Aquí Sí Que Nos Tratan Como Adultos: Some Findings On Participation In Compensatory Pathways For Early School Leavers in Catalonia (Spain)

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Although statistics indicate some improvement over previous years, Spain still remains as one of the countries with highest rates of Early School Leaving (ESL) and highest rates of youth unemployment as well in Europe. Undoubtedly, these phenomena must be tackled together.

In Catalonia (where the research is being carried out) there actually exist very few compensatory measures for Early School Leavers (ESLrs) with the sole main objective of promoting the return of these youngsters into the education system. However, there exists a diversity of compensatory measures that include a dual objective, both the return to the educational system, especially towards VET studies, and the improvement of employability and labour market insertion of young ESLrs.

This paper explores two compensatory measures which are being implemented extensively by the Catalan autonomous government from the perspective of their implementers and beneficiaries. One is called Joves per l'Ocupació, a training programme for young ESLrs between 16 and 25 driven by the department in charge of employment. Among other actions, it combines basic VET studies with monitoring and individualized tutoring of students, with the dual objective of promoting their return to the mainstream educational system and improving employment options for participants. The second measure, called Programs of Training and Integration, is actually a set of measures driven by the department of education and its main objective is to integrate young ESLrs between 16 and 19 years back into the mainstream educational system, especially towards VET studies, by temporally participating in basic training programs carried out in alternative learning arenas.

Based on the analysis of qualitative data from both in-depth individual interviews and focus groups conducted with ESLrs and their peers, as well as with implementers and trainers involved in these measures, the paper will focus on the experiences that lead these youngsters to leave school early and those processes that have successfully redirected them to participate in alternative and compensatory educational measures out of schools. Finally, from a multi-level approach, we analyse the adequacy of these measures as alternative learning environments and in relation to the objectives they officially pursue.

References


