THE TRANSITION FROM YOUTH INTO ADULTHOOD

Summary of the National Report on the Situation of Young People in Luxembourg 2015

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Contents

A GOVERNMENT NOTICE

B THE TRANSITION FROM YOUTH INTO ADULTHOOD: PROCESSES, PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES

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Foreword

The National Report on the Situation of Young People which you have in your hands represents the culmination of an enormous amount of work. It aims to provide a comprehensive picture that addresses the question: what does it mean to become an adult in Luxembourg today?

Unlike the 2010 Youth Report which offered a very wide-ranging perspective on this age group, the report here analyses a specific aspect, namely the transition from youth to adulthood, i.e. it looks at the critical period when a young person starts to become an adult. Moreover, the years of economic crisis which marked the start of this decade and for which young people all across Europe paid a heavy price, have inevitably focussed our attention squarely on this issue.

The University has looked at the issue of transitions in three different areas, all equally important: employment, housing and participation in society. Becoming an adult means being integrated into the labour market – which is the main vehicle of integration into our societies. However, becoming adult also means leaving home and starting your own family, passing on the torch from one generation to the next to some extent. And lastly, being an adult means becoming a full citizen which is about getting involved politically and engaging in social and citizenship issues. This report reflects what is actually happening in each area, it draws conclusions while at times sounding alarm bells and it provides us with rich, deep food for thought.

For each of these three aspects of transition towards adulthood, the report draws us back to a central question: how much scope are we giving the younger generations and how can we enable them both to be integrated into society and help shape it? This is the main question for youth policy, and based on this report, I shall try to answer it by developing a new tool for youth policy during the coming years. We shall work on this over the next few months through a dialogue with the University of Luxembourg's researchers, those working in the field and young people themselves.

I would like to express my very high regard for the researchers who have worked on this report, Prof. Helmut Willems and his team of youth researchers, but also for all the many people, who, in one way or another, have shared their experience, their story, their knowledge and expertise and in so doing have made it possible to produce this report about young people.

Claude Meisch
Minister of Education, Children and Youth

Foreword

Youth research has, for many years, been a key part of the work of the research unit called INSIDE at the Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education (FLSHASE). The focus of interest for youth research is on the transitional phase between (early) childhood and adulthood that is so important in a young person's development. It is a phase during which many virulent educational, psychological, cognitive and sociological issues arise. In order to research them – and in particular to research how they interact – it is important to take an interdisciplinary perspective.

This calls for a team of motivated scientists who approach a common subject area from different disciplinary standpoints and, in the process, not only go beyond the boundaries of their own specialist field but also refine their methodological tools.

Furthermore, researching the phase of life we call "youth" also requires, in addition to this interdisciplinary focus, close cooperation between the university, government ministries and our national educational and social institutions. Such a trilateral partnership is essential if the research is not to be confined to an abstract description of the phenomenon, but is also able to study, for example, the actual transitional routes taken by young people, and analyse specific institutional support services. Here, too, it is often initially a question of understanding each other's language and making the transfer of theory into practice a fruitful one for the various issues in question.

This National Youth Report provides impressive proof that all this can indeed be achieved. It also shows how academic research at the highest level can relate very specifically to current societal challenges, and in this way make an important contribution to development in society and in the country as a whole.

My thanks must go first to my esteemed colleague Prof. Dr. Helmut Willems, who has led the youth research team for many years with great success and vision. It is thanks to his outstanding expertise, team-building skills and tremendous commitment that the 2015 Youth Report now lies before you in its present form.

However, I would here also like to thank everyone else who has been involved in working on this report. Above all, I must mention the youth research team at FLSHASE which always worked together perfectly, even when the workload was at its heaviest, and never lost sight of the ultimate goal. My thanks go also to the government ministries that were involved for their cooperation, and for the confidence they have shown in the university. I must especially highlight the long-standing excellent partnership with Nico Meisch, Premier Conseiller de Gouvernement at the Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse (Government Adviser at the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth).

I am confident that the 2015 Youth Report will serve as an important stimulus for research and public debate, and I hope that anyone with an interest in reading it finds it useful and informative.

Prof. Dr. Georg Mein
Dean of the Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities,
Arts and Education at the University of Luxembourg

A

Government Notice

Government Notice

BACKGROUND TO THE NATIONAL YOUTH REPORT

What does it mean to become an adult in Luxembourg today? This is the question that this second National Report on the Situation of Young People in Luxembourg is trying to answer.

How can public authorities support young people in this process? This is the question which the government is asking itself and some initial, general answers are given in this notice, which precedes the actual report. An action plan for youth policy will then follow which will suggest further action to be undertaken in this area.

The Youth Act of 4 July 2008 sets out the framework within which this National Youth Report has been produced. Article 15 of this Law states that *"every five years, the minister shall present the Chamber of Deputies with a report about the situation of young people in Luxembourg"*. According to this same Article, *"the national youth action plan drawn up by the minister shall determine the direction of 'youth' policy"*.

The purpose of this Government Notice concerning the National Youth Report is to place it in the context of national youth policy and to draw some initial conclusions from it with regard to what government action can do for young people.

Furthermore, it is helpful to recall Article 3 of the Youth Act, which states that youth policy is cross-sectoral, knowledge-based and supported by active consultation with young people. With regard to methodology, these three characteristics mark Luxembourg youth policy as "state of the art" for current policy-making for young people in European Union countries.

The first National Youth Report was produced by the University of Luxembourg in 2010. As this was the first one to be written following the adoption of the Youth Act of 4 July 2008, it took a very broad view. The first youth report presented an extremely wide-ranging picture, as it produced an overview of all the data available concerning young people in Luxembourg.

SUBJECT AREAS FOR THE NATIONAL YOUTH REPORT

As is only natural, instead of taking such a broad view, this time round the second National Youth Report has been produced by focussing on a narrower perspective. The areas studied have been limited and the age sub-categories selected to fit with them. **The main area on which this report focuses is the transition from youth to adulthood.**

To a certain extent when work was started on the report, this subject area was a natural choice. Indeed, the years of economic crisis which began in 2008 have had and are still having a definite impact on young people's living conditions and the opportunities they have to get established so they can

live independently. We are now aware that the effects of this crisis are far more damaging for young people than for the population at large. In Europe from 2010 onwards, the evidence for this became irrefutable. Given the challenges faced by young people, when discussions were taking place about what this report should specifically focus on, the issue of transitions quickly emerged as an area which needed to be better understood. In line with Article 3 of the Youth Act, discussions also took place with representatives from youth organisations, the National Youth Council and the Youth Parliament, so that they were involved in the process.

However, although it seemed a natural choice to take transitions from youth to adulthood as a subject area, it also seemed equally important that the idea of transition was not restricted to what comes to mind most naturally, namely the transition between the educational system and the labour market. Passage to adulthood is definitely a far more complex matter than simply accessing the labour market. It is the person as a whole who is reaching adulthood and not just an employee. Becoming an adult also means leaving the parental home and starting a family. Behind this lies a whole series of other issues, which include housing in particular. Furthermore, being an adult means being fully involved in defining our common future and our models of society, in other words being involved in politics. This involvement in politics happens once voting age is reached with the right to vote. However, citizenship is far more complex than just getting the right to vote. Alongside actively participating in elections is the question of greater participation in political processes, and also of social involvement, and in particular within organisations since they are an important vehicle for social integration in Luxembourg.

A more accurate picture now emerges of what it means to become adult. There are multiple transitions to adulthood and they raise key challenges for everyone concerned. In this National Youth Report, the factors discussed are access to the labour market, housing and citizenship. The diversity of factors bound up with how young people make the transition to adulthood is reflected in the age groups studied. Different age sub-categories for young people seem more relevant depending on what is being studied: access to the labour market, housing for young people or citizenship for the young. The Youth Act defines this age range from 12 to 29, i.e. a very wide period. If we want to understand more about the transition between the world of school and employment, our attention is focussed on 15 or 16-year-olds, the age when compulsory education ends. On the other hand, gaining access to housing is a challenge faced later not by adolescents, but by young adults. At times the data studied here deals with an age group that can extend to 34 years. Questions concerning citizenship come into play much earlier on, during adolescence.

THE CROSS-SECTORAL NATURE OF YOUTH POLICY

These different subject areas also reflect a particular feature of youth policy, namely that it does not deal with one specific area of intervention, but with an age group in its entirety and with all aspects connected with it. In other words, **youth policy cannot be a policy exclusively for education, for family, for work, for health or for housing. In reality it finds itself where these fields of public authority intervention intersect. This is why the cross-sectoral nature of youth policy is a fundamental issue.** If there is indeed one area that can be called "for young people", then it is the area that historically has concentrated on youth leisure activities. Yet, youth policy which is appropriate for our times and which aims to have an impact on young people's living conditions in our society needs to reach far beyond this one area of intervention alone. This is why collaboration is necessary between the different sectors and ministries and with representatives from the fields in question.

This is precisely why, in this Youth Report, those fields were family, education, work and employment and also housing. To make this National Youth Report more relevant, there has been collaboration between the ministries of education, work and employment, the family and housing. This collaboration has led to the adoption of an inter-ministerial memorandum stating the intention to design the Youth Report as an inter-ministerial instrument. This memorandum laid down priorities – transition to employment, housing and citizenship – and the resources and roles of the various ministries involved.

As far as method is concerned, this memorandum steered the National Youth Report in a specific direction. **Rather than unilaterally favouring an objective standpoint by using public statistics concerning youth transitions, it suggests complementing this approach by systematically taking into account the viewpoints developed by young people themselves concerning their transitions.** This is equally valid both for how young people view transition to adulthood, and how they very subjectively experience this passage into a different stage of their life and also for what they think about the measures taken by the public authorities. As a result of the effects of the economic and financial crisis of recent years in particular, which has had a direct impact on young people, the public sector has developed a considerable arsenal of measures to support young people as they make the transition to adulthood. The young people using these measures develop their own analysis of them and when writing this report the government decided that it would be systematically included.

WHAT IS "GOOD" GOVERNMENT POLICY?

Including the standpoint of those using the measures was an innovative aspect in the writing of this report and it entailed involving young people and carrying out active consultation, as laid down in Article 3 of the Youth Act. However, including the opinions of those using the measures was also inspired by further thinking around the important question of knowing what makes good government policy. Whenever policy-makers draw up government policy schemes, they obviously do so based on rational thinking which takes into account various observations, which are sometimes implicit. These observations deal with needs, how to respond to these needs, how to provide the response, the ways in which users react and how they ought to behave so as to get the most out of the schemes being run and the benefits being offered. Together all these findings constitute a sort of administrative rationale, a vision of how the social world operates.

On the other hand, those using government-run schemes, young people in this instance, develop their own individual rationale. Their observations are not the same as those of the policy-makers. Young people develop their own thinking and analysis, as they have a different take on the world, shaped by different day-to-day experiences, with different expectations of what they hope to achieve in their lives and how they interpret what it means to "become adult". The rationale and expectations of public administrators and the young people using the measures are often at odds.

This can lead to situations where the expected outcomes of government schemes are not achieved because those who are supposed to benefit from them have not made use of the schemes in the manner intended. If a young person involved in a scheme to transition into the labour market believes that they actually have a job rather than that they are benefitting from a scheme, it comes as no great surprise that they will not invest much time in looking for a real job. Whenever government schemes are interpreted in conflicting ways, it is tempting to believe that the users have not understood, or worse, have not wanted to understand how to make use of the help being offered to them. On the contrary,

the conclusion that should be drawn is that the scheme was not devised to take into account what users actually need. The rationale of administrative or political decision-makers and that of the actual users were too divergent for the scheme to be used as was intended. This is all the more common as there is no such thing as a typical young person or typical user. The report shows that young people have different sorts of expectations, different needs and different views about how they intend to lead their lives as adults. For government bodies these views present challenges as they decide what action to implement.

Based on this observation, "good" public policy in the area of transitions is policy which ensures consistency between the public services' objective administrative rationale and the users' subjective rationale. When the objectives of both parties converge in the measures put forward, when policy-makers and users both benefit from this approach to some extent, then the measures may succeed in achieving their desired effect.

So there is a strong case for taking young people's opinions and viewpoints into account for policies which concern them. **Their involvement should not be seen as a luxury, but on the contrary as a necessity so as to ensure that the schemes set up run successfully.** In the way that the report has been devised, following the inter-ministerial memorandum, it is designed to promote such involvement, and it considers the position taken by young users as being legitimate, since it is based on their own experience.

Once the inter-ministerial memorandum on the second National Report on the Situation of Young People in Luxembourg was adopted, the University was tasked with producing this report. The Youth Cooperation Agreement binding the government and the University of Luxembourg was geared towards this goal.

LINKS BETWEEN RESEARCH INTO YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH POLICY

The report produced is a mine of information, both with regard to qualitative and quantitative information. Reading the report, and studying the data which it has brought to light in depth, is no easy task and will take time for any reader who wants to learn from it what is required when developing government policies for young people.

Indeed, the link between research into young people and the development of youth policy is not an automatic link. The field of research rarely offers government bodies ready-made answers. On the contrary, research has something to say to the person who asks the right questions. Thinking that policy development can be found in research results would be to fall into a technocratic trap. **On the contrary, examining the research so that it can support policy development requires dialogue to take place between the parties involved.** This dialogue must include all the stakeholders, not only researchers and government bodies, but also professional practitioners and civil society organisations.

With such dialogue it should be possible to interpret the National Youth Report collectively. This is why a series of presentations and dialogue at various levels will be organised between the publication of the report and the formulation of the action plan for youth policy provided for by Article 15 of the Youth Act. To this effect, the following paragraphs will also contribute to the debates which are bound to follow publication of this report.

Even if in-depth examination of this report will take place over a period of time, it is still possible to draw some conclusions from it, albeit preliminary conclusions. The report may be read on several levels.

Overall, the National Youth Report draws a picture for us, not only of young people in Luxembourg and the ways in which they experience passage into adulthood, but of our country in general. In a similar way that young people are often "early adopters" of new technologies, young people's lifestyles provide us with insight into what our society will be like tomorrow. Moreover, the times in life that are transitions, generally or specifically between youth and adulthood, are very enlightening times because the choices which are made then guide us into the future.

The University explains in its report that one of the features of our current European societies is that they give individuals a great amount of freedom as to how to live their lives. Life histories are less standardized; individuals are less tied by their family, social and cultural backgrounds. We might therefore expect to find a great multitude of different types of life plans which represent either a continuation of the dominant social model, or an alternative, i.e. a model of opposition.

However, it is clear that, above all else, young people desire to become integrated into the social model offered by the adult generations. Whether from the statistics or from reading the qualitative study carried out by the University, it can be seen that young people very largely share the prevailing values found in Luxembourg. They wish to have a career, their own place to live and start a family. On first sight, this might appear to be a good thing. **This finding shows that young people are in tune with the society where they live and that the models offered seem acceptable to them. In other words, the report does not point to any fracture or strong inter-generational tension in Luxembourg.**

On the other hand, we have to question whether the alternatives available to individuals, due to the increased freedom postulated by the researchers, are in fact as numerous as we might believe. With regard to housing in particular, Luxembourg is characterised by a high number of property owners compared with tenants. However, to be able to own a property presupposes an extremely stable professional situation since it requires a person to be in a position to plan their financial situation over the long term. A stable financial situation is dependent on having a career that is predictable over the medium term at least. In other words the way the housing market is configured in Luxembourg does not encourage young people to take risks with their careers. To become integrated into the current model, it is in their best interest to find a career path as quickly as possible which will allow them to quantify their future.

This may be seen as conflicting with the other demands made on young people, for example with regard to professional mobility. The labour market is characterised by a demand for mobility. Yet, from the individual's point of view, how can high mobility be guaranteed if, as far as housing is concerned, owning a property is considered to be the preferred option? This becomes even more striking if the labour market is viewed as being not only national, but a European market where young people have to find their place.

For young people of Luxembourg nationality, the segmentation in the labour market adds an extra element to this equation. Statistically the public sector has more employees of Luxembourg nationality and so may appear to be a relatively well-protected employment sector.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the level of entrepreneurship among young people living in Luxembourg is one of the lowest in the European Union. The conditions for making the transition to adulthood are such that they hardly encourage risk-taking, which requires a person to be capable of managing uncertainty about their future, at least temporarily.

Especially with the transition into the labour market, in order to enable young people to be creative, develop their own pathways and have the courage to try out new things, ways will have to be found to

encourage creativity and the spirit of entrepreneurship. At the same time temporary safety nets will have to be offered to give young people the chance to bounce back, should their attempts to find their own way prove unsuccessful.

Luxembourg, as it is described in the National Youth Report, is a country where the majority of its inhabitants enjoy a very high standard of living compared to the whole of the European Union. However, the price that young people have to pay as they transition into adulthood seems to be a strong pressure to become integrated into the prevailing social model, which does little to encourage experimentation with alternative patterns of life.

This is even more the case for those young people who from the outset have fewer economic, social and cultural resources. A whole section of the detailed analysis of this report must look at these resources which are unevenly distributed among young people and the ramifications arising from this. These inequalities are all the more marked because they occur in all the various aspects of the transitions analysed in the National Youth Report.

On a different level, the report also shows how young people experience the public policy schemes set up for them. In this respect, this National Youth Report really does add a different dimension to the debate surrounding the measures put in place to support young people as they transition into adulthood.

A quantitative study carried out by the University of Luxembourg has elicited feedback about dozens of measures from the people using them. And it is especially useful to listen to these users because as previously explained, we need to realise that the way young people experience the schemes they are involved in is one of the vital factors for the success of these schemes.

Regarding the support for young people to access the labour market, where there is a long history of offering support to the young, **what seems to be suggested is that when the National Youth Report is analysed, one of the points which needs further examination is how to match the goals of the measures being provided with the objective and subjective needs of the young users**. Initial analysis seems to show that it is not always possible to clearly distinguish what are the goals of these measures. It is therefore difficult to get them to match user needs, especially when dealing with the users' subjective desires. Such desires may appear difficult to comprehend, but they do play an important role in determining how users are going to experience public policy and, as a consequence, make effective use of it as they make their personal journey through life.

In its report, the University identified quality criteria for the measures that are implemented to support young people with their transitions. These criteria could provide a very useful starting point for carrying out this analysis.

The situation with housing for the young is different to that for accessing the labour market, as housing policy does not target young people to the same extent. In different areas (housing, childcare and family support, social assistance, youth work), there are measures which aim to support young people so they can live independently. These measures have developed from a variety of traditions, however, and so there is no "young people and housing" policy as such. Although over the past two years there have been initiatives to deal with this, as a result of the increased collaboration between the ministries in question, and some initial housing projects have been set up specifically for young people, **the challenge in this field will be to create a proper government "young people and housing" policy, and to continue to increase the housing provision available to young people and to link up all the players involved.** Linking everyone will make it possible to work on different areas, such as encouraging alternative forms of housing, ensuring consistency in the measures aimed at young

people and making sure that the information directed at them meets their needs and fits with how they communicate.

As far as citizenship is concerned - the third area of transition analysed by the University in the National Youth Report - there is also a whole array of measures to further strengthen citizenship. Unlike the measures for labour market access and housing for young people, these measures are often not compensatory in nature, but rather deal with building capacity for involvement. **Both analysis of the statistical data and the additional surveys carried out as part of this report show that a divide exists in Luxembourg society when it comes to accessing citizenship. Indeed there is a clear difference between national residents and non-national residents. This obviously holds true for the most central aspect of access to citizenship: taking part in elections. However, it holds true equally for other support measures for young people, in the field of social involvement or in youth organisations.**

Of course this divide cannot be seen in isolation from the other dividing lines which characterise Luxembourg society, such as segmentation in the labour market or unequal distribution of pupils in the education system. Inequality in accessing ways to experience citizenship through becoming involved means that the divides found in other fields tend to widen further.

The future action plan will have to address this issue which sets Luxembourg a considerable challenge. How indeed in our society do we enable as many people as possible to become involved as citizens? This challenge touches on Luxembourg's social cohesion. Of course, one of the questions here is the language in which the measures offered to young people are written. An initial reading shows that very often the language used is Luxembourgish and closer analysis should help us understand whether using a wider range of languages to strengthen citizenship might make it easier for non-nationals to access these measures. However, the question of widening access to measures which encourage citizenship and participation also means thinking more broadly about the methods used to reach out to young people. Faced with ever-increasing numbers of projects and measures that aim to create involvement, using methods which are often inappropriate for the specific target audiences, how do we recognise and encourage existing civic involvement in its multiple forms? Indeed, in the National Youth Report it appears that the way young people do become involved does not always correspond to the type of involvement conventionally advocated. **In such instances, it is important to acknowledge the existing involvement as such and give it support. This requires in-depth reflection, and perhaps a paradigm shift in the way young people are encouraged to become involved, socially and politically.**

The role played by family support also appears to cross-cut the three areas of transition. Whenever the family of origin can offer support and whenever it is able to do so, this makes transition easier for young people. However, for a variety of reasons, economic, social and cultural, not all families are in a position to provide their children with this support. For transition into the workforce, what seems to be a considerable advantage is the parents' social resources and how well they are integrated into Luxembourg society through informal networks. As far as access to housing is concerned, financial resources seem to play more of a role. Lastly, for transition in the area of citizenship, parental involvement plays a significant role. Supporting young people as they make their transitions means supporting families too, so that they can get behind their children. This means looking upon parents as partners in the transition and in the support processes. This challenge epitomises Luxembourg's cultural heterogeneity which is in part responsible for the replication of this inequality in the family support that is available to young people.

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The transition from youth into adulthood: processes, perspectives, challenges

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Theories, data, dialogue: the concept behind the Luxembourg Youth Report   1.

The central theme of the 2015 Luxembourg Youth Report is an analysis of the transition from youth into adulthood. **The Youth Report aims** to (a) describe the different ways in which young people transition into adulthood, (b) document the support services in Luxembourg that are specifically aimed at young people and (c) analyse the experiences and evaluations of those services from the perspective of young people.

Main subject areas

In terms of subject matter, the Youth Report deals with **three aspects of transition** which characterise the transition into adulthood, both from the point of view of social science theories and also from that of politicians and society:

1. **Transitions into the world of work:** the transition from the education system on to the employment market, from the status of a pupil, student or apprentice to that of a working person;
2. **Private transitions:** leaving the parental home, developing ways of living independently, forming partnerships and starting a family;
3. **Development of civic engagement during the period of transition:** taking on the role of an active, socially and politically engaged citizen.

These three aspects of transition are described and analysed using scientific methods. The 2015 Youth Report looks at adolescents and young adults aged between 15 and 34 because, in view of the lengthening period of time spent in education, the transition into adulthood can nowadays sometimes continue until people are in their 30s.

Underlying data

The report is based on various data sources. In addition to using existing statistical data (survey data, administrative data), some data was specially collected for the report. That includes qualitative interviews with experts, interviews with adolescents and young adults and a standardised survey of young people who have had experience of a support service.

Different data sources were analysed with a view to achieving different goals. The **expert interviews** with professionals in the field or in politics served primarily to explore the subject area and identify the questions at issue. The **analysis of secondary data** was used mainly to describe and analyse the stages of transition and differentiate between the situations of adolescents and young adults in terms of

their age, gender, nationality and social background. The **qualitative interviews** were used to collect subjective information from adolescents and young adults about their attitude to becoming adults and the status of adults. The **standardised survey** of participants in support services focused on their experiences and their assessment of the services.

One final feature regarding the methodology used in producing the Youth Report was the systematic **involvement of experts** from academia, professional practice, administration and politics, together with representatives of young people in the supplementary focus group discussions. This not only provided an important instrument for quality control and external validation but also meant that the report and its conclusions would be more closely connected to Luxembourg's ongoing professional debate.

This **triangulation** of different methodological approaches and different data sources resulted in a broad and multi-perspective representation of young people's transition into adulthood. Not least, it helped ensure that the methodological weaknesses of one perspective could be compensated for by the strengths of the others.

The findings reveal general trends and interconnections and also help to identify problem areas. The report therefore provides a comprehensive basis for information and discussion among politicians, professionals and academics.

Theoretical framework

In terms of theory, the Youth Report is based on concepts from youth sociology relating to transition and the definition of youth as a phase in terms of developmental tasks. According to these, the transition into the adult world is defined as learning to play new roles in society and successfully accomplishing certain **developmental tasks** (Havighurst, 1972 [1981]). These developmental tasks are understood as challenges to the individual which have to be overcome in order to be able to deal successfully with social tasks. The key dimensions of the developmental tasks facing young people can be described as "Qualify" (transitions into work), "Commit" (private transitions) and "Participate" (developing forms of civic engagement) (Hurrelmann & Quenzel, 2012).[1]

These developmental tasks therefore define, firstly, key aspects of the development of an individual's personality and identity, but also, secondly, the social expectations and targets for young people. Accomplishing these tasks helps young people to develop self-reliance, independence and the capacity to act. Even if, as a result of social liberalisation and individualisation, developmental tasks and social roles can nowadays be more individually chosen and shaped, nevertheless certain biographical events can be identified as transition markers along the way to adult status. These include, for example, entering the world of employment, leaving the parental home, marriage or partnership and starting a family.

In describing and analysing these transitions and developmental processes, we relied on two main theoretical concepts: (a) **action theory approaches**, which look at individual ways of overcoming challenges, and (b) **structural theory approaches**, for measuring the importance of structures, norms and institutions.

The action theory approach sees young people as the doers and designers of their own biographical transitions and analyses the transition decisions that they make and their individual progress in that context. Here, the way an individual accomplishes the developmental tasks is greatly affected by

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1   The fourth developmental task referred to by Hurrelmann & Quenzel (2012), "Consume", was not analysed as a separate dimension in this Youth Report.

the resources available to them, both personal (including intelligence, talent, motivation, control beliefs) and social (including family support and social integration) (Blanz, Remschmidt, Martin & Andreas, 2006). While action models regard the transitions into adulthood as the result of individual decisions, structural models look primarily for explanations at a macro level. The focus here is on social norms, the institutional context and the regulations of the welfare state which have contributed to an "institutionalisation of the life course" (Kohli, 1985) and to a certain standardisation of the transition.

2. *The heterogeneity of the young generation in Luxembourg*

2.1 THE PROPORTION OF ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS IN THE TOTAL POPULATION

As in other Western countries, the **demographic trend** in Luxembourg is characterised by **falling birth rates** (due to changing family structures, gender roles and career patterns) and **increasing life expectancy** (due to an increase in the standard of living and medical advances). The result of this trend is that the proportion of older people in the population is rising, while the proportion of young people is falling. This pattern can also be observed in Luxembourg, even though the ageing of the population here is considerably less marked than in neighbouring countries (Eurostat, 2015a).

The age structure of a population is of great importance for economic development and dynamism in society as well as for the sustainability of the provisions of the welfare state. This is because in Luxembourg, as in many other European countries, the insurance against life risks that is provided by the welfare state is based on a pay-as-you-go system that is sometimes described as a contract between the generations. To be effective, it depends on the balance between the number of people paying in and the number of people receiving the benefits. As of 01.01.2015, the population of Luxembourg was 562,958. More than a quarter of those (26.8 %) are adolescents and young adults aged between 15 and 34, with the group of 25 to 34-year-olds – at 15.5% of the total population – slightly more strongly represented than that of 15 to 24-year-olds, at 12.2% of the total population (see Figure 1). Figure 1 also shows how Luxembourg, in comparison with other European countries, has more adolescents and young adults and fewer old people.

Figure 1: Age pyramid for the population of Luxembourg (2015) and the 28 EU countries (2014)
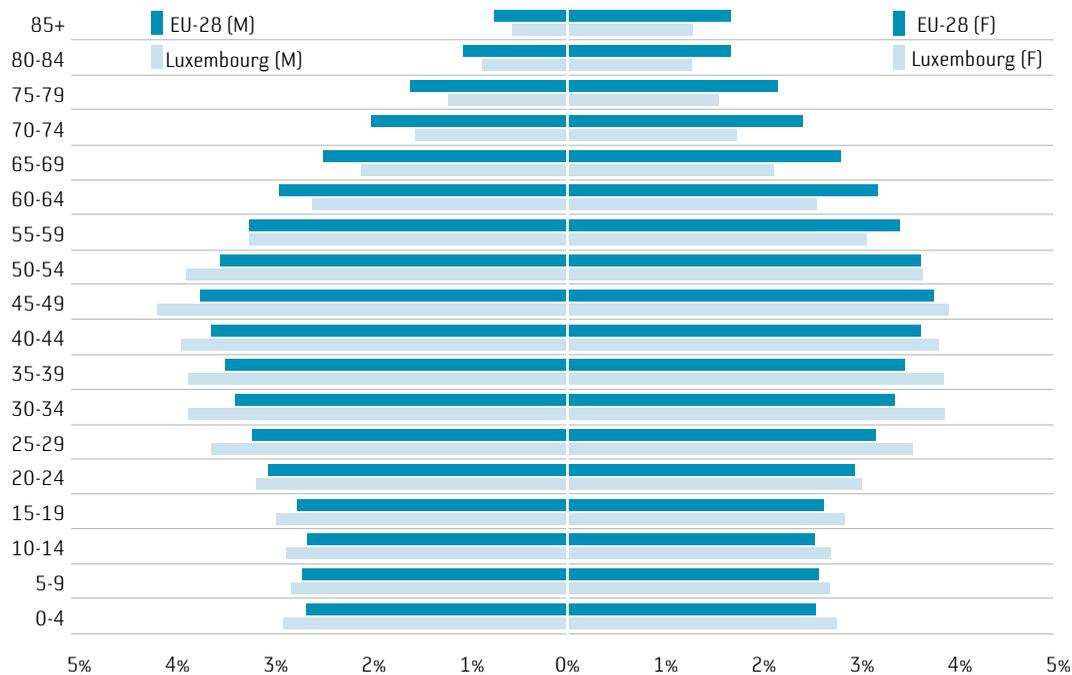
Source: Statec, 2015; Eurostat, 2014

While the proportion of 15 to 34-year-olds in the total population has fallen from 30.5% in 1991 to 26.8% in 2015, in recent years it has stabilised and in fact, since 2011, it has even increased slightly (data records from the census in 1991 and 2011[2]; Statec, 2015). This **moderate demographic change** in Luxembourg can also be seen when you look at the youth and old-age dependency ratios[3]. Whereas in many European countries, the proportion of young people below the age of 20, in relation to the proportion of people aged between 20 and 59 (the youth dependency ratio), has fallen sharply, in Luxembourg the change has been only slight. The same applies to the old-age dependency ratio (the numerical ratio between the over 60s and the 20 to 59-year-olds), which in Luxembourg, unlike in most other European countries, has also remained largely stable (Eurostat, 2015b).

These indicators show that ageing in Luxembourg society is progressing more moderately and slowly than in other European countries and that the proportions of the population represented by children and young people have remained largely stable here. One of the reasons for the slower ageing of the population of Luxembourg compared with other European countries is the high rate of immigration

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2   Sources not mentioned in the bibliography are described as "data records" and listed in the appendix under "Data records used".

3   The quotients taken together reflect the age ratio within a society. This means that the quotients are rough indicators of the economic burden represented by the balance between the earning and non-earning groups.

by young people of working age. Within the European Union, Luxembourg is experiencing the fastest population growth due to immigration. That is why the changes in the demographic structure of the population of Luxembourg show a marked **increase in the proportion of foreigners** in all age groups over the last 20 years. In the 15 to 34-year-old group, in 2011, the proportion of foreigners was 47%, higher than in the population as a whole (43%). The proportion is particularly high among 25 to 34-year-olds, at 55%, which can be mainly attributed to (work-related) immigration by young adults.

2.2   THE ETHNIC-CULTURAL HETEROGENEITY OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

As a result of the high influx of migrants, the population of Luxembourg today is characterised by **great heterogeneity of nationality**. People who do not have a migration background are now in the minority: only 35% of the resident population of Luxembourg were born in Luxembourg and have two parents who were born in Luxembourg. By contrast, two-thirds of the population of Luxembourg have a migration background, whether direct (they are immigrants themselves) or indirect (their parents or one parent were immigrants). This applies particularly to the younger generation of 15 to 34-year-olds, among whom there is an **above-average proportion of migrants**. Table 1 gives an overview of the nationality structure of the younger generation compared with the total population.

Table 1: Nationality structure of 15 to 34-year-olds and of the total population in 2011

	Total population	15 to 34-year-olds
Luxembourg nationality	**57.0%**	**52.6%**
- from birth	48.7%	43.5%
- by naturalisation	8.3%	9.1%
Foreign nationality	**43.0%**	**47.4%**
EU nationality	37.4%	40.0%
- Portuguese	16.1%	18.7%
- French	6.1%	7.4%
- Italian	3.5%	2.7%
- Belgian	3.3%	2.7%
- German	2.4%	1.7%
- Other EU nationality	6.0%	7.3%
Non-EU nationality	5.6%	7.3%

Source: Census 2011; n = 512,353

At the same time, the group of immigrants itself is very heterogeneous and has changed greatly in origin and education over recent decades. Whereas, in the second half of the last century, most migrants came to Luxembourg from Portugal or Italy, often as poorly qualified labourers, nowadays more and more well-qualified professionals of different EU nationalities are coming to Luxembourg. Immigrants

of Portuguese nationality still account for the largest group, followed by people of French, Belgian or German nationality. However, the proportion of non-European migrants has also grown, with the result that there has been a significant increase in linguistic, **cultural and ethnic heterogeneity** in the cohorts of children and young people.

INEQUALITY AND POVERTY AMONG THE YOUNG GENERATION   2.3

Luxembourg, with its high gross national product (GNP) and high pro capita income, is one of the wealthiest countries in Europe (Hury, Peltier, Salagean, Thill & Zahlen, 2015). However, even in Luxembourg, there are sometimes big differences with regard to the access certain population groups have to economic resources. Since economic resources have a big influence on the living conditions and opportunities for adolescents and young adults, their distribution within society is important when analysing the transition into adulthood. The young person's family and its resources play a vital role.

Unlike in many other countries, where the risk of poverty among older people is a growing problem, in Luxembourg the risk of **poverty mainly affects young people**. The proportion at risk of poverty[4] demonstrates the close correlation between age and poverty: in Luxembourg the age groups below 25 are those most at risk of relative poverty, at 23.3% for below 15-year-olds and 21.9% for 15 to 24-year-olds, while far fewer of the over 65s (6.2%) are at risk of poverty (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: At-risk-of-poverty rate and subjectively difficult financial situations, by age group, 2013
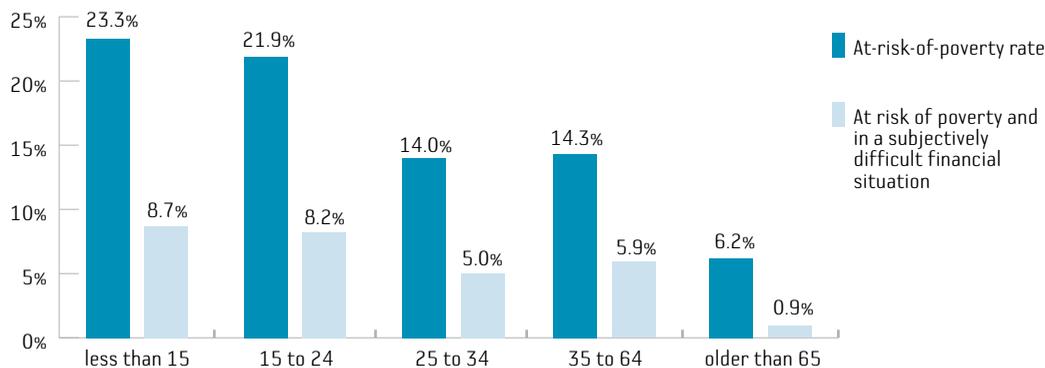
Source: EU-SILC 2013; n = 9,994

This trend is also confirmed by people's subjective assessment of their own financial situation (see Figure 2): Here again surveys show that in Luxembourg significantly more young people report having financial difficulties than older people (data records from EU-SILC, 2013).

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4   The at-risk-of-poverty rate (also called "relative poverty") describes the number of people whose equivalent income is less than 60% of the median income (level of income at which exactly the same number of people are above that value as below it).

3. Pluralisation and individualisation of the transition into the world of work

The change from school into the world of employment, via a professional apprenticeship or university education, is a key transition between youth and adulthood. In knowledge-based societies, educational qualifications are a key factor determining different kinds of transition into working life and also different professional careers. The same applies to the first few years on the labour market: stable patterns of employment during the first few years influence a person's entire working career and reduce the risk of being affected by unemployment later on (Dietrich & Abraham, 2008). Entering the world of work also encourages **financial independence** and plays a strong role in **establishing personal identity**. In that sense, it also greatly influences decisions about the timing and nature of transitions in a young person's private life.

3.1   HIGHER DEMANDS, INSECURITIES AND RISKS DURING THE TRANSITION PHASE

Overall, the transition into working life has changed markedly in recent decades. As a result of globalisation, more intensive competition and greater use of technology, in Western industrial countries there are fewer jobs for unskilled or low-skilled workers, but more jobs requiring a high level of qualification. Consequently, young people remain longer in the education system, the entry into working life is delayed and the **transition phase overall is extended** (Konietzka, 2010; Walther, 2006). The need to acquire higher educational qualifications and the changing nature of employment and business structures require more flexibility and mobility on the part of young people, together with a high degree of initiative and decision-making capability (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007).

For young people in Luxembourg, the transition into employment is generally somewhat easier than for young people in other European countries. In relation to the European average, they are less frequently unemployed, find jobs matching their qualifications more frequently and are given permanent employment contracts sooner. This is particularly true for adolescents and young adults with average or high educational qualifications.

However, there is one group of young people in Luxembourg who, in some cases, face considerable difficulty with the transition into work. This comprises mainly **adolescents and young adults with poor school-leaving qualifications or none at all**. A disproportionate number of these are young men, or adolescents and young adults with a direct migration background. They are more frequently unemployed, often face worse opportunities on the labour market right from the start of their working life, are more likely to be in atypical employment situations (part-time employment, temporary employment, short-term work) and are more dependent on state support services.

A look at the **youth unemployment rate** demonstrates the problem: it has risen steadily in Luxembourg in the last 15 years and is approaching the European average. In 2014 in Luxembourg, more than one in five of the young people aged under 25 who were active on the employment market were unemployed (22.0%), while the unemployment rate for the population as a whole was only 6% (see Figure 3). The big difference between the unemployment rate for the population as a whole and the youth unemployment rate indicates that the transition from the education system into employment represents a critical phase for a lot of young people in Luxembourg. This is particularly true for young people with poor qualifications, for whom the risk of becoming unemployed is especially high.

Uncertainty and worry about the threat of unemployment or precarious work situations were subjects that were often raised by adolescents and young adults in the interviews. Access to the labour market was often judged to be difficult, because educational qualifications are losing value, employers often require professional experience and employment contracts are usually temporary. Against this background, many young people in Luxembourg are afraid that, in the tougher competition for jobs, they will not have access to "good jobs" and will not be able to achieve the same high standard of living as their parents.

Figure 3: Ratio between youth unemployment and general unemployment in 2014 in certain European countries
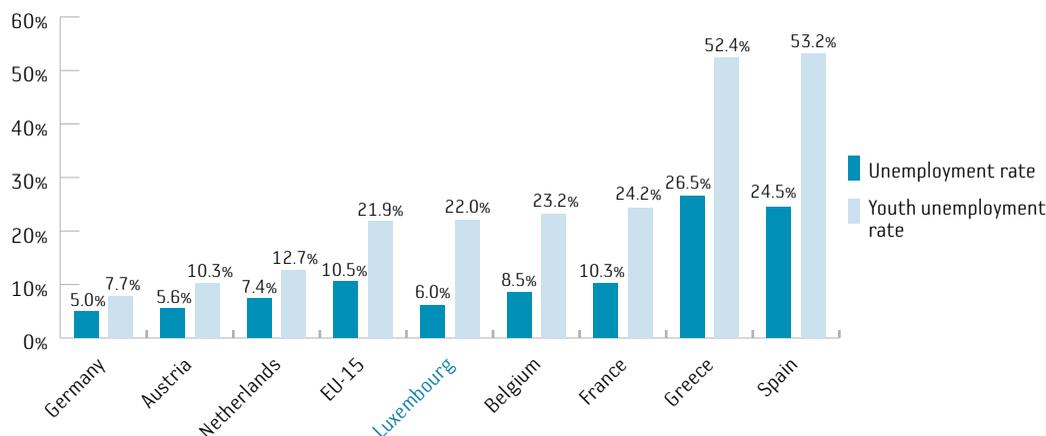
Source: Eurostat, 2015c, based on data from the Labour Force Survey 2013; youth unemployment rate: under 25s

For several decades, the high demand for workers in Luxembourg has not been met solely by the resident population but mainly by migrants and cross-border commuters from neighbouring countries. As a result of the massive influx of workers from the Greater Region and from many other European and non-European countries, Luxembourg's labour market is strongly **segmented by qualification and nationality**. Whereas adolescents and young adults of Luxembourg nationality often work in technical or scientific professions and are overrepresented in administration and education, young workers of Portuguese nationality are more often employed as low-skilled workers and are overrepresented in the construction industry, retail trade and catering. Most foreigners from EU countries aged between 15 and 34 work in academic professions, financial services or the higher service sector of private industry.

The reasons for this unequal distribution can be found in the different levels of qualification, different wage levels and language skills.

Consequently, in the interviews, cross-border commuters and foreign workers were regarded with ambivalence by the young people. While some of those questioned expressed the opinion that the country benefits from them, others pointed out the tough competition which they saw as jeopardising their own opportunities on the jobs market.

3.2   A TYPOLOGY OF TRANSITION PROCESSES AND THE PATTERNS FOR ACCOMPLISHING THEM

With the globalisation of the economy, advances in technology and the digitisation of production and sales, together with increased rationalisation as a consequence of global competition, not only have national economic structures changed, but also national jobs markets and their expectations of workers. The female employment rate has increased noticeably, the trend towards higher qualifications continues and a high degree of flexibility and mobility is expected from today's workers. As a consequence of these changes, **the transitional phase of entering working life has become more individualised and diversified**. Even though adolescents and young adults today have more options and greater autonomy in their choice of occupation and career, their opportunities and strategies for taking action continue to be greatly influenced by their social background and by the prevailing structural conditions (Walther & Stauber, 2013). Consequently, the transition by adolescents and young adults into the world of work takes place at different speeds and with varying degrees of success.

Our qualitative interviews with a total of 77 adolescents and young adults in Luxembourg identified widely varying processes, rationales and patterns for accomplishing the transition. They can be divided into **four transition types**, distinguished not only by the different kinds of transition into working life but also by the different strategies for action, values, perspectives and attitudes of the adolescents and young adults in question.

Direct transition: Young adults who make a direct transition accomplish the transition into employment successfully and speedily. There is normally only a short period between leaving education and permanent employment. Supported by parents who show a proper interest in the young people's progress, and assisted by good results from school, they make their own decisions about their professional lives which they then implement with determination. The migration background that is common to about one in three of this type generally appears to be a positive factor that has enriched their progress through life. Thanks to generally good language skills and a strong social network, these young people see themselves as fully integrated into Luxembourg society. Individuals who make a direct transition assume that they will be able to determine their lives for themselves (high degree of self-efficacy) and regard the future with optimism. Both professional success and personal growth are important to them. As a result of their successful integration in the employment market, they can afford a higher standard of living from an early stage.

Alternative transition: Young adults who have made an alternative transition have also accomplished the transition into employment successfully, but they allowed themselves more time and sought out their own path and supplementary experiences. Consequently the transition phase extended over a longer period. These young people, too, on the basis of strong parental support and a successful school career, make independent decisions though these may not always be planned but often occur spontaneously

and may need to be corrected along the way. Their careers are therefore characterised by changes and interruptions initiated by themselves, but these can be seen and accepted as part of finding their way and learning how to make decisions. In most cases, they lead to a professional situation with which the young people are satisfied. Personal satisfaction and self-fulfilment are more important to them than professional status. They see themselves as shaping their own individual way through life. About one third of young adults who make an alternative transition have a background of migration. These young people also benefit from their experience of successful social integration. Despite often lacking professional security, they look to the future with equanimity because they deliberately choose to leave their options open. Their standard of living varies depending on their professional situation.

Transition requiring support: This category comprises adolescents and young adults who are confronted by major difficulties in the transition into employment and therefore require help. Despite making varying degrees of effort, they have not yet arrived in working life: they are either unemployed or in a precarious employment situation. They therefore try to accomplish the transition with outside support, for example by taking part in a labour market integration scheme. The family resources of this group vary: some receive little if any support from their family, while others continue to be supported by their parents in their difficult situation. Their experiences at school and their educational qualifications also vary: while this group is dominated by young people with poor or no educational qualifications, it also includes young people who have school-leaving qualifications or a university degree. They describe their professional careers as not so much self-determined as rather the result of the lack of alternatives, leading to temporary and emergency solutions. Almost half of those in need of support have a migration background which they frequently regard as an additional inhibiting factor that, from the point of view of those affected, manifests itself in the form of language problems, lack of integration and, in some cases, experience of being disadvantaged. The fact that they have not yet managed to integrate professionally has a negative effect on the self-image and well-being of many of this group. For that reason, many associate employment with a desire for structure in their everyday lives and social integration. Those concerned have high hopes of the external support services, but often also view the future with scepticism.

Failed transition: For some adolescents and young adults, the transition into employment cannot be expected to happen in the foreseeable future and is even regarded by them themselves as unlikely. As a result of their precarious and highly problematic overall situation, the transition has initially failed for them. Those affected are generally struggling with multiple problems, ranging from difficult, in some cases shattered, family circumstances, through health and drug-related problems and bad experiences at school, to difficulties with language and integration. Their many experiences of failure in different contexts result in huge loss of self-worth and capacity to act; often they react to the persistent negative experiences with withdrawal or flight, for example by dropping out of school. Decisions about their future occupation are generally made for them by others. The lack of prospects in terms of career has a negative effect on other aspects of their life and, for many, leads to serious financial problems. Their attitude to the future is correspondingly pessimistic, and some have already given up hope. Table 2 gives an overview of the four types of transition.

Table 2: Overview of the typology of transition processes and patterns for accomplishing them

	Direct transition	Alternative transition	Transition requiring support	Failed transition
Family resources	- Positive parental support - Close communication	- Positive parental support - Strong desire for autonomy, can lead to confrontation	- Some are lacking support - Some are getting support in case of difficulties	- Very little parental support - Difficult family relationships and circumstances
School career and educational success	- Average or high educational qualifications - Mainly positive experiences at school	- Average or high educational qualifications - Mainly positive experiences at school	- Varying qualifications - Sometimes negative experiences at school	- Low or no qualifications, often dropped out of school - Massively negative experiences
Migration experiences and integration	- No problems with integration (good language skills, social integration) - Positive experiences	- No problems with integration (good language skills, social integration) - Positive experiences	- Difficulties with integration - Language problems - Feel that they are disadvantaged	- Difficulties with integration - Language problems - Feel that they are disadvantaged
Decision-making and actions	- Self-determined - Make plans, act rationally - Direct progression, ambitious	- Self-determined - Unplanned, spontaneous - Individualist, changeable	- Emergency solutions due to lack of alternatives - Decisions often made on the initiative of others	- Tendency to withdrawal - Often only act on the initiative of others
Values and motivation	- Materialist (security, career) and post-materialist values (sense of meaning) in equal measure	- Predominantly post-materialist values (self-fulfilment, satisfaction)	- Psychosocial motivations are in the foreground (structuring of everyday routine, social integration)	- Mainly financial motivation ("Work is the main thing") - Loss of value system
Self-fulfilment and attribution	- High self-fulfilment - Attribution appropriate to the situation	- High self-fulfilment - Attribution appropriate to the situation	- Low self-fulfilment - Mostly one-sided attribution - Somewhat negative self-image	- Low self-fulfilment - One-sided attribution - Negative self-image
Implications for other areas of life	- Higher standard of living - Less time for other aspects of life	- Lack of security, but few serious implications - Variable standard of living	- Harm to psyche, health, well-being - Financial worries	- Serious negative implications for all aspects of life - Financial need
Attitude to the future	- Optimistic, confident	- Open-minded - Relaxed	- Hopeful - Sceptical	- Pessimistic - Resigned

The typology does not represent a conclusive assessment of the transition by the young people in question; rather, it should be seen as a biographical snapshot. However, assigning young people to a type based on their individual experiences and attitudes clearly shows the factors and conditions that

are required for success, and the barriers facing young people making the transition into working life. The fact that the transition into the world of work is different, depending on people's educational path and level of education, is already well-known and has been clearly documented for Luxembourg, too. Nevertheless, it was surprising to find what a big role is played by family circumstances and **family support in accomplishing the transition**. This could be seen both for those adolescents and young adults who had, in different ways, successfully accomplished the transition themselves and also for those groups of young people for whom the transition is proving problematic or for whom, at the time of the survey, it could be regarded as having failed. In virtually all the successful instances of transition that we analysed, the family provided essential assistance in the form of financial help, contacts and information, personal interest and support. And in virtually all the cases of problematic transition, the lack of family resources and family support, or family problems and conflicts, were key elements in the young people's difficult situation.

## EDUCATION AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND AS KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TRANSITION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET   3.3

Overall, the level of education of the general population in Luxembourg, as in other European countries, has risen steeply in recent years. This means that, while the number of people with post-secondary educational qualifications is rising, the proportion of those with poor educational qualifications has been falling over the last 15 years (MENJE & UL, 2015). As in many highly developed countries, women are now more successful than men in the Luxembourg education system; they spend longer in education and, on average, achieve better educational outcomes. The fact that **young people today engage more with education** means that they also remain longer in the education system. Compared with the over 65s, today's 25 to 34-year-olds spend on average three years longer in the education system; the transition into employment takes place correspondingly later.

Major influences on the educational opportunities of young people in Luxembourg are their **linguistic and migration background** and their **social origins**. An analysis differentiating levels of education by migration background and nationality shows big differences (see Figure 4): pupils with a migration background achieve on average poorer educational outcomes than those without a migration background. For example, young people of Portuguese nationality or non-EU nationality have, on average, a lower level of education than young people without a migration background. However, among young people of German, French, Belgian or other EU nationality, the level of education is considerably higher than that of those of Luxembourg nationality.

It can also be seen that once an educational path has been embarked upon, it can rarely be corrected upwards. Although Luxembourg's education system is highly differentiated and stratified, with a large number of possible educational paths, internally it permits very little upward mobility (Backes, 2015).

Figure 4: Highest educational qualification of 25 to 34-year-olds by nationality
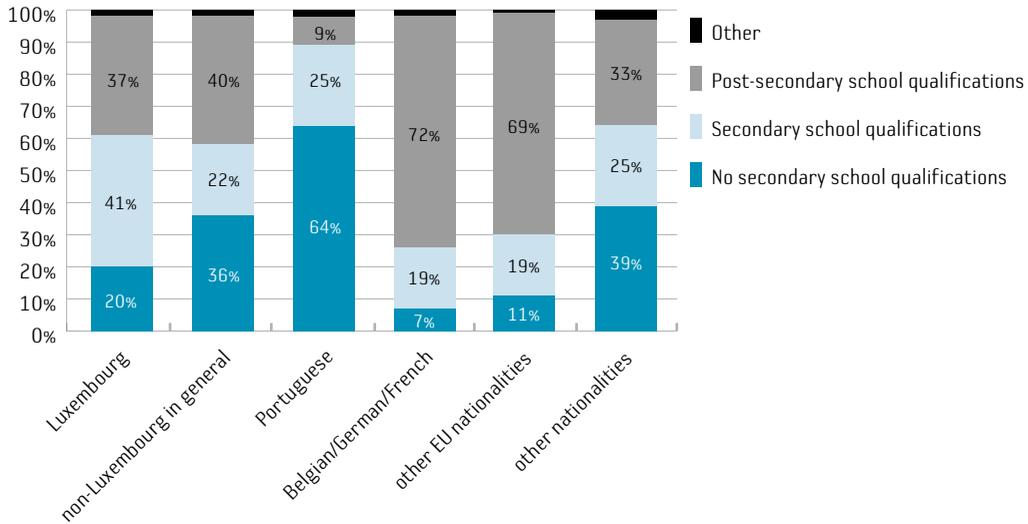
Source: Census 2011; n = 63,719 (includes people who are no longer in training or education)

The formal qualifications acquired in the education system are an important determining factor for how and whether the transition into employment is accomplished. While, for a majority of adolescents and young adults with training or university qualifications, the transition is stressful and challenging, but ultimately turns out to be unproblematic and achievable, for young people leaving the education system with poor or no qualifications, it is much more difficult. This is particularly true for young people with a migration background, who are more frequently unemployed even when they have comparable qualifications. The time of migration plays an important role: the more time has passed since the family immigrated, the lower the risk of being unemployed.

This data also demonstrates in particular the **important supporting role played by the family** in helping a young person succeed at school and go on to make the transition into employment. This support may take many forms: financial or emotional, acting as a role model or intermediary for certain occupations, providing information or informal knowledge, or access to networks. Even though many of the young people questioned say that they are supported by their parents, the data indicates that the quality and scope of parental support for young people with transition difficulties is often significantly less than for their peers who navigate the transition successfully. In particular those adolescents and young adults who have failed to make the transition and experience multiple problems frequently come from precarious family backgrounds where they were left to their own devices at an early stage, with the result that they lack social understanding and orientation and therefore also important psychological resources.

EVALUATION OF THE HELP AND SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE WITH TRANSITION, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF YOUNG PEOPLE

3.4

The transition into the world of employment is a challenge that is overcome by adolescents and young adults in different ways. In the light of the different kinds of transition that we have observed, there is a need for a range of different **help and support services**.

Adolescents and young adults who make a direct progression through life generally accomplish the transition into working life on their own terms and with determination. They turn to their family and school environment for support and information and use this to find their own way; they normally have no need of further support beyond these resources. The same applies to adolescents and young adults who accomplish their transition more creatively and indirectly; mostly they, too, have individual resources which help them to embark on the path they have chosen and to overcome any obstacles or uncertainties.

In contrast, there are adolescents and young adults who cannot achieve this transition with their own resources and are dependent on external assistance to integrate into the labour market. Some of them need assistance in the form of information, advice or guidance, while others require specific measures to help them integrate in the labour market, for example, by acquiring skills that they lack and making them ready for employment. Such young people are the main target group for policies on youth and the labour market.

The **support services in Luxembourg** mainly aim to make the transition into employment easier for young people having difficulty with it. Naturally, the focus is often not on integrating them in the labour market directly, in the sense of arranging an employment contract for them, but rather on teaching them particular skills and, associated with that, how to achieve or maintain their readiness for employment. Often there are no precise objectives in the descriptions of the support services; instead, there are lots of vague objectives such as "encouraging integration in the labour market", which allow a great deal of room for interpretation in what form the service actually takes. This makes it difficult to tailor the services to meet the needs of young people on one hand, and of the labour market on the other. Furthermore, as yet there is no complete, regularly updated list of all such support services, making it difficult for those in search of work, and also the organisations offering the support, to find their way round the system.

Overall, the **number of participants** in support schemes sponsored by ADEM (National Employment Administration) more than doubled between 2000 and 2013. The scheme which currently has the highest number of participants is the "Employment Initiation Contract" (Contrat d'initiation-emploi CIE), which is available to all young people, regardless of their previous education or career path and is intended to help them into employment by offering practical work experience in private and public organisations (Chambre des Salariés, 2014).

A survey of a total of 1162 adolescents and young adults who have been through one or more of these schemes provides information about their expectations, experience and subjective assessments. Most of those surveyed were positive about the **subjective benefit of participation** (see Figure 5). They had been able to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and were encouraged in those areas in which they needed support, gaining additional practical skills and theoretical knowledge.

Figure 5: Subjectively experienced benefit of support schemes
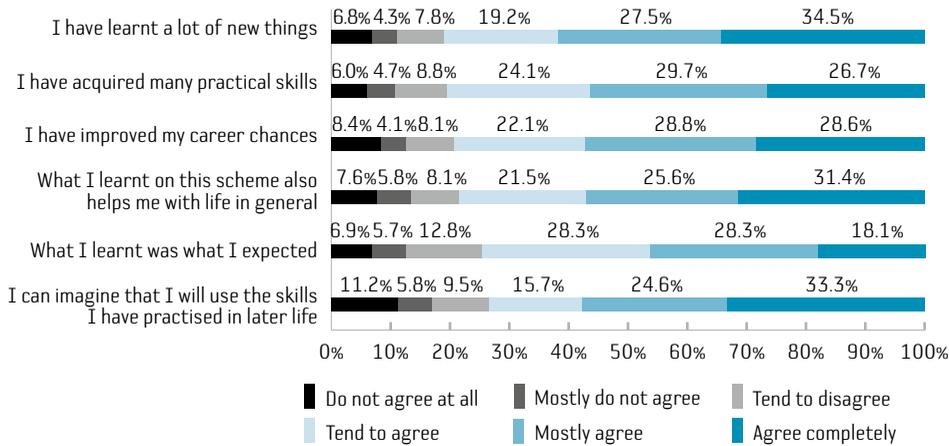
Source: Survey of young participants in the schemes; n = 1,122-1,137

It is clear that age, level of education and language skills play a major role in the subjectively assessed success of a support scheme. The greatest benefit (according to the findings) is gained by younger, poorly educated participants. Older, more highly educated young adults, on the other hand, benefit far less from the support schemes that are available.

Some participants regard support schemes as a dead-end, or like being "kept on hold", while others even regarded it as their "normal working situation". It is apparent that not all the participants are aware of the concept of transition behind these schemes and regard themselves as "working" instead of participating in a short-term scheme. This is problematic in that it can often result in a "locking-in effect": participants scale back or even abandon their search for alternative jobs.

The greatest potential for improvement comes from **schemes that are more closely customised** to meet the individual level of need. It appears to be important to recognise the different needs of adolescents and young adults and address these with tailor-made services (e.g. individual coaching, case management). In this way, the strengths and weaknesses of the young participants, and their ideas about working, could be taken more into account in the schemes.

New partnership models, delays in starting a family, difficult transitions to independent living *4.*

While the transition into work is an essential requirement for young people becoming independent economically, transitions in their private life are important prerequisites for breaking away from the family and consequently becoming independent members of society. In that context, **leaving the parental home** and **developing their own identity** are important developmental tasks in youth. The main events when it comes to these private transitions are entering into a partnership, moving out of the parental home, living independently and starting a family of their own. The transition into parenthood, especially, presents adolescents and young adults with new challenges. In their view, this is a life stage that, even more than moving out of the parental home or entering the world of work, brings an awareness that they are adults (du Bois-Reymond, 2013).

## BIOGRAPHICAL POSTPONEMENT AND DISCONNECTION OF MARRIAGE AND STARTING A FAMILY   4.1

Over recent decades, in Luxembourg – as in other Western societies – the events marking private transition into adulthood have been postponed until later in life and disconnected from one another. As a result of this disconnection, the order in which the **private transitions take place varies greatly** among the younger generation. Whereas, among the older age cohorts, moving out from the parental home and getting married would often happen in the same year, and the planned marriage was the reason for moving out, nowadays these events are much further apart; today, moving out of the parental home generally happens considerably before getting married. Nor is getting married any longer a prerequisite for becoming a parent. Traditional transitional events can be skipped (for example, nowadays marriage often only comes after a long period of living independently and after becoming a parent). At the same time, these transitions may be **reversible** (e.g. moving back into the parental home after a period of independent living, perhaps after university or after a divorce).

These trends are also a reflection of far-reaching changes in social norms and the pluralisation of accepted lifestyles. Nowadays, moving out of the parental home often leads into a variety of **"new lifestyles"** such as living alone or as a couple, with or without children, in a same-sex partnership, as a sole parent or in a patchwork family. In particular, non-marital cohabitation is widespread these days and a socially accepted way for couples to live together. It accounts for a high proportion of couples, especially in the younger age groups. In fact, since the 1970s there has been a noticeable decline in

the number of marriages in the adolescent and young adult age group; the number of marriages in Luxembourg is now among the lowest in Europe (Dommermuth, 2008). At the same time, the number of divorces has risen sharply.

The timing of marriage has also been considerably postponed: the median age for marriage, that is to say the age at which 50% of any year group are married, was 32.7 in 2011, more than eight years later than in 1981 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Proportion of married people by age for 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011
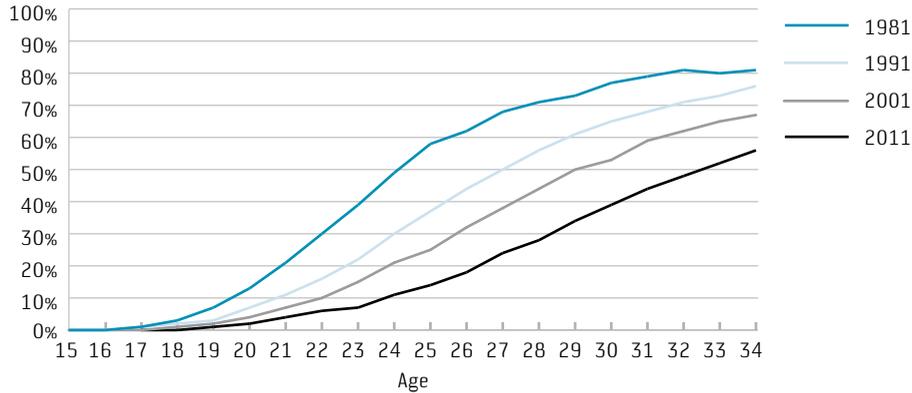
Source: Census 1981-2011; n (1981) = 51,696; n (1991) = 45,187; n (2001) = 38,162; n (2011) = 28,726

Most marriages take place when the partners are aged between 25 and 34: while only a minority (13.7%) of 25-year-olds are married, the proportion of 34-year-olds, at 56.2%, is four times as high. The age at which people marry is greatly influenced by their level of education and nationality: the lower the level of education, the earlier the marriage, and people of Portuguese or non-EU nationality marry significantly earlier than people of Luxembourg nationality. This, of course, is not primarily a sign of cultural differences but is mainly due to different educational paths and levels of education. For women, the average age at which they marry is lower than for men.

Nevertheless, in Luxembourg the family as a two-generation household with children continues to be the predominant model in adult life. This **classic family model** is regarded as desirable and is widely accepted among adolescents and young adults. When asked about their most important goals in life, starting a family is one of the answers most frequently given by young people (Meyers & Willems, 2008); and, for the overwhelming majority of those questioned in the qualitative study for the Youth Report, the desire for a steady partnership and their own family was, along with a career and work, one of the key aspects of being an adult.

With a proportion of 48.1%, almost half Luxembourg's population lives in a household of two people with children (Thill, Peltier & Heinz, 2013). However, **starting a family has been postponed until later** in life and is more and more frequently taking place separately from marriage – only about three in five children are born within marriage (Statec, 2014). The fertility rate in Luxembourg, at 1.57, is the same as the European average (Eurostat, 2013b). The average age at which women in Luxembourg give birth to their first child is 30 and so slightly above the average for Europe and the neighbouring countries. The postponement in starting a family is mainly due to the increasing participation of women in education

and employment. Most of the adolescents and young adults that we questioned wanted to create the right conditions for parenthood before having a child and so first secure themselves a permanent job, suitable accommodation and generally good living conditions. Most young people under the age of 25 have therefore not yet made concrete plans to start a family.

ACCOMPLISHING THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING   4.2

When it comes to making the **transition to independent living**, the high cost of living in Luxembourg, which has risen significantly in recent years, presents a major hurdle and source of stress for many young people because both buying and renting property have become much more expensive. Those young people who accomplish the transition to independent living quickly and without problem are mainly young people of Luxembourg nationality who are in permanent employment and therefore enjoy financial planning security. Young people on temporary work contracts, or lower incomes, together with students and the unemployed, on the other hand, have greater difficulty in gaining access to the normal housing market, especially if they are unable either to take out a mortgage or receive financial support from their parents.

Access to housing is therefore **perceived as problematic** by the vast majority of the population of Luxembourg (86%) (De Lanchy & Licheron, 2014) – significantly above the European average. An equal number of people regard the affordability of accommodation in Luxembourg as poor (data records from Eurobarometer 81.5, 2014). It is primarily young people who are affected by the high housing costs. However, there are differences in the difficulty they experience, depending partly on their nationality and family background: a study of the stress caused by high housing costs, both as it is experienced subjectively and when measured objectively, shows that young people of foreign nationality, single parents, the unemployed and people at risk of poverty suffer the greatest hardship. People renting accommodation experience more difficulty than home-owners (Eurostat, 2013c).

Admittedly, in recent years a number of products and support services have been developed, both to make it easier to buy a home and to increase the number of homes available. Nevertheless, compared with other European countries, Luxembourg still provides a lower proportion (2%) of social housing or subsidised accommodation (Pittini & Laino, 2011).

The **challenges of Luxembourg's housing market** require young people to come up with new ideas and strategies for making the transition into independent living. Buying a property is often initially postponed in order to build up more capital to finance the purchase. Temporarily renting a smaller apartment offers a possible way of bridging the gap. The greater flexibility of a rented home is also seen as an advantage. Other young people try to buy a home early on, which is becoming increasingly feasible due to the current low interest rates on mortgages, but generally also requires financial support from their family. Many young people report that their parents or grandparents have given them financial assistance to buy an apartment or house. In addition to giving direct financial support, an equally high proportion of parents and grandparents give their children or grandchildren indirect financial support in the form of a bank guarantee, in order to satisfy the bank's conditions for a loan.

The **main motivation for moving out of the parental home** that was given by the young people in the survey was the desire for autonomy and independence. Often, it is also the wish to live with a partner and start a family, or commencing work, training or study in a location far from their original

home, which determine the time at which young people move out. In some cases, family conflict also plays an important role in the decision to move out of the parental home.

The **timing of the move from the parental home** varies: while almost all young people (96%) live with their parents until they are 18, after that the proportion falls steadily: by the age of 25, already less than half (44%) are still living with their parents, and among 30-year-olds, only a minority (13%) are still with their parents (data records from the 2011 census). When they complete their education is a key factor in when young people move out: the higher the level of education, the later they move out. Young people normally have to have their own job and financial stability before they move out. There does not seem to have been a tendency for young people to move out later as a result of the economic crisis and increased youth unemployment.

Even though entering employment and moving out of the parental home are closely connected, getting a job does not necessarily lead to young people moving out: for various reasons, some working young people continue to live with their parents even after getting a job. The main reasons for this given by the young people in the survey were financial.

Furthermore, for many young people, moving out of the parental home is not an irreversible transition. Some young adults **return to their parents' home** after a period of time in their own home. Factors that increase the probability of a return to the parental home include divorce or separation, unemployment and finishing education or training. Especially graduates returning to Luxembourg from abroad often move back in with their parents temporarily until their financial situation has stabilised. Many of them have taken out a loan to finance their studies which they now have to pay back. Some young people indicated in the interviews that the return to the parental home was fraught with conflict as a result of the clash of different daily routines and changed expectations of the roles of parents and adult children.

The model that most young people in Luxembourg aspire to is to own their **own home**. Their ideas are often based on the way their family lived, even though many young people fear that, because of high property prices, it will be difficult to achieve the same standard of living. The majority of the Luxembourg population, 73%, own their own homes (Eurostat, 2013a). This proportion is somewhat higher than the European average.

Figure 7: Housing status in 2013, by age
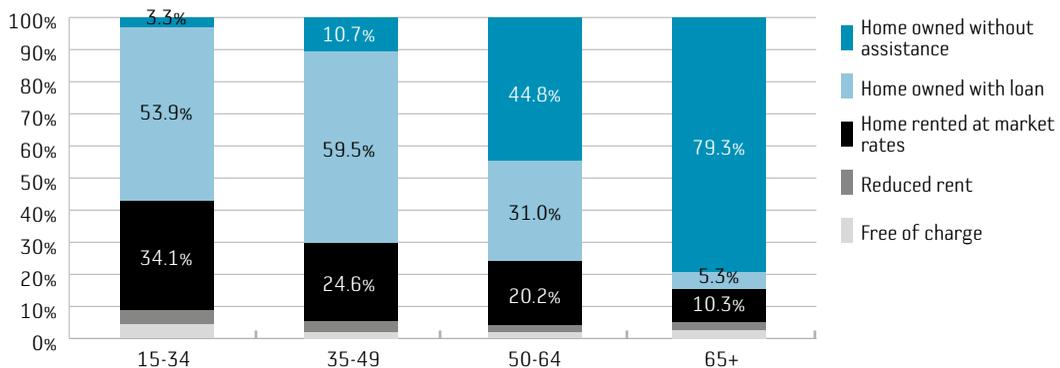
Source: EU-SILC 2013; n (total) = 6,591; n (15-34) = 995; n (35-49) = 2,264; n (50-64) = 2,159; n (65+) = 1,173; the 15 to 34 age group includes only those people who are not living with their parents.

Even among the younger generation, a considerable proportion already own their own homes: 57% of the under 35s who no longer live with their parents live in their own home, while 38% live in rented accommodation (see Figure 7). The homeowners are primarily people of Luxembourg nationality (73.1% compared with 42.2% among foreigners from an EU country and 47.6% among foreigners from a non-EU country). Their employment situation also affects their housing status: among young adults with a permanent employment contract, 62% live in their own homes, while among people with temporary contracts the proportion is only 35% (data records from EU-SILC 2013).

Compared with the EU average, a high proportion of young people in Luxembourg have a **high standard of accommodation**, if this is measured in terms of the living space per person and what they say themselves about their level of satisfaction. The vast majority of Luxembourg's population (92%) are satisfied with their housing situation (data records from EU-SILC 2013). However, there are big differences within the population groups with regard to living space and the quality of accommodation.

EVALUATION OF THE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH PROBLEMATIC TRANSITIONS INTO INDEPENDENT LIVING — 4.3

The housing policy in Luxembourg is strongly focused on encouraging the building of more homes (Georges & Urbé, 2012). As the number of homes increases, the rise in prices should slow down so that accommodation remains affordable even for less well-off population groups. This is also the main focus for the financial support that is available.

At the same time, there are a number of state-subsidised forms of housing for very different groups, including for young people who for various reasons are no longer able to live with her parents but who cannot yet make the transition into independent living on their own.

A survey among a total of 100 young people in supported forms of accommodation (children's home, sheltered housing, living with mentors) shed some light on their subjective experiences. **Sheltered housing** schemes are more often used by young women than by young men; there is also a high proportion of people with poor educational qualifications or qualifications from technical secondary school. These services are most frequently used by people who have lived in a supervised housing situation before (so called "care leavers"). The most common reason given for using supervised accommodation was family conflict, often in combination with individual problems. Most of the young people who were questioned need a great deal of support.

The young people in the survey who were living in this kind of housing reported that the **impact and learning experiences** had been **largely positive** (see Figure 8). Most of the residents were satisfied with their current housing situation. They were particularly appreciative of the personal support given to young people in finding a job and living independently. A negative aspect remarked on mainly by the younger residents was that a strict regulatory system was often perceived as a means of control that imposed too many restrictions on their daily lives.

Figure 8: Assessment of the learning progress made in residential facilities
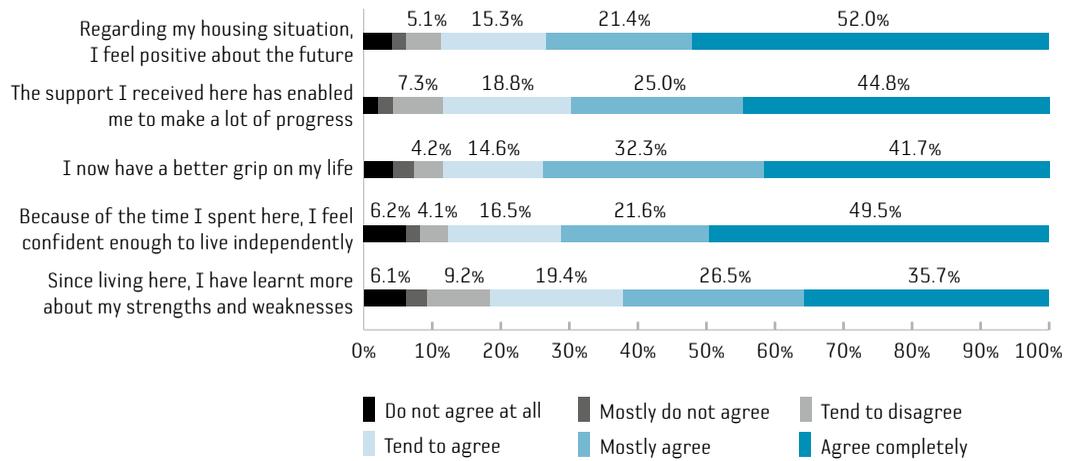
Source: Survey of young participants in the schemes; n = 97-100

The generally positive assessments and the increase in skills that the young people describe indicate that these supervised residential facilities largely achieve their objective of preparing young people to live independently. Those questioned, themselves, mostly thought that their stay there had put them in a position to live independently. In general in Luxembourg, there is a **high demand for residential facilities for adolescents and young adults**. Currently the supply does not meet the demand, which in some cases can lead to long waiting times.

The development of civic engagement during the period of transition   *5.*

Assuming the role of a responsible citizen is regarded as an important developmental task for young people (Oerter & Dreher, 2008). This means, among other things, that people growing up develop their own system of norms and values and learn the skills and behaviours which encourage civic engagement (Hurrelmann & Quenzel, 2012). Promoting and supporting **social and political engagement** is therefore a central objective of youth policy in Luxembourg.

Unlike the transition into the world of employment, or transitions in private life, there are no definable transition markers that indicate a successful transition towards having a civic identity. Civic engagement (participation) can take many forms, as shown in Figure 9. Engagement and participation may take place at **micro level** (commitment in a private context), **meso level** (commitment at school or in a club or the local community) or **macro level** (society, politics).

Figure 9: Model of civic participation and engagement at micro, meso and macro level [5]
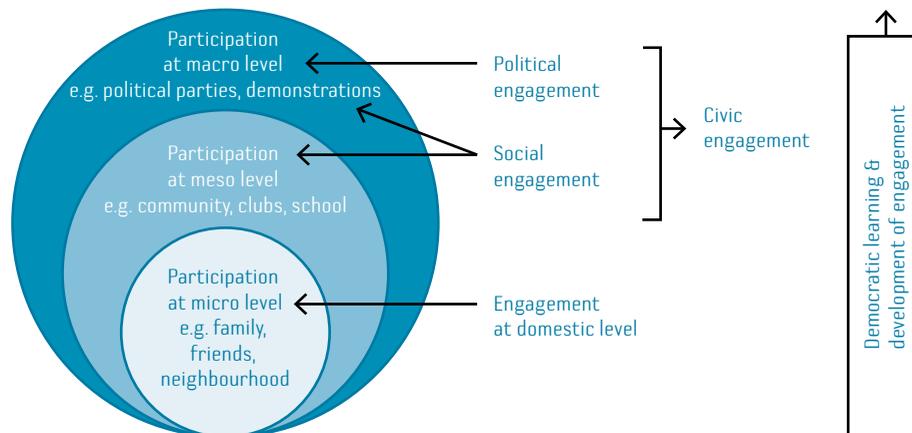
Our analysis focuses on the resources and motivations of young people as well as on the factors that encourage the development of social and political involvement at a young age. Whether and how

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5   With reference to the social ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1981)

young people becoming engaged depends both on their individual resources and on social structures and services.

5.1   SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN LUXEMBOURG – TRENDS AND POTENTIAL

The term **social engagement** refers to activities in which people engage "voluntarily, with no financial remuneration, in the interests of a third party or the community".[6] In Luxembourg, social engagement for young people is possible, firstly, within the professional structures of public youth work (e.g. youth centres, voluntary services) or, secondly, in civic structures such as numerous clubs and organisations. These activities may be in very diverse fields, including social (e.g. support for migrants, voluntary fire brigade), cultural (e.g. theatre, music), leisure activities (e.g. youth clubs, scouts) or sport.

Empirically, two tendencies can be identified: compared with other European countries, Luxembourg is one of those with the highest number of young people registered as **members of a club or association and taking part in its activities**. However, the proportion of those who are also **actively involved in their club** is far smaller (data records from Eurobarometer 319a, 2011). Furthermore, in Luxembourg clubs and associations lose many young members during the transition phase.

Figure 10 shows the changes that occur during the transition into adulthood: younger adolescents who have more time are more frequently active in associations or organisations. As people grow older and have more obligations (training/study, work, family), membership numbers fall. Very few young people and young adults take on more responsibility in their clubs or associations during this phase. However, once adolescents or young adults do decide to make a voluntary commitment, even their private commitments no longer seem to have such a big effect on their involvement.

Figure 10: Participation in club activities and social engagement in Luxembourg, by age group
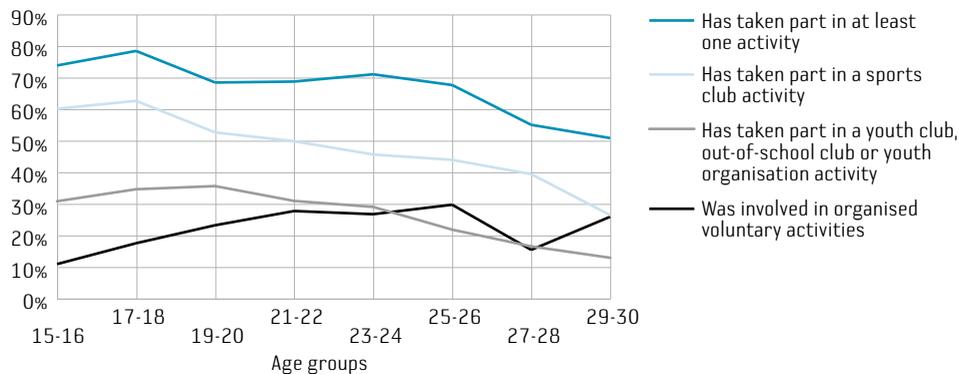
Source: Eurobarometer 319a; n = 989-1,000

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6   www.benevolat.public.lu/de/espace-benevole/charte-benevolat/definition-role-principes-fondamentaux/index. html (last consulted online on 09.11.2015)

The different forms of **political engagement** are subdivided by whether they could be described as conventional or unconventional. While the conventional forms aim to influence political decision-making processes directly (e.g. taking part in elections, becoming a member of a political party, holding a political office), the unconventional forms of political engagement encompass activities which focus more on specific political issues and aim to address them indirectly. They include activities such as petitions, demonstrations, protests or participation in social movements and civic initiatives. There are also more long-term, youth-specific forms of engagement such as pupils' and students' representative bodies, the Youth Parliament, youth conventions or a youth town council.

Because, for over 18s with Luxembourg nationality, voting is compulsory, there is a **high level of participation in the country's democratic processes**. When it comes to other forms of participation, however, Luxembourg follows the European trend for the younger generation to prefer unconventional, theme-based and, especially, youth-specific types of political involvement to the more conventional forms (e.g. working for political parties) (data records from EQLS 2011). Many of these unconventional kinds of political engagement tend to be more short-term, take up less time and can often take place spontaneously. **Political engagement by young people in Luxembourg is overall at a slightly lower level than the European average** and appears to change little during the period of transition (unlike social commitment).

SOCIAL BACKGROUND, EDUCATION, GENDER AND MIGRATION BACKGROUND AS CENTRAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT   5.2

The extent of social and political engagement, and membership of clubs and associations, is not the same for all groups of young people. Rather, civic participation appears to be influenced by a number of different factors.

When it comes to **social engagement**, in Luxembourg there are **big differences between the generations**. The very high social engagement among the older generation is not being continued to the same extent by the younger generation (data records from EQLS 2011). This situation is more marked in Luxembourg than the European average.

There are also **clear differences depending on social background, education and migration background**. According to the Civic Voluntarism Model of Verba et al. (1995), participation by young people is largely influenced by the resources available to them as individuals such as money, education, time and social networks. This can also be seen in Luxembourg. Adolescents and young adults who show social commitment in Luxembourg are more likely to have a higher standard of education, usually have a higher income and are mostly aged between 15 and 24 – an age at which education and training still leave time for such engagement. The vast majority of such young people also have Luxembourg nationality, and many come from homes with a high standard of education and a high level of interest in social engagement. Young people who do not have Luxembourg nationality are significantly under-represented – especially those of Portuguese nationality. In addition, young men are more involved in clubs and associations than young women. The many services intended to promote civic engagement are also used almost exclusively by young people of Luxembourg nationality. Most of these young people are under the age of 25, have a high standard of education and come from a middle-class home; many of them are socially engaged in several different ways.

An explanation for the **low civic engagement by young people of foreign, especially Portuguese, nationality** could lie in the areas of life that they regard as more important. They attach particular importance to family and work, while young people of Luxembourg nationality regard their friends, free time and self-fulfilment as higher priorities. However, differences in language skills, and the terminology traditionally used by political parties, organisations and associations also play an important role.

When it comes to **political involvement** by young people, there are again **big differences from the older generation**. Young people show far less interest in politics and regard politics as less important in their lives than the older population groups. However, this does not bring with it a rejection of the democratic system or loss of confidence in political institutions.

Whereas the older cohorts more frequently use conventional methods of political participation, young people prefer **unconventional methods of participation** which are characterised more by single-issue activities related to the areas of interest of young people. Here, too, differences can be observed: young people who are politically engaged are more often of Luxembourg nationality and tend to be better educated. As with social engagement, **male adolescents and young adults are more active than females** politically, too: young women are less interested in politics than young men and less engaged in this field.

Analysis of secondary data also shows that the **family** has a big influence on the development of political interests and political attitudes among adolescents and young adults. Young people are more often interested in politics themselves if they grew up in families where politics were discussed. Especially those who grew up in a family that was very interested in politics become knowledgeable about, and aware of, political issues at an early stage and their interest in politics changes little during their transition into adulthood. **Education** is also an important factor determining interest in politics; knowledge of civic processes is an important prerequisite for political engagement. It appears that schoolchildren in Luxembourg have relatively little knowledge in this area compared with schoolchildren from other European countries.

A striking feature is the often **very low level of interest in politics by adolescents and young adults of foreign nationality**. Because Luxembourg is a country of high immigration, the question arises as to how this group can be more involved in the country's democratic processes.

5.3   INDIVIDUAL BENEFIT AND INTEREST IN THE GREATER GOOD AS MOTIVES FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

All the findings indicate that both the social background and family traditions and the specific individual outlook of young people – namely their values, interests and skills – influence their civic participation (see also Verba et al., 1995). For a long time, when people tried to explain social and civic engagement, researchers believed that working to achieve this kind of collective, communal objective could only be explained if the individuals in question were motivated by altruism and an interest in the greater good. It has now been recognised that the **concepts of rational behaviour theory**, as formulated in the "rational choice theory" (Diefenbach, 2009), also apply to social engagement. According to this theory, people consider rationally whether and how they will work to achieve the goals that they pursue.

Here, **value systems** play an important role. In some cases, today's younger generation has different value systems from the older generations. Young people combine different values very pragmatically: they want to both achieve material security and find self-fulfilment. Family and work are important

to them, but so too are friends and leisure activities. They have specific expectations of their leisure activities: they should mainly be about relaxation, spending time with friends and having fun. These expectations and the desire for self-fulfilment also determine the social engagement activities in which young people become involved.

For many adolescents and young adults, the main motivation for becoming more socially engaged is to be found in their own **social environment**. Both family and friends play an important role. Many young people are either brought into contact with a club or organisation by their parents, as children, or they are approached by their peers and encouraged to become involved. Family traditions and role models, as well as social networks, can therefore be seen as encouraging social engagement.

The survey data also shows that adolescents and young adults become socially engaged for specific reasons. On the one hand, these include **pragmatic-utilitarian reasons**, in that they expect personal benefit from their engagement. By this they mean not only that it will help them in their careers, but it will also bring personal development. Social interaction with other people and having fun are another frequent motivation. Some people use social engagement as a way of filling time (for example before starting work or university study).

On the other hand, many of those questioned said that they wanted to work for other people or for the greater good and for society and that they were **interested in contributing to society**. For these adolescents and young adults, the main priority is not their personal benefit but the desire to do something positive for other people.

The findings clearly show that young people who are committed in this way have specific ideas about their civic engagement and clear expectations of it. For most of them, the engagement is not an end in itself but is intended to meet their predefined expectations.

The statements by many young people in Luxembourg who are not currently socially engaged indicate that there is **significant potential for more civic engagement**: many of them said in interviews that such engagement was not possible at present for various reasons, but that they would certainly be interested in it in the future. There is further potential among people who used to be socially engaged, but had to give this up during training or studying, many of whom intend to resume such activities later on or become involved in a different field. There is also great potential among the many young people with a migration background, who often lack the contacts and networks through which they could be motivated and mobilised to become socially engaged.

THE EDUCATIONAL AND LEARNING EFFECTS OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT   5.4

The results of the interviews and a standardised survey of 454 adolescents and young adults indicate that young people benefit from their social engagement in many different ways. They acquire **social and personal skills** and gain wider **knowledge and abilities** which are not only important for holding office in an association or organisation but could also be useful professionally, and so help them with their transition into working life. Furthermore, the activities contribute to their **personal development** in terms of attitudes and values, for example tolerance, open-mindedness, interculturalism and critical thinking. Last but not least, through working with other people, social engagement brings personal satisfaction for many young people and makes them feel more **integrated into society**. Socially engaged young people also acquire skills that encourage civic participation and political participation in general.

Especially young people who make the most of opportunities designed to encourage civic participation can envisage themselves being more involved in society in future and assuming greater responsibilities.

The young people with a migration background who were surveyed also emphasised that it gave them more confidence to become actively involved in politics. They regard their social engagement as their contribution to bringing about successful integration. Civic engagement can therefore be seen, on the one hand, as an expression of successful social integration but also, on the other, as a valuable way of encouraging and reinforcing that integration. However, as a result of the **unequal level of social and political participation by young people** referred to above, only a relatively small proportion of adolescents and young adults with a migration background currently benefit from this.

Overall the results show that civic engagement contributes in various different ways to **developing an identity and becoming an adult**. Active citizenship helps young people in the maturing process and so aids their development into fully fledged, responsible and adult members of society. It boosts self-awareness, helps build personal identity and encourages social integration. The non-formal learning processes involved in social and political engagement complement the educational work of schools.

Between transition and moratorium, tradition and innovation: young people's ideas about becoming and being an adult 6.

BETWEEN TRANSITION AND MORATORIUM: PERSPECTIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR WAY TO ADULTHOOD 6.1

In the qualitative interviews, information was gathered about the subjective perspectives of adolescents and young adults on the transition process. It is apparent that young people apply different logic systems and rationales to the transition stage. We can distinguish between two typical outlooks, described in youth research by the terms "youth as transition" and "youth as moratorium" (Zinnecker, 1991; Reinders & Wild, 2003; Reinders & Butz, 2001).

Youth as transition regards youth as the phase between childhood and adulthood and focuses on the preparation for later life that this entails and therefore on taking on the role of a fully-fledged member of society. It is accepted that young people play an active role in shaping the developmental tasks, but at the same time their actions are largely influenced by societal expectations. From the perspective of this transition approach, the primary purpose of youth is to learn the attitudes and skills required to assume adult roles (Reinders & Wild, 2003). **The moratorium approach**, on the other hand, regards youth as a separate phase of life which is characterised by learning to find your own way in life, and during which "specific social lifestyles, cultural attitudes and political-social patterns emerge" (Reinders & Butz, 2001). According to this interpretation, the period of youth is experienced as a developmental phase in its own worth, going beyond its role in preparing young people for professional and adult life.

This study shows that young people's attitude to the transition process is on a continuum between these two poles. Many of those questioned want to achieve adult status as soon as possible and regard the **transition phase as an interim stage** that they are keen to leave behind as quickly as possible. They are very **focused on the future** and want to find work, financial security, stability and independence as soon as they can.

Other young people deliberately extend the time they take to become adults and make the most of it to learn as much as possible and gather new experiences. They are in no hurry to become adults but are more **focused on the present** in their lives and often remain financially dependent on their parents for longer. For them, the **transition phase has meaning in its own right**. A characteristic of these adolescents and young adults is a rather post-materialist outlook: for them, personal development, leisure activities and well-being are considerably more important than material security, jobs or careers and achieving.

In addition to these typical attitudes, the random sample also includes numerous combinations and cases where the young people's original goals and plans could not be realised as they planned. For example, some young people had to change their life plans and reorganise their lives as a result of **"critical moments"** (Thomson et al., 2002) such as dropping out of school, unemployment, the death or illness of a parent or becoming a parent early on. Such acute life experiences can have a lasting effect on not only the life plans but also the very identity of an individual. They present young people with challenges that it takes a great deal to overcome. While some of them report high stress levels and even psychiatric problems, others can see that successfully overcoming those critical events had a positive effect on their developmental and maturing processes. The long-term effect of critical life experiences on young people's transition into adulthood and their future lives depends largely on how they overcome them and the resources available to them.

6.2   YOUNG PEOPLE'S IDEAS ABOUT BEING AN ADULT

Adolescents and young adults not only navigate the route towards adulthood in different ways but also have **different ideas** about what being an adult means to them. Of all those questioned aged between 15 and 34, only about a quarter believed that they had already completed their own transition; these were mainly among the 30 to 34-year-olds in the random sample group. All the others thought they were still in the transition phase of becoming an adult. This finding, surprising at first sight, that the vast majority of those questioned did not yet regard themselves as entirely adult, can be explained by their current status during the transition and the subjective ideas they have about being an adult. The data shows that becoming an adult is a highly individual experience that begins at different times and as a result of different experiences for adolescents and young adults. For many of those questioned, the **classic transition markers** play an important role.

For many young people in Luxembourg, having a secure job and their own home and starting their own family are still very important and were regarded by the majority as indicators of having successfully completed the transition into adulthood.

However, for many of those questioned, these traditional markers were not enough to show that one is an adult. Instead, they associate being an adult with **related changes in lifestyle, inner attitudes and maturity** (incl. self-reliance, independence, acceptance of responsibility).

Some of the young people deliberately distanced themselves from the traditionally prevailing norms and ideas about being an adult: they claim that they themselves are adults even if they have not yet reached certain transition markers and are perhaps not even aspiring to do so. Instead, they develop **alternative ideas about being an adult** that are separate from the traditional transition markers and in this way defend themselves against the perceived pressure to conform in society.

And for yet others, being an adult is a rather **ambivalent experience**. While they would like to be an adult in the sense of being autonomous and independent, at the same time they want to preserve the positive aspects of youth. So they try to reconcile adulthood and youth. To some extent, adult status has negative connotations for them (serious, boring), so some of them do not necessarily want to be regarded as "adult" or take on all the facets of adulthood.

These different attitudes and perspectives explain why young people aspire to adult status at different rates and navigate the transition phase in different ways.

THE PERSPECTIVES AND TRANSITION EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENTS   6.3
AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

For adolescents and young adults with a disability, the transition to adulthood presents a disproportionately tough challenge compared with their able-bodied peers. This is the conclusion of a qualitative study carried out as part of the Youth Report with 51 young people living with a disability. They have to cope with the same developmental tasks as young people without disabilities. However, achieving them is made much more difficult, not only because of their physical, mental or psychiatric impairment but also because of the lack of respect and the stigmatisation that they experience from other people. This means that dealing with their disability and the experience of exclusion presented those concerned with **additional developmental tasks** that make accomplishing the transition more difficult. Even their school careers are often characterised by this kind of experience. Despite positive trends towards greater inclusion and integration, those questioned also reported experiences of exclusion and stigmatisation. The young people concerned try to become immune to this stigmatisation and boost their own feeling of self-worth. Those questioned all expressed the wish and determination to shape their own lives for the better. They would like to be treated and respected as "normal" people.

The underlying ideas and wishes that young people with a disability have about being and becoming an adult are little different from those of their able-bodied peers. For them, too, being an adult primarily means financial, emotional and social independence and autonomy. Nevertheless, it is obvious that for them the **transition to self-reliant, independent adult life is more difficult**: only one in seven of those questioned had found their first job on the labour market and one in two were still living with their parents.

It is also made more difficult for them because the desire for autonomy of young people with disabilities is not always adequately supported by society or by their family. The lack of faith in their abilities and the frequently prevailing tendency of parents and professional institutions to restrict the scope for these young people to make their own decisions, out of concern for their welfare, sometimes impede their transition into independent life. Furthermore, social circumstances such as workplaces and leisure facilities that are not always suitable for the disabled, and the limited opportunities to meet up with young people without disabilities, stand in the way of the inclusion in society that they desire.

Even though, generally, the support and assistance provided by organisations for the disabled were judged in a positive light by the young people concerned, in their experience, real integration and participation in the life of society could only be said to have been achieved to a limited extent. Despite many efforts and some improvements made under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, many people believe that the **goal of inclusion is still far from being achieved**. Further efforts are therefore required to enable young people with disabilities to transition into a life that is as autonomous as possible. Those questioned themselves expressed wishes such as barrier-free access to public institutions and places and information campaigns so that they would be treated with greater understanding and respect by people without disabilities. Extending the number of inclusive meeting places, dismantling prejudice and stigmatisation, encouraging readiness for the labour market and, above all, social recognition of the desire of young people with disabilities for autonomy could make their transition into adulthood much easier.

7. Empirical trends and key factors influencing the transition into adulthood – a synopsis

In recent decades, the period of transition from youth into adulthood has changed greatly. Compared with in the past, it extends over a longer period and is less structured and standardised. The transitions in different areas of life influence each other but are not connected in terms of either time or common practice. Consequently, there are nowadays significant differences in the order in which the transition into working life, private transitions and the development of civic engagement take place. The individual sections of the report also show that the different ways in which adolescents and young adults make the transition can mainly be explained by education, social background, nationality, gender and the resources available to them.

EXTENDING THE TRANSITION PHASE AND POSTPONING COMMENCING WORK AND STARTING A FAMILY

In Luxembourg in recent decades, as in most other Western societies, a significant lengthening of the transition from youth into adulthood has been observed. This lengthening can be seen in the way the transitions in central areas of life are taking place later and later: commencing work, getting married and starting a family take place much later nowadays than they did a few decades ago.

The extension of the transition phase is normally due to the fact that young people have to invest more in education nowadays and therefore spend longer in the education system before they start looking for work. Furthermore, entering the labour market is more difficult nowadays: this transition is characterised by internships, temporary employment, part-time work and repeated periods of unemployment, leading to an extension of the transition into work. Along with the resulting delay in earning money comes postponement of transitions in private life: for many people, security in their professional (and therefore also financial) life is still a prerequisite for buying a property or starting their own family. Furthermore, the traditional transition markers for adult status are no longer relevant to all young people. Although the majority aspire to achieve these transition events and regard them as important stations on their route through life, for many the transition phase is seen as a period for trying things out, self-fulfilment and developing their own ideas about life.

THE DE-STANDARDISATION AND DIVERSITY OF TRANSITIONS AND PATTERNS

As a consequence of individualisation and social differentiation (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1994), there is now much greater freedom of choice in life-plan decisions, with many different possible routes into adulthood. Traditional patterns are losing in importance while individualised transitions are increasing. However, at the same time, this increased freedom to decide creates pressure to make a decision and so it is also associated with greater insecurity and risk. It is often hard for young people to see the consequences that certain decisions will have on their individual lives.

While some adolescents and young adults are able to use this freedom of choice well – for example by deliberately choosing a particular career path – for others the situation is not without uncertainty, crisis and anxiety. The extent to which young people are able to use these freedoms and deal competently with the associated challenges depends partly on their personal resources (including cognitive skills, social skills, self-sufficiency), and partly on the support they receive from their social environment (family, friends).

THE DISCONNECTION AND REVERSIBILITY OF TRANSITION EVENTS

The transitions in different areas of life are not dependent on one another but to some extent influence one another. For example, for most young people, a successful transition into the world of work is a prerequisite for living independently or starting their own family. However, these different transition events marking the transition into adulthood are no longer connected in time: unlike in the past, when social norms and conventions expected young people only to move out of the parental home when they were about to get married, and parenthood was inconceivable outside marriage, nowadays the different transition events in private life are often widely separated in time. The move out of the parental home normally happens well before marriage or starting a family.

Furthermore the transition in one area of life may have already been completed while the transition in other areas has not yet begun (e.g. young adults who are working but still living with their parents).

Besides, transitions once made are not regarded as finished for ever; instead, they more and more frequently turn out to be reversible. An example of this is the situation of students who, after a period of living independently during their studies, go back to live with their parents. The loss of a job or a divorce can also mean that young people have to give up their independent living and return to their parents.

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY SUPPORT IN ACCOMPLISHING THE TRANSITION

Our findings all indicate the great importance of parental support in accomplishing the transition successfully. In the case of young people who face problems during the transition phase, this support is frequently lacking. Individual problems and a lack of a social network can then often mean they need support during the transition process or it fails altogether. By contrast, young people with interested and supportive parents can not only rely on their financial assistance but also on their experience, knowledge and emotional support. This not only becomes important during the transition into adulthood but plays a vital role even during school days.

Family support is also an important factor in the transition towards independent living. In view of the high property prices in Luxembourg, most young people are dependent on help from their parents. However, not all parents are able to support their children financially or provide them with accommodation.

The influence of the home family is particularly apparent in the development of civic engagement: young people who grow up in a politically interested and committed family more often show an interest in politics themselves and develop their own political and social commitments. Parents are not only important role models but also often deliberately encourage their children's commitment.

Young people who are unable to rely on support and advice from their parents are disadvantaged in many ways. While support services outside the family attempt to compensate for these disadvantages, they can never fully replace support within the family.

THE DIFFERENT TRANSITION PROCESSES OF YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN

Over recent decades, the lives of young men and young women have become more similar, especially when it comes to routes through education and then jobs. While the "institutionalisation of careers" (Kohli, 1985) originally applied mainly to men, whose lives were dominated by work, women have now become more similar to men in this regard. Compared with previously, a far higher proportion of women are now in employment and they return to employment more frequently and sooner after the birth of their children.

Nevertheless, there are still differences between the genders in making the transition into adulthood. On average, young women achieve better educational qualifications than young men and are more likely to have a university degree; consequently they remain in the education system for longer. Women move into their own homes sooner, while young men often stay in the parental home for longer. However, even today, women still perform the majority of domestic work and childcare which means that more women seek to manage the double workload by reducing their professional work (part-time work).

However, when it comes to social and political engagement, male adolescents and young adults are more active: girls and young women are less interested in politics than their male peers and less frequently engaged in clubs and civic organisations.

THE EFFECT OF NATIONALITY AND MIGRATION ON THE TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD

In all aspects of the transition, we found significant differences in how the transition was accomplished between young people of Luxembourg nationality and those with foreign backgrounds. Even though it is important to analyse the findings carefully, it can be seen that young people who are not of Luxembourg nationality generally achieve lower educational qualifications than those of Luxembourg nationality. Since inadequate language skills and social networks often go along with this, the foundations are laid early on that will determine the professional future of many young people with a migration background: as a result, young people with a migration background are disproportionately likely to find themselves in occupations requiring poor qualifications, are more frequently affected by unemployment and have to rely more often on help from support services in navigating the transition into adulthood.

Also striking are the low level of political interest on the part of young people of foreign nationality, and their reduced social and political engagement. Young people with a migration background rarely take advantage of the power of voluntary work to help with integration.

At the same time, the data also shows that there are a large number of highly qualified, professionally successful and well integrated immigrants, but they mostly come from the second generation of migrants and, often, from other EU countries.

WHAT THE SUPPORT SERVICES CAN OFFER, AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

For many adolescents and young adults, the range of services to help with transition in various aspects of life provides important assistance in accomplishing the transition into adulthood. This is confirmed by the overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants.

With regard to services that help people into work, it can be seen that most participants in the schemes take a positive view of the increase in their knowledge and skills, the way they developed as a person and the improvement in their career chances. The following four factors are most likely to make them give a positive assessment: (1) tailoring the service to individual participants (adaptation), (2) entering into the needs of the participant, (3) identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the participant and (4) providing individual support for the participant. Focusing the services on these factors should therefore increase the likelihood of achieving success.

Supervised residential facilities improve the lives of the residents and help them cope with everyday life. However, in some cases young people have to put up with very long waiting times before there is a vacancy. This indicates a high demand for more residential facilities. Older young people in residential facilities, who have more individual freedom and more opportunity to participate, rate the benefit they gained from the service more highly than younger teenagers who are often subject to a high degree of control and regulation in their residential facilities. Overall, it would be useful to extend the opportunities for residents to play a more active role, with a view to strengthening their feeling of responsibility and independence, thereby improving the likelihood of a successful transition into independent living.

The services intended to promote civic engagement are used almost exclusively by young people of Luxembourg nationality. These services not only perform an important social integration function but are also very useful in helping young people to develop a wide range of skills (including taking responsibility, developing as an individual and in some cases learning professional skills). In this context, it would appear that making these services more available to young people with a migration background and those with poor qualifications would be very important.

In addition to the positive effects, the results also show the limitations of the support services. Some young people regard the services as keeping them "on hold" or in a dead-end and not bringing about the improvement in their situations that they hope for. Especially young people with multiple problems who need a lot of support benefit only to a limited extent from the existing services, and they require far more extensive support, specifically tailored to meet their needs. It is important that they are identified early and given more support by children's social services, with their families also being involved.

Appendix

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LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

The present short version summarises the key findings of the "National report on the situation of young people in Luxembourg".

The legal basis of the report is the article 15 (1) of the Youth Act of 4 July 2008 which stipulates that the minister responsible for youth policy presents a report to the Chamber of Deputies every five years. Unlike the first Youth Report of 2010 which covered a broad scope of youth related topics, the present report focuses on a specific topic, namely the transition from youth into adulthood. The report consists of two parts: a scientific description and analysis of the situation of young people living in Luxembourg realized by the "youth research group" of the Integrative Research Unit on Social and Individual Development (INSIDE) at the University of Luxembourg, and a government declaration outlining the future priorities of youth policy in Luxembourg. This report therefore constitutes a scientific basis for the development of the Luxembourg government's youth policy, which is summarised and implemented by the national Youth Pact.

The present version gives an overview of the key findings concerning (1) the transitions into the world of work, (2) the private transitions (forming partnerships, living independently, and starting a family) and (3) the development of civic engagement during the period of transition. It is aimed at all readers interested in a concise overview of the current situation of young people in Luxembourg and their transitions from youth into adulthood.