

Institution: Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 21 Sociology		
Title of case study: Effective Supportive Services for European Students; transforming practice across 11 European Countries		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2014 to 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Marion Ellison	Professor of European Social Policy and Sociology	January 2001 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the first time students who are care experienced or from non-academic backgrounds can access substantial bursary funding and support from the Scholarship Culture Ruhr programme prior to and during their university studies at 9 major universities in the Ruhr area of Germany. (see, https://www.stipendienkultur.de/) Health, social care and youth work professionals in Veneto, Italy have changed their perceptions of integrated community approaches to support youth transitions because of training conducted by Ellison as part of the EU Commission IMP.ACT IMPrese in ACTION project. This has also led to changes in professional practice in some cases. Teaching and research professionals have changed their conceptualisations of educational inequalities and teaching practice related to students with complex vulnerabilities and support needs. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Ellison was a Permanent Partner for Scotland in a significant international collaborative research project <i>Innovative Social Policies for Inclusive and Resilient Labour Markets in Europe</i> (INSPIRES), (EU, FP7). Policy and practice impacts have been delivered by the 'Effective Student Services in Europe Project', an international project focusing upon the experiences of university students as they undergo the transition between university and employment, which was built on findings from INSPIRES. Community partnership approaches between universities and community organisations also emerged from the INSPIRES project and subsequent research (3) (4) and (5). With over 100,000-page views globally, the INSPIRES website is a key resource for all such impact projects. It includes the database, European Labour Market Resilience Dataset (ELMaR) that has disseminated to a range of media sources including twitter and Facebook and a LinkedIn group with over 1000 connections.</p> <p>INSPIRES entailed a rigorous in-depth analysis of the evolution of labour markets and employment and social policies for vulnerable groups on the labour market across 12 European countries from 2000 onwards. The project focussed on the labour market position of young people (aged 16 to 25) as employment figures clearly show that unemployment amongst young people is significantly higher than average unemployment in all European countries. The research revealed differences in the extent to which youth unemployment was affected by the economic and fiscal crisis of 2007-2008. Youth unemployment in countries like Germany and the Netherlands was hardly affected by the economic and fiscal crisis of 2007-2008, whereas in countries like Italy and</p>		

Greece it increased by almost ten percentage points. Similar differences were found for other vulnerable groups within the labour market, including older workers, disabled workers, and workers from ethnic minorities (4) (2) (3) and (5). A key finding was that young people undergoing the transition between education and employment were particularly vulnerable across labour markets in Europe. Ellison led further in-depth analysis of findings from Work Packages 1 to 7, with reference to WP 7 which focused on youth transitions. Her study included collaboration in a policy Delphi involving practitioners, third sector organisations and policy makers from all 12 EU Partners involved in the INSPIRES (C5), and the coordination and production of an EU Directed Policy Brief on instruments that may be used to advance the EU 2020 Strategy's goals. This was accompanied by four action-orientated policy briefs directed at policy makers, practitioners from public and third sector organisations, representatives of employers' organisations and trade unions and vulnerable groups across Europe with a central focus on youth transitions. Ellison's detailed analysis of the findings was contextualized within a broader study of recent data regarding youth vulnerabilities in European labour markets (6), including a critical and in-depth study of the prospective socio-economic, educational and training context for young people as they navigate the transition between education and employment in a post Brexit Europe (1). Her research identified central limitations of existing comparative research in the field of youth transitions, particularly regarding the transition between education and employment. Exemplifying this, there is no evidence that national agencies systematically analyse employment opportunities in terms of the social profiles of graduates. A key question is whether specific factors relating to additional support needs, socio-economic disadvantage, ethnicity or gender have an impact on graduate employment destinations given that there is clear evidence that these factors have a significant impact on access and completion of higher education degrees. There are very few research projects, which offer a comparative view of institutional policies, support mechanisms, and practice orientated actions offered by Higher Education Institutions in partnership with community organisations within distinct European settings.

It was the findings from this analysis that led to the establishment of the 'Effective Supportive Services for European Students' project and its emphasis on sharing good practice between partner universities and community organisations from across Europe with a focus on disadvantaged students' additional support needs before university, whilst studying at university and during the transition between university and the graduate labour market.

As a result of the high regard for this research the partners submitted a Horizon 2020 grant proposal 'Generating Equity and Access for Transformations in Education' (GenErATE) in March 2020. This proposal received very good feedback from reviewers and forms the basis of a current grant application to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC UKRI) fund for International collaboration to be submitted in April 2021. Ellison also received further European funding as part of the EU Commission IMP.ACT IMPrese in ACTion project, (<https://www.irecoop.veneto.it/23/04/strumenti-di-finanza-etica/>) between January 2018 and June 2019 which enabled her to deliver a series of training sessions to Health, social care and youth work professionals in Veneto and Edinburgh

3. References to the research

1. Ellison M (2017) "Through the looking glass; Young people, work and the transition between education and employment in a post-Brexit Europe. *Journal of Social Policy*. July 2017. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-social-policy/article/through-the-looking-glass-young-people-work-and-the-transition-between-education-and-employment-in-a-postbrexit-uk/E7245191E7379F2970E02B909CA2F776>
This journal article is published in a leading international journal in the field of Social Policy. The article was selected from a broad range of submissions based on its rigour and originality from a Special Brexit Edition of the Journal. Research evidence and analysis from this article has been cited in 9 leading journal articles.
2. Ellison (2016) INSPIRES Policy Brief to EU Commission Recommendations for EU 2020 Employment strategy. EU Commission.

3. Ellison, M (2014) An In-depth Analysis of the Implementation and Development of Policy Innovations and Processes of Policy Learning: Report for Scotland <http://www.inspires-research.eu/Deliverables>
4. Ellison M; Sergi V and Giannelli, N (2017) In-Depth Analysis of the Relationship Between Policy Making Processes, Forms of Governance, and the Impact of selected Labour Market Innovations in twelve European Labour Market Settings” http://www.econ.uniurb.it/RePEc/urb/wpaper/WP_17_01.pdf
5. Ellison M and Berkel R (2014), ‘Understanding the impact of innovative social and employment policies within the regulatory frameworks of European labour market settings <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/issr.12035>
6. Ellison M (2014), ‘No Future to Risk?’ The Impact of Economic Crises and Austerity on the Inclusion of Young people within Distinct European Labour Market Settings’. In Irving Z and Farnsworth K (eds), Social Policy Review 26. Bristol. Policy Press. June 2014. <http://eresearch.gmu.ac.uk/3523/>

4. Details of the impact

1. Instrumental Impact

This impact was a direct result of ‘The Effective Supportive Services for European Students Project’ International Workshop in January 2020 which was underpinned by Ellison’s research. The workshop involved professional practitioners from The University of Duisburg-Essen, Queen Margaret University and the third sector organisation ‘Who Cares Scotland’. The impact on perceptions of professional practice was followed up by the development of a new service directed at young people from non-academic and care experienced backgrounds in all nine universities in the Ruhr Region of Germany:

In the workshop, the example of Who Cares? Scotland it has become particularly clear that it is important for students from non-academic families and their families or foster families that there is financial security to start a course of study and to successfully complete it. For this reason, the Scholarship Culture Ruhr program has been expanded at the University of Duisburg-Essen and at the other universities in the Ruhr area,
(Director: "Chance hoch zwei" (Second Chance Programme) of the Protectorate for Diversity Management and International Affairs at the University of Duisburg-Essen (E.1).

This impact demonstrates that more effective support services for students who experience a variety of complex challenges in universities in ten European countries is gained by the mutual exchange and implementation of a wide range effective programmes and measures. These services benefit students who face a range of challenges and barriers when making the transition between university education and employment or further study/training. The expanded programme means that care experienced students and students from a non-academic background are now included in the Chance Hoch Two Programme giving them access to support before and during their studies at all 9 universities in the Ruhr area of Germany. Each university in the Ruhr valley provides tailored support for students on the programme. At Duisburg Essen this support takes the form of ‘seminars and workshops provided by University lecturers whilst students are still at school including mentoring and a € 50 per month allowance whilst children are at school with continued mentoring and a stipend of € 300 per month in the first year of study should the students decide to study at the University of Duisburg Essen (Student Mentor for the Chance Hoch 2 Programme, Scholarship Culture Ruhr Programme at Duisburg-Essen University, Germany, E. 2).

Academic and research staff participating in ‘The Effective Supportive Services for European Students Project’ have attested to the positive impact of the resultant expansion of the Scholarship Culture Ruhr Programme upon the experiences of students at Duisburg-Essen University and the other eight universities in the Ruhr valley (E.3; E.4). There is clear evidence that services for University students are being extended and improved as a direct result of ‘The Effective Supportive Services for European Students Project’ at Universities ranging in size and student population.

For example, the University of Duisburg-Essen, in Germany is a large university with a highly diverse student population of over 43,281 (2018) students, effective support services at faculty level are delivered to 2000 social science students through 'The Information and Support Centre' (IBZ). The Scholarship Culture Ruhr programme is delivered across all the universities in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region. The region encompasses nine universities and over 30 postgraduate colleges totalling over 300.000 students. At the other end of the scale, students also benefit from the implementation of exchanged support measures at QMU, a small university with a total student population of 6,479 students. Practitioners from Student Services in the University of Masaryk, Czech Republic; University College, Cork, Ireland; University of Corvinus, Hungary; University of Panteion, Greece; Ca' Foscari University of Venice; The University of Bari, Italy; The University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, The University of Oslo and The University of Valencia, Spain are also involved in the exchange of practice orientated measures.

Professionals from student support services and academics from nine European Universities attended an International Practice Exchange Conference and Workshop in Venice in October 2018. As a direct result each University has identified one or more support measure and programme from partner universities to be implemented in their own university over the coming five years.

2. Conceptual and Teaching Practice Impact

Teaching and Research professionals have changed their conceptualisations of educational inequalities and pedagogic approaches towards young people with complex vulnerabilities, (Transcripts, E.3; E.4; E. 5; E.6 and E.7) Exemplifying this a research professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany has identified current 'blind spots' in educational support services in Germany.

Exemplifying this a research professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany has identified current 'blind spots' in educational support services in Germany.

'the intensive exchange with experts from other countries reveals blind spots in the German debate on educational inequalities, young people in foster care are not perceived as a vulnerable group in need of specific support. Accordingly, it is my goal to focus more on young people in foster care in Germany in the future and to develop measures within the project framework to better address possible disadvantages of this group in the education system'.

(Research Professor, Institute for Work Skills and Training University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany: E.3)

In addition, a senior lecturer at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia has identified how the project has changed his teaching practice,

'As regards the Venice Conference, it dealt with ever more important issues on disabilities. It indeed influenced my teaching practice since I always make sure that if anyone is present with any special condition I seek for adjustments in advance. I found the Venice Conference important for introducing and presenting psychologically and physically non-invasive practises, including a particular aspect of mindfulness'. (Senior Lecturer, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia, E.6)

3. Impacts on Professional Practice

Broader professional practice impacts include the establishment and development of local employment partnerships to support young people at risk after staff attended training sessions delivered by Ellison to health and social care professionals in the Veneto Region of Italy. Similarly, Ellison led a series of training workshops for health, social care and youth work professionals in Edinburgh and Veneto on community approaches to support services for young people to enable

positive and meaningful educational transitions in order to facilitate the development of effective local employment partnerships to support young people into employment.

‘Our system is very different and in particular the way professionals interpret their role. I really enjoyed the communitarian conception of the social issues that invites us to design services for young people by acting in a way that can include them within the wellbeing of our community as a whole. I will put into action what I learned in the training session’
(Social Worker: Veneto Region, Italy, E.10)

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

E.1 Director: "Chance hoch zwei" (Second Chance Programme) of the Protectorate for Diversity Management and International Affairs at the University of Duisburg-Essen. Written transcript of testimony (E1) and Video testimony (E1a): (MP4 File GMT20201208)

E.2 Student Mentor at Duisburg-Essen University, Germany

E.3 Research Professor: Institute for Work Skills and Training
University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany:
Written transcript of testimony.

E.4 Research Associate, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany:
Written transcript of testimony.

E.5 Research Coordinator, Institute for Social Science in the 21st Century (ISS21)
University College Cork.

E.6 Coordinator, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

E.7 Research Fellow, Ca'Foscari University, Venice, Italy.

E.8 Inspires European Research Project: <http://www.inspires-research.eu/>

E.9 CORDIS EUROPA: Reporting: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/320121/reporting>

E.10 Training Coordinator: IRECOOP VENETO: Veneto Cooperative Organisation, Veneto, Italy.