-directed, self-controlled and personally rewarding than learning in schools or workplaces (Kim, 2011).

Activists gain skills and knowledge about the movement and suggestions for more successful organisation activities. Activists face both encouraging and frustrating experiences; they keep asking themselves about the reason for their continued participation, leading to self-reflection. These
reflection support the deeper understanding of social movement participation and organisation (Kim, 2011). Moreover they reflect the significance of social movement activities, which act as a motivator to learn and to become involved in activities providing broad learning opportunities — such as discussions on legislation, organising campaigns and political processes, learning about systems of government and identifying key advisors and politicians. Working in social movements helps develop planning and facilitation skills, networking and group-work competences.

Activists gain numerous competences, which are specific to their political activity, including (rhetorical) communication skills, such as how to speak in public and how to engage with the media. Social action facilitates the learning of specific skills and knowledge, such as managing large-scale events and stage protests as well as musical and theatrical events. Moreover, it is as much about gaining the competences of navigation and negotiation, such as learning how to deal with the police and large crowds, as it is about learning how to communicate with the government and politicians (Ollis, 2011).

A strand of literature focusses on the individual biographical and life-course related to outcomes of engagement in (political) social movements. In relation to political activism or participation in social movements, studies conclude that activism has profoundly affected the biographies of former activists and has left a strong imprint on their personal lives. This includes their political attitudes, their political orientation and their ongoing political activity. Many choose teaching or other ‘helping’ professions, they tend to have lower incomes and have a less straight-forward career than their age peers who lack similar kinds of experience (Giugni, 2004). Moreover, they are more likely to have divorced, to marry later or to remain single. Some studies, reviewed by Marco Guigini, show that biographical impact is not limited to highly involved activists, but also affects the lives of people in less demanding activities (such as participation in demonstrations) with a lower degree of personal involvement (Giugni and Grasso, 2016)

6 Conclusions and outlook

This paper reviews research and examples across the EU-28 on recently founded, youth-led social movement organisations aimed at improving employment conditions for workers in their early phases of employment (that is, the first ten years). Three subgroups have been considered: a) youth organisations of or attached to trade unions, b) organisations fighting against precarious employment and c) organisations aimed at improving working conditions during the early career years for people in (semi-)professional groups. The SMOs in question are understood as acting at the intersection of current social movements and the field of industrial relations.

While a comprehensive inventory of all initiatives falling under the heading of youth-led SMOs fighting for better employment conditions of early workers has been beyond the capacity of the current project, it has been possible to document the presence of these types of SMOs in a wide range of EU28 countries. While language barriers, in particular, have not allowed us to demonstrate their presence in all EU28 countries, it is assumed that a more in-depth analysis would certainly find examples of these types of organisations in all of the countries in the EU28.

Youth labour markets have had particularly difficult periods since 1990 in all EU28 countries. However, none of the countries surveyed ever had a period when most young people could easily find their first meaningful and promising job. As a result, while more SMOs of the type investigated might be found at the depths of the various employment crises, these SMOs have never been in short supply over the past three decades.
While this type of organisation can arise anywhere, Section 2 has explored reasons for differences in the frequency of this type of organisation across countries and groups of countries, characterised by their transition process and industrial relations systems.

Beyond differences in the level of youth unemployment, underemployment and precarious employment, countries provide different environments for these particular type of organisations to arise.

In some countries, the sheer magnitude of young people affected by poor employment prospects is thought to fuel the creation of youth-led SMOs in employment relations, despite the fact that young people receive little support from the welfare state and depend mainly on the family (in particular, in Southern Europe). In other countries (e.g. in the Nordic), more generous support creates better conditions for civic engagement in this type of organisation.

The frequency of their appearance and the strategies applied by the SMOs considered here is expected to be linked to the industrial relations system prevalent in a country, or in one economic sector or region within one country. We should understand this particular group of ‘new actors’ in employment relations (Cooke and Wood, 2014) as challengers within industrial relations systems, which, in order to be effective, need to mobilise support from either existing organisations in the industrial relations field or develop strong allies in the political system. Countries with corporatist or social-partnership industrial relations systems are probably more fertile ground for this type of initiatives than countries with a state-centred or fragmented industrial relations system that more likely resort to a broader and more politicised strategy. However, all expectations highlighted require further research in order to be clarified or refuted. Furthermore, current developments in the overall political landscape of countries — including strong shifts towards right-wing parties in government, tendencies to autocratic styles of government and the advancement of social movements portraying themselves as clearly right-leaning — might also need to be taken into consideration (see Jacobsson and Saxonberg, 2013).

Only anecdotal evidence was available on the actual function of and the strategies used by the SMOs in question. Case studies within Workpackage 7 will try to contribute to the literature on how these types of SMOs work towards their goals and provide particular input — a unique voice — within the industrial relations field and within the political field in a broader sense.

The literature and examples revealed that the approaches of recently founded, youth-led SMOs, including the areas of contest that they focus on, quickly diffuse across national borders; mobilisation in other locations inspired many local initiatives. Like their accompanying social movements, many SMOs identify themselves as transnational in their purpose and strategic orientation, even when they focus on changes within the local industrial relations arena. Organisations often identify themselves as belonging to a certain transnational framework characterised by a ‘catch-word’ or ‘slogan’ (e.g. initiatives playing around with any combination of ‘generation’ and ‘precarious’). Most of the initiatives reviewed thoroughly use the internet and its media as a potentially global space.

Active participation in youth-led organisations aiming to improve working conditions for people in their early careers (and beyond) is certainly rare, when considering a total population. It is likely to account for only a small fraction of the 5 to 10 per cent of young people who have actively taken part in a trade union, a political party or another organisation with a clear political purpose in the past 12 months. However, while small when expressed as a fraction of an age cohort (e.g. 15–30 year olds), the available evidence indicates that the absolute numbers of activists and the number of SMOs run by them are not negligible.

Active participation in youth-led SMOs in employment relations can be addressed as one type of
ENLIVEN - Deliverable 7.1 – Literature review on initiatives to improve early career conditions across EU member states

voluntary work. Given the high level of skills required in voluntary activity and the multiple tasks and challenges encountered by activists, their participation in this type of organisation can be expected to be highly beneficial, offering them individual opportunities for informal learning. Qualitative interviews with activists in Workpackage 7 (or Workpackage 6, where applicable), will further investigate the role of engagement in individual learning biographies. In addition, participation in social movement organisations has been shown as strongly contributing to the long-term political socialisation of activists. Active participation can become a key experience in the development of young peoples' civic biographies and an effective tool for integration (Colley, Boetzelen, Hoskins and Parveva, 2007).

Beyond individual learning by participation, recently founded youth-led SMOs should be regarded as laboratories producing qualitative knowledge and practical skills. By challenging established organisations, including trade unions, these organisations expand the scope of possibilities for renewing and enlivening structures of interest-representation and strategy within industrial relations. Taking more seriously the idea of learning through participation may help traditional organisations to move on from the traditional attempt to treat young people as the object of political action to a more dynamic understanding that young people should be supported in their standing up for their own causes.

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