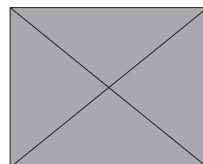


THE IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON PEOPLE AND THEIR RELATIVES: IMPROVING PREVENTION AND SUPPORT



Although unemployment is now a widespread phenomenon, (3.6 million jobseekers in 2015 – Pôle emploi, the national public employment service), we still do not know enough about the traumatic impact it has, its social consequences and effects on relatives. For the ESEC, public policies - especially those focusing on health - need to provide better support for people while they are out of work. Beyond that, society as a whole needs to be encouraged to change its perspective of jobseekers.

Unemployment is the number one concern among French people. The 2008 economic crisis has exacerbated a situation which now affects 10.6% of the labour force. These days it has become harder to find another job and the average length of time spent unemployed is now 1 year and four months (as at end 2015). More worrying still is that some categories such as low-skilled persons, young people, women, seniors and disabled people find it particularly difficult to enter the workplace with 5.4 million people flitting between unemployment and precarious employment.

The problem of unemployment is compounded by financial vulnerability for, although benefits help to absorb some of the loss of earnings, 40% of jobseekers do not receive them and half of them are on less than 500 euros a month (2014). Jobseekers do have certain rights available to them, such as validation of retirement quarters, under certain conditions, or the maintenance of previous health cover (when they see a drop in income, they are eligible for universal health cover/PUMA and

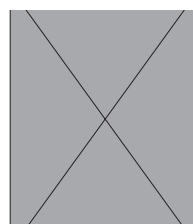
top-up health insurance, CMU-c or assistance with paying for top-up health insurance – ACS – depending on their income level). But for all that, it is very common for jobseekers not to exercise their rights to social benefits.

Unemployment is now a public health issue, with 10 to 14,000 deaths a year attributable to it because of the rise in certain diseases, including cardiovascular diseases and cancer (SUIVIMAX, Inserm survey). It increases the risk of going through a depressive episode, with 24% of men and 26% of women affected (Dares 2015). A 10% rise in unemployment leads to a 1.5% rise in the suicide rate (2015 Epidemiological Bulletin).

Unemployment also has major social repercussions. It increases the risk of separation and social isolation, it affects the academic future of children (Insee, 2004) and it delays women's decisions to have children (INED, 2011).

Not only are these consequences well below the radar, but "a certain compassion fatigue" has set in. Accordingly, 60% of survey respondents think that jobseekers could find a job if they really set their mind to it, and 46% that the public authorities are not doing enough for the most deprived, versus 73% in 1994 (CREDOC surveys). And yet, every year the labour force in France increases by 150,000 members, without our nation being able to create enough jobs for them all.

For the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC), our attitude towards unemployed people needs to become



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more understanding and objective. If we are to prevent the most devastating social consequences for people without jobs and their relatives, we need to work on reversing the stigmatisation that undermines the legitimate exercise of their rights, the view they have of themselves and, ultimately, their very reintegration into the job market.

Public health

+1.5%

A 10% rise in unemployment leads to a 1.5% rise in the suicide rate.

Unemployment statistics

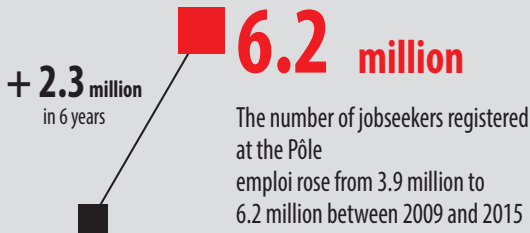
PUBLIC HEALTH

14,000

deaths a year attributable to unemployment, with road traffic accidents causing 3,464 deaths in 2015



Sources: Inserm 2015 and road traffic safety 2016



LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

2.4 M

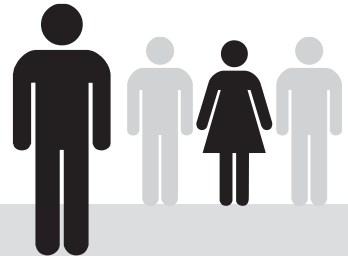
long-term unemployed



ONE IN TWO PEOPLE IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Half of the labour force

have experienced or will experience at least one spell of unemployment during their working years



The ESEC's recommendations

Change perceptions and improve support

CHANGE THE DIM VIEW TAKEN OF JOBSEEKERS

- by supporting the creation of a 21st discrimination criterion on the basis of social precarity and by adding the bill, which has already been passed by the Senate, to the agenda of the National Assembly. A consensus could not be reached on this recommendation, and some people see this criterion as a source of legal insecurity for companies regarding its possible inclusion in the Labour Code;
- by organising a national information and awareness campaign on what it is really like to be unemployed and by galvanising citizens into action;
- by developing statistics and sociological studies on the impact of unemployment on families (breakups, consequences on children and youth independence).

THE MOST

14.3%

This is the unemployment rate regarding workers versus 4.4% for managers and higher intellectual professions



Source: Insee 2014

VULNERABLE WORKERS

18.3%

This is the unemployment rate among 15 to 29 year olds. 35% of them have been out of work for 6 to 18 months

The unemployment rate among women is 9.4% versus 10.5% for men

Women

are four times more likely than men to be out of work



PEOPLE AT RISK OF UNEMPLOYMENT

18%

the unemployment rate among disabled people is double the rate among non-disabled people



Source: Dares 2015

NON-EU NATIONALS

The unemployment rate of non-European nationals in the labour force is

20.4%



for jobseekers

DEVELOP PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES IN TERMS OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

➤ Develop epidemiological research:

- by incorporating the unemployment factor into general population health cohorts;
- by conducting more targeted epidemiological studies with a view to gaining a clearer idea of the risk factors associated with unemployment.

➤ Introduce psychological support measures:

- by making information available in facilities where jobseekers come for advice, support and guidance;
- by offering everyone registering at the Pôle emploi the possibility of psychological support;
- by drawing up a good practice guide which is applicable by employers when they are notifying employees of individual or collective redundancy plans and in the ensuing period, and negotiated by the social partners.

🚩 Rally all healthcare stakeholders to the cause

- **by referring for an initial medical checkup anyone asking for one** the first time they meet with a Pôle emploi guidance counsellor;
- **by offering preventive health assistance** through improved cooperation with health examination centres;
- **by fostering early detection** of vulnerable situations specific to unemployment through greater consideration of this aspect in the training and management of teams of social workers and Pôle emploi staff;
- **by undertaking work aimed at** looking into the way the labour force as a whole is covered by the occupational health system and by planning for follow-up procedures which include traceability of occupational exposure and risks;
- **by more closely involving the Régime social des indépendants (self-employed health & welfare service/RSI) and health insurance funds** to improve follow-up of self-employed workers who have been obliged to cease their professional activity;
- **by teaching about unemployment as a risk factor** in the prevention module of the first common core year for health studies and sharing this knowledge in the specialist press.

ENSURE MORE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT

- **by improving the welcome extended to jobseekers registering at the Pôle emploi:**
 - by supplying each jobseeker with a welcome and support guide;
 - by clarifying information through letters and extending applicants the possibility of seeing a counsellor in person, to ensure their registration is not all done over the Internet;
 - by training and guiding staff to help them cope with the stress and emotional pressures of their job.
- **by facilitating integration into society and the workplace:**
 - of young people: by making enough funding available for the broad-scale roll-out of the Youth Guarantee (Garantie Jeunes) scheme for young people not in education, employment or training;
 - of parents: by expediting the creation of nursery places and financing nurseries for the purposes of professional integration by guaranteeing that all children can eat at the canteen.
- **by anticipating certain financial repercussions of unemployment:**
 - by supporting budgetary approaches that take into account living conditions and cutbacks which mean people are really feeling the pinch;
 - by providing for emergency budgets with diverse institutions – social action of *Départements* and social protection bodies – so as to provide financial assistance with out-of-pocket payments for health devices (hearing aids, dental prostheses and prescription glasses).
- **by nurturing community ties and inclusion of jobseekers:**
 - by disseminating the good practices of local initiatives which enable jobseekers to be consulted on public policies geared towards integration into society and the workplace;
 - by granting associations and organisations which support and assist people out of work the financial resources they need to accomplish their mission and their actions.