



Caritas CARES

Portugal's Report

The Young in Europe need a future !





Presentation Structure

1 - About Caritas Portugal

2 – Young people at higher risk of poverty

3 – The problems of most concern in Portugal

4 – Transmission of Poverty

5 – Effectiveness of Portugal's policies to fight poverty and social exclusion among young people

6 – The Response of Caritas

7 - Recommendations



Caritas Portugal

- Caritas Portugal is an official service of the Portuguese Bishops Conference
- Union of 20 Diocesan Caritas and several local grassroots groups that work in parishes and communities.

Vision: 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

Caritas in Portugal





Young People at Higher Risk of Poverty

- **Young Unemployed People**

During the recent economic crisis the unemployment **rate of young people with less than 25 years old rose from 21.6% in 2008 to 38 % in 2013**. Despite the fact that youth unemployment figures declined since that date, **they continue to be at high levels as 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%).



Affects young people with **higher education levels (17,6%)** as well with **lowest education levels (25,5%)**

In **2012, 28,806** young Portuguese **left to other countries** and in **2015 20,216** of young Portuguese **emigrated**

A significant number of young people are not registered in the national employment service.



Young People at higher risk of poverty

- **Young Workers**

Young workers saw their wage **decline by about one third (31%)**. This reduction is five times higher as compared to total of wage earners (6.3%). The average level of earnings for young workers was already low in 2009 but it **had an abrupt decline between 2009 and 2014**. In 2015, **the risk of poverty in the age group (16 to 29 years old) increased to 10%**, an increase of 2.6% since 2012.



The proportion of individuals with a monthly income of less than €700 in 2014 increased from 20% in 2009 to 29% in 2014.

Young workers receive low wages because a significant number of them are covered by public employment measures.

The average in these measures, for a person with a degree, is €695.18, 20% more than the minimum wage, which is €557.00



Young People at higher risk of poverty

- **Students**

During the crisis, many families were confronted with unemployment situations, wage cuts and cuts on their social support. They are faced with a series of difficulties to support their children in school.



The situation is worse in the case of higher education. They are not able to pay tuition fees that represent a significant cost, meals, accommodation or transport.

Caritas Portugal observed an increase in the number of students asking for food and financial support.



Young People at higher risk of poverty

- **Young People with Disabilities**

This group of people is severely affected by the risk of poverty in various fields such as education, labour market and social protection. According to Eurostat, 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% against 10.7% of young people with no limitation).



Schools are not prepared to welcome, to include and to promote students with disabilities in the learning processes.

There is a lack of services to integrate and to find an adequate place for young people after the compulsory schooling.

It is extremely hard for young people with disabilities to find a job opportunity.

The problems of most concern in Portugal



Low wages and poor working conditions

Affects both young people with low levels of education and young people with higher levels of education.

According to the National Statistical Institute (INE), in 2015, there is a significant difference among wages, according to age.

The average salary of young workers is 621.05€ just 64.50 € more than the minimum wage in Portugal

This statistics can be explained by policies that were developed by the public authorities since the beginning of the crisis, in 2011, as a way to tackle youth unemployment, like trainees and other programs.

Another source of less social protection is 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”).

The problems of most concern in Portugal



Inadequate or poor quality education

Young students can easily drop-out from school as they do not perceive the advantages to continue studying.

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 type of jobs.

Families with a low income are not able to cope with study expenses.

The relationship between the education system and the labour market needs to be strongly reinforced, as the education system does not follow the needs of the labour market.

There is a general lack of coordination between the public employment services and the schools and universities in terms of trainings, jobs opportunities, professional and vocational guidance. There are few partnerships between schools and companies

Transmission of Poverty



Some of the poor people in Portugal descent from poor families, and have been constantly confronted with poverty situations during their lifetime.

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))

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.

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.

There is a cultural cause in the perpetuation of poverty related to a fatalism view that is preserved in statements such as “I am poor, so I have to be poor for the rest of my life”

Effectiveness of Portugal's policies to fight poverty and social exclusion among youth



Access to affordable childcare



These services are of good quality and they are important for the early childhood education and development of children. A significant portion of the users, regardless of their financial situations, must pay an amount that is calculated according to their annual income.

Youth Guarantee



Youth Guarantee initiative has an impact on reducing poverty and social exclusion among young people, but it is not sufficient. For example, in relation to employment and internships, the projects and the programmes are professional internships or insertion contracts.

Education policies combating early school-leaving and early drop-outs



During recent years, a package of education reform policies has been implemented in order to reduce the youth unemployment rate, many of them related to the Youth Guarantee. Some of these possibly have a positive impact on early school leaving, however, this is not sufficient.

Access to affordable housing



In Portugal, there is a programme specifically addressed at young people *Porta 65 Jovem*. It helps them to pay the rent in city centres. However, this is insufficient to reduce poverty and social exclusion among young people, because the level of rents in open market is high, when compared to the wages received.

The Response of Caritas



Young Caritas

- Diocesan Caritas in Leiria-Fátima created this project with the intention of involving young people aged 18 to 35 in the charitable activities of the diocese, through various social activities.
- The project has developed three pillars: *Explica-me*, *Equipa-te* (reached 50 children and teenagers) and *Escuta-me*.

<http://www.caritasjovem.pt/>

Education Support

- Provide financial support to students to prevent them from leaving school – or getting highly indebted during their studies – for mere budgetary matters.
- 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.

<https://sites.google.com/site/campanhacaritas2/>

Recommendations



1

Promote decent wage levels, also in the measures for creating employment, and expand social protection coverage in case of unemployment.

2

Prevent irregularities in work contracts by controlling the abusive use of the “green receipts”

3

Equal opportunities in access to education

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.