The emerging adulthood period: What is it and how does it impact on the economic participation of young people with intellectual disability?

Jenny Crosbie
PhD Student
Swinburne University

Background: Young People with Intellectual Disability

- Criteria for defining intellectual disability: significant impairment in intellectual functioning; difficulties in adaptive behaviour; and manifestation in the developmental period (AIHW, 2008).

- There are approximately 90,000 people with intellectual disability aged 15-24 in Australia (AIHW, 2008, ABS, 2016). 70% have a mild or moderate intellectual disability.

- Most (88%) live with their parents (AIHW, 2008).

- Many (55%) educated in special schools or in special classes.

- They leave school with low levels of high school completion, literacy and numeracy (AIHW, 2008).

Background: Young people with intellectual disability and economic participation

- ▶ Low numbers go into post school education/training or employment after high school.

- ▶ High proportion transition from school to adult day services or sheltered employment programs.

- ▶ Low labour market participation rates.

- ▶ High unemployment rates.

- ▶ Dependence on government pension from young age.

- ▶ Low levels of formal qualifications such as certificate level, diploma, and degree.

Background: Barriers to Economic Participation for Young People with Intellectual Disability

- ▶ Individual barriers such as work related skills, qualifications, literacy and numeracy skills, driver's license/transport.

- ▶ Structural labour market issues including high casualisation, gig economy, workforce flexibility, multi-tasking.

- ▶ Workplace automation and the decline in manufacturing. Work has become more knowledge based.

- ▶ Attitudes regarding the employability of YPWID.

Background: International and Australian Policy Context

- UNCRPD provides a number of human rights protections including the right to access education and employment.

- National Disability Strategy is a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, and to providing leadership for a community-wide shift in attitudes.

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Broad aim to increase social and economic participation for people with disability. Emphasis on choice and control. Provides individualised funding related to goals and aspirations.

Background: Transition Programs and Supports

▶ Transition support is largely situated within the school environment.

▶ Transition support is short term and focussed on exiting school and moving to adult services.

▶ Low involvement of YPWID and their families in the transition process.

▶ Low expectations regarding economic participation for YPWID.

▶ Lack of understanding about the importance of the 'emerging adulthood' developmental period for young people regarding economic participation.

Background: Limited Understanding about the needs of YPWID and their Families During Transition Period

- Families of YPWID experience particular stresses during the transition from school. Has been described as a "second shock".

- YPWID miss out on many of the normative experiences related to career development that their non-disabled peers have access to.

- Information about post school options is limited or confusing for families which impacts their capacity to support their YPWID effectively.

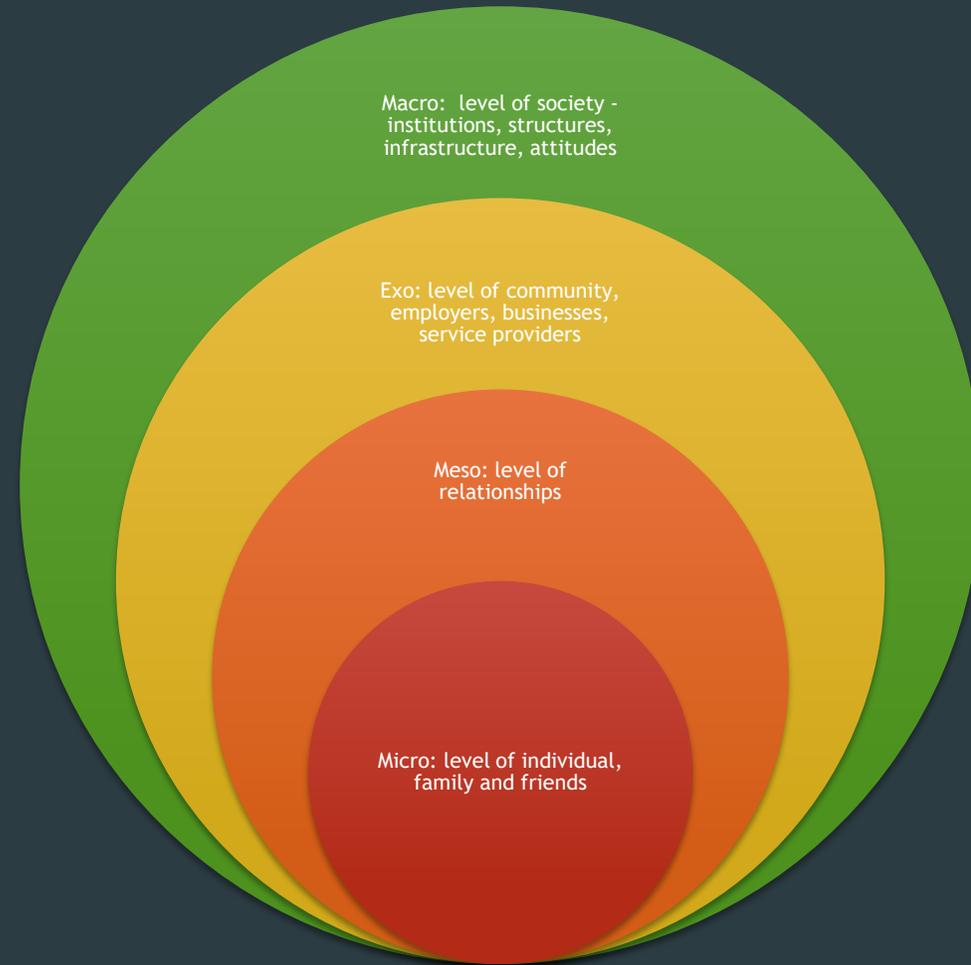- Low expectations of YPWID impact on opportunities made available to them related to economic participation.

Literature Review:

- Very little research in the Australian context related to economic participation of YPWID in the emerging adulthood period. The majority of studies relate to the period of 'transition', from school to adult services.

- Many studies from the US. The context in the US is very different to Australia. Studies relate to a broad range of disability rather than intellectual disability.

- Kohler's (2016) Taxonomy For Transition Programming 2.0, focussed on transition-focused education is widely used in the US.

- Emerging Adulthood (Arnett) is a distinct area of the lifespan that has emerged in response to changes in industrialised societies. Few studies about the experience of people with intellectual disability in this period particularly in relation to economic participation.

Ecological Models of Social Inclusion

- ▶ Ecological frameworks enable analysis of barriers and enablers within a complex system (Clifford Simplican et al., 2014; Lindsay et al., 2018).

- ▶ Fits within the broader understanding that disability is a product of individual, environmental and social factors.

- ▶ YPWID are part of a larger social network which is comprised of several components including micro, meso, exo and macro systems.

Ecological Models of Social Inclusion

Macro: level of society - institutions, structures, infrastructure, attitudes

Exo: level of community, employers, businesses, service providers

Meso: level of relationships

Micro: level of individual, family and friends

Emerging Adulthood period

- Has emerged as a new life stage in industrialised countries (Arnett, 2000). It's the longest life stage prior to adulthood.

- Period between adolescence and 'full adulthood'.

- Young people are reaching adult milestones later (ie marriage, children, fulltime work, leaving home). They are studying/training for longer.

- It's a period of identity development and a time to develop capabilities for adult life.

Emerging Adulthood period - YPWID

- Planning related to YPWID is focused on short term goals and transition to adult services. Planning doesn't take the longer term view that is required to sustain people in employment over their adult life.

- Low focus on career planning. Career approach recognises that growth and development are needed to sustain employment over a 40-50 year period.

- Low expectations lead to transition to 'safe options" such as ADEs and Day Services which close doors to integrated employment.

- Need to integrate development of independent living skills with development of work related skills to maximise functioning.

Good Practice in Emerging Adulthood Period for Young People with Intellectual Disability

- ▶ Raising expectations

- ▶ Transition Practices

- ▶ Work experience

- ▶ Individualised focus and strengths based approaches

- ▶ Collaboration

- ▶ Family involvement

- ▶ Availability of information in a variety of formats

Raising Expectations

High expectations for employment and career

- Person with disability
- Employers
- Schools
- Goverment and Policy Makers
- Service Providers
- Families

Good Practice in Emerging Adulthood Period for Young People with Intellectual Disability

Transition Practices

Kohler, 1996

Category	Practices included
Student-focused planning	Transition plan development, student participation in the planning process, and planning strategies
Student development	Life skills instruction, employment skills instruction, structured work experience, career and vocational curricula, assessment, and self-determination training
Family involvement	Family participation in transition planning, family training, and family empowerment
Program structure	Policy, philosophy, strategic planning, program evaluation, resource allocation, and human resource development
Interagency collaboration	Collaborative service delivery and inter-organisational frameworks

Good Practice in Emerging Adulthood Period for Young People with Intellectual Disability

Work Experience

▶ High quality work experiences while a YPWID is at school predicts later integrated employment (Wakeford and Waugh, 2014).

▶ Can include after school jobs, school based work experience, school based traineeships and apprenticeships, internships and job sampling.

▶ Provision of high quality supports maximise opportunities for success.

Good Practice in Emerging Adulthood Period for Young People with Intellectual Disability

Individualised focus and strengths based approaches

- Individualised focus and strengths based approaches such as guided discovery, and customised employment enable YPWID to build opportunities related to their interests and abilities.

- Can include development of small business enterprises

- Customised jobs involve placement into a workplace that is supportive, undertaking a range of job tasks that are suitable for the individual

Good Practice in Emerging Adulthood Period for Young People with Intellectual Disability

Collaboration

- Good outcomes are achieved when individuals and organisations work collaboratively.

- Various individuals and agencies bring skills, networks and funding that can support individual aspirations.

- Intermediary role is critical to success

Good Practice in Emerging Adulthood Period for Young People with Intellectual Disability

Family Involvement

- Strong family Involvement in the emerging adulthood period is normal practice.

- Parents support young people by providing accommodation, support to develop independent skills, advice re career development and material support

- The capacity of family members to support the career aspirations of YPWID needs to be strengthened via provision of information, training and resources.

Good Practice in Emerging Adulthood Period for Young People with Intellectual Disability

Availability of information in a variety of formats

- ▶ YPWID and their supporters require information about post school options in a range of formats and at different stages.

- ▶ Provision of information about economic participation needs to be provided early

- ▶ Peer support, mentors and ambassadors have a role to play in changing attitudes.

Good Practice Examples

Ticket to Work (Australian Model)

▶ National initiative that leverages the power of cross-sectoral collaborative partnerships to improve employment outcomes for young people with disability.

▶ Delivered through Local Ticket to Work networks that include schools, employment services, post school providers and employers.

▶ Ticket to Work prepares young people for the world of work and provides them with an open employment pathway in their transition from school through a combination of vocational/career development and early contact with work environments.

▶ Ticket to Work participants are more likely to be employed (64%) than the comparison group (33%).

Good Practice Examples
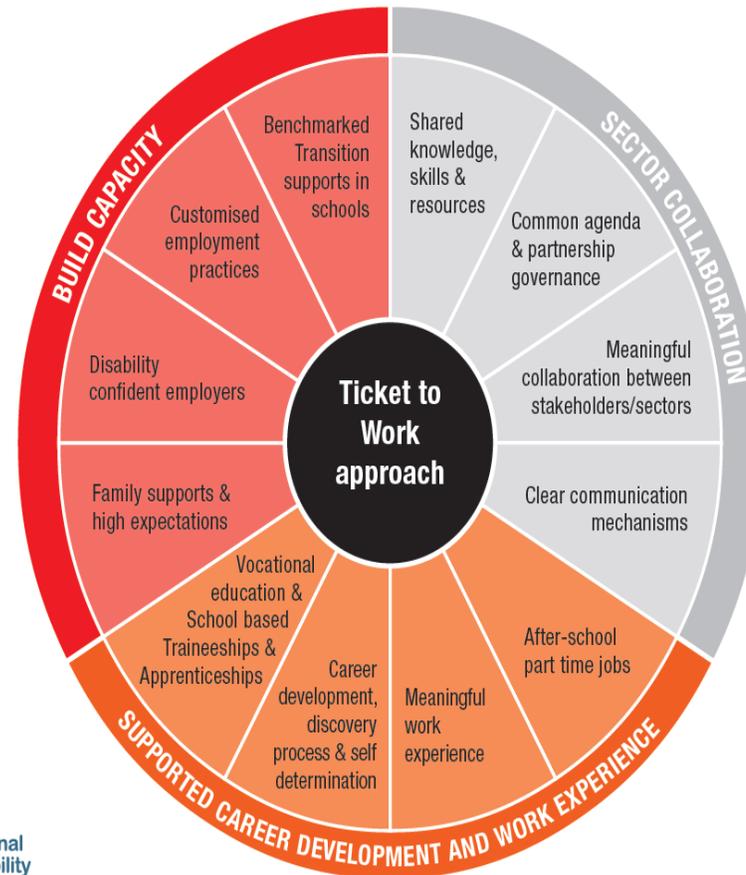
Good Practice Examples

Post School Education Programs (USA)

► YPWID attend post school education programs based on college campuses

  ► Mixed/Hybrid Model

  ► Substantially Separate Model

  ► Inclusive Individual Support Model

► Opportunities to participate in 'college life'.

► 65% of those who completed program had a paid job one year after exit.

https://thinkcollege.net

Good Practice Examples

Project Search

▶ A unique, business-led, one-year employment preparation program that takes place entirely at the workplace.

▶ Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations.

▶ The program culminates in individualised job development.

▶ 67% of participants employed on completion.

https://www.projectsearch.us

Video

Young people talk about going to college

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpnQQ1wc4xo

Ticket to Work

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwo4zDaMwG8&feature=youtu.be

Questions

JENNY CROSBIE

JCROSBIE@SWIN.EDU.AU