

# THE YOUNG IN EUROPE **NEED A FUTURE!**



## / WHAT THIS REPORT IS ABOUT

This report describes the main challenges related to poverty and social inclusion among young people in Portugal and provides recommendations for policy makers to address these challenges. The recommendations are based on an analysis of the grass-roots experience of Cáritas Portuguesa which is compared to official data.

## / ABOUT CÁRITAS PORTUGUESA

Cáritas Portuguesa is an official service of the Portuguese Bishops Conference. It is also a national union of 20 Diocesan Cáritas and several local grassroots groups that work in parishes and communities. This multi-level network covers the whole country. We are a member of Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Europa, The Portuguese Confederation of Volunteers, the Portuguese Platform of Development NGOs and the Non-Governmental Forum for Social Inclusion. Our Vision is to be a referential service of the social pastoral activity of the Church enlightened by Faith and rooted in the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

### **Programmes that we carry out aimed at families with children:**

- \_ Income support
- \_ Food support and other basic needs (e.g. FEAD)
- \_ Access to employment
- \_ Community, volunteering and cultural activities

### **Programmes that we carry out aimed at young people:**

- \_ Income support
- \_ Food support and other basic needs
- \_ Access to employment
- \_ Community, volunteering and cultural activities

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Create  
Future



# 01

Introduction

**Youth population:** 1.7 million

**Young people:** 16.1%  
(EU average: 17.4%)

**Early school leavers:** 14.0%  
(EU average: 10.7%)

**Youth Unemployment:** 20.8%  
(EU average: 14.7)

**Housing cost overburden:** 33.5%  
(EU average: 40.4%)

**NEET:** 4.9%  
(EU average: 8.0%)

**At risk of poverty:** 29.4%  
(EU average: 28.1%)

Young people, Unemployment & School leavers: 2016;  
Housing cost, 2013.  
Latest available data- accessed 18/05/2017

## PORTUGAL'S MAIN CHALLENGES RELATED TO POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE<sup>1</sup>:

### DECENT WORK

**Job opportunities and wage levels have dropped dramatically since the financial crisis of 2008.**

Portugal still has a high level of youth unemployment, many youths emigrate, and higher education is not being valued in the labour market.

### PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

**Whilst the Youth Guarantee, and related measures, are generating some opportunities, no quality jobs are being created.** A lot of youths are trapped in internship schemes without any social protection.

### EXPENSIVE EDUCATION

**The cost of education fosters the intergenerational transmission of poverty.** Low income families are unable to cope with the study expenses of their children.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Accessing a place of one's own is very difficult for many youths due to the precarious employment situation and an expensive housing market.** A common feeling of insecurity related to their future prevents many young people from committing to the rental or purchase of an apartment.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

**1 /** Promote decent wage levels, including in the measures for creating employment, and expand social protection in case of unemployment.

**2 /** Prevent precarious jobs, irregularities and tax evasion in work contracts by controlling the abusive use of the status of self-employed by employers (the so-called "green receipts").

**3 /** Give equal opportunities in accessing schooling and ensure conditions that support students in continuing their studies, specifically for young people from households that are at risk of poverty and social exclusion (e.g. through the provision of study materials, books and meals; supporting the students' accommodation and public transports costs).

**4 /** Promote affordable housing for young people according to their income and give them an opportunity to start an independent life.

**5 /** Develop a national strategy to promote the civic participation of youth.





# 02

Poverty and social exclusion  
among young people in  
Portugal: the reality behind  
the data

## THE PROBLEMS OF MOST CONCERN IN PORTUGAL

/ Low wages and poor working conditions

/ Inadequate or poor quality education  
(early school-leaving or school drop-outs)

### / LOW WAGES AND POOR WORKING CONDI- TIONS

In Portugal one of the main problems related to youth are low wages and poor working conditions. This affects both young people with low levels of education and young people with higher levels of education. According to Eurostat, the figures of “in-work poverty” – the share of persons who are at work and have an disposable income below the poverty threshold – have started to increase since 2012. In 2012 the risk of poverty of young workers (from 16 to 29 years old) was 7.4% and in 2015 the risk of poverty in this age group increased to 10%. This is an increase of 2.6%.<sup>2</sup>

According to the National Statistical Institute (INE), in 2015, there was a significant difference in wages, according to age. Young workers (18 to 24 years old) received, on average, €346.22 less than workers aged 35-44 years. The average monthly wage of young workers is €621.05, just €64.50 more than the minimum wage in Portugal (currently at €557.00 per month).<sup>3</sup>

These statistics can be explained by policies that were developed by the public authorities, following the recommendations of the European Institutions and the “Troika”, since the beginning of the crisis, as a way to tackle youth unemployment, like traineeships and other programs that promote insertion of young people into the labour market. The measures were not meant to create quality jobs but rather to stop the rising unemployment rate, especially amongst young people. The undesired effect was the increase of temporary work and precarious jobs. These measures led to lower wages and more in-work poverty.<sup>4</sup>

In 2016, the government reviewed the amounts defined in these measures, because graduates with a bachelor, master or doctorate degree were receiving the same wage, and there was no distinction for higher qualifications. However, even with these changes, the wages remain low and do not match the level of qualifications attained. For example, in the case of internships, for a person who has a higher education degree the support subsidy is €695.18 per month, and for a person who has a Ph.D. it is €737.31 per month.<sup>5</sup> These amounts are much lower than minimum wages in many EU

countries.

Employers have used these levels, generally, as a standard for payment of young workers even if they were not using the related employment measures. Some of them even offered a lower wage compared to the financial support provided for internships. Moreover, these types of measures are not a guarantee of dignified working conditions because the majority of the employers do not offer a contract after the internship finishes and the person is not entitled to receive unemployment benefit. When they remain in these employment schemes, young workers do not have holidays, nor any security after the internship finishes.

Another source of lost employment-related social security are irregular contracts, like the “green receipts” (recibos verdes). Originally created for self-employed workers, they are now widely used for employees in general (commonly known as “fake green receipts”). A worker employed on this condition assumes all the payments regarding social security and taxes. Employers are not obliged to pay these costs as they do in other contracts. Besides, these workers have no meal or transport allowances, health benefits or 13 and 14th months of payment. In 2016, according to the INE, some 127,800 workers were in this situation and this number rose by 9,000 from 2014.<sup>6</sup> With this type of contract, the employers are not obliged to pay any holiday leave and they can dismiss the workers without having any costs. Furthermore, some workers in this situation are not entitled to unemployment benefits and other rights.

### / INADEQUATE OR POOR QUALITY EDUCATION (EARLY SCHOOL-LEAVING OR SCHOOL DROP- OUTS)

The problem of school dropouts is strongly related to the expectations young people have in respect to the labour market. In Portugal, there are many higher education graduates, but they cannot find a job for their level of qualifications and they are considered too qualified for other types of jobs. This, again, means that young students easily drop-out from school as they do not perceive the advantages of higher education.

*/ I am 19 years old and I have been looking for a job for the past two years ago, to start an independent life. Only this year I found a job opportunity, but unfortunately, this is a seasonal job and, in the winter, I will be unemployed again. It is becoming very hard for young people to have a secure life on a financial level, due to the lack of jobs and the ones that exist, most of them, are precarious. Caritas is helping my mother and me with some essential goods, like food, or some household expenses.*

(19-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Algarve)

*/ A young girl finished her degree as a nurse and after looking for a job for a long time, she received an offer to start working for an elderly couple, in their home, because they needed daily nursing care. She accepted but without any work contract, no contributions for social security and without any coverage of the social protection schemes. After a year in this situation, she started to work in a private hospital, full-time, but under the green receipts scheme with the promise that at the end of half a year she would have a regular employment contract. In effect, half a year has passed and she still has the same working conditions.*

(Reported by a Social Worker, about a 26-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Viseu)

*/ I am 25 years old and I've been working for 10 years in precarious jobs. I started work with the intention of helping my mother and continuing my studies for university. Currently, I have a contract within an employment measure (Contrato Emprego Inserção -CEI) from a Municipality but, for me, this is almost the same as being unemployed. My wage is €419 and I have three years of graduation studies, dozens of training courses taken, one year of migration in another country and 10 years of struggle. People like me are not considered and we become beneficiaries of professional internships, unpaid internships and endless employment measures. We are merely looked at as unemployment numbers and statistics. When we look for a “real” job, we still hear things like: “We are looking for someone with more experience!”, “You are over qualified” or even: “You have too much experience for your age!” - this was the best that I've heard, so far!*

(25-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Coimbra)

Another noteworthy aspect is that families with a low income are not able to cope with study expenses. Neither does public assistance in this area cover this gap. Consequently, according to a Study by the Ministry of Education, there is a very strong relationship between the socio-economic status of the family and the child's positive results in education.<sup>7</sup>

According to Eurostat, the percentage of young people, aged 15 to 29 years, with less than a lower secondary education (levels 0-2) was 43.5% in 2016 (EU28 average – 33.8%). This remains high compared with the other levels of education: 38.5% for upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (levels 3 and 4), and 18.0% for tertiary education (levels 5-8).<sup>8</sup>

Despite the fact that the educational system in Portugal is public, school expenses are high. Families must pay for books, school materials, transports and meals. It becomes even more expensive if children want to continue their studies at university. Here, the majority are confronted with tuition fees, books, meals, transport and in some cases, for someone who needs to leave their hometown to study in a different city, accommodation costs. Even when it is possible for a young person to get a part-time job to support these expenses while continuing their studies, it is very difficult for someone who cannot count on family or other types of financial support. Accordingly, it is common to find students who give up because they do not have the financial means to continue and/or finish their education.

According to Eurostat, in 2016, after years of consecutive decline, the number of early leavers from education and training started rising again, to 14.0%. In 2015 the percentage was at 13.7%. This percentage is 4% above the average of the European Union (28).<sup>9</sup>

Second, the relationship between the education system and the labour market needs to be strongly reinforced, as the education system does not follow or meet the needs of the labour market. In addition, as seen above, the labour market is not prepared to fully absorb the graduates into decent jobs. Companies, particularly small and medium enterprises, are only now starting to feel the

need to provide a different set of services that are beyond their scale and that require a certain level of qualification (communications, product certification, etc.).

There is a general lack of coordination between the public employment services and the schools and universities in terms of training, jobs opportunities, professional and vocational guidance. There are few partnerships between schools and companies. These linkages would give students access to first-hand experience of the labour market, expose them to the real-life “work-places” and foster a realistic transition from school to work.

Neither is there a coordinated approach with other public actors, such as municipalities, on the involvement of young people into the local development processes. There is a general lack of local cooperation between the schools, the social services (public and private) and community policing authorities in favour of young people with behavioural problems, or at risk of domestic violence, or unable to pay tuition fees or with other limitations.

#### Access to minimum income schemes

Currently, minimum income schemes or other related benefits that are available to young people are:

- \_ Minimum income
- \_ Unemployment benefit
- \_ Scholarship support
- \_ Housing benefit
- \_ Disability benefit
- \_ Child allowance
- \_ Alimony

Often, young people have limited access to these schemes and benefits due to irregularities in their work contracts and the above-mentioned employment measures. The maximum level of the income per family that is stipulated in order to receive scholarship support is very low and excludes other families with financial difficulties that might be only marginally above the threshold.

In addition, generally, these minimum income schemes are moderately adequate. The level of

benefits is not sufficient to raise people above the poverty threshold and the coverage is patchy. Recently the barriers to accessing some of these schemes have risen, for example, as mentioned above, with the unemployment benefit. Most of the young workers are contracted by the “employment measures” created by the public authorities (like internships) and they are not entitled to receive unemployment benefit despite having contributed to the social security system during the time they have been working.

Furthermore, accessing scholarship support has serious barriers. The maximum level of income per family that is stipulated in order to receive this support is very low. This then excludes families that are just above the threshold, and who frequently face financial difficulties too. For example, families with children and youth up to 18 years of age are only eligible for scholarship support if the income of their families does not exceed €5,898.48 per year (€491.54 per month).<sup>10</sup> This is €65.46 per month below the national minimum wage. Therefore, this excludes many children and young people from receiving the support. In most cases, it is essential to support their subsistence and attendance in the education system. In addition, the scholarships are not adequate to deal with cases of the over-indebtedness of some families, because the formula for the calculations just considers the income rather than the expenditure.

#### Access to employment

The major problems related to the access of young people to employment are:

- \_ Inadequate or poor quality education (early school-leaving or school drop-outs)
- \_ Lack of professional experience
- \_ High levels of unemployment
- \_ Limited employment opportunities
- \_ Low salaries and precarious jobs

*/ This is a young boy with a low level of education, only the 6th grade, who is from a household that benefits from the minimum income (Rendimento Social de Inserção). This is the only source of income of this family because they are all unemployed.. This young boy has already attended various training programmes, but there is a lack of opportunities for his profile – low level of education and qualification. He said that he is unmotivated and he feels So, currently he is not in employment, education or training (NEET) and this situation creates a vicious cycle of dependency on social benefits, whilst also increasing the difficulty in halting the process.*

(Reported by a Social Worker, about a 25-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Viseu)

*/ We have the situation of a single mother who has three children, two of them students. She has two jobs just to try to provide their basic needs and support for school. Despite these two jobs, she only receives €700 per month. She came to Caritas to ask for help in paying for the son's registration at university, because he was only able to apply for a scholarship after the payment of this initial fee, and her income was not sufficient to provide the total amount of the registration.*

(Reported by a Social Worker, about a family beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Santarém)



**Current services to fight poverty and social exclusion among young people**

The following services that could lift young people out of poverty and social exclusion are generally not available:

- \_ Access to affordable housing
- \_ Access to education and training (formal, non-formal or informal)
- \_ Measures for labour market integration that are capable of promoting decent wages and effective jobs.

**Transmission of poverty**

The transmission of poverty from childhood to young adulthood is a significant concern. Some of the poorest people in Portugal come from poor families, and have been constantly confronted by poverty during their lifetime. It remains very difficult for the majority to get out from this protracted situation and to leave the cycle of poverty. The effects of the transmission of poverty can be noticed in particular in three areas: in education (associated with low levels of education, early school leaving or dropouts), the labour market (difficulties in accessing the labour market) and housing (living in disadvantaged and impoverished neighbourhoods)).

We consider several causes being at the centre of the transmission of poverty. A child, born into a poor household, is likely to have more difficulties to face in the future. This becomes clear in their education, at family level as well as at institutional level. Here, the children are confronted with low levels of education, plus the lack of capacity, both academically and financially, within the family to provide them with support during their studies, coupled with limited ability to keep them motivated and focused at school and the lack of resources to provide them the essential materials required at school. This type of situation is frequent in the context of poor households and leads to severe consequences for children, such as weak results in school and early school dropouts. In most cases, young people who are able to continue their studies, are capable of reversing the situation of the transmission of poverty.

The main problem is not only the need for material goods, but it relates to other social problems that do not allow children growing up in poor households to develop in a healthy environment, which reflects in their behaviour during youth. Some of these children are born into neighbourhoods with high crime rates. From a young age they have more contact with criminality and are influenced by elder peers who are connected to these situations.<sup>11</sup>

Another prime cause is the perpetuation of the thought “I am poor, so I have to be poor for the rest of my life”. Due to this deep-rooted idea, which seems to be transmitted from childhood, it becomes very hard for a young person to get out of this situation, accepting it as a condition for their future. Public policies do not seem to help solve this problem and some policies feed this cycle. In Portugal, Caritas is aware of many public policies to combat poverty situations. However, none of these seem to be capable of eradicating it, particularly because it misses a strategy needed to stop this cycle of transmission of poverty. Prevention is not visible in the different policies.

**YOUNG PEOPLE AT HIGHER RISK OF POVERTY**

- / **Young unemployed people**
- / **Young workers**
- / **Young people with disabilities**

**/ YOUNG UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE**

Youth unemployment is a scourge that affects many families and, above all, the dreams and aspirations of Portuguese youth. Moreover, it compromises the future of the country. According to EUROSTAT, during the recent economic crisis the unemployment rate of young people under 25 rose from 21.6% in 2008 to 38% in 2013. Despite the fact that youth unemployment figures have declined since that date, they continue to be at high levels compared to the EU28 average. For example, in 2015 Portugal registered a rate of 32% in youth unemployment (EU28 – 20.3%) and in 2016 Portugal had a rate of 28.2% (EU28-18.7%).<sup>12</sup>

This demonstrates that the situation of the labour market is still disadvantageous to youth. In 2016, unemployment also affected young people with higher education levels (17.6%) as well as young people with the lowest levels of education (25.5%). Compared to the EU28 average, unemployment has likewise spread amongst young people with high levels of education (undergraduate degrees, masters’ degrees and Ph.D.s). When comparing the levels of educational achievement there is only a 7.9 percentage points gap (EU28 - 9.6%).<sup>13</sup>

Data collected in Diocesan Caritas (Atendimento Social) by the Núcleo de Observação Social –NOS, the social observation group of Caritas Portugal – demonstrates that the first reason why people come to Caritas is “work related problems”, mostly situations of unemployment.<sup>14</sup> Since the economic crisis, most young people have started to look at emigration as a solution to the unemployment problem but also a valid option for developing their careers. In 2012, 28,806 young Portuguese left for other countries, and this tendency continues to be high even with a reduction registered in 2015 when 20,216 young Portuguese emigrated.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, “the proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training” – dubbed as NEETs – rose in Portugal during the “Great Recession”. Up until 2007, the NEET rate in Portugal was slightly below the OECD average at around 14%. Between 2008 and 2013 it rose to 19%. By 2015 the NEET rate had decreased to 15%, however it is still above the levels seen before the crisis.<sup>16</sup> The drop in the youth unemployment rate

can be explained by the increase of youth emigration, alongside a significant number of young people who are simply not registered in the national employment service. This happens because most of them do not receive unemployment benefit and do not see the advantage of being registered in this service. Moreover, young people who are in training programs – for example, as provided under the framework of the Youth Guarantee – do not count in the unemployment statistics.

The economic situation of young people is very challenging. Many of them cannot start an independent life and continue to be dependent on their families. This also affects the public authorities and society as a whole, because of the pensions and social security schemes that depend on their potential contributions. The country is not creating enough jobs for young people. In the future, this will affect those who receive a pension – in an ever more aging society – and those who work, as contributions are declining.

### / YOUNG WORKERS

According to a study launched in Portugal in 2016<sup>17</sup>, young workers saw their wages decline by about one-third (31%). This reduction is five times higher than that of the total wage earners (6.3%). This strong fall in young workers' earnings is one of the most striking features of the changes in the labour market compared to other age groups.<sup>18</sup> Young workers are seen as career starters and as inexperienced workers. This is clearly reflected in the "precariousness and vulnerability" of their employment situation. The researchers also mentioned in the study that the average level of earnings for young workers was already low in 2009 but it had an abrupt decline between 2009 and 2014. This affects the living conditions of this age group and increases their vulnerability to poverty.<sup>19</sup>

According to Eurostat, the rates of in-work poverty and at-risk-of-poverty started to increase in 2012. In 2012 the risk of poverty of young workers, aged 16 to 29 years, was 7.4%. In 2015, the risk of poverty in this age group had increased to 10%, an increase of 2.6%.<sup>20</sup> These figures, compared to the other age groups, reveal that young workers – under 24 years old – face the highest risk of pov-

erty. In general, the proportion of individuals with a monthly income of less than €700 in 2014 had increased from 20% in 2009 to 29% in 2014, which is proportionally consistent with the increase in workers who received the minimum wage.<sup>21</sup>

We can conclude that young workers receive low wages because a significant number of them are covered by public employment measures like internships. The average revenue in these measures, for a person with a degree, is currently €695.18 per month, 20% more than the minimum wage, which is currently at €557.00.<sup>22</sup> According to NOS data – the social observation group of Caritas Portugal – Caritas documents in their Diocesan Caritas (Atendimento Social), that the second reason why people come to Caritas is "lack of income to cover basic expenses". Most of these situations are people with low income per households.<sup>23</sup>

### Students

Students are another age group that Caritas Portugal considers to be at risk of poverty. During the crisis, many families were confronted by unemployment, wage cuts and cuts to their social support. They have faced a series of difficulties to support their children in school. The situation is worse in the case of higher education. Due to this situation, they are not able to pay tuition fees that represent a significant cost, nor meals, accommodation or transport. Caritas has observed an increase in the number of students asking for food and financial support. Due to these various requests, Caritas Portugal created a project, in 2016, in order to give a response to these requests. Some financial resources were allocated by Caritas Austria and 31 students were supported.<sup>24</sup>

### / YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This group of people is severely affected by the risk of poverty in various areas such as education, labour market and social protection. There is a lack of financial support for young people with disabilities. In addition, there is a lack of adequate support measures and services. For example, in the education field, schools are not prepared to welcome, to include and to promote students with disabili-

ties in the learning processes. After the period of compulsory schooling, there is a lack of services to find an adequate place for these young people, and integrate them in society. This gap has consequences for their assimilation into the labour market. If it is difficult for a young person to find a job opportunity, it is extremely hard for young people with disabilities. According to Eurostat (2011), the rate of young people neither in employment nor in education and training is higher among young people with a work-related limitation caused by a health condition (26.5% compared to 10.7% of young people with no limitation).<sup>25</sup>

*/ I am a 25-year-old-girl and I live with my boyfriend and a two-year-old daughter in my parent's house. My household income is only the minimum income (Rendimento Social de Inserção) because we are unemployed. Unemployment is the biggest problem in my family. Since I completed high school, I've never found a job opportunity and it is very difficult because there is a lack of opportunities for my level of qualifications. Since 2016 I've been in a project of Caritas – CRIARTE – where I am learning needlework and I've been attending training sessions to improve my qualifications and skills. However, I simply cannot find a job.*

(25-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Coimbra)

*/ I am unemployed and I live with my parents. I studied until the 9th grade and I'm a certified locksmith, a job I did for two months. I have been registered in the National Employment Service (IEFP) for seven years, but I've never found any job opportunity and I've never been called to do a training programme (...).*

(24-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Leiria)

*/ I am 30 years old and I have been unemployed since September 2015. However, I've never stayed at home, because now I am a beneficiary of an employment measure (Contrato Emprego Inserção -CEI). Even though I'm in a CEI for the second time I still consider myself what I really am: an unemployed person. I have a degree but I don't have much work experience. The degree is something that I value but it has no reward in and of itself. This situation does not allow me to take medium or long-term decisions, like leaving my parents' house, marry or have children. I am in an economically precarious situation, with no light at the end of the tunnel. I feel that my life is on hold, as if I was still a teenager.*

(30-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Coimbra)



# 03

Limits in accessing the rights and effectiveness of the Portugal's policies to fight poverty and social exclusion among young people

## RIGHTS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE MORE DIFFICULTIES IN ACTUALISING

/ Right to education

/ Right to work

/ Right to housing

/ Right to equality and non-discrimination

/ Right to social protection

Young people in Portugal have more difficulties in securing a range of rights. The main problems related to not being able to access these rights are generally connected to the problems associated with the labour market. Social benefits frequently are only targeted to the very poor, with rigid means testing.

**Housing:** Housing prices in Portugal, compared to medium income values are absolutely out of proportion. Young people are confronted with unemployment, precarious jobs, irregular contracts and low wages, all contributing to a global feeling of insecurity regarding their future. Due to this, it has become very hard for a young person to sustain housing just for him/herself. In this sense, they do not commit to renting or purchasing an apartment. Recently the Social Observation Centre in Caritas Portugal focused attention on the housing situation in Portugal. Despite having some measures in place, the situation of housing has become uncontrolled. A study, undertaken by the Social Observation Centre, reveals that “old” houses have again registered an increase in prices (9.2%), higher than the price of “new” houses (3.5%). The prices of houses rose on average 7.1% in 2016, and 7% in only the three first months of 2017. Most social housing needs to be renovated, and the costs are estimated at more than €50 million. Additionally, the problems related to housing have started worsening for the most vulnerable groups. The supply of affordable housing for this specific population has virtually disappeared. In the urban areas of the country, mostly in Lisbon, the prices of houses are high compared to the average income per family.

**Social protection:** Because of the problems related to the labour market, the right to social protection schemes is also limited, such as the right to unemployment benefit. Moreover, the current situation compromises the future of the pensions and social security schemes that depend on potential contributions. As the country is not creating enough jobs for young people, there is a growing tension between those who receive a pension and those who work.

**Education:** The lack of income of families prevents young people from continuing/completing their studies (more noticeable when a young per-

son wants to undertake higher education) and it increases the risk of early school leaving.

### BOX 1. Ratification and implementation of the European Social Charter related to young people

**PORTUGAL has ratified all articles of the Revised European Social Charter.**

**Portugal has ratified the Additional Protocol providing for a Mechanism of Collective Complaints. This allows parliament and civil society to monitor effectively the obligations in fulfilling and providing basic social rights.**

**More information on the provisions accepted by Portugal is available here.**

**FACTSHEET: Portugal and the European Social Charter**

*/ We can report the situation of a young girl, attending a course of Medicine in Coimbra, far away from her home. In the beginning, she had problems in paying expenses such as tuition fees, public transport, accommodation and meals. Caritas gave her total support because her household was unemployed and had various problems paying all these expenses (...).*

*(Report by a Social Worker in the Diocesan Caritas of Lamego)*

*/ I am a 21-year-old psychology student. The fragile economic and financial condition of my family led me to ask Caritas for help in the payment of my tuition fees because I was late in the payment and this situation compromised my whole academic future. It implied the possibility of dropping out of university. Caritas has helped me to continue following my dream (...).*

*(21-year-old beneficiary in the Diocesan Caritas of Évora)*



/ How effective are Portugal's policies to fight poverty and social exclusion among young people?

POLICIES THAT ARE HAVING A LIMITED POSITIVE IMPACT

Policies	Reasons why they are being effective
Access to affordable childcare	Public childcare services support all parents – not only young parents – in caring for their children. These services are of good quality and they are important for the early childhood education and development of children. They also help parents during the day to attend to their jobs or to find job opportunities. These services have accompanied the societal changes of recent years. A significant portion of the users, regardless of their financial situations, must pay an amount that is calculated according to their annual income. Even if it is a symbolic amount, it is still a challenge for families to keep their children in these facilities, because a significant percentage of people are unemployed or have low wages. The amounts that the families must pay for these services, even when they pay the lowest fees, are expensive and it does not allow them to spend their income on other needs. <sup>26</sup> There is insufficient coverage of public day care centres, which forces many parents to choose either private services, which are very expensive, or to leave their children with nannies, often not certified and without adequate conditions.

POLICIES THAT ARE HAVING A LIMITED POSITIVE IMPACT

The following policies are having a limited impact in fighting poverty and social exclusion among young people.

Policies	Gaps or reasons why they are not being effective
Youth guarantee	Caritas Portugal believes that the Youth Guarantee initiative has an impact on reducing poverty and social exclusion among young people, but it is not sufficient. For example, in the matter of employment and internships, the projects and the programmes are professional internships or insertion contracts. Whilst it is certainly an important pathway to tackling the youth unemployment rate, these schemes are also responsible for creating precarious and temporary jobs and in-work poverty. The remuneration per person does not ensure dignified wages.
Education policies combating early school-leaving and early drop-outs	Caritas Portugal believes that the Youth Guarantee initiative has an impact on reducing poverty and social exclusion among young people, but it is not sufficient. For example, in the matter of employment and internships, the projects and the programmes are professional internships or insertion contracts. Whilst it is certainly an important pathway to tackling the youth unemployment rate, these schemes are also responsible for creating precarious and temporary jobs and in-work poverty. The remuneration per person does not ensure dignified wages.
Access to affordable housing	In Portugal, there is a programme <i>Porta 65 Jovem</i> specifically addressed at young people, to help them to pay rent in the city centres. For three years part of the rent is subsidised. However, this is insufficient to reduce poverty and social exclusion among young people, because the level of rents is high, when compared to the wages received by this age group. With all the insecurity experienced by young people on the labour market, this type of support is insufficient for someone who does not have a backup support, as an individual's situation can easily change in a year (for example, one can lose one's job) and thus exclude them from the possibility of pay their part of the rent.

**/ EXAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE POLICY OR PROGRAMME RELATED TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

In 2014, the Ministry of Education, Direção Geral do Ensino Superior, designed the Programa Retomar. Its objective was to allow the return to education and training of university students, who had left their studies before its conclusion. Between 2014 and 2015, 455 young Portuguese were supported by this programme.

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**THE USE OF EU FUNDS IN PORTUGAL TO COMBAT YOUTH POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

The European Social Fund (ESF) is contributing partially to reducing poverty and social exclusion among young people. The ESF in Portugal is being used to support some projects or programmes to help integrate young people into the labour market or to improve their qualifications.<sup>27</sup> This has had a positive impact because, during the crisis, it created job opportunities for young unemployed people. This occurred through support to set up their own business, allowed them to remain connected to the labour market, or to be in training and improving their qualifications.

In terms of social inclusion, the ESF has been used for activities aimed at improving access to social and health services in rural and island regions and for disadvantaged groups.

The Youth Guarantee is financed equally by the YEI and ESF.<sup>28</sup> The measures created with this fund are employment measures aimed at reducing youth unemployment rates, such as professional internships or insertion contracts, financed by the Youth Guarantee. However, it has generated other problems related to the labour market, namely temporary and precarious jobs and low salary levels. In general, the current policies/programmes implemented in Portugal by the ESF address some of the problems related to poverty and social exclusion but it is not sufficient.

Furthermore, the European Social Fund is only partially contributing to a reduction in the transmission of poverty to young people. Caritas Portugal considers the ESF an excellent instrument to fight poverty and to promote social inclusion, not only for youth but also for the population in general. Nevertheless, what Caritas Portugal has observed is that the ESF has been under-utilised to support those measures that were created to decrease the numbers of unemployed. First, we believe that the measures supported by the ESF should be aligned with the principles of the Revised European Social Charter, ratified by Portugal.<sup>29</sup> It should prevent the generation of further problems with the measures it applies. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure fair wages that allow a decent standard of living and to provide

social protection (like unemployment benefit, holidays and parental leave) when the internship and/or the employment contract period ends. It is essential to define a strategy to prevent precariousness on the labour market and to ensure that the control and supervision mechanisms are effectively preventing situations of fraud. Moreover, the ESF has to create an enabling environment for employers to contract young people with disabilities. Regarding the training programmes and measures thereof, it is necessary that technical and vocational training is done in partnership with employers, workers' organisations and the academic sector. Caritas Portugal considers it important to improve coordination between the providers of the programmes/measures and the grass-roots services, and to promote effective access of individuals and families experiencing social exclusion or poverty. Beyond using this fund to create jobs and improve qualifications, it is also necessary to use it for programmes and measures with a holistic approach that take into account other dimensions such as housing, education, social and health care assistance.

Other EU funding schemes in Portugal, that are contributing positively to reducing poverty and social exclusion relative to young people, include the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). It is being used to support some local and national projects to help the integration of migrant and refugee communities in our country. Portugal does not have a specific approach to help only young immigrant people, but to support whole families. Therefore, the projects developed indirectly support young people who are members of these families. Consequently, they contribute to reducing poverty and social exclusion by investing in the fields of education and training and inclusion into the labour market.

**/ EXAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME FINANCED BY THE ESF THAT HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE REDUCTION OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION OR THE PREVENTION OF THE TRANSMISSION OF POVERTY TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

Since 2011, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and integrated in the High Commissariat for Migrations - ACM, has implemented the programme: Escolhas. Its approach is to promote the social inclusion of children and young people from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds, with the aim of giving them equal opportunities and the strengthening of social cohesion. The objective of the programme is, from 2015 to 2018, and in its 6th edition, to support 90 projects from different parts of the country, and reach a total of 75,000 participants.



# 04

The response of Caritas:  
promising practices that  
combat poverty and social  
exclusion among youth

/ The response of Caritas:  
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**CÁRITAS JOVEM (YOUNG CARITAS)**  
**CÁRITAS DIOCESANA DE LEIRIA-FÁTIMA**  
<http://www.caritasjovem.pt/>

DESCRIPTION	In June 2014, the Diocesan Caritas of Leiria-Fátima launched Young Caritas, with the intention of involving young people aged 18 to 35 in the charitable activities of the diocese, through various social activities. A young and volunteering spirit moves this project. It aims to design and develop projects for the beneficiaries in area such education, culture, sports and well-being.
PROBLEM ADDRESSED	Lack of school attendance; low academic results; social isolation; risky behaviours; lack of sports routines and better opportunities for education, culture and the labour market.
RESULTS	The project has developed three pillars: Explica-me, that provides educational support for children and teenagers from households at risk of poverty and social exclusion and with low academic results. The “teachers” are young, highly qualified volunteers. They help other children and teenagers in developing effective school habits by providing guidance and orientation and thus improving their results in school. Equipa-te, aims at promoting the social integration of teenagers from households at risk of poverty and social exclusion, through the development of playful-pedagogical activities. These two projects have supported 50 children and teenagers. Escuta-me, is a cycle of conferences for the community to contribute to their own social, cultural and educational development. It also aims to spread the work carried out by the Diocesan Caritas at grass-roots level. During 2016, 500 people participated in this project.
INNOVATIVE FEATURES & SUCCESS FACTORS	The involvement of youth in solving the social problems identified by Caritas and referenced in the social diagnosis by the municipality. Youths bring a new angle to the analysis and creativity to create projects for the Diocesan Caritas.

**EDUCATION SUPPORT**  
**CARITAS PORTUGAL**  
<https://sites.google.com/site/campanhacaritas2/>

DESCRIPTION	The main objective of this project is to provide financial support to students to prevent them from leaving school – or getting highly indebted during their studies – for mere budgetary matters. The beneficiaries of this project are students over 18, in a situation of economic difficulty, attending any level of the education system. This project may support costs such as tuition fees, administrative expenses (enrolment; certificates/diplomas), living expenses (room rents and food expenses), educational materials, transport to and from school/university, and tutoring. This project is coordinated by Caritas Portugal and implemented by the Diocesan Caritas. The Diocesan Caritas identify the students in a situation of economic difficulty. They submit a request for support to Caritas Portugal, providing all the necessary information about the situation identified. Caritas Portugal analyses the situation and, if all is according to the present regulations, transfers the funds to the Diocesan Caritas.
PROBLEM ADDRESSED	Students dropping out of the tertiary education system (or getting highly indebted during their studies) due to budgetary matters. This problem refers not only to tuition fees but also to the inability to support living costs (for example, the cost of dormitory accommodation) and educational expenses (for example, the costs of books).
RESULTS	Since 2016, this project has supported 33 students from 9 dioceses (from the north to the south of the country) with a total amount of €25,990.36. The type of support most requested was for tuition fees, expenses for accommodation, and public transport.
INNOVATIVE FEATURES & SUCCESS FACTORS	This is a good practice because it enables the Caritas network to ensure that no young person has to abandon their studies because of the mere lack of economic means.





# 05

Recommendations to  
address the described  
problems / References

RECOMMENDATION 1

PROMOTE DECENT WAGE LEVELS, ALSO IN THE MEASURES FOR CREATING EMPLOYMENT, AND EXPAND SOCIAL PROTECTION COVERAGE IN CASE OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

Problem addressed if implemented

Low salaries and limited access to social protection systems.

Governmental department or responsible institution that could lead this measure

The Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security.

Main arguments supporting this measure

There are significant wage differences according to age. The undesired effect of the employment measures has not ensured dignified wages and has contributed to in-work poverty. There is a widespread mismatch between wages and the level of people’s qualifications. Young workers, in these employment measures, are confronted with no holidays nor any social security at the end of the internship period. They are not entitled to unemployment benefits because the national public authorities have reduced the duration of internships from 12 to 9 months, while in Portugal people are entitled to unemployment benefits only after having worked for a minimum of 12 months.

Policy framework

Youth Guarantee; European Social Fund; Social Security

This measure corresponds to Target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value”.

How the European Commission could support this measure

Within the Country Specific Recommendations of the European Semester Process, establish rules at national level to promote and put into practice the rights enshrined in the European Social Charter.

RECOMMENDATION 2

PREVENT PRECARIOUS JOBS, IRREGULARITIES IN WORK CONTRACTS BY CONTROLLING THE ABUSIVE USE OF THE “GREEN RECEIPTS”

Problem addressed if implemented

In Portugal, widespread irregularities in work contracts persist. For example, the “green receipts” (Recibos Verdes) are used as a regular contract, even for professional categories that are not entitled to have a contract like this.

Governmental department or responsible institution that could lead this measure

The Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security.

Main arguments supporting this measure

This practice of simulating autonomous work for employees generates precarious and temporary jobs for young workers as well as irregular work contracts. The “Green receipts” (recibos verdes) were originally created for the self-employed, but now it is being used for employees in general. They are called “fake green receipts”. Under this arrangement, the employers are not responsible for paying for social security and other taxation, and the workers have to cover these expenses by themselves. With this type of contract, employers can dismiss their workers without having any costs and a significant part of the workforce doesn’t have any access to protection.

Policy framework

Basic social protection for everybody at working age.

This measure corresponds to Target 10.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): “Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality”.

How the European Commission could support this measure

Within the Country Specific Recommendations of the European Semester Process, establish rules at national level to promote and put into practice the rights enshrined in the European Social Charter.

RECOMMENDATION 3

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Problem addressed if implemented

Poor families face financial barriers to supporting their children through school and poverty among the students poses difficulties when continuing their studies at university.

Governmental department or responsible institution that could lead this measure

The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security.

Main arguments supporting this measure

It is necessary to support students to continue/complete their studies, specifically young people from households that are at risk of poverty and social exclusion. This means providing books and meals; covering their accommodation and public transports costs.

Students in Portugal who are considered being at risk of poverty, face new challenges and difficulties. During the crisis, many families were confronted by unemployment, wage cuts and cuts in their social support. It became very difficult for them to support their children at school, and even more so when the students wanted to continue higher studies. The maximum threshold for receiving scholarship support is so low that it excludes other families that are just above the threshold, yet who still face significant financial difficulties. The scholarship system is not able to deal with cases of over-indebtedness of some families.

Policy framework

Youth Guarantee; European Social Fund; Programa Retomar; Scholarships (Public Policies)

This measure responds to Target 4.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): “By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”.

How the European Commission could support this measure

Define a European strategy to guarantee the universality principle in education and help the mem

ber states to implement these in their national educational systems. Reinforce the financial instruments of the Member States to help them in providing the essential materials for their students, alleviating the costs for families at least during the compulsory period of education. At university level, the criteria should be expanded so that families with temporary financial problems can also access some support and keep their children studying.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**  
PROMOTE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THEIR INCOME AND GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO START AN INDEPENDENT LIFE

**Problem addressed if implemented**  
Because of youth unemployment and low wages for young people, it is very hard for a young person to afford a house by him/herself. The costs of apartments (to rent or to buy) are high, in particular in the city centres, like Lisbon. Due to lack of employment opportunities in rural areas, however, many young people are forced to go to the big city centres. It is very hard for young people to start an independent life, even for those who are working.

**Formulation of the recommendation**  
Promote affordable housing for young people according to the wages received and give them an opportunity to start an independent life.

**Governmental department or responsible institution that could lead this measure**  
The Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure and Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security

**Main arguments supporting this measure**  
It is very hard for a young person afford a house by him/herself due to the level wages received by this age group.

It is almost impossible for young people to acquiring a loan from a bank if they are unemployed or have temporary jobs or don't have a work contract.

**Policy framework**  
Porta Jovem 65 (policy)

This measure corresponds to Target 11.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing".

**How the European Commission could support this measure**  
Issue a Country Specific Recommendation calling for a social housing policy that extends the offer of social housing to meet the demand.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**  
DEVELOP A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE CIVIC PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

**Problem addressed if implemented**  
There is a general lack of policies to promote civic participation, such as volunteering, among the youth. Schools, universities, NGO's, social care services and public authorities are insufficiently coordinated to be able to encourage young people to be connected with causes and to participate in volunteering projects in order to improve various social situations.

**Governmental department or responsible institution that could lead this measure**  
The Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security.

**Main arguments supporting this measure**  
A National Youth Strategy should create public policies to include volunteering as a regular practice for students and young people. For now, there is a lack of public policies to promote civic participation among youth; and an absence of volunteering culture and practice in society.

**Policy framework**  
The National Youth Strategy; Youth Guarantee; European Social Fund.

This measure corresponds to target 4.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): "By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship".

**How the European Commission could support this measure**  
The EC created the European Solidarity Corps. This programme could be adapted to the different member states, helping them to define and develop a strategy to promote civic participation among youth. It could also give financial support to help the member states to integrate formal, informal and non-formal education on civic participation.

**1** For the purpose of this report, young people are considered people aged 18 to 29, in line with the criteria of the European Commission. The source of the data in the box is from Eurostat, consulted on 12/05/2017 from the latest available data

**2** Eurostat: In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by age and sex - EU-SILC survey: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

**3** INE; Remuneração média mensal de base (€) por Localização geográfica (NUTS - 2013), Sexo e Grupo etário; Anual: [https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine\\_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0006910&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2](https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0006910&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2)

**4** The trainee-schemes were developed in 2011, <https://dre.pt/application/dir/pdf1s-dip/2011/02/04100/0121701221.pdf>

**5** See detailed information on the webpage of the Portuguese Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, <https://www.iefp.pt/estagios>

**6** INE; População empregadapor conta de outrem comidade entre 20 e 64 anos (Série 2011 - N.º) por Sexo e Contrato de trabalho; Anual: [https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine\\_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0009083&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2](https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpid=INE&xpgid=ine_indicadores&indOcorrCod=0009083&contexto=bd&selTab=tab2)

**7** Govt of Portugal, General Directorate of Statistics in Education and Science 2016: Desigualdades Socio-económicas e Resultados Escolares II, [http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev\\_NationalReport\\_PT.pdf](http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev_NationalReport_PT.pdf)

**8** Eurostat, 2016, Young people by educational attainment level, sex and age: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

**9** Eurostat, 2016, Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status: [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat\\_lfse\\_14&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_lfse_14&lang=en)

**10** This data refers to 2017: <http://www.seg-social.pt/bolsa-de-estudo>

**11** Centro de Estudos para a Intervenção Social, *Delinquência e Violência Juvenil em Portugal: Traçando um retrato a diferentes vozes*, pages 45-47, [http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev\\_NationalReport\\_PT.pdf](http://www.youprev.eu/pdf/YouPrev_NationalReport_PT.pdf)

**12** Eurostat, *Unemployment by sex and age - annual average*, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

**13** Eurostat, *Youth unemployment by sex, age and edu-*

*cational attainment level*

**14** Núcleo de Observação Social, Análise dos dados dos Atendimentos, 2016, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bzhlv2f6n15yOWdDMW53TmFJZzQ/view>. The data is not disaggregated by age groups. These reports are established from 2012 at Diocesan level

**15** PORDATA, *Emigrantes permanentes: total e por grupo etário*, <https://www.pordata.pt/MicroPage.aspx?DatabaseName=Portugal&MicroName=Emigrantes+permanentes+total+e+por+grupo+et%C3%A1rio&MicroURL=2522&>

**16** OECD, *Society at a Glance 2016*, <https://www.oecd.org/portugal/SAG2016-portugal.pdf>

**17** Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2016, *Desigualdade do Rendimento e Pobreza em Portugal: 2009-2014*

**18** Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2016, *Desigualdade do Rendimento e Pobreza em Portugal: 2009-2014*, page 103, <https://www.ffms.pt/FileDownload/dd40884a-16bd-4709-b488-da838f8972b5/desigualdade-do-rendimento-e-pobreza-em-portugal>

**19** Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2016, *Desigualdade do Rendimento e Pobreza em Portugal: 2009-2014*, page 102

**20** Eurostat, *In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate by age and sex - EU-SILC survey*, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

**21** Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2016, *Desigualdade do Rendimento e Pobreza em Portugal: 2009-2014*, page 104

**22** See the detailed conditions for internships on the webpage of the Portuguese employment service, <https://www.iefp.pt/estagios>

**23** Núcleo de Observação Social, Análise dos dados dos Atendimentos, 2016, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bzhlv2f6n15yOWdDMW53TmFJZzQ/view>. The data is not disaggregated by age groups. These reports are established from 2012 at Diocesan level.

**24** See page 19

**25** Eurostat Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by type of disability, sex and age, <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

**26** In 2016, Caritas Portugal registered, within a pro-

gramme that supports children and their families with health and education expenses, 255 requests to pay for childcare services. This represented 44.74% of the amount spent on this programme

**27** The European Social Fund in Portugal, link <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=394>; in Portuguese - link <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=394&langId=pt> /<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&keywords=&theme=0&country=394&list=1>

**28** <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=13657&langId=en>

**29** European Social Charter, Situation of Portugal, <https://rm.coe.int/168047e01a>





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