The Hungarian Youth Guarantee System and the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training): Hope or Despair

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Abstract
This thesis examines the effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee System (YG) and its Operational Programmes in Hungary, as an element of intervention on the strict increase of the unemployment rate, which was present all over Europe after the economic crisis in 2008. As the YG intends to provide options of reintegration to the especially vulnerable youngsters into the labour market, those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) proved to be a challenge to reach out by the YG. In spite of the fact, that the Hungarian way of adaptation of the YG was slightly different from that recommended by the EU, it is implemented well. This thesis besides providing the theoretical framework of the Hungarian labour market and educational system for the YG, gives empirical context of Ózd and Csepel to it, revealed by the qualitative research on the key actors taking essential part (formally or informally) in the efficiency of the YG, such as vocational schools, family care centres, Public Employment Services (PES) at the cities. Additionally, vast amount of information was added by the experts on public employment, the YG and other active labour market policies in Hungary. It is also noteworthy, that policies in the education system and the case of the Roma people proved to be complicating circumstances on the success of the YG. The main findings on the Youth Guarantee alongside its relative success are that it has many weaknesses, such as the lack of cooperation and integrated way of communication between the relevant actors and the presence of mentors, that there were no precisely specified target groups and the lack of awareness associated with it, which made reaching out for the NEET harder and thus minimising the success of the YG.
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1. Introduction

Data provided by EuroStat, indicates that youth unemployment (from the age group of 15-20) reached extremely high rates in the Member States of the European Union. The EU average was 22.8% in 2012, which meant about 5.5 million young people were unemployed, which is more than before the economic crisis with an estimated 1.4 million in 2007. The phenomenon of youth unemployment is varying from each region within both the EU and the Member States. Despite the crisis, the case of youth unemployment is not that acute in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and in the Scandinavian countries, while a social catastrophe threatened the Mediterranean regions (in the case of Greece and Spain, the rate of youth unemployment is more than 50%). In Hungary, as a result of the crisis, the youth unemployment rate increased from 18% (2007) to 28.1% (2012), which meant 84.6 thousand young people out of the labour market, as the graph indicates it below.

Figure 1.: Youth unemployment rate from 2007 to 2017 in Hungary

Unemployment is significant especially among the low skilled individuals, those who completed only primary education have a rate of 54.7%, which is disadvantageous concerning the EU average, while for those unemployed who obtain degrees from tertiary
education (19.6%) is more or less the same with the EU average. Regarding Hungary from the 1990’s, the participation of youth in the labour market was decreasing in correlation with the social and economic transition. One reason for this is the expansion in education –the increased period of time spent in education by the youth-, major causes are the insufficient demand of labour, the lack of qualification for entering the labour market, the mobility within the country and the low percentage of youth being employed while completing their education. Hungarian NEETs (youngsters being not in education, employment or training) can be characterised as being inactive, the proportion of women is higher, the majority of them lack or have minimal work experience, which results in the high percentage of lack of motivation among them –it is more than 40%, while the EU average is 33%. Additionally, it is also noteworthy to mention that the NEET rate is higher among the Roma population and people being residents of the rural areas of Hungary. Therefore, it is evident that there was an acute need for a Youth Guarantee, to reintegrate the inactive youth into the society.

Alongside the main causes and correlations of becoming NEET in Hungary, the thesis examines the concept of Operative Programmes (GINOP and VEKOP) within the Youth Guarantee System, and then discussions are set on the Hungarian way of implementation in contrast to the European patterns, including alternatives of such programmes and already established ones from the family of active labour market policies to that the Youth Guarantee belongs too. Hence, the research is conducted around the questions concerning the situation of the NEET, the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in both the EU and Hungary, while embedding the issues into the context of the interdependence of employment and education. The research tries to address the following questions with adequate explanations through the analysis of quantitative and qualitative means of methodology –by conducting focus groups with the Hungarian students of vocational schools and interviews with their teachers, beside the discussions with experts of the subject as well as providing the quantitative data on the context of the topic. What are the main factors of becoming NEET in a general and Hungarian context? What are the most effective types of policies in reducing the inactivity among the 15-24 years old NEETs –in relation to the role of education and the type of education in helping the youth to enter the labour market? How are active labour market policies effective in this case? How is the Youth Guarantee System presented in the Hungarian way of application?
2. Literature Review

2.1. Sociological Theory relevant to NEETs

As the definition of the status of being NEET suggests, the theme of the thesis is built upon the interdependent pillars of education and employment. The type of education one receives could immensely influence the quality of future chances of the individual being employed, while the rate of unemployment of a country affects its policies towards the education system. Therefore, the following review of the existing literature includes the sociological theories produced in these fields and the relation between them, as well as setting the context of the literature used in the main body of the research, including the active labour market policies such as the set-up of the Youth Guarantee and the programmes it provides. Such policies and programs are employed and adapted to help the youth entering the labour market and compensate the failures of the education system. Consequently, the Hungarian approaches addressing the failures of education policies are comparatively presented with the international ones of the European Union. In these fields, the economic approaches and quantitative researches conducted are principally relevant, hence literatures are also presented, purposely shedding light on the full context of the thesis.

In terms of the relationship between education and employment, Talcott Parsons education acts as a bridge for the youth between their family and adulthood. Years spent in education are a period of transition in the life of a young individual towards adulthood where statuses can be achieved on the basis of universalistic standards, unlike in the environment of the family, where they obtain ascribed statuses. The schools play a selective role regarding their grading of students by similar universalistic standards as in adulthood, therefore, youngsters are gaining statuses on the basis of their performances. (Haralambos and – Holborn, 1990)

The selective nature of the education system is discussed in a broader sense in Pierre Bourdieu’s Cultural Capital Theory, which includes the differences between the social classes during this procedure. Bourdieu explains the roots of the fail of the working-class children in schools is not to be searched in the hierarchy of the social classes, thus working-class being inferior to upper ones, but the answer lies in the education system, which fails these children and not the other way around. He argues that the system of
education is has its fundamental basis in cultural reproduction, namely, in reproducing the culture of the dominant classes. With such fundamentals, it means that the performance in schools is linked to the amount of cultural capital obtained by the students. Children belonging to the dominant classes are having advantage due to the fact of already having acquired the cultural capital –the subject of the reproduction-, while working-class children are at disadvantage. (Bourdieu, 1977) This means that such children should adapt and most importantly they or their parents should realise the need of this adaption as early as in elementary school.

The selective nature of system is just one aspect of education strengthening the inequalities among the students. In Hungary, the type and the quality of a school can determine the future chances of employability of the students. The certificate of schools, which are mainly producing training skilled workers is losing its value on the labour market. Such schools, for instance vocational schools, basically “train students to be unemployed” and causing them to lose hope and trust in the institutional system at the same time. (Takács, 2016)

There is a huge difference between the skills taught in vocational high schools and vocational schools. The former provides with the universal and flexible basic skills, which can be improved, while the latter provides specific skills that can easily become outdated as the technological improvements go further and affect the demands of the labour market, thus causing the youngsters find themselves in unemployment. (Gábor Kézdi 2008) Instead of retraining the students, vocational schools train them into specific skills in order to meet the demands of the employers. However, training the students into a narrow range of knowledge also means the deskilling of the workforce, consequently, they obtain the certificate and skills but are still not qualified enough to fit the rapidly changing requirements of the labour market resulting in the phenomenon of sectoral unemployment. (Haralambos – Holborn, 1990)

Over the last fifty years a number of thinkers have developed theories on exclusion which are relevant to the thesis. Gunnal Myrdal coined the term underclass, which mainly refers to the class of those people being unemployed, not being employed or underemployed –i.e. the class of people under the working class-, and thus not contributing to the life of their nations –at least through the labour market. (Myrdal, 1963) However, this concept is homogenizing the people including the underclass, which is held
to be a major weakness of the theory, since—as the thesis points out— the people of the underclass are rather heterogeneous.

There is also it has been claimed a phenomenon of ‘culture of poverty’ among those disadvantaged NEET and other people, which it is claimed can also remain through generations in the family of the individual, which is a different form of living of the middle class. (Lewis, 1969). As Oscar Lewis (1969) puts it, the people living in poverty can make up a subculture, which has the characteristic of a mechanism that contributes to the sustainment of it, particularly because of the desires, worldview and attributes of the youth who grow up in it. People socialised within a culture of poverty it is said lack aspirations and feel powerless and fatalistic due to their lack of opportunities and resources, moreover, the blame of the poor on the part of the majority of the society resulted in the feeling of inferiority. For Lewis (1969), the culture of poverty comes to the surface when the poor do not obtain any sense of class consciousness. On the other hand, a major weakness of this theory is that Lewis and others who subscribe to this theory were unsuccessful to test on a longitudinal way the perpetuation of poverty from generations to generations. Nonetheless, later research conducted on the subject revealed that some members of poor families did not encounter with any such obstacles to social mobility on the basis of their origins and the possible impact of culture of poverty. Also it should be noted that some perceive the culture of the ghetto as a logical response to the structural inequality of society and in some cases such culture can be beneficial re support networks and self-help (Ryder, 2002 ).

The young person’s transition from school to work can be at risk when experiencing unemployment and the sense of inactivity at a young age of leaving school. Being socially excluded is the outcome of becoming a NEET. Ruth Levitas distinguished and defined three major discourses on the field of social exclusion. The first is the redistributive discourse (RED), which explains social exclusion as the outcome of resources in the capitalist structure of the society. The second is moral underclass discourse (MUD), which claims that the lack of morals, motivation and will, which are the source of social exclusion, moreover, the fact that social benefits cause the problem of dependency. The third is the social integrationist discourse (SID), in which the individuals are suffering from social exclusion due to the lack of work, but still missing the points that despite not providing financial resources, unpaid work has its values for
the individual and that paid employment does not necessarily mean brings social inclusion. (Levitas, 1999) Beside the financial and psychological consequences of unemployment, the risk of social exclusion is present, as the individual’s opportunities of social interactions are limited while being NEET. Furthermore, the loss of the sense of collective purpose because of being inactive just gets worse by the time with the scarring effects, which can cause the loss of human capital, motivation as well as influencing the future employment of the individual by increasing the probability of being employed with lower payment. (European Commission, 2016)

The complex concept of capability and its absence was described by Amartya Sen (1985). It refers to what the individuals are capable of with the use of their elementary possessions, and to what extent they are capable of becoming active parts of the different scenes of the society. Beside functioning, the individuals are free to make choices during their life course in order to improve their quality of life. (Sen, 1985) Consequently, the choices of the NEET individuals are crucial in terms of their situation and the reasons of being inactive.

2.2. EU Policy

The issue led to the launch of the youth unemployment package by the European Commission in December 2012, which consisted the Council Recommendation on the establishment of a youth Guarantee. A working paper published by the ILO Research Department in August 2015 perfectly describes the creation, transformation and characteristics of the Youth Guarantee (YG) System. The fundaments and major elements of the YG that were laid down in 2012 included the followings: the whole system and its operative programmes are financed by the European Structural Fund (ESF) -which is the part of the Cohesion Fund-, and beside the strong support for labour market integration of the youth, the programme should stand in continuous interaction with the stakeholders. Furthermore, early intervention and activation of the NEET is essential in order to achieving a long lasting and effective integration for them, while such actions are continually monitored and evaluated, thus securing the YG’s adaption to the needs of the NEET during its operation. Also, the roles of the Commission were defined in supporting the adaptation and establishment of YG in the Member States of the European Union: beside the financial support they provide through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the Commission shares the good practices and monitors the measures adapted by the
states—with aggregate, direct and follow-up monitoring most importantly—, as well as giving support for dissemination and the inevitable awareness-raising activities in order to reach out for the youth needing the help of the programme. Additional measures include the precise allocation of the target group, with the advice of dividing it into sub-groups (ethnic minorities, long-term unemployed, gender differences, etc.) in order to develop more precise strategies, thus increasing the efficiency of the YG system. The next main measure was partnership, namely between the local governmental/non-governmental organizations, thus, when planning the local strategies, the YG programmes can adapt to the local relations with the local actors who are close to the target group. (Escudero–Mourelo, 2015)

Youth Guarantee implementation plans were submitted by all of the European countries by May 2014. As the official Council recommendation of the establishment defined it on 22. April 2013, all Member States committed themselves to make sure that all young people under the age of 25 receives the followings within the frames of the Youth Guarantee in the period of 4 months after the moment of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education: being provided with good quality of employment, traineeship, apprenticeship as well as the continuation of their education. The programmes are implemented as “guarantees”, which mean that they are right-based programmes available for those who meet the criteria. (Coveney, 2013) The implemented plans—i.e. the national schemes that are based on the policy framework of the European Youth Guarantee— it can vary from country to country due to their diversity at the starting point of the programme and the economic background of the member states. Such diversity can be manifested in the differing levels of youth unemployment and the fact that the young people are rather heterogeneous in terms of their characteristics as a group with different social environment, their level of inactivity and commitment, furthermore, can differ especially when it comes to the identification of sub-groups within the target group of the programme; differences the institutional set-up or capacity of the numerous agents of the labour market of a country; differences in approaches may be dependent on financial constrains regarding the resource allocation or the situation of public budgets.

In spite of the fact, that each state has to come over different sets of issues during the establishment, all the programmes produced must involve three kinds of measures in order to be efficient for an effective YG. Besides being run by PES—who are the body bearing the responsibility of offering opportunities in employment or education to
candidates who are suitable and register for such help on the basis of the criteria—the Member States must entail the measures of: 1.) Education and training for employment with providing professional guidance and help the return of early school drop outs to re-enter education; 2.) intermediating services regarding employment, for instance, assistance provided in the search for jobs and follow-up career plans that are personalized for the individual; and 3.) ALMPs that are influencing the demand on the labour market, like public work programmes, start-up incentives or subsidies needed for hiring. Alongside the principle measures, the Member States launched designed initiative and reforms to help the re-integration of the young, such as: reform on the education system and the labour market and initiatives to assist social development and the reduction of poverty; and amendments to laws concerning youth issues. (Escudero–Mourelo, 2015)

2.3. NEET Policy and the Youth Guarantee in Hungary

Júlia Varga (2017) discusses the most significant reforms and approaches of policies regarding education that have been made in Hungary. First of all, the most relevant change in the education, that the compulsory age of remaining in school has been decreased from the age of 18 to 16 in the hopes of youngsters entering the labour market earlier. Secondly, in order to make vocational schooling more attractive for the youth, the structure and label of vocational schools and vocational high schools were changed. Vocational high schools were changed to be and named vocational grammar schools, while, vocational schools are now vocational high schools, furthermore, both are supervised by the ministry of Finances. In vocational grammar schools, the time of teaching general education subjects was reduced, while the merged subjects of natural sciences are taught in 9th grade, and from 10th to 12th grades one vocational subject is having the emphasis as a requirement of the future profession. On the other hand, the length of time spent in vocational high schools was reduced from 4 to 3 years, as well as the reduction of time spent on teaching general education subjects similarly to the case of vocational grammar schools. The expected effects of such reforms are the deterioration of basic skills taught in the formerly mentioned types of schools, therefore, the basis of the tertiary education is decreased. The major consequence on the level of the individual is that youngsters from both schools have greater likelihood of being unemployed, thus, having an impact on the level of the society in the sense of decline of contribution to growth, as well as strengthening and creating inequalities in the society. (Varga, 2017) The inactivity and the growing rate of unemployment of the young people—not just in the
country but being a striking problem all over the European Union—set the need for interventions and the re-integration of the NEET.

Concerning the Hungarian way of delivering the Youth Guarantee, I mainly relied on the official Hungarian document of the implementation plan beside the reports published by the European Commission, which not just delineated the framework of the plan, but also touched upon the context and the challenges concerning the establishment of an efficient YG. Relatively early, on 6 December 2013, Hungary presented a Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, which was updated in April 2014. The national scheme was launched on 1 January 2015 and is progressively implemented through to 2018. The programmes are available to all young NEET, but lays more emphasis on long-term unemployed (LTU)—being in unemployment for more than 6 or 4 months)—youth and NEETs. The context on which the YG was issued, is mainly the decline in the labour market participation from the side of the youth, explained by the educational expansion and extended period of academic life, which led to a low level of ‘double-status’ (being employed during education) among the youth. The rate of youth employment—despite showing some percentage of increase since the crisis—was at its lowest in 2012 with 18.6%, with having the NEET rate of 14.7% in the same year. It was realised that the youth between the age of 15-24 are most at risk of unemployment, especially in the economically underdeveloped regions of the country, meaning Northern-Hungary and the Northern Great Plain.

The Hungarian Youth Guarantee System consist of two main pillars: the GINOP and the VEKOP group of programmes. There is not difference between the two on the basis of their aims and target group, but VEKOP 8.2.1 only covers the Central Hungarian region—excepting this region, the NEET rate was higher than 25% everywhere in the country. VEKOP has the financial resources of the ESF and the Hungarian National Employment FUND (NEF). The GINOP 5.2.1 covers the whole country with the exception of the VEKOP region. Beside using the resources of ESF and NEF, it has the additional financial resource of YEI, due to the fact of covering greater regions which are expected to be developed to the level of the Central Hungarian one.

These major challenges meant the integration of the NEET and LTU youngsters into the labour market, who are in the majority of the cases low-skilled, lacking working experience and early school leavers. To face these challenges, the basic skills and
competences should be improved through training or education, namely in vocational schools. The document of the implementation plan draws up both the strategic and institutional framework of the Youth Guarantee. The youth policy framework is included in the National Youth Strategy, which mainly entails to improve the social integration and the work of the youth profession as well as providing active roles for the non-governmental organizations (NGO) of the youth. Additionally, it also includes the adopted Programme for the Future of the New Generations, which helps to define the areas of investments within the strategy. The other major part of the framework is the Strategy on Early School Leaving, which has the goal of preventing the youth of leaving school early, moreover, aims to help most of the youngsters to enter the upper-secondary level of education. One of the main pillars of this principal strategy is The Public Education Development Strategy, which is aimed at the development of the educational institutions, the improvement of the qualifications of teachers, hence enhancing the competences and skills of the students while having the potential early school leavers at its focus.

The other pillar is the Strategy of Lifelong Learning, which promotes the time spent in lifelong learning by adjusting the formal education and training systems to such principles. The last principal strategy is The Strategic Framework Document for the Employment Policy Development (2014-20), which defined the interventions planned in the labour market. As for the institutional framework presented by the implementation plan, the Ministry of Finances has the main part of responsibility shared regarding the Hungarian YG system in its hands – including the questions of employment, training and policies in adult and vocational education-, as well as it stands in close cooperation with the Ministry of Human Resources, which is responsible for the education and youth policy. The other major body is the National Employment Services (PES), which is given the primary responsibility of the implementation and coordination of the scheme. The next entity in the list institutions is The National Youth Expert Forum (ISZEF), which assists in the coordination of the policies related to the youth, and is chaired by the Ministry of Human Resources. Lastly, the National Youth Council participates as an umbrella organization representing the smaller youth organizations and helps shaping the youth policy. Employment organizations (such as the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and organizations for under-represented groups (like the National Roma
Council) are also having roles in the operation of the YG. (Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, 2014)

**Figure 2.: The process of the services offered and provided by the YG**

The figure above intends to describe the process of the services offered and provided by the YG. As mentioned the PES is the main body at responsibility carrying out the YG, who were merged into the bureau—they were previously the part of the ministry. The process starts with the registration of the NEET as unemployed or job seeker at the PES and accepts to co-operate with them along the programmes. Then a profiling should take place as a regular task of the PES, which includes the uncovering of the work history and the qualifications of the youngster. A consultation follows it, where
the PES employees with the youngster put together a plan tailored to the individual needs of them. While preparing the offer, the registered youngster can receive subsidies. If the youngster happens to find employment externally of the YG during the process of preparing the offer, then it means the end of the YG agreement. Otherwise, the offer is based on the attributions of the individual: if they have qualifications or some kind of profession, then an offer is made to enter the labour market, where the employer of the youngster is able to apply for wage subsidies, which can be even the 100% of the wage. If the youngster lacks proper or any kinds of qualifications or profession, then they can be offered trainings with wage compensatory subsidy. Offers can be made on entering an internship programme, where the vocational centres send them to a company.

The last group of offers is the possibility of becoming an entrepreneur, which is mainly directed by the OFA Ltd. There, the youngsters can receive trainings in enterprise managing, and after getting their certificate, they have to apply for wage cost subsidies and capital support for an agreed time. Beside the training, they can receive business plans set up for them, as well as mentors who are helping and guiding them. The whole system has a central guidance on who could get what kind of subsidies and support within the services. After receiving help and services, the youngster quits from the YG system, and their situation is investigated 180 days later, which is administrated, therefore the EU can monitor the success and operation of the programme by taking samples from the PES databases.

The effectiveness of a Youth Guarantee depends on the decision of the government in the question of prioritisation of distribution. A more targeted programme may result in greater benefits but only for the specific group standing in the focus of the target, while on the other hand, a programme which is implemented in a wider sense will tend to enhance competition and reduce reservation wages. (Escudero–Mourelo, 2015) Hungary decided to implement the plan in the most intensive way, thus setting the fundamentals of an extensive programme, however, the wide range of policies and the apparatus shows us basic weaknesses and failures in this approach. The Hungarian policies does not treat the differentiating and special needs of vulnerable groups – including long term NEETs and people with multiple barriers (for instance, youngsters with disabilities)- that require special interventions. As to the evidences, the YG monitoring data from the last years clearly explain the patterns of these weaknesses.
Despite proving to be moderately successful in 2016, the Hungarian YG is characterised by the lack of outreach and the low coverage of the youth. 6.2% of the NEET population were covered by the programme, which shows that a rather significant number of the NEETs are not addressed and provided with help. Moreover, only 45.2% of those who received help within the frames of YG were in positive situation in the following 6 months after exiting the programme. The Commission advised that there was a need for greater involvement of NGOs, youth and social organizations in provision of some labour market services. Additionally, names the main problem concerning the track of the situation of the NEET as the tie goes by. In 2017, it was reported that the rates of youth unemployment and NEETs decreased to their pre-crisis levels, as well as pointing out the reforms on the change of the structure of vocational education and training and expressing their scepticism towards this decision and its expected consequences. (European Commission, 2018)

2.4. Alternative Strategies

Last but not least, I used literature during my research regarding alternative solutions to the Youth Guarantee, namely the work of the International Labour Office (ILO). Such alternatives are wage subsidies, which are aimed at covering through transfers to employers and employees a part of the wage and non-wage employment costs of the individual, therefore, promoting the employers to hire members of the target group—which may consist of new job seekers, youngsters, disadvantaged people, etc. Their goal is to provide employment for the people and preventing them from applying for public works. Wage subsidies can be given within programs that employs the individual for at least 3 months and are not summer jobs or the test of a job, but rather are on-the-job trainings (in its case with the criterion of program is related at least ¾ to the job), programs focusing youngsters (with the age limit of younger than 30) and experimental programs. (Bördös–Csillag–Scharle, 2015) Nevertheless, concerning the drawbacks of such programs, the bureaucracies that are at charge of selecting the participants from the target group are more likely to apply individuals who have higher possibilities of performing well within the programmes, thus getting more positive results and premiums for their success rate. With money standing as the main incentive for the programmes, the group of people who mean the ore of the problems of unemployment and the lack of skills are not likely to be provided with effective help.
2.5. Assessments of Hungarian Initiatives

The next section of literature was used in the research concerning the Hungarian context of socio-politics and policies in connection with the failure of education, which are clearly presented by the PISA results; inequalities and employment. József Fejes and Norbert Szűcs in their article of Where is the issue of the educational integration today? in 2017, drew correlation between the quality of skills tested by PISA and the future employment of the youth. Concerning the development of skills required for individual learning (such as reading and being familiar with the basic principles of math), the Hungarian education system is rather weak. As for the result of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which examined the 15 years old students, the country is below the international average as the OECD data presents. (2017) The PISA analyses the 15 years old youth in terms of their knowledge and to what extent can they apply and use their knowledge outside of the school. their main point is to collect data on youngsters and reveal characteristics and patterns that can influence their future employment and lifelong learning. (Fejes–Szűcs, 2017) In the last decade, those countries were successful in economic development, which were able to efficiently improve the cognitive skills of those participating in education and trainings.

In contrast, the Hungarian students are undisciplined and lack motivation while struggling in the system, due to the small amount of complex in-class exercises, they are unable to use their knowledge in other perspectives outside of the walls of the school. This issue was further discussed by Judit Lannert in her study of Not a land for children. This can be explained by the overwhelmed syllabus, which mainly tests the memorising strategies of the students rather than their strategies of understanding a subject. (Lannert, 2018) It just gets worse in the case of students with lower socio-economic statuses, who are having the worst performances even in an international sense. In the terms of strengthening or weakening the existing inequalities among the students and thus influencing their future, the type of the school plays a major role. Children having different family backgrounds (such as belonging to lower social classes or certain ethnicities) are very likely to be enrolled in different quality of education –i.e. being segregated. The PISA examination in 2012 indicated that the correlation between the family background and performance is significant, especially in Hungary. Therefore, the children of higher status parents are advantaged regarding their future education and
employment. This selective nature of the schools in Hungary results in homogeneous schools, in which the classroom has greater influence on the students to their future education than the family. The vocational schools where the majority of the disadvantaged students study are unable to help the children in compensating their suffering of inequality with the improvement of basic skills to an appropriate level – as a result, there is a higher rate of school drop outs, hence these students are unable to acquire the knowledge needed for their professions. It can be explained by the quality of the teachers who are being contra-selected to the students, and the financial resources of such schools. The schools are not eliminating but strengthening the inequalities among the pupils (Fejes–Szűcs, 2017)

In their book of Segregation in the elementary school in Hungary after the turn of the Millenium, Gábor Kertesi and Gébor Kézdi are comprehensively discussing the consequences of segregation of students. The segregation of children struggling with problems concerning their studies into schools and classes leads to the decrease in the quality of schooling services, meaning the teaching resources – time, competence and attention- become limited compared to the quantity of pedagogical tasks that are needed to be solved; the atmosphere of the receivers of the education become disadvantageous due to the change in the dominant nature of the peer group; and the wage of the teachers loses its value due to the complicated pedagogical tasks.

The coexistence of people who lack personal experiences with other different groups than theirs is difficult for them. This lack of experiences is fuelling distrust, stereotypes, prejudices and lead to later conflicts between the groups. In a society where the different social groups are significantly separated, the political nation is fragmented in the sense that people do not experience the nation together as a community of all of the citizens and not just of certain people. Consequently, the ‘inner circles’ of a society do not welcome the financial support of the ‘outer circles’, which just conserves the disadvantages of the ‘outer circles’. The information regarding the employment opportunities or the continuation of studies, and the personal references are essential resources for people who want to be able to getting out of their isolated situation. As for the experiences, the frequency of the contacts between the groups studying at the same school can be increased by providing the availability of leisure time spent together outside of the school – i.e. a desegregation is needed. (Kertesi–Kézdi, 2009)
Csapó et al (2014) also discussed the social and economic consequences of the neglected education system. If the youngsters with disadvantaged backgrounds leave the education system without having skills and knowledge useful in the labour market, they are not or merely able to take part in the sharing of burden, while they are generating costs for the society for instance in the fields of unemployment, social services and health care, etc.

Gábor Kézdi (2008) examines the failures of vocational schooling in his book of Not just the consequence of the transition. He argues that the skills acquired during the vocational training become outdated by the time of technological advancement, which only favour those who are able to improve their skills. Skills provided at vocational schools loses its value in 25 years and only serves as satisfying the demands of the labour market for specific skills, which are not optimal for a long period of time. The workers, who are obtaining only such set of skills, could experience with a decrease in their wages that the demanded skills of the labour market and employers have changed. (Kézdi, 2008)

The problem of faced by those youngsters who completed their studies at vocational high schools in 3 years and chose not to graduate that they are more likely to be at risk of unemployment.

The difference between the graduated and non-graduated was analysed by Tamás Hajdu et al (2015) in their work of In defence of graduation. Those who graduated from vocational high schools are receiving a greater amount of wage (about by 25%) due to entering into well-paid positions in greater numbers than those completed their vocational training. The difference between the wages is just increasing by the increase of the age of the individuals – ‘the knowledge of yesterday worth less on the labour market’- especially due to the fact of those who completed vocational training were not prepared to improve their skills as to the changings in the demand, which also means that the graduated have benefits from their improved basic skills on the labour market.

János Köllő’s (2017) discussion on shortage of labour published in The Hungarian Labour Market perfectly fits in the sequence of thoughts of this literature review. He explains that only those South-European countries (such as Italy) with the characteristic of a remaining strongly traditional small businesses can afford themselves the luxury of policy making giving up on the education of half of 14-15 years olds concerning their basic knowledge. In Hungary, nor family small businesses, nor the large companies, nor the civil organizations help the entrance of those individuals who lack basic skills into the labour market. In accordance to this, the share of costs by companies arises, especially
concerning the recent shortage of labour –namely, that beside the wages they want to pay for the labour they are unable to find the appropriate number and quality of workers. Furthermore, the low level of public and governmental support with the same level of political and social acceptance received by civil organizations, which serves as a drawback in the process of reaching out for target groups and providing them with information on programs and lifelong learning, which is required for entering the labour market.

2.6. Alternative Programmes to the Youth Guarantee System

Concerning the following set, relied on only one very comprehensive literature, which introduces us the means of active labour market policies and programmes, and their contrasts both on a national and international level. Péter Hudomiet and Gábor Kézdi explain us such policies in their study of The international experiences of active labour market policies published in 2008. The active means of the labour market policies are targeted on finding a long-lasting solution that are positively influencing the demanding side of labour through the creation and provision of employment. However, these means only pay-off after a long period of time, but still offer significantly better solutions than unemployment benefits, for instance allowances –such provided by the passive means- at least this tendency characterises Hungary. Their main drawback is that they require a remarkable amount of financial resources, thus, they can be executed only on the expenses of the side of the income’s budget. Moreover, the determination of the government and social sensibility can also influence the effectiveness of such means in a greater deal, than the type of the specific programme in question. The main types of active labour market programmes –from the most expensive to the cheapest- are training programmes, employment support programmes, public employment and active assistance in the search for employment. (Hudomiet–Kézdi, 2008)

They also discuss well-aimed, complex programmes, just like the Youth Guarantee System. In respect to their attributions, the participants of these programmes do not receive only one type of programme, but are provided with special, and often a personalised combination of activities. Due to the complexity of the programmes, they are the most expensive but still the most efficient. Their principal elements are the active provision of help in searching for employment, personal discussions and career advice alongside opportunities of trainings and receiving employment support. Applicants for
the programmes are being selected on the basis of their potential of success and the likelihood of being profitable. The target groups usually consist of those, whose situation was not significantly improved by other active labour market programmes. (Hudomiet–Kézdi, 2008)

2.6.1. Job Corps

The first big success of well-aimed and rather complex programmes I would like to mention is the Job Corps launched in the USA by the Johnson government in 1964, with the aim of helping the disadvantaged youth in receiving a good quality of employment, hence improving their situation and promoting their integration into the society – and proved to be a great success in the 70’s and 80’s. The main target group of the programme consists of those youngsters from the age of 16-24, who are unemployed or having jobs with extremely low wages, and can receive a maximum 6 months of training within the frames of Job Corps. The participants can freely sign up or out of the courses and can discuss their needs with consultants – even after years of completing the programme, the space for discussion remains there. One half of the courses include general trainings and the other half involves the vocational trainings. Its special element is that the majority of the participants (at least 80%) are obliged to move into dormitories, where they not only receive further allowance (for example, meal, sporting opportunities, etc.), but are monitored in every hour of the day. Studies examining the success rate of the program found out that there was a significant increase in the wages of the participants over the years they were employed. The also found out that the older participants (20-24 years old) were more motivated, spent longer time in the programme and also were more profitable than the younger ones. (Hudomiet–Kézdi, 2008)

2.6.2. New Deal

The New Deal for Young People is the other programme, which is an instance of success. It was started in 1998, and aims at providing help to the disadvantaged youth. The uniqueness of the programme is that it is compulsory for those 18-24 years old youngsters, who have received unemployment benefits for 6 months, moreover, if they refuse to participate they are withdrawn from the unemployment benefits. The New Deal consists of three periods, each aiming at the integration of the individual into the labour market as soon as possible. The first 4 months is the time period of ‘Getaway’, when each participant receives trainings and a consultant, who helps them in searching for jobs. For
those who were unable to get employed in the first period, can chose from the followings: 1.) be employed in the private sector with wage subsidies; or 2.) receiving an intensive education and training; or 3.) being employed in the civil sector; or 4.) being employed at environmental organizations. This period lasts for 6 months, and those who were still unable of getting a job, go to the third phase, which focuses on the search for work again. (Hudomiet–Kézdi, 2008) It is noteworthy to mention that the Youth Guarantee programmes are similar to these described: are complex, well-aimed, and their success lies in the way of connecting the elements of the programmes.

2.7. Concluding Thoughts on the Relevant Literatures

The previously presented literature was embraced by the relationship of education and employment. The skills and practise of knowledge outside of the schools greatly influences the future employability of the individual, as the results of the PISA examination presents it from year to year. The Hungarian students are at disadvantage in many case, mainly due to the overwhelmed education system, which not only affects their learning habits but also the quality of sources of knowledge, namely the teachers. Other weakness if the system is the selective nature of schools –which is especially strong in Hungary- and results in the arrangement of schools based on their quality: the quality of the teachers and the environment of the classroom. This type of segregation of children into school do not only fail to meet the special needs of them, but also helps in the creation of inequalities as well as strengthening them. Their case only gets worse by the continuation of education, and whether they are able to graduate or not. This serves as a major reason for the general scepticism of the people towards the Hungarian education system, especially the newly passed reforms, which seems to be promoting student to choose vocational education.

The literature addressing this problem is entitled to answer the research question of the effective types of policies in reducing the inactivity among the 15-24 years old NEETs, with the question concerning the role of education and the type of education in helping the youth to enter the labour market. This issue of segregation has its major impact on the society in the separation and lack of interaction between the distinct groups of people, hence weakening the solidarity of the country. Therefore, the establishment of the Youth Guarantee is reasoned –regardless of the incongruous policies concerning the education and the involvement of NGOs into the programmes in order to extend the radius of effectiveness of the YG. Lastly, the active labour market policies and programmes
were discussed by a great piece of literature as alternatives and similarities to the Youth Guarantee. Thus, these pieces of literature provide guidance in the research concerning the effectiveness of active labour market policies, and how the Youth Guarantee is presented in the Hungarian application.

Despite relying on a great number of literature, there are still gaps in the research. For instance, the concrete situation of NEETs both before and after entering such programmes: having a NEET status may depend on a sequence of reasons, and there are also cases when the individual does not necessarily regard themselves as such –because being relatively active- but still out of formal employment, education or training. Also, their situation is rather difficult to measures after receiving help, because their extent of success should be compared with the hypothetical success of not being involved in such programmes.

3. Methodology

In terms of research methods at the centre of the data collection strategy adopted in the research is qualitative research methods. The perspective of the methodology is two sided: interpretive and critical. On one hand, the research methods are interpretive, because the thesis is constructed by conducting qualitative research as one of the main sources of information, thus, understanding the problem of NEETs from the actors’ own frames of understanding. Furthermore, greater understanding can be gained on the impacts of governmental policies and strategies –such as the Youth Guarantee Plan or other active labour market policies-, because the actors can give me a contrast on what was planned, what was said to be done and finally, what was done in the reality. On the other hand, I employ critical research methods for the sake of gaining information on the NEET.

The methods of literature review and content analysis enable the researcher to project the content of the literature to the reality, therefore, I rely on these methods heavily, since one of the core piece of the thesis is the Youth Guarantee Plan published by the government. This document is examined and interpreted in terms of the policies and plans of the Hungarian government with the ways of their implementation.
The principal method that is utilised in the research is qualitative interviewing, which gives me the opportunity to gain a greater perspective on the situation of those youngsters, who are not in employment, education or training, by organizing focus groups and conducting interviews with experts, employees of family care centres and employees of schools. As to the data collection, eleven interviews were conducted all together. I have interviewed teachers at each vocational schools both at Ózd and Csepel, with the head teachers of the schools in tow. In the core of the interviews there were questions on the profile of the vocational schools and what kind of trainings, education and other kind of assistance they provide for their students, beside the investigation on whether they got support within the frames of the Hungarian YG System, and what kind of support was it.

Two youth focus groups were organized at each city as case studies, with those Hungarian youngsters who are students of the vocational schools. Each focus group contained 6 students, between the age of 16 and 21. I had the goal of revealing their opinion on people being NEET and their plans for the future after completing their studies at the vocational schools.

Additionally, I have done interviews with an employee at family care centres at each city, just like interviews with employees at National Employment Services (PES) on the actors and the quality of their relationship in the network of the YG, thus setting up conclusions on what are the main weaknesses and problems of the YG System that should be overcame. Nonetheless, despite asking for permission in many ways, the PES at Ózd could not provide me with the opportunity of an interview, due to being overwhelmed by their administrative work, and my initiating was not discussed in time because of the solid bureaucratic system they are operating in. On the other hand, with the help of the local school and family care centre I managed to get information on the network of the actors with whom the PES could stand in relation with.

Finally, I conducted interviews with four experts on the core subject of labour market policies, public employment and the operation of the YG itself to gain a greater understanding on the context of the whole research. During the discussion we also touched upon the current Hungarian educational and economic setting, as well as the situation of the Hungarian Roma population in these contexts.

Besides providing with contextual understanding by investigating in a closer perspective as a researcher, qualitative research methods gave me information on the points of view of the participants on their own interpreted reality on the situation of not being in employment or education. Furthermore, it also gives the possibility of inspecting
the process of the situation of the NEET in the mentioned cities over the different policies and strategies of the government. The interviews and the focus groups provide with a more personal style of research, therefore, there is space for digging deeper in the subject and revealing more information.

The participation in both of the interviews and youth focus groups of the research were voluntary and were tape-recorded and written notes were made, furthermore anonymity was provided, moreover, only I and the examiners of the thesis have access to the recording. All the participants were provided with information about the research and point of the thesis as well as with the approximate time of the discussions, thus, in the followings they could decide whether they agree to be respondents or not at any point of the research. They were also given the opportunity to decline to answer any of the questions asked of both cases of the interview section and focus group. Finally, my and my supervisor's contact information was distributed among the respondents, in case any of the respondents have upcoming questions regarding the study. In addition, Information Letters, Consent Forms and Invitations to the interview were handed out among the participations of the research, therefore, the research is ethical and as it is informed and offers anonymity and conforms to ISA.

Regarding the SWOT analysis of the thesis, one advantage that conducting interviews and focus groups at vocational schools and experts and other relevant actors of the subject is that these may had experience with researchers similar to me, thus, they could support the management of the discussions with a procedure, therefore, the research went more evenly. Moreover, they also provided help with organizing the discussions, consequently, I had a more straightforward way of keeping contact with the respondents.

In addition, another strength of the research methods of the thesis is that I know well the cities where I conduct my case studies, including the characteristics of the communities living there, for instance, what social class is the dominating one, or who are the main ethnicities and what are the major issues concerning the cities.

The drawback of having such a widely adapted and implemented system such as the Youth Guarantee, the actors of this system are diverse and not always well-connected, therefore I could not gain a proper and wide insight in specific points of the subject where there are no share of information and cooperation. Also, I did not have the opportunity to have discussions with all of the actors, such as the Vocational Centres of the counties.
where the youngsters of the YG are trained, and from where the vocational schools are receiving sources from the YG.

As to other weaknesses, even with the statistical data provided I cannot gain a whole understanding in the situation of the Hungarian youth being NEET. The reason is that I am going to conduct my research mainly within the frames of schools, family care centres and PES headquarters, therefore, I could only get information on those NEET who turned for and got help from them, however, I was not provided information on the situation of those youngsters not being in employment and education who do not have the opportunity to seek help.

Furthermore, participants of the youth focus group could also deny to tell the truth if it comes to sensitive and personal questions, for the reasons of being afraid of other respondents’ opinions or even being afraid of being dismissed by the school, for instance, having illegal income from illegal activities.

Regarding the main opportunities provided by the research methods, the case studies as mentioned above, took place at vocational school with whom I had an agreement of doing the research. Also, I received support from friends and acquaintances living at Csepel and Ózd, who gave me proper information on how the everyday lives of the local NEETs are perceived as a heterogeneous group of people.

What stood as threats to managing my research, being unable to find information on those NEETs, who do not consider themselves as such, for the reasons of receiving indirect income, being house wives/husbands or not being in formal employment or education but are having voluntary employment which is a non-direct type of income.

4. Findings and Data analysis

As described in the previous methodology section in the thesis, I managed to collect a huge amount of information on the Hungarian Youth Guarantee System from a wide scope of people, including, teachers, head teachers, students, experts, employees of family care centres and National Employment Services (PES), who all gave me a great insight into how the Youth Guarantee functions.

4.1. Perception of the Experts

Among the experts I talked with, many worked with the YG System or conducted research in this field. They confirmed that the main reason for the initiative of the YG
was the impact of the economic crisis of 2008. The central aim of this initiative was to prevent the youth from being inactive, i.e. becoming NEET, due to the fact that unemployment could cause particularly acute problems among the juveniles, because they are more vulnerable in the sense of lacking work experience and qualifications. After the economic crisis, a new layer of inactive people was added as the new clients of the PES, who turned their attention to the newly unemployed, therefore the case of the already inactive people became worse. Also, the number of people being employed in public works increased dramatically in Hungary. Thus, the YG System was on regions of the country, where the NEET rate is higher than 25% -which in the case of Hungary, refers to almost the whole country. The most disadvantaged regions of the country are the Northern-Hungary and the Northern Great Plain, including the counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (BAZ), Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Baranya and Hajdú-Bihar, beside the other poorer areas where the Roma population is 100% like the Kiskunhegyesi region. As mentioned in the Literature Review previously, there were three main measures set by the European Commission in order to implement the YG properly. Namely, the precise allocation of the target group (and its division into sub-groups), partnership between the actors, and the precise and technically detailed monitoring of the YG. The Hungarian implementation has some serious weaknesses in each of the main measures. The experts informed me that the Hungarian YG has a rather broad target group, with the only sub-group of LTU, which was set out of priority from 1. January of 2018, and continued with the broad range of targeting. Unfortunately, this act prevents the YG to provide tailored services to the individual due to the fact of lacking precise strategies to each groups of individuals of the diverse target group.

It was also confirmed that the NEET rate is high among the disadvantaged population of the country, especially among the Roma people, whose majority is dependent on their families and only a minority of them receives subsidies. The fact that the NEET youngsters mean huge problem in economic sense was no challenged but strengthened, and every interviewee agreed that no society can afford itself to give up on their inactive people, because the longer they are inactive, the harder it is to integrate them and require more help. Especially the NEET under the age of 25, who need special attention and strategy, because it is harder to find and get in connection with them. A precise strategy would be needed, so the multiplication of the problems could be prevented, namely the way of socialisation of the individual. The experts drew my
attention on the phenomenon, that if someone has been socialised in a certain way that education and employment are not important it can be caused by the primary socialisation in the family, which can most likely be regulated by the education system. Special attention should be paid from an early age (kindergarten), thus, the youth could see other examples than their families and then the number of those who value education and employment could be increased, consequently preventing people becoming NEETs.

4.2. Perception of the local PES employees

The interviews with the PES employees at Csepel, gave me the details on the strategies of outreach as applied by them. These included group prospectus among the youth, the notification of employers, career counselling, advertisements in newspapers, organizing events such as job fairs where professions and vocational trainings were promoted, hanging placards and fliers at schools (at least where they got permission to do so) and least but not least sending out letters and e-mails to the registered unemployed and job seekers. Despite trying as much as they could to raise awareness to the opportunities provided by the YG, they did not have enough financial resources to do better, and it was confirmed that the Youth Guarantee is not a well-known system of services among the average Hungarian people. The databases of unemployed registers and job seekers were the primary sources of reaching out of the PES, thus, the law obliges everyone to enter the YG system and participate in its awareness rising events for those being registered. Missing out a few events can lead to sanctions, such as being deleted by the PES for two months, which means that the individual is not able to receive any kind of services through the PES for this period of time.

In order to improve the outreach of the PES, mentors were introduced into the system. In fact, they should have been included from the beginning of the implementation as advised by the Commission, but in Hungary it took 1-2 years till the first mentors were employed. It is a good strategy of the YG to give mentors anyone who registers into the system or are given services, but it is rather hard to execute, which can be clearly shown, since the majority of the PES does not have mentors. In most of the cases, PES employees are given the tasks of mentoring beside their regular jobs or external companies provide mentors through public procurement, which is a very slow process. However, the number of mentors was increased when extra payments could be given to them if being employed through public procurement. Nevertheless, the PES employees told me that even these mentors are given other jobs than mentoring, for instance, doing the administrative work.
of the PES employees, there is only a minor number of those mentors, whole only job is focusing on the youth, even if there are any of them in any form of employment. Each mentor could provide assistance to a maximum of 30 mentored and are qualified professionals. As one of the PES employees expressed: “I haven’t seen any mentors here...but they would be enormously useful.”

Beside reaching out for the target group, the job of a mentor is keeping in touch with their clients and maintaining good relationship with them, however, they lack capacities and strategies for reaching out, especially for those who could be classified as underclass, who are impossible to get in contact with and remain as an untouched core of the problem. The original concept was that the youngsters call and ask for assistance from the mentors, but as it turned out, it is the other way around. Although, there are individual strategies of the experienced mentors, for example, waiting for the youngsters at school, or meeting them in a pub, etc. An additional problem is that the majority of the target group is not resident of the city where the PES is located, thus they rarely know about the opportunities provided by them such as mentoring. It also takes a long time for the mentors to build a deep and good quality relationship with the youngsters, nevertheless, they are more likely to run out of time, because the youngster’s time is over in the YG before their relationship could have reached the optimal quality of providing assistance. One of the experts told me that the most experienced mentors do not tell any detailed information to the PES about the mentored individual, so they can provide them with better help without the interference of the PES, but it can vary from county to county. As it was reported by the interviewees, the system is not flexible enough, since the mentors have a strict bureaucratic way of making reports, thus they are overwhelmed by the administrations. Last but not least, I was informed that there are also Youth Guarantee consultants within the PES, who are even fewer in number than the mentors, but have the similar job as them. To indicate how they rare they are, even an expert who conducted international research on the YG told me that she has never met anyone being a YG consultant in Hungary.

With the goals of providing help and services to as many NEET as possible, the Youth Guarantee System has a wide number of actors in its network, each having a particularly important role in the operation and thus the success of the YG. Nonetheless, the relationship of the actors is contingent, and it is the main responsibility of the PES and its employees (and their individual dedication) to have connections with the actors of
the network. As mentioned before, schools are said to be having the second most important role regarding the situation of the youth. However, all of the experts and the employees of the family care centres agreed that the schools should take greater responsibility. The education system is described to be broken, with incompetent and unmotivated teachers which only results in the increase of social inequalities and disadvantages among the students.

4.3. Perception of the local Family Care Centres

The second actors are the family care centres, who provide a wide range of services, such as group/individual counselling, camps for the youngsters, maintaining community houses, and many more. I was told that they do not choose to whom they provide help, they do as much as they can, and if not competent in some cases, then they sent the client to another actor of their indicator system, for example the Red Cross, psychologists, therapists, doctors or other governmental organizations delivering family services. Regarding the youth, the employees told me that only a few of them comes in on their own to ask for help, most of them are sent by the schools or brought in by their parents and only if they are having acute issues, which they are not able to solve by themselves. As the employees informed me, there are only a few NEET youngsters assisted at Csepel, however, in Ózd, about 70% of those people who seek help are NEETs.

They expressed their problems with outreaching too, which can be mainly blamed on the malfunction of the indicator system, in which the schools should give report on problematic youngsters to the Family Care Centres if it concerns them. However, they cannot reach the youth before they turn 16, due to the lack of co-operation of schools. In both cases of the cities I was told that there is a vast number of NEET people living there who remain unreached. Once the youngster turns 16, they are not obliged to go to school, and if the parents do not care, they can do what they want, thus also indicating the problem of the influence of the family. Both of the employees told me that most of their young clients are females and between the ages of 15-17. At Ózd, this problem has a greater presence due to the high population of Roma people. The Roma women are more likely to give birth to their first child at an early age, which –as described by the employee- is mainly owing to the cultural differences of the Roma people. Otherwise, there are no ethnic differences between the people asking for help, and both of the employees agreed that people from the underclass are the most frequent help seekers.
Similarly, in both of the cities there are no strategies for tracking down and monitoring the situation of the client after providing them with help, because they do not have the capacity and financial resources for it. All they can do is keep the people alive and more or less keep them on the same level. With this lack of capacity, they reported that there are more frequent cases when the same issues occur from generation to generation within one family. Their main financial resources beside the governmental ones are from charities and applications, therefore, they are lacking money. Moreover, despite being stated that such measures are very useful, they do not do any kinds of professional profiling of measurements on the skills and qualifications of the individuals, only just shallow ones, which are just enough for a quick plan of providing help.

Further details were revealed on the quality of the connection of the actors in the YG system. The employees at the family care centres mentioned that there is no coordinated or centralised or in any ways integrated way of communication between the other actors and them, despite dealing with a good share of responsibility and are overwhelmed and lack resources as mentioned. Thus, this employee told me that the condition of the youth is not likely to improve. Especially in the case of Csepel, where there are no ways of exchanging the information on the shared clients with the PES, people do not get quality help in the system and thus are more likely to apply tricks and lie in order to get what they need. As one of the family care employee said: “Everyone sits on their own share of duties and can’t or doesn’t want to reach out more due to being overwhelmed in this highly bureaucratic system.” Without being well-connected, the clients are just sent from one place to another, while the exchange of information would be extremely helpful particularly in the case of the LTUs. It seems rather hard to find solutions when there are secondary, elementary schools and kindergartens not cooperating, in which teachers lack competence needed in order to deal with the huge amount of children who are making up a diverse population requiring diverse attention and solutions.

Therefore, it seems that disadvantaged youth are lacking sources of motivation, and none guides them on their paths, even their families. The interviewees agreed that the schools in the recent education system seem to increase the inequalities rather than dissolving them, since there no selection among the teachers on the basis of their competences, the children are more likely to receive sanctions if not reaching satisfactory instead of being cared for and motivated. In both cases of Ózd and Csepel, the employees
of the family care centres told me that they have not heard of any kind of programmes which bought relevant changes to their regions, moreover when asked, they said that they have not heard of the Youth Guarantee System.

As previously mentioned in the Literature Review, civil organizations and NGOs were planned to be deeply included in the YG system. The interviews with the experts helped me to understand that such organizations have been taken into the network of providing help, but unfortunately, those organizations were left out, which are the most experienced and well-connected in the areas targeted by the YG. The NGOs are lacking resources and support, and by separating them from the EU resources—as one expert expressed- the government made it extremely hard for them operate. On the other hand, they would have an important role in making the job of the local governments easier, for instance in the case of the YG, better solutions could be provided through strategies including a wide range of NGOs, such as making it easier to reach out for the specific sub-groups of the target group, or helping in the profiling—which as reported does rarely happen within the frames of the PES- and therefore cooperating with them in the exchange of information.

It is clear that there are interconnected problems of the target group, each differing from the other in some way, thus, the actors should be well-connected. Instead, it seems like each of them created their own circle of clients and each of them levied from this group of client, namely mainly paid attention to those who are willing to work together, but the core of the target group remains untouched and unreached.

4.4. EU Monitoring process of the Youth Guarantee System

The whole YG system and its process of providing help is strictly monitored by the EU. Because EU money was used, the EU monitors the spending of the Youth Guarantee within the frames of annual reckoning on to whom and what the money was spent within the YG. The monitoring happens through the PES, where the young NEET registers as unemployed and gets into the system and thus, one of the programmes suitable for their needs. After receiving some kind of services and quitting the system, there is a tracking down after 180 days, which is administered in the PES database. The EU takes random samples from this database, which is examined. in the followings Their aim is to find out whether the youngsters were active or inactive when entering the system, as well as analysing other demographic indicators such as age and gender beside the administered
date on when and to what the youngster received subsidies from the ESF or YEI resources. Consequently, the PES is obliged by the monitoring principle, which has very detailed and technical regulations to report data frequently on the indicator numbers and report on the progress made.

As the experts, researchers and employees within the YG told me, the monitoring numbers are good all over the country, even better, which indicates the success of the YG. On the other hand, the monitoring does not measure skimming, the level of outreach or the presence of ethnical segregation. Additionally, as mentioned, the LTU people are no longer in a priority category for giving services to. Moreover, there is a form of skimming in the sense of there is a greater chance of getting into the YG if the youngster has a higher level of education –it is also noteworthy that most of the NEET seeking help from the YG are literate and relatively integrated, or can use the Internet, unlike those who remain unreached by the programmes. It was also revealed that there is no ethnical segregation or gender based discrimination within the frames of the YG system, but a lot of Roma did not give their ethnicity when registering (it was not compulsory). The country average of Roma people reporting their ethnicity is 60%, but can vary from county to county in Hungary. The age median of the people registering into the YG is 22, and as to the experiences, those who are between the ages of 16-20 are strongly encouraged to get back to school or receive some kind of training, and are not necessarily guided to enter the labour market if have other options. Speaking of lacking options, when there are no demands from the labour market for the people of the YG, local governments can employ them within the frames of public employment. The youth cannot be employed in such, but there are poorer regions with minimal infrastructure, where due to the lack of job opportunities, the local government should employ them, sine it can also use the YG to put them into public employment. Nevertheless, this option cannot be offered within 4 months of providing services, only after they have made sure that there are no other options. On the other hand, I was told that some PES –due to the pressure of the indicator numbers-add the youngsters being in public work in their archives to those who have entered the labour market normally. They can do it freely, since such an act is not regulated by the EU, but this strategy is not applied by every PES. Fortunately, the number of people being in public employment is decreasing due to the labour shortage being present in the country.
4.5. The Role of Public Employment

I have also paid particular attention to the Hungarian way of public employment and asked the experts on this subject in more detail. They reported that the group of people being in public works is very stratified: there are elderly, young parents, low skilled and other disadvantaged people in the system who would be otherwise unemployed. After the crisis, the employment rate was improved due to the public employment, because it attracted those who were inactive. Nowadays, it managed to put a break into the system for employers, in the sense that the minimal wage cannot be smaller than the wage of public employment. It means less unemployed and thus a better economy, but is not necessarily better for the individual, therefore, there is a decrease in the number of people being in public work by, for instance, putting them into programmes of the YG. There are strict conditions of entering public employment, namely that the individual should be a job seeker and that the PES could not find any other opportunity for them. Theoretically, beside the juvenile, the trained and graduated from tertiary level of education are not able to enter it (most of the people being publicly employed obtain an elementary level of education), and for those who are able, only a certain period of time could be spent in public employment.

Public Employment and the Youth Guarantee are sharing their target groups, thus, there is a competition for indicator numbers between the two. Both of them need to satisfy the indicators in order to operate. The smaller local governments receive money of public works when they reach this target number. The fundamental concept of public works is that those people who are unable to enter the labour market by themselves, -mainly due to the high demands of the employers- should be employed by the society itself. Thus, the society should make an effort in order to prevent these people from sinking in inactivity, however, nowadays, the wages of public employment are nearly not enough to make a living, not even mentioning the minimal wage. The effectiveness of public employment to the individual cannot be precisely measured, but it surely depends on its type: whether it provided some kind of relatively useful working experience or not. However, it is still public works, which is not very likely to improve the labour market position of the individual. Additionally, they get labelled and stuck into public employment due to the lack of working experiences. As one of the experts described: “There are a lot of people employed in public works, and I’m sure that this vast number of people are not this unfortunate. They would surely be able to find normal kind of
employment with some help. This is why the process of profiling is inevitable (but rarely applied) in measuring the competences of the individuals and guiding them as to it. But the opposite happens and some majors of the local governments can influence them in some ways, and persuade them to enter public employment.”

The amount of wages of public works and minimal wages are getting closer, therefore, there is an additional motive for the job seeker to enter public employment, especially now, when there is a decline in rural infrastructure in Hungary. In spite of the fact, that the Youth Guarantee provides subsidies more than the minimal or public work wages, there are a lot of people choosing public employment. In Northern Italy, there is a tradition of small family businesses, which helps to prevent people becoming NEETs, but in Hungary, there is no such things. This was one of the main reasons of the YG to have programmes on becoming entrepreneurs.

4.6. Case Studies on the Roles of Vocational Schools at Csepel and Ózd

The schools were mentioned several times as being particularly important actors in the YG system as influencing its level of success, consequently, I conducted case studies and interviews at vocational schools, where the students in training could gain skills preventing them becoming NEET. However, it was revealed that the educational system and the vocational schools especially are only actors of increasing the inequalities, since the teachers are unmotivated and not capable of dealing with the disadvantaged youngsters. In both Csepel and Ózd, there is no ethnic segregation of children in the vocational schools, only in a regional sense, namely that if there is a Roma majority in one part of the city, then most of the students are also Roma at the schools located there.

Since increasing inequalities, and potentially being socially excluded in the future and becoming part of the underclass, the schools have the aims of improving the basic and non-cognitive skills (like behaviour and attitude) of the students as much as they are capable of. However, the system of vocational education is not flexible enough to meet the demands of the labour market, thus, the youth needs more information, so they can be able to decide about their future profession in time. However, every interviewee agreed that youngsters lack plans for the future and only have the goal of gaining money in some way. Despite having the wide range of opportunities of the modern world available for them, they somehow get lost among the choices and there are no determining and motivating teachers who could help them and take out the variable of the family as a
social influencer from the system. Due to lacking motivation, guidance and a good example to follow, the scientific field of anthropology could provide more specific methods and answers on the main question of why the youth do not have the courage to leave their communities and cultural bounds, and take on their opportunities. Similarly, the traditions and customs of the ethnic groups should be examined by anthropological means instead of the class-based approach of sociology.

4.6.1. The Impacts of Decreased Age Limit of Compulsory Schooling

My research emphasizes the impacts of the changing age limit of compulsory schooling, which is now 16. During the data collection I asked the interviewees on their opinion on such a change, and one of them expressed their viewpoint: “The question of vitality of a country (i.e. birth rate) is taken from the aspect of having children in time, namely that the Hungarian women give birth in time and thus complete their studies, which has been extended in the last few years. I don’t see any reason –especially in the era of Lifelong Learning- for keeping a woman for a long period of time in nationalised education.” The age limit was set to 16 because the youth would not spend more time in education if they did not want to, so seems to make no sense in keeping them in schools, instead, they should be guided to enter the labour market, as it was the main initiative of such policy. Nonetheless, this also means that the hands of the schools are tied after the student reaches the age limit of 16.

As one of the experts described, in poorer regions, and especially in the case of Roma people, children start the school one year later, at the age of 7 and during their education in elementary schools they are very likely to fail once or twice, consequently, it means that they are 16 years old when being in 8th grade. Due to the lack of experiences and skills (even basic skills in most of the cases), these youngsters are more likely to seek employment informally, as well as their disadvantages are multiplied and it becomes harder to provide them help, because almost all of the jobs are requiring a minimum of 8th grade educational level. This is where the YG has an inevitable role in providing help for those who at least seek it, but there are still 16 years old youngsters who enter the labour market because of the wage cost subsidies provided by the YG. When the age limit was 18, in the case of Roma it meant less pregnant Roma youngsters due to the ‘imprisoning effect’ of the school. But after leaving school, having children means
becoming an adult for a Roma girl as the experts described. Now, the age limit is 16, thus, the number of young Roma girls giving birth probably will increase. On the other hand, it is also important to mention that it makes no huge difference giving birth a few years later from the viewpoint of the youngster’s future. As the experts reported, there will be an increase in the numbers of youngsters completing their studies at 8th or less grade, also in the numbers of the Roma youth bearing children at early ages, therefore a data analysis would be very handful in understanding the impacts of this policy, however, this thesis does not include such.

The case studies of the thesis took place at Csepel and Ózd in vocational schools. In Csepel, there are relatively few NEET youngsters in the programmes of the YG as school leavers, most of them are usually above the age of 20, as the PES employee informed me. Those who are lacking any kind of vocational training or profession are also in a minority within the YG system, and most of them were sent for further trainings or employment.

4.6.2. The Vocational Schools at Csepel and Ózd

As to the data collection at the vocational schools of Csepel and Ózd there was a slight difference between the schools. In the case of Csepel, I was recommended a particular vocational school at the city, and later it was revealed that it was not a coincidence. The school strongly relies on its reputation in the city in terms of attracting students into their institution, therefore, -as the interviews revealed-, they are doing everything to maintain good relationship with the organizations and other institutions at Csepel. Their case is interesting, because they are not maintained by the state, but by a Hungarian foundation, which distinguishes them from the other schools in the city, and has impacts on their relationships, way of vocational education, thus basically their operation. Additionally, since they are maintained by a foundation, they can make unique offerings for their students in the form of different scholarships: enrolling scholarship; internship scholarship; scholarship on good grades; scholarship for not having unjustified absences from any classes. Moreover, the cost of the exams of receiving the driving licence of those students who did not fail and have good grades are paid by the school as well. All these scholarships prevent their students from being drop outs, and there are instances, when a good student can collect 60 000 forints just from scholarship per month, which is extremely helpful for the students of the school, whose majority is Roma and are from highly disadvantaged families. This strategy is effective, since a lot of student works
beside school, but this helps them to complete their trainings, although, giving this generous amounts of scholarships is not an option for most of the schools in the country.

The vocational school at Ózd is rather a regular one, but on the other hand, it is part of the Vocational Centre of the city. Their Vocational Centre provide programmes, which intends to improve the vocational education. Therefore, there are catch-up group trainings taking place in the vocational schools, which tries to solve the issues and deficiencies of the youth brought from elementary school. Due to the shortage in students, there is no application test to be admitted in the school, instead, students get admitted on the basis of their grades. This means a decline in the quality of local schools and education, because the schools admit almost any students in order to be able to operate. They cannot do anything more to attract the youth into the school due to the lack of financial resources. The vocational school holds active career guidance programmes and events promoting vocational trainings, and also pays advertisements in the local newspapers to promote themselves, but still, their number of students is decreasing, as well as the teachers. There are also other vocational programmes for those, who are too old for elementary school, so they are trained in a profession. Nonetheless, this strategy is troubling, because the educational system is already overwhelmed, lacks teachers and the students are already having a lot of classes. There are also teacher trainings within the programme, which also has the goal of decreasing the number of school drop outs. However, it remains to be a hard task, since the family of the student has a huge impact on the way of socialisation of the youngster.

The vocational school at Csepel provides regular vocational trainings and development and catch-up trainings beside trainings held for handicapped and students with behavioural problems. The regular vocational trainings are organised around exclusively those professions which are in a shortage on the Hungarian labour market, which is many in numbers, thus the students after completing their studies do not come across any obstacles to enter the labour market. There are no criterions on admitting a student, the head teacher informed me that they admit anyone, because they provide a wide range of help for their students not to drop out, but at the end it depends on the motives of the student is they fail or not. Despite this, the number of drop outs from this school is high (every 5th or 6th student passes their exams), but they are not having any shortages of students, but from teachers. It is true for this school that most of the teachers
are elderly and almost completely burnt out and unmotivated, namely due to the lack of competences of the students.

Similarly, both head teachers revealed that the results of the students on the PISA tests are rather catastrophic. Most of them come from elementary schools without obtaining any basic skills, meaning they are illiterate and do not understand the basic concepts of math, thus, the teachers of the vocational school have to use the time of normal classes to compensate the students’ deficiencies. While in the case of Ózd, the school reported that they are unable to measure the competences properly, because the tests are too long and in many cases the students are illiterate and most frequently do not even come to school. Moreover, as being the part of the indicator system, the schools are obliged to report if a student does not attend school, they signal to the necessary actors and the parents. However, in many cases, nothing happens even after 50 hours of missed classes, thus, the family allowance is withdrawn from the student’s family. Nonetheless, the head teachers emphasized that even the family allowance is withdrawn nothing happens and the children still does not attend school. Also, there is a tendency in the case of the school at Csepel, that the teachers are risking their jobs and do not report to the head teacher when those students do not attend school who are known to be homeless, or working beside school, they only report to the teacher responsible for the social work, who deals with all of the cases. If she decides, she report it in the official way, if not, then they try to solve the matter through the parents or the family care employees and the student if possible.

As the head teacher explained, this is the main reason of the low number of teachers at the school, thus, many of them are elderly and unmotivated, even burnt out. In Ózd, the tendency is that students do not want to complete their maturity exams –even tough with vocational training they would have 4 exams instead of 5- because it has lost its value and thus making the teachers even less motivated. Most of the students are Roma from the rural regions and the school has a Roma majority of students. in the case of Csepel, the vocational school there has also a majority of Roma students, mainly from disadvantaged family background.

The head teachers also added to the thoughts previously described regarding the cultural differences of the Roma, especially in the way of socialisation of the youngsters. They do not have plans for the future, and do not know about most their opportunities,
which is generally true to all of the students not only the Roma. At Ózd, they do not want to enter the labour market, because the wages are too low, instead, they go abroad or do low-skilled monotonous work at companies because it provides higher wages. However, in Csepel, mainly due to the personal attention paid on the students, most of them are planning to finish their trainings and then start a second or continue their education. Meanwhile other students with different plans, have the intentions joining their families’ small businesses.

Regarding the relationship of the schools with the different actors, besides being parts of the indicator system by law –including connections with the family care centres, integrated social organizations, the police and many other- the vocational school at Ózd stands in relationship with the PES, as being a part of the Vocational Centre. However, when asked they did not just know about the Youth Guarantee, but admitted that there are cases when the local PES hold information back from them, because they are maintained by a foundation and not regulated by the local government. Naturally, they are having regulations and restrictions on the number of students and vast amount administrative work, because most of the schools in Csepel are sending their troubling students there to study. There is a huge traffic of students in the city between the vocational schools, and this school seems to be in the core, although being ‘black sheep’ as they explained. They are well-connected but because information is held back, they were shocked that they have not heard of the YG system, and told me that it can be due to the lack of advertisements and awareness raising regarding YG. I also tried to reveal, if they have heard of any kind of active labour policies, but they revealed that there were no programmes or strategies making relevant changes or differences in the region. On the other hand, both of the schools are trying as much as they are capable of to have a good and well-connected relationship with every actor, thus, they are cooperating in every case related to them.

Also, the vocational school at Csepel has the advantage of standing in relation with many German and Hungarian companies, who frequently employ their students from the very first day they completed their trainings.

We also touched upon the impacts of the new age limit of 16, and revealed the details that the number of students is decreasing in the vocational school at Ózd. Even the grade 2 (satisfactory) is enough to get into the school. The policy makers expected the
youngsters to go to vocational training, but it did not happen. The head teacher told me his concern was about the low wages in the regions, thus the lack of motivation of the local youth to enter the labour market there: “It would require wage decompression at least in the region so the students could enter the local labour market.” There is also no tracking system of those who completed a training at any of the vocational schools, therefore, there is the phenomenon of professional, graduate and low-skilled workers are employed at the same place, moreover, the number of those who leave their professions is increasing. On the other hand, the head teacher at Csepel expressed that this change in policy did not make a relevant impact, only in the sense of they need to make greater pressure on the parents –with the help of the other institutions and organizations- to persuade them to regulate their children. However, they also experienced that this policy made a specific impact on their female Roma students, namely that in the last two years there was a tendency of the number of Roma girls dropping out of school is increasing as soon as they turn to 16. They told me that they have the experiences of Roma parents stating that “Let my daughter stay here until we find her a husband or turns 16, and can go to work.” Therefore, the cultural differences of the Roma people are appearing again.

Therefore, despite being located in two very different counties of the country as to their development, the two vocational schools are experiencing the same problems regarding the school drop outs and the shortage of teachers. However, in the case of Csepel, there are more opportunities provided by Budapest, as it is one of its districts, thus, there is no shortage of students. Moreover, in this case the strategy of profiling the students and not just measuring their competences but their desires, a more well-targeted solution can be made, which helps the students entering the labour market after their studies. Unfortunately, it requires a lot of financial resources. Nevertheless, both of the vocational schools admit that vocational trainings have a lot of potential in them and can be beneficial for those who are motivated and put effort in it, but with the current strategies and resource of teachers, the case is not this easy, and the schools are unable to cope with their tendencies of increasing inequalities among the students.

4.6.3. Focus Group with the students of the Vocational Schools at Csepel and Ózd

I conducted a focus groups with 6 students of the vocational schools being at the ages between 16 and 21, and were participating in vocational training. All of them were residents of Ózd or Csepel or the smaller settlements near them. At Ózd, except for one student, all of them are living in a good part of the city. At Csepel, they told me that all
of them are residents of friendly neighbourhoods. In the case of Ózd, 1 of the 6 students had strong plans of continuing her education and completing the maturity exam, the others had the goals of completing their trainings then entering the labour market and are uncertain about completing the maturity exam. Their main argument was that they do not want to spend so many years in school, because altogether it would be 13 years, but they were quick to point out that with the maturity exam their wages would be much higher. While in the case of the focus group at Csepel, all of the students had plans for their future, either going to another vocational training or completing their maturity exams or going to work.

Nonetheless, when I asked the students from Ózd on more specific plans for the future or any kind of aims they want to achieve they told me that they had not thought about it yet. All of them agreed on having plans out of the city –despite it provides with many job opportunities-, because they want to work for higher wages. Half of did not have any kind of working experience, the others were employed either as students or unskilled workers. Similarly, at Csepel the students told me they want to either go abroad or look for opportunities at Budapest.

When I asked them about their trainings and why they chose it, all of the students from both cities told me either it is the most profitable profession or they were put in the trainings because they have not completed the elementary school. However, they like what they are studying despite having some difficulties in the beginning of their trainings and have not thought on any other trainings, maybe after completing the recent ones. When asked on their opinions on the trainings and education provided by the schools, the students from Ózd told me that they did not have any kind of specific idea, but it is good as it is now, and they are aware of the assistance and the programmes of the school. On the other hand, students from Csepel had very different expectations from the school: they thought it would be more modern since maintained by a foundation, but by the time they started to like it.

Then we touched upon the subject of NEET, and all of them shared the opinion that inactive people are shameful and weak for remaining inactive and getting in such a situation was most certainly their fault, as they explained. All of the students from Ózd had a lot of friends, family members and other acquaintances who are NEET. Four of them were aware of programmes and trainings that could provide reintegration for the
NEET, and know people who applied for some of these, mainly family members and friends, but are unaware of the existence of the YG. However, most of their friends are already working, who are usually older than them, as I found out, due to the tendency of being a part of some kind of social groups. Finally, most of their financial situation and family background was satisfying as they described, but it could be improved. While the students from Csepel had very few acquaintances who are NEET and were not familiar with any programmes or trainings outside of the school regarding reintegration of the NEET. Beside sharing the main idea on NEET with the students from Ózd, they had very distinct thoughts on the life of the people being NEET: One of them added whose sister is a NEET recently: “I don’t know how could someone live a life without working or at least studying, because in the future you have to make a living...if you don’t go to school, you won’t get any jobs anywhere” or one, who is from a Roma family from Csepel: “If you don’t go to school or work now, what will you do later? And what will happen if you will have children and family? From what will you make a living?...we need to think about it now!” Therefore, in the case of the students from Csepel, they have the concept of future in their minds as a way of forming their present.

As mentioned before, the youth of Csepel has more and better opportunities provided locally and by the capital city, thus all of them had many job opportunities in their minds already. While in the case of Ózd, although being aware of some their opportunities at Ózd, their opinion differed from the head teacher’s regarding the demand of the local labour market. The head teacher stated that the labour market could employ all of their students in an instant, but the students told me that there are no options in the city, and the remaining options are not well-paying. I was also informed that many students of the vocational school reported having desires entering public employment, because many of their relatives are working there.

As mentioned, the school provides programmes through the YG, and as the head teacher told me, it was good that the problems of vocational education were realized and try to overcome these with such programmes. The vocational schools try to adjust to the demands of the labour market, but most of the professions are not useful or needed at the labour market, and those which would be particularly useful, lack the financial resources to start trainings on them. The reforming of the vocation education meant constant changes in trainings and changings of the maintainers which mainly resulted in chaos as the head teacher explained. Regarding the Youth Guarantee, there was an awareness
rising to its programmes at the schools, but most of the students did not understand it. He also informed me that some of the main weaknesses of the YG are that the employer only enters the YG system for the wage subsidies and if the youngster is talented, then they would be able to enter the labour market by themselves, which all refer to the form of skimming. Despite this, the head teacher expressed the view that the YG is needed and useful after all, especially for the small family businesses, which can benefit and operate due to the cheap labour force of youngsters and the wage cost subsidies.

4.7. The Roma people within the Youth Guarantee System

Now, I would like to give some additional information on the Roma people within the YG system. The Roma have especially disadvantaged positions, and as I have noted before, the experts described it as a result of cultural differences. Before the transition, the socialist traditions made the social inclusion and improvement of the Roma, but after at, their places of work mainly closed – those which required low-skill labour force. As one of the experts put it: “The pattern of their socialization after the transition influenced them through generations and forced them out of the labour market, thus needed to seek employment informally. They are socializing this way through time, which differs from the normalised way of socialisation of the majority and thus the rhythm of the society – i.e. first completing education then finding some kind of employment on the labour market.” Due to the central way of provisions, there is a continuous tendency of the Roma population becoming regionally concentrated. From these regions, a circle of governmental services moved out, because they were unable dealing with this problem. The invested money in programmes targeting the Roma and underclass people was not profitable, moreover, the ways of this money was invested into these programmes was not sophisticated and careful enough and the proves lacked perspective, thus, resulted to be ineffective. Now, if a programme comes to its end, there is the tendency of not continuing it, instead they jump into something new with a new strategy.

The program in the case of the Roma people is worse, because it is perceived by my interviewees that their shared cultural patterns unifies them in a way that it makes them harder to reach, and they also attract those similarly disadvantaged who are not necessarily part of that culture but belong to the underclass, therefore, they are slowly making up entire communities. As one of the experts described, poverty seems to be becoming ethnically determined, because the majority of the people in poverty are Roma, but it also varies from county to county on how they create their own culture of poverty.
across Hungary. As emphasized before, the role of the family is especially important, because it is the basis and the primary level of socialisation for the individual. Therefore, one observer might conclude that my informants’ experiences support Oscar Lewis’s theory on culture of poverty, especially with the growing examples of poverty and social issues remaining from generations to generations. I return to this question in the conclusion.

4.8. The Main Weaknesses of the Youth Guarantee System

In respect to the findings, a lot of weaknesses of the Youth Guarantee System were pointed out by all of my subjects of interviews. The first problem was that there is no way of getting into the programmes without registering at the PES. This should be solved in some way, namely, either the PES should try to reach out more and leave their buildings, for instance by making mobile-registration available at some of the education or employment related events. There are career counselling, exhibitions and other occasions promoting vocational and other training beside the job fairs, where only those are able to meet with the PES who are attending these events. On the other hand, they should work together and exchange information and data with other actors of the network and indicator system, such as schools, family care centres, local governmental/non-governmental organizations –those who are connected to their target group in some way.

This results in a scratching of the surface, due to the fact that only those who are given a guarantee, who are motivated enough to go into the PES and register as unemployed of job seekers, while the core of the problem remains untouched despite the many efforts made the PES, for instance, they sent out letters to their clients from the registry but many of them were illiterate and could not understand the letter informing them on the YG. At the beginning of the programmes, the Hungarian implementation had only one sub-group within the target group, the LTU, which were set as a priority because about 20-25% of the young NEET registered in the YG were long-term unemployed, as one of the experts described, it was rather hard to raise their number even at the beginning, but as the YG operated, their number was somewhat decreasing. In contrast, the majority of the NEET were not registered as unemployed for more than 6 months. However, as the time passes by, it gets harder to reintegrate and activate the person due to the loss of competences, psychological issues, lack of confidence and motivation just to mention some –i.e. a mass of social problems are appearing, and the recent system of institutions is not prepared to help disadvantaged people, especially in the more complex and
complicated cases. “At the end of the Youth Guarantee, there will be greater social costs than actual profit” as one of the experts put it.

The other big problem of the YG is the phenomenon of skimming. Namely, that those are registered into the YG who would have got a job offer without the YG. When I asked about whether there is a tendency of employers firing employees after their obligation of further employment is over, they told me that there is no such phenomenon, but I was given examples of employers appearing with their employed youngsters to request wage subsidies through the YG for them. By this, employing the youngster can be free of charge for the employer, unless they break the contract before the youngster’s time is up, thus they are sanctioned to pay a fee –which can happen as a mutual agreement with the youngster too without any sanctions. I was informed that the employers are using the services and subsidy system of the YG for their own benefits.

Finally, there is the problem of a lack of awareness of the Youth Guarantee and the opportunities it provides among the average people on the streets. One of the PES employees said that “As for me, privately, I haven’t met with the name of Youth Guarantee on the streets.” This can be the result of the lack of connectedness between the actors dealing with the target group of the YG. Despite being a must, there are no processes of profiling or services of mentoring only shallow ones, which also results in the lack of outreach. Additionally, the professions and the vocational education are not able to measure the demands of the labour market, even locally, thus, they are also unable to satisfy it, and either the youngsters find themselves without employment or there is a shortage of certain ones.

5. Conclusion

The Youth Guarantee System was implemented in a good way and is efficient with smaller problems, which nevertheless, when added together, show its main weak spots. It proved to be useful and have a positive long-term impact on the Hungarian society, by reintegration the NEET youngsters beside many other inactive people through its services, which were provided to anyone who asked for help. The programmes providing training proved to be the most effective, since it results in a greater increase of human capital for the individual. However, the least amount of people were in programmes to enable them become entrepreneurs, which is not enough to start the
traditions of small family businesses in Hungary, which could be helpful in further employment of those who are lacking working experiences.

Due to the fact that the YG is a service based programme, it was unable to reach out properly, despite the fact there were a wide range of strategies advised by the Commission. In spite of this, the YG is successful in accomplishing the target indicator numbers, but as described in the previous sections in details, this success was more likely about quantity than quality. The Youth Guarantee, similarly to other operative programmes in Hungary, is not precise and well-targeted, but the target group is diverse and required complex strategies and solutions, but it seems like every actor of the system deals with their own share of clients, and there is a lack of exchange of information due to the lack of connectedness either formally or informally. As well as, the awareness should have been risen on the YG, thus, at least the people would know about their opportunities.

As for the solution of the issues regarding the Roma people, as I emphasized before, alternatives could be brought up with the help of ethnographers and or participatory action research with the Roma, where the Roma are partners in research in examining the coping mechanism of the Roma communities in response to exclusion. We should know these patterns in greater detail in order to set up a well-targeted strategy and system of providing support, therefore preventing the possible waste of financial resources on an inefficient programme. This strategy should be based on the EU supported concept of Community Led Local Development where the Roma/marginalised become active partners in designing and delivering solutions to end exclusion.

Furthermore, this thesis does not include any qualitative or quantitative research with other actors having impact on the YG, such as the mayors of smaller settlements, who can influence the amount of people being employed in public works, or civil organisations and NGOs who play important role in the awareness raising and the outreaching process of the YG, or any kind of actors of youth volunteering programmes, police or even the local priest, i.e. anyone who could stand in connection with the target group, but could be included in the strategies improving the Youth Guarantee System, beside the possible ways of strengthening and giving additional support to the institutional actors already mentioned.
I would like to recall the theoretical models of social inclusion coined by Ruth Levitas –MUD, SID, RED- in relevance to the conclusion of the thesis. As described in details in the Literature Review, these discourses examine the causes of social exclusion of the individual on the basis of either lacking morals (MUD), social integration (SID) or financial resources (RED). However, the findings of the thesis have enabled me to look into the detail and the reality of exclusion, namely the reasons of the NEETs becoming inactive: was it due to the lack of morals, social integration or resources? I came to the conclusion that the social exclusion of the NEET happens in all the three ways described by Levitas. Regarding the previously presented findings, it is clear that poverty and exclusion and thus becoming NEET are caused by the behaviour of individuals and their subcultures influenced by their way of socialisation or as an understandable response to exclusion as reflected in MUD. However, structural factors were also shaping the motivation of the marginalised and limiting the opportunities and initiatives available, thus the RED and SID approached have relevance too.

Last but not least, a wide range of data were included in the thesis in with covering many of its details and the interconnectedness of the both the issues of the Youth Guarantee System and the problems of its context: the society in which it was implemented. Nevertheless, there are still fields on the subject which remain untouched. I hope to continue this thesis during my further education studying for a Master’s Degree in Survey Statistics. Therefore, I will be able to cover those statistical barriers, which serve as obstacles in the better understanding of the interdependent problems of the Hungarian society and the way of developing precisely targeted strategies to overcome these.
6. Bibliography


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7. Appendices

7.1. Information Letter and Consent Form for Invitation to be Interviewed

Date
Dear (Insert Participant’s Name):

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my BA degree in the Institute of………… at the Corvinus University. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

This study will focus on …………………(give the central research question and purpose of study)
Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately (Insert Time). You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded but if you are unhappy with this I can make written notes. Only I and my examiners will have access to the recording. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at (06-70-255-4640) or by e-mail at (petfun96@icloud.com). You can also contact my supervisor, (Ryder Andrew Richard; Corvinus University of Budapest at Faculty of Social Sciences) at e-mail (andrew.ryder@uni-corvinus.hu).

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours sincerely, (Signature)

I have read the above information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Petra Parrag of the Department of Sociology at Corvinus University of Budapest.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be tape recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the dissertation and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview tape recorded.

YES NO
I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research
YES NO
Signature

7.2. Focus Group Questions
Do you live here, in this city, where the school is located?
Where do you live, in what kind of area?
What is your dream job? Describe it!
Have you ever had a job? Student or regular employment?
What is your reason of being unemployed?
   How do you feel about it?
   How do you try to overcome it? In what ways?
   What factors do you consider as important?
From where did you hear about this training offered by the vocational school (we are being at)?
Why did you decide to choose this training?
Do you know organizations that provide help for people not being employed nor being in education?
   If yes, which one were these?
Have you asked for help from them?
   If yes, why did you leave them?
   If not, why?
Do you know anyone, who has turned for help to them or any organizations being in association with them?
How old are you?
What is your highest level of education?
Do you want to work on your career or continue your education?
Reminisce about school: Did your school provide programs or opportunities to find job or join trainings?
   If did not finish school: What was the main reason?
What do you think about your possibilities at your hometown or in the county you live in?
How about your friends?
Do they work?
Where do they live?
Are they close to your age?

How would you describe, how many friends do you have – more or less than 10?
How would you describe your financial situation?
Have you heard about the Youth Guarantee Plan?
If yes, from where?

7.3. Interview questions

7.3.1. Family Care Centres:
What kind of trainings/help do you offer?
How do you reach out for the youth? With what kind of strategies? Whose responsibility it is?
How do you cover this financially?
Do you stand in association/co-operation with other schools or training centres?
If yes, which one? What is the quality of this relationship?
Why?
To what extent?

providing work/training at those organizations for those who are in need or working together?

From what age groups do you have the most applicants for help?
What is the gender of those, who ask for help from your organization?
From what ethnicity do you have the most applicants for help?
How much NEET youngsters do you deal with recently?
What do you think, are there a lot of NEET among the youth in your city (where the organization is located)?
What is your opinion, how many you are not able to reach?
What is your viewpoint on public employment as a source of money for the employee?
Who should be employed in public works?
What are your experiences, how many youngsters seek employment in public works?
In the disadvantaged families you deal with, how many individuals are employed in public works?
Do you keep in touch with those individuals you provided help with?
What are your experiences regarding those who were provided with help? How is their life going? Better or worse?

As for the services provided to the youth, what could be done better?

What do you think, how important the role of the schools is in the life of the youth?
  - How is your cooperation with schools at your cities?
  - Are there cases, when they could do better their duties?
  - Have you experienced any kinds of segregation within the schools?

What is your standpoint regarding the active labour market programmes and policies, including the Youth Guarantee?

What do you think of the policies regarding the NGOs and other civil organizations?

7.3.2. Teachers and Head Teachers:

What kind of training/education do you provide to your students?

How do you attract the students into the institution? What are your strategies?

On what basis do you choose to whom you admit as a student into your school?
  - If yes, what are these?
  - How would you describe the majority of your students regarding their basic skills and competences?

Do you have any teacher employed in your school, who also deals with social work?

Do you have any kind of association or cooperation with other institutions?
  - If yes, what are these?
  - To what extent?
  - Whose responsibility is keeping in touch with the institutions?

What are the duties of the school if a student does not attend their classes?

From what ethnicity do you have the majority of the students?

How would you describe the achievements of your student on the PISA tests?

What are your experiences with those students who completed some kind of vocational training at your school?
  - Is there any kind of difference between the trainings?

To what extent the school provides assistance to its students regarding entering the labour market?
  - What kind of help do you provide?

What do you think of the recent policies in relation to the education system?
What is your standpoint regarding the active labour market programmes and policies, including the Youth Guarantee?

Have you heard of the Youth Guarantee System before? If yes, from where?
Have you received any kind of services within the frames of the YG?
Have you applied for any kind of programmes in the last 5 years? If yes, what were these?
Have you won any kind of support?

7.3.3. Experts on Public Employment:
What is your opinion, how much NEET youngsters are there in Hungary?
Do they mean a problem regarding the economy of the country?
What are the most disadvantaged regions of Hungary?
What were the impacts of the economic crisis of 2008 on the NEET? To what extent their number increased?
What is your viewpoint, how effective the active labour market policies are as to the reintegration of the inactive youngsters?
What are the most efficient policies?
What is the least efficient strategy in the case of those disadvantaged youngsters coming from the least developed regions of the country?
What do you think, are the youngsters of Roma NEET having disadvantages?
What are the main forms of public employment applied in Hungary?
What are the conditions on entering public works?
What is the highest level of education of the majority of people being employed in public works?
What is your opinion, is public employment a good alternative of financial resources for a NEET individual?
Is there some kind of tendency regarding youngsters seeking employment within the frames of public work in order to receive quick and easy income?
In what region of the country public works are the most effective?
Is there an ethnical difference between the people being employed in public works?

7.3.4. Experts on the Youth Guarantee System and PES Employees:
How does the Youth Guarantee System work?
How is the EU monitoring the operation of the YG system?
What are the conditions of entering the YG system – for both the youngster and the employer?

How is the Youth Guarantee operating from its starting point till now?

How would you describe the efficiency and possible success of the YG?

What is your opinion, what are the main weaknesses of the YG?

What do you think, is there such thing as skimming within the frames of the YG?

What is your opinion, what could be the possible reasons of lack of awareness of the YG – may it be the average person of the street or even the actors of the indicator system?

How could it be improved?

What is your opinion, how much NEET youngsters are there in Hungary?

Do they mean a problem regarding the economy of the country?

What are the most disadvantaged regions of Hungary?

How many NEET are reached by the YG?

What do you think, how many remain untouched?

How and with what kind of strategies are applied in reaching out for the target group of the YG?

Is there any kind of tendency, namely there are more applicant in the YG from a certain ethnicity?

To what age group most of the youngsters belong within the YG?

What are the duties of the mentors?

How does mentoring work?

How many mentors are employed?

What are the conditions of becoming a mentor?

What is your opinion, on what ways could the YG be improved, so it would have a better outreach for the target group?

Who are the main actors in the operation of the YG system?

What do you think, who has the main responsibility?

Who should take more responsibility?

What should be the quality of cooperation and relationship between the actors so the YG would be more successful?

What do you think, what is the reason of lacking cooperation with NGOs and other civil organizations?

What is your opinion, is there a tendency of youngsters entering public employment as an easy and quick source of income?