

# Call for papers: Special issue

## “SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION OF VULNERABLE YOUTH IN TIMES OF CRISIS”

[Abel Beremenyi](#) (Central European University) and [Xavier Rambla](#) (Autonomous University of Barcelona), editors of the special issue invite contributions to the 'School-to-work transition of vulnerable youth in times of crisis' issue in [Profesorado. Revista de currículum y formación del profesorado](#).

Abstract submission by: September 12, 2021

Foreseen date of publication: October, 2022

### Special Issue Information

The main focus of the special issue is the school/training to work transition (STWT) among vulnerable youth. In particular, it will focus on young people from ethno-cultural minorities, immigrant backgrounds, racialized groups, and/or with experiences of social exclusion, in the context of two crises, the financial crisis of 2008 and the COVID-19 pandemic, and their effects in Europe and Latin America. The special issue aims at analyzing the diversity of structural, institutional, and social aspects that crises have had on STWT conditions, and the experiences lived and responses developed by the young people facing these new challenges.

We call for empirical-theoretical contributions addressing this area of research and emphasising the perspectives of young people and relevant stakeholders (institutions, agents). Comparative reflections are particularly welcome.

The manuscripts are expected to be guided, though not exclusively, by the following questions:

- With what programmes and interventions do educational/training institutions influence a better STWT of young people in these conditions? How have these been modified in the last decade?
- How are active labour market policies (ALMP) linked to compulsory school and post-secondary training and how do these links affect STWT of young people? (internships, second chance programmes, insertion programmes, etc.)
- How have crises and their impact increased the diversity of STWT patterns in different contexts and populations?
- What dilemmas appear between the choice and the structural/institutional imperatives along the STWT of young people in different contexts and populations? (e.g., *choice biographies* vs. *risk biographies*)
- How do young people interpret crisis and their training and labour market opportunities? To what extent do they accept them or do they try to transform them? What alternative aspirations do they hold for their future?

- Do—and if so, how do—young people value education, training, employment, social services and other policies (e.g., health, safety, family) that intervene in these circumstances? And how do they engage them in their adaptive strategies of STWT?

### Relevance of the special issue

The special issue on STWT in Europe and Latin America aims to illuminate aspects of STWT from a comparative perspective, thus making visible its territorial variability among local spaces to which symbolic and affective values are assigned. The quality and equity in secondary and post-secondary education are intersected in multiple patterns, in different countries and socio-cultural contexts and education/life-long learning policies on both sides of the Atlantic.

The special issue seeks to host empirically-based theoretical reflections on how young people from minorities and groups at risk of exclusion respond to changing STWT conditions and what alternative strategies and perspectives they develop for their future. In addition, the special issue aims to provide theoretical interpretations on the interaction between education/training, the labour market, youth policies and the young people's STWT strategies under these conditions.

In general, young people from a minority group or and from other vulnerable conditions have suffered disproportionately the consequences of the latest crises (Arza Porras et al., 2020; Blustein et al., 2020; Ferrari, 2020; Korunovska & Jovanovic, 2020; López Oller, 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2019). The globalized economy has replaced standard employment with precarious, diversified, flexible, denormalized and unpredictable careers (du Bois-Reymond & López Blasco, 2004; Heinz, 2009; Pohl & Walther, 2007; Stauber & Walther, 2006; Walther et al., 2002), which makes it difficult for young people to plan and coordinate the multiple transitions to adulthood and particularly to work.

To compensate for these challenges, policies and discourses highlight individual responsibility by promoting self-regulation through 'activation' and 'high aspiration' (Dahlstedt & Tesfahuney, 2010; Stahl, 2018) and the '(re)orientation of hopes' (Pimlott-Wilson, 2017) molding themselves to market demands (Lipman, 2004). In Latin America, these ideas also inspire the incipient support programmes for young people during their transition, although the standard employment relationship tends to be much more fragile (Roberti, 2018; Torres et al., 2021).

Parallel to these challenges, youth individualization has been observed: the weakening of collective socialization models and greater emphasis on self-responsibility (du Bois-Reymond & López Blasco, 2004). Similarly, there is a prolongation and 'biographisation' of transitions in contexts that lacks reliable collective patterns of working careers (Pohl & Walther, 2007). Young people are forced to 'invent adulthood' for themselves (Thomson et al., 2004), according to their

opportunity structure. Dwyer and colleagues (1999) speak of '*choice biographies*' to describe the continuous movement between training, employment, unemployment, and adult and youth status, but with some control over 'responsible risk management' in changing and uncertain contexts.

However, Furlong (2009) has questioned the fallacy that hides behind some of these appearances. Despite the fact that the protagonists themselves, and the professionals who serve them, may assume that youth trajectories respond mainly to personal decisions, the truth is that inequalities between social classes, genders, ethnic minorities and majorities, and local spaces constrict young people's opportunities. This pressure is even greater when their social circumstances expose them to significant vulnerability related to their education, professional interests, urban environment, and health. The fallacy is even more striking in Latin America where a significant part of young people drop out of compulsory secondary education to contribute to family income with highly precarious jobs (D'Alessandre, 2017; Vendramini et al., 2017).

Noting the parallelism between the activation agenda and the youth individualization experiences in the context of inequalities, STWT research has begun to study the perspective of young people who follow programmes designed to facilitate their transition. In Europe, Walther (2017) observes that these perspectives do not take into account the institutional differences between Scandinavian, Central European and Southern countries. The protagonists take for granted the presence or absence of certain opportunities and they elaborate interpretations of their biographies that often contradict the official narratives. In Latin America, research on the subjective dimension has revealed the family care responsibilities that many young people assume, the importance of interactions with professionals who apply different pedagogies, and the worrying incidence of violence on the lives of many young people (D' Alessandre, 2017; Jacinto, 2017).

It is therefore essential to take into account the perspective of young people, and of those who decide not to follow the rules of the labor market from a position of vulnerability but instead choose to proactively *negotiate* alternative strategies rooted in their creativity, values, skills, and mobilization of available capital (Stahl, 2018).

#### Abstract and Manuscript submission information

- 250 words **abstract submissions:** **September 12, 2021**
- first-round manuscript submissions (to SI editors): November 28, 2021.
- manuscript submission to double blind peer review: January 30, 2022

All information on Manuscript Preparation:

<https://revistaseug.ugr.es/index.php/profesorado/about/submissions>

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