

# Making Room for Mental Health

## The Bloom Box



Tukka Brunila • Silke Creten • Ilana Hartikainen • Antonia Markiewitz • Arron McArdle •  
Ariadna Petri • Irene Soriano Flórez • Zea Szebeni

September, 2021

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
The Relationship between the Digital and Green Transitions, and Structural Unemployment?	6
Why this Impacts Mental Health	7
<b>The Bloom Box</b>	<b>7</b>
The contents of the Bloom Box	8
Information on support systems	8
Booklet of vouchers and discounts to services	8
Life upgrades	9
Freebies	9
<b>Closing the Agenda Gap</b>	<b>10</b>
EU level	11
Can the EU act?	11
What can the EU do?	11
Member state level	13
What can Member States do?	13
Corporations/Employers' level	15
What can potential employers do	16
<b>References</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>21</b>

## Executive Summary

The “Bloom Box: Making Room for Mental Health” project (in short, BB) highlights the importance of a multi-tier cross-sectoral approach in two interrelated sectors of great concern: youth unemployment and mental health. This policy paper focuses on the intersection of these sectors, and its impact on economic activity and outcomes. Youth unemployment has been linked to deteriorating mental health in adult life. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, 1 in 6 Europeans suffered from poor mental health during their lives, costing Member States approximately 500 billion Euros — an estimated 4% of their GDPs. This requires innovative yet tenable solutions for the EU, its Member States, and potential employers to implement in reaction to the imminent mental health issues stemming from youth unemployment. The BB project recommends that the EU adopts a holistic approach and invest more in the promotion of youth employment and good mental health, recognise the right to mental health as a fundamental right, and incentivise Member States to act towards this purpose. Member States are invited to adopt, among other policy recommendations, the ‘Bloom Box’ programme, a novel package designed to help the young unemployed, including by boosting their self-confidence, reducing the stigma around unemployment and mental health, and supporting them to find a job or to transform their professional lives. Finally, the BB recommends that, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, potential employers adopt and implement strategies which promote youth employment and opportunities for workers to be re-skilled and retrained.

## Analysis of the Alarming Context

The relevant parameters for this paper cluster around the state of mental health among young Europeans and its connection with youth unemployment. Both areas trigger stigma and have profound long-term macroeconomic impacts. A structural economic transformation focused on sustainability is required, given the dire effects that the ongoing degradation of the natural environment will have on the economy (Montt, Fraga & Harsdorff, 2018). By forcing the closure of high-emission industries, climate change mitigation policies will also likely cause extensive job loss (Gloppen & Vallejo, 2020), thus becoming a driver of structural and technological unemployment. This will inevitably impact the economic wellbeing of Europe’s

youth, with current economic predictions illustrating the beginnings of yet another youth employment crisis (Steiert 2020). If the economic problems attached to youth unemployment are obvious, less apparent are the mental health problems which stem from a fragile economic situation. Research suggests that long term unemployment can have a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of an individual. This impact is considerably more adverse among youth.

We approach mental health and mental well-being from a macro-perspective. When discussing mental health problems, we refer primarily to psychological distress, that is, a range of symptoms linked to various underdiagnosed mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and burn-out. These symptoms include fatigue, sadness, panic attacks, numbness, and social isolation (Drapeau, Marchand & Beaulieu-Prévost, 2012). Mental health problems, in general, have a high prevalence across EU countries. In 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that 11% of adults in the EU had symptoms of psychological distress (OECD/European Union, 2020). The lifetime prevalence of psychological distress is estimated to be 14% throughout Europe, meaning that 1 in 7 European citizens have suffered from a mental health problem at one point in their life (Alonso et al., 2004). More recent numbers show that 84 million people (1 out of 6) have been diagnosed with mental health problems, so the prevalence has worsened over time (OECD/European Union, 2020).

Poor mental health can have long-term manifestations and is a strong predictor of suicidal behaviour and suicide (Fleisher, 2020). However, mental health problems have a negative effect not only on morbidity and mortality, but also on the EU economy. The cost of mental health problems was estimated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) at more than 4% of GDP across the EU (OECD/European Union, 2020). These costs are not limited to health care, as they also include social security programmes and have an effect on the labour market.

Confirming the economics of mental health, a palpable sense of concern emerges among those dealing directly with youth (OECD, 2021). From civil society organizations to social research institutions, one common denominator persists: people under 30 dwell in a precarious state of personal and societal welfare. As Eurostat statistics have shown, the youth unemployment rate has consistently remained around 17% (Eurostat, 2021). The Covid-19 crisis has revealed in many ways how the world's youth occupy a space in society that makes them particularly vulnerable to problems associated with mental health (Quilter-Pinner, Webster & Parkes, 2020). Country specific reports released during the crisis have consistently illustrated that young people are disproportionately affected by a loss of opportunity and the

uncertainties of the European labour market, which combine to place a severe mental strain on Europe's youth. Feeding into this strain is the long-standing issue of youth unemployment across Europe, which policymakers have consistently highlighted as a key problem area for the last decade. Short projects (known as the gig economy) and temporary lay-offs add to financial constraints (Weber, Hurley & Adăscăliței, 2021), likely hitting the youth particularly hard (Quilter-Pinner et al., 2020).

Mental health problems and unemployment are connected in a bidirectional relationship. On the one hand, impaired mental health can be a consequence of the loss of a job (Neubert, Suessenbach, Rief & Euteneuer, 2019). On the other, poor mental health is a predictor of unemployment (Olesen, Butterworth, Leach, Kelaher & Pirkis, 2013). Youth unemployment in particular has long-term mental health scarring effects (Strandh, Winefield, Nilsson & Hammarström, 2014).

Psychological distress and unemployment, both separately and when they reinforce each other, can cause the loss of agency and disempowerment. The public stigma of unemployment is one of many factors that negatively influences mental well-being (Krug, Drasch & Jungbauer-Gans, 2019). However, mental health problems are also stigmatised. Public stigma is the reaction of the general public to the affected group, and it can be internalised by people in the stigmatised group, leading to self-stigma (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015). One consequence of stigma is (self-)discrimination, which can negatively influence someone's future life chances and opportunities (Goffman, 1963; Corrigan et al., 2006). In the case of mental health problems, four general forms of discrimination include withholding help, coercive treatment, avoidance, and institutional segregation (Corrigan et al., 2006). An additional consequence of self-stigma can be isolation (Goffman, 1963). In short, the stigma surrounding unemployment has a detrimental effect on the unemployed and their well-being, which can lead to yet another type of stigma: that surrounding mental health problems.

With economies transitioning and the culture around work changing, are European institutions, Member States, and private companies asking the right questions? Beyond strategic economic thinking and a plan to build back better, what can European citizens expect?

The European Union and its Member states must view the future beyond the lens of the European political economy and acknowledge risks outside the traditional political vernacular of economic growth and productivity. This requires innovative leadership that devotes thinking and intellectual resources to the future (Arokodare, 2020). An innovative policy approach is essential to the success of the emergent economic transition, which presents a set of complex socio-economic problems, both for the present and future mental health of European societies.

Three intersecting policy areas may benefit from such an approach, and we present relevant analyses below.

## **The Relationship between the Digital and Green Transitions, and Structural Unemployment?**

Since its inception during the industrial revolution, the still-dominant linear model of economic growth, i.e., the take-make-waste model, has regarded natural resources as abundant and infinite. As European populations and societies grow, this linear model has become obsolete in many ways. The world now faces the repercussions of the climate and environmental crises — threatened biodiversity, depletion of non-renewable energy sources, and the like — and a rise in social inequality as a result of the linear economy model and the rising environmental externalities generated by decades of unsustainable economic growth. The green economy (Loiseau et al., 2016) is an economic framework with two viable and compatible routes: the circular economic model and the de-growth model, both offering transitional measures. These include the downsizing of local and global industries as well as the restructuring of human societies and their consumption of said industries (Vazquez-Brust & Plaza-Úbeda, 2021). Additionally, as societies benefit from a further digitalisation of services, the automation of certain sectors is inevitable. An economic analysis posited by the McKinsey Global Institute predicts that automation will have a significant impact on European workforces, as the activities of 30% of current occupations are automatable (Manyika et al., 2017). The long-term view attached to the same analysis forecasts that 15% of all full-time equivalent work globally could be automated (ibid.).

Considering such economic models and trends has become all the more pressing for Member States, given the EU's commitment to guiding Europe toward a greater and greener future (The Economist, 2021). However, the future is not coming without consequences, and many international organisations predict high levels of economic uncertainty. Recent reports from both the OECD's environmental working papers and the EU's Employment and Social Development institute (ESDE) indicate that Europe will experience future downturns in economic activity, which will primarily impact sector-specific labour markets, such as electricity production, transportation, industry, agriculture, and mining account for nearly 90% of total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the EU (Elgouacem, 2020; ESDE, 2019). A greener economy will likely see the creation of new labour market opportunities, but an inevitable decline in employment in carbon emitting industries will manifest as structural unemployment (Bal-Domańska, 2021).

## Why this Impacts Mental Health

Linking structural economic transitions to mental health, one particular strand of thought holds significant weight: Carney's thesis of value(s), an economic theory suggesting that the answers to a successful transition lay in imbuing social and economic structures with human values (Carney, 2021). Due to recent developments (cf. Covid-19 pandemic), we are facing a labour market that requires rebuilding and restructuring in many areas and thus massive unemployment, with people feeling discouraged when looking for new jobs or having to accept jobs that do not fit their qualifications (International Labour Organization, 2021). This can have long-term scarring effects when "they occur at key stages in a person's life, such as the transition from school or university to work" (International Labour Organization, 2021, p. 25), as these periods are the basis for all future occupational advancements.

Our report advocates for a policy intervention at an early stage to 1) help (re)integrate people into the (new) labour market at an early stage (thus avoiding long-term unemployment) and thus 2) reduce the risk of experiencing harm to their mental health due to unemployment or pursuing a job that doesn't fit or that they are overqualified for.

What is needed is strategic foresight: the understanding of future trends and the risks involved (Arokodare, 2020). The past is no longer a good predictor of the future; instead, strategic foresight requires that future crises are anticipated and prevented through actions in the present (Holland, 2021). As explained above, the future is full of risks that must be considered when planning for a sustainable future, if we do not want to find ourselves exposed to problems like those we have faced in recent times, which have caused standstill and even regression.

## The Bloom Box

To tackle this problem, we propose the 'Bloom Box'(BB), a set of policy goals and a toolbox for managing the unemployment period. The concept is based on the Finnish baby box (Finnish baby box, 2020). It is a collection of information, materials, and tools that are vital to reclaiming agency during times of unemployment. The package, sent to all young unemployed people, is an innovative way to reframe the discussion on unemployment. It attempts to preemptively reduce psychological distress, while also countering its effects. As pointed out above, the experience of stigma reduces the ability to act. It is difficult for someone to take action on their own if they lack the capacity or the faith to do so. The stigma that surrounds

unemployment and mental health further exacerbates the loss of hope and disempowerment. More often than not, the problem is not a lack of solutions, but an inability to utilize institutional or other social support systems. This means a lack of knowledge, understanding of practices, skill needed to seize opportunities, or even believe in one's own ability to do so.

The BB would be sent to all young (18-30) people when they register for the first time as unemployed in their respective countries and to those already registered once it is implemented. It empowers them to start navigating the institutional framework and dealing with reduced income and other social issues stemming from unemployment. Member States are responsible for keeping the material updated on a regular basis, and making it available on the websites of the employment offices.

The 'Bloom Box' programme leaves room for Member States to implement it as they deem fit, while maintaining its core elements. The box should also be updated whenever new tools or institutional initiatives come into place. Considering this need for update and the commitment to constantly improve the box, in the Annex we offer an applied research tool comprising a survey and focus group, and related material (such as a social media add, etc.). We have drafted a questionnaire for occasional distribution to different groups of unemployed individuals, so that the box can be better tailored according to each country of implementation.

## **The contents of the Bloom Box**

### **Information on support systems**

- Existing support mechanisms
- Unemployment benefits
- Public health care
- Peer support groups
- Mentoring programmes
- Curated list and information on 'good employers', national or EU-wide, that include employment and mental health promotion strategies as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

### **Booklet of vouchers and discounts to services**

Public-Private Partnerships to offer free or discounted benefits and services:

- Training and education:
  - general career advice and employment orientation



- employability: CV writing, interviewing, social media job hunting (LinkedIn)
- job-specific skills and competences
- educational possibilities
- soft skills: attitudes, interpersonal communication
- Community, sports & leisure
  - Physical exercise
  - Volunteering
  - Wellness activities
  - Recreational spaces
- Cultural activities

### Life upgrades

- Nutrition and wellness
- Activities at home
- Ideas for home improvement
- Stories of people in similar situations

### Freebies

- Focus ball / Pocket calendar with essential dates (e.g. for local job fairs)
- Pampering pack (samples of toiletries)
- A journal and relevant inspiring stationary
- Curated list of useful Apps, such as [KoaHealth](#), [Mindstrong](#), [Youper](#)

The Bloom Box might seem to incur high costs. However, upstream policy will pay off in the long run, not only when actually confronted with a crisis — although experts know that such crises will occur more frequently (Tajudeen & Oladunjoye, 2021). The money invested early on (in strategic planning, forecasting systems, and last but not least, the Bloom Box) will return as savings on social expenditures (e.g. less spent on healthcare and unemployment benefits due to early reintegration into the labour market), resulting in (economic) growth.

## Closing the Agenda Gap

We identify three sets of actors and levels at which the ‘Bloom Box’ policy recommendations could be implemented. Those expected to act are: 1) The EU; 2) the Member States; 3) employers. The actions are intertwined, and they should be coordinated between the actors. We premise the framework recommended below on these actors and the different incentives that could support the ‘Bloom box’ recommendations.

Specifically, we recommend:

**that the EU** a) invests more in promoting good mental health and employment; b) incentivises Member States to act towards this purpose through programs like the Bloom Box; c) recognises the right to mental health as a fundamental right; d) holistically integrates mental health and employment policies into its policy making.

**that Member States** a) adopt and implement the ‘Bloom box’ programme; b) adopt and implement tax and employment policies that promote youth employment and the employment of those who have previously experienced long-term unemployment or psychological distress; c) centralise and appropriately market competent institutions and relevant programs; d) introduce and implement a Universal Basic Income (UBI) or Youth Basic Income (YBI).

**that potential employers** a) adopt and implement strategies that promote employment for young unemployed as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes; b) adopt and implement internal procedures that promote the ‘Bloom Box’ policy goals, including opportunities for workers to be reskilled and retrained.

Each of the aforementioned recommendations is explained in detail below, together with the institutional changes that would need to accompany it.

## EU level

### Can the EU act?

The EU can act in the area of mental health and unemployment on the basis of Article 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU, 2007, consolidated in 2012), which provides that the EU has shared competence with the Member States, inter alia, in the following areas; (a) social policy, for the aspects defined in this Treaty; (b) economic, social, and territorial cohesion; (c) common safety concerns in public health matters, for the aspects defined in this Treaty.

Article 168 of the TFEU provides that ‘A high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities. Union action, which shall complement national policies, shall be directed towards improving public health, preventing physical and mental illness and diseases, and obviating sources of danger to physical and mental health. Such action shall cover the fight against the major health scourges, by promoting research into their causes, their transmission and their prevention, as well as health information and education, and monitoring, early warning of and combating serious cross-border threats to health.’

In this sense, the EU can act as a lighthouse in promoting cross-sectoral interactions (social welfare, youth unemployment, mental health) towards tackling mental health and unemployment issues.

### What can the EU do?

The EU can act on several grounds, including institutional and constitutional changes at the EU and national levels. Specifically, the EU should:

- **Incentivize Member States to invest in promoting the ‘Bloom Box’ (BB) goals by:**
  - Issuing guidelines and recommendations on the urgency to act, the interaction between mental health and youth unemployment, and their implications;
  - Encouraging Member States to allocate an adequate amount to the ‘Bloom Box’ programme through the budgetary monitoring it exercises on them (via the European Semester)
- **Compel Member States to implement the BB policy goals** by allowing access to related European funds only if the Member State has implemented the ‘Bloom Box’

policy goals (i.e. include the ‘Bloom Box’ policy goals as an ex-ante additional conditionality in the Multiannual Financial Framework [MFF] for access to EU funds).

- **Fund practices/programmes/structures/institutions that promote this goal**, including providing additional funding for research on mental health and youth unemployment issues, which is currently lacking.
- **Develop EU initiatives promoting a ‘macro-approach’ to unemployment and mental health that would include a broader definition of mental health, comprising psychological distress as defined above.**
  - Indicatively, as part of the New Generation EU Recovery instrument, the EU adopted the EU4Health programme, as a response to the pandemic and in an effort to improve the financial resilience of healthcare systems. The programme, established by Regulation (EU) 2021/522, supports actions to improve mental health, but without specifying how broadly mental health is to be defined.
- **Expand and better market the European Social Fund (ESF)**, the purpose of which is to support the creation and access to jobs, and ensure fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens. In this context,
  - ensure the timely and apt delivery of the projects (operating at a multi-level governance system and ensured by both the EU and Member States at the central, regional, and local levels).
  - ensure that robust projects relating to mental health and youth unemployment are ranked high on the ESF’s priorities and agenda.
  - allocate higher amounts to the ESF, in line with the strategic foresight agenda the project pursues;
  - create and market more programmes under the aegis of the ESF, such as the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) which aims at supporting the EU's objective of high level employment, adequate social protection, ending social exclusion and poverty, and improving working conditions
- **Recognise the right to mental health as a fundamental right on its own.**
  - Currently, the legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, includes only one provision on the right to access health care (Article 35 of the Charter).
  - Adding the right to mental health (including access to mental health care defined broadly) in the Charter as a separate provision would allow individuals whose

right to, for example, preventive mental health care has been infringed upon to bring action, provided the conditions of Article 51 (1) of the Charter are fulfilled. Making the right ‘enforceable’ would presuppose that the EU has taken action and adopted binding legislation pertaining to mental health.

- **Adopt (at an EU level), expand, and make enforceable the rights and principles found in the European Social Charter.**

## Member state level

### What can Member States do?

Member states have the greatest amount of power and flexibility to implement policies designed to support the mental health of long-term unemployed people. Specifically, we recommend that they take action in the following areas:

- **Adopt and implement the Bloom Box programme:**
  - Carry out the focus group research detailed in the Appendix to tailor the contents of the BB to the country in question.
  - Negotiate with public and private entities to ensure the availability of the goods and services offered to the BB’s recipients.
  - Ensuring the BB’s availability on a country-wide level and marketing it to encourage wide adoption.
- **Force institutional change by adopting tax and employment policies supporting the mental health of unemployed persons, which could include the following:**
  - Offer tax benefits to companies for hiring people with diagnosed mental health issues
  - Offer tax benefits to companies for hiring people who have been unemployed on a long-term basis; alternatively, establish a minimum percentage of long-term unemployed persons that companies would be required to hire
  - Pass so-called WARN Acts, requiring that large companies offer retraining services in advance if they plan to make redundancies. Companies might also be compelled to offer, for example, psychological support or career counseling to the employees slated to be laid off.
- **Centralise and market the institutions capable of addressing these problems:**

- Centralise the institutions dealing with issues of mental health care and unemployment into one physical space to limit the time and stress that people registering for essential social services will experience
- Streamline the bureaucratic steps required to access these social services, for example by implementing a single intake form or evaluation for recently unemployed persons that would grant them access to several services at once
- Increase communication between different institutions offering services that people often apply to in tandem (for example, between mental health care services and the unemployment office), in order to make information easier to access
- Broadly publicize (in online and offline media and advertising) the services that government offices offer to unemployed people, laying out a clear path for newly unemployed people to take
- **Implement Universal Basic Income (UBI) or Youth Basic Income (YBI)**
  - The Finnish experiment with UBI suggests that it returns agency to unemployed people, improving their mental health and allowing them to focus on finding new opportunities, either as employees or entrepreneurs
  - As a stepping stone to UBI, implement a YBI program that guarantees an income to everyone between the ages of 18-25, a particularly crucial time for figuring out a long-term career path
    - As this process is often hampered by extreme pressure to find a job, YBI could have a long-term positive effect on mental health if young people are given the space to decide what type of career to pursue without financial pressure
- **Adopt a pre-emptive approach already at an early stage in the educational systems**
  - Provide short-term programmes/sessions targeting the mental health of youth either at school or at university. Specifically,
    - Provide sessions as to how to recognise the symptoms of psychological distress and of mental health problems.
    - Use campaigns and other informative material to eradicate the stigma associated with mental health issues and psychological distress related (but not necessarily) to employment.
  - Provide programmes that would enhance the employability of young people, whether they have experienced such distress or not.

- Provide programmes that would allow for employment orientation through the assessment and training of competences; attitudes and job skills; interpersonal communication; and professional development. The project ‘My proyecto: El Empleo’, undertaken by the Spanish NGO *Empleo y salud mental*, stands as a successful individualised intervention programme held in 2018 (240h of small group training plus 80h of individual attention; 5 of 6 participants got a job after the programme), with the second edition taking place this year. It aims to enhance the employability of people between 16-30 years old with mental health disorders who are beneficiaries of the Youth Guarantee System, included in the Youth Employment Operational Plan, funded by the ONCE Foundation and the European Social Fund. Acquiring skills grants the independence to participate meaningfully in the labour market.
- **Invest in producing and disseminating publicly funded campaigns** that aim at reducing the stigma associated with mental health and youth unemployment.
  - Produce and market campaigns that publicize the ‘Bloom Box’ programme to potential recipients and inform them of their rights. The initiative aims to normalise mental health issues and youth unemployment in order to eradicate the associated stigma.

## Corporations/Employers’ level

Research has shown that employees who work in a healthy environment are more productive (Goetzel, Ozminkowski, Sederer, Lloyd & Mark, 2002; Oxenburgh, Marlow & Oxenburgh, 2004; Sachiko & Yamamoto, 2018). Thus, it benefits employers to maintain a stable and flourishing environment for their employees. Furthermore, in a study conducted by McKinsey in 2017, 58% of the respondents argued that corporations (as opposed to other institutions, including federal and local governments and educational institutions) should address skills gaps relating to automation and/or digitalisation (Llanes, Lund, Mourshed, Rutherford, Tyreman, 2018). This is concomitant to the current prevalent perception that corporations should be socially responsible and should give back to the stakeholders/society as a whole (Amiram, 2008; Stuebs & Sun, 2015).

## What can potential employers do

As stated above, some of these recommended measures may be enforceable on the basis of national policies/measures, which would ensure a level playing field at the national level, while some others may rely entirely on private initiative and be part of internal procedure(s):

- **Include employment and mental health promotion strategies as part of their **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)****
  - For example, the company's social responsibility divisions can include: job creation for young unemployed, development of youth inclusion programmes, training and improvement programmes for young unemployed.
  - Some companies have developed CSR programmes whose ultimate goal is giving young people professional development training to meet the demands of the labour market. Companies in Romania have implemented such a model, leading to a decrease in youth unemployment rates (Stanescu, S.-G., & Comandaru, A.-M., 2019)
- **Contribute to reducing the stigma associated with mental health and/or unemployment.**
  - During interviews employers should not ask about gaps in the applicants' CV, nor about the reasons why they left their last job.
- **Offer psychological support on an anonymous and voluntary basis.**
  - For larger employers/companies, have psychological support in place or offer meetings with a psychologist while ensuring confidentiality.
    - This could be achieved either by offering training to all employees to recognise the signs of psychological distress and/or
    - by allowing for meetings with a psychologist outside office hours and premises without the employer being informed about the meeting. This would presuppose that the company/employer employs one or more psychologists who are independent yet readily available.
  - For 'smaller' employers, whose finances do not allow for such a service, have free vouchers available to all employees to access the services of independent psychologists/psychiatrists.
- **Offer career counselling support** for employees with temporary job contracts, regardless whether they will remain in the company or not
- **Offer training and retraining opportunities**, taking the upcoming challenges of digitalization and the green economy into account.



## References

- Alonso, J., Angermeyer, M. C., Bernert, S., Bruffaerts, R., Brugha, T. S., Bryson, H., Vollebergh, W. A. M. (2004). Prevalence of mental disorders in Europe: Results from the European Study of the Epidemiology of Mental Disorders (ESEMeD) project. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica. Supplementum*, 109,(420), 21-27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0047.2004.00327.x>
- Amiram, G. (2008). Corporate governance as social responsibility: A research agenda. *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, 452.
- Arokodare, A. O. U. (2020). Strategic agility: Achieving superior organizational performance through strategic foresight. *Global Journal Of Management And Business Research*, 20(3).
- Ayllón, S., Valbuena, J. and Plum, A. (2021). Youth unemployment and stigmatization over the business cycle in Europe. *Oxford Bulletin of Economic Statistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/obes.12445>;
- Bal-Domańska, B. (2021). The impact of macroeconomic and structural factors on the unemployment of young women and men. *Economic Change and Restructuring*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10644-021-09341-9>
- Carney, M. (2021). *Values: Building a Better World for All*. Signal.
- Corrigan, Patrick W, Watson, Amy C, & Barr, Leah. (2006). The self-stigma of mental illness: Implications for self-esteem and self-efficacy. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25(8), 875-884.
- Drapeau, A., Marchand, A., & Beaulieu-Prévost, D. (2012). Epidemiology of psychological distress. *Mental illnesses-understanding, prediction and control*, 69, 105-134.
- Derived from: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/jobs-and-economy-during-coronavirus-pandemic\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/coronavirus-response/jobs-and-economy-during-coronavirus-pandemic_en) (18.02.2021)
- Elgouacem, A. (2020). *The fiscal implications of the low-carbon transition*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/22260935>
- European Union (2007, consolidated 2012). *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*. Official Journal of the European Union. C 326 / 26.10.2012
- ESDE (2019). *Towards a greener future: Employment and social impacts of climate action*.
- Eurostat (2021). *European Union unemployment Rate*. Derived from: <https://tradingeconomics.com/european-union/unemployment->



[ations/retraining%20and%20reskilling%20workers%20in%20the%20age%20of%20automati  
on/retraining-and-reskilling-workers-in-the-age-of-automation.pdf](#) (25.08.2021)

Loiseau, E., Saikku, L., Antikainen, R., Droste, N., Hansjürgens, B., Pitkänen, K., Leskinen, P., Kuikman, P., & Thomsen, M. (2016). Green Economy and related concepts: An overview. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 139(15), 361-371.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.08.024>

Manyika, J., Lund, S., Chui, M., Bughin, J., Woetzel, J., Batra, P., Ko, R., & Sanghvi, S. (2017). *Jobs lost, jobs gained: What the future of work will mean for jobs, skills, and wages*. Derived from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/jobs-lost-jobs-gained-what-the-future-of-work-will-mean-for-jobs-skills-and-wages> (25.08.2021)

Montt, G., Fraga, F., & Harsdorff, M. (2018). The future of work in a changing natural environment: Climate change, degradation and sustainability. *ILO Research Paper Series, Geneva: International Labour Office*. Derived from:

[https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/The\\_future\\_of\\_work\\_in\\_a\\_changing\\_natural\\_environment\\_ILO.pdf](https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/The_future_of_work_in_a_changing_natural_environment_ILO.pdf) (24.08.2020)

Neubert, M., Suessenbach, P., Rief, W., & Euteneuer, F. (2019). Unemployment and mental health in the German population: The role of subjective social status. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 12, 557-564.

Odoardi, I., and Liberatore, A. (2021). Youth unemployment: Serious problem for young Italians neet and a comparison with the social exclusion condition. *Journal of Urban & Regional Analysis*, 13(1), 177-193.

OECD/European Union (2020). Adult mental health. *Health at a glance: Europe 2020. State of health in the EU cycle*. OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2021). Policy responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19). Supporting young people's mental health through the COVID-19 crisis. Derived from:

<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/supporting-young-people-s-mental-health-through-the-covid-19-crisis-84e143e5/> (25.08.2021)

Olesen, S.C., Butterworth, P., Leach, L.S., Kelaher, M., & Pirkis, J. (2013). Mental health affects future employment as job loss affects mental health: findings from a longitudinal population study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 13, 144, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-13-144>

Oxenburgh, M., Marlow, P., & Oxenburgh, A. (2004). *Increasing productivity and profit through health and safety. The financial returns from a safe working environment*. CRC Press.

Pescosolido, B. A., & Martin, J. K. (2015). The Stigma Complex. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41(1), 87-116. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145702>

Quilter-Pinner, H., Webster S., & Parkes, H. (2020). *Guaranteeing the right start: preventing youth unemployment after COVID-19*. Derived from: <http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/548933> (24.08.2021)

Sachiko, K., & Yamamoto, I. (2018). Good boss, bad boss, workers. Mental health and productivity: Evidence from Japan. *Japan and the World Economy*, 48, 106-118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.japwor.2018.08.002>

Standing, G. (1983). The notion of structural unemployment. *International Labour Review*, 122(2), 137.

Stanescu, S.-G., & Comandaru, A.-M. (2019). The implications of social responsibility in reducing youth unemployment in Romania. *Central European Review of Economics and Management*, 3(2), 33-48.

Stuebs, M., & Sun, L. (2015). Corporate governance and social responsibility. *International Journal of Law and Management*, 57(1), 38-52. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLMA-04-2014-0034>

Strandh, M., Winefield, A., Nilsson, K., & Hammarström, A. (2014). Unemployment and mental health scarring during the life course. *European Journal of Public Health*, 24(3), 440–445. <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/cku005>

Tajudeen, Y. A., & Oladunjoye, I. O. (2021). Climate change. An emblematic driver of vector-borne diseases: Holistic view as a way forward. *Global Biosecurity*, 3(1). <http://doi.org/10.31646/gbio.120>

The Economist (2021). *Why the European Union is a less-than-jolly green giant. The EU is better placed than national governments to set green standards. This will hurt*. Derived from: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2021/07/15/why-the-european-union-is-a-less-than-jolly-green-giant> (25.08.2021)

Vazquez-Brust, D. A., & Plaza-Úbeda, J. A. (2021). Green growth policy, de-growth, and sustainability: The alternative solution for achieving the balance between both the natural and the economic system. *Sustainability*, 13(9). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13094610>

Weber, T., Hurley, J., & Adăscăliței, D. (Eurofond) (2021). *COVID-19: Implications for employment and working life*. Derived from: [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_publication/field\\_ef\\_document/ef20050en.pdf](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef20050en.pdf) (24.08.2021)

# Appendix

## Survey and focus groups

This survey would need to receive ethical approval from the competent institutions.

### Participants' profile:

Age: 18-30 (Gender: 50-50)

Time: 1h-1h30

Reward: 30 euros per participants in the form of voucher (e.g. Wolt/Deliveroo)

Medium: Online: audio recorded (no cameras), only the main points would be transcribed. The participants would be allowed to pick their own names (anonymous data gathering).

National groups: any European country.

Size of the groups: 5-6 persons per group

### Who:

1. University degree + unemployed
2. no higher education + unemployed
3. no higher education + 1 first full-time job
4. university degree + unemployed for more than 6 months
5. university degree + 1 first full-time job
6. no uni degree and + unemployed for more than 6 months

### 1. 15 min questionnaire

- a. To tailor it to the participants (mental state during their unemployed period):
  - i. How much social support do you have (people that you can turn to in times of hardship) (like scale: 1-5; none at all - much)
  - ii. Do you have people who are economically dependent on you? yes/no
  - iii. How comfortable is your financial situation (Likert scale, 1-4, 1: living comfortably on present income; 4: finding it difficult on present income)
  - iv. Demographics:
    1. age - text box
    2. gender (male / female / do not want to state / other / diverse)

3. how long have you been unemployed (in months)
  4. what is your highest level of education
  5. area of living (1 - a big city; 2 - suburbs or outskirts of big city; 3 - town or small city; 4 - a country village; 5 - farm or home in the countryside)
    - v. How much distress have you experienced due to unemployment?
    - vi. Email address to participate and a few dates to meet
2. 1h-1h30' focus group
- a. Introducing ourselves and the project (emphasis on their agency)
  - b. Introduce yourselves and your situation
  - c. What assistance did they receive during their unemployment/when trying to look for jobs? how did they feel about it (too much / too little etc.)
  - d. What assistance would have been good to receive?
  - e. Have you experienced any distress due to unemployment / the assistance?
  - f. The Box \* - what is it,
    - i. what do you think should be in it?
    - ii. we think this should be in it: (detailed contents) - what do you think?
  - g. Anything else that you would like to add?
3. 15 min questionnaire on all items in the box - ranking
- a. Blank space - in case they would like to add anything else