



FACES OF JOBLESSNESS

A PEOPLE-CENTRED PERSPECTIVE ON EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS AND POLICIES

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www.oecd.org/social/faces-of-joblessness.htm



Faces of Joblessness

Premise and rationale

- The circumstances of jobless people are often “messy”
- But this is not systematically reflected in how we approach policy, or the statistics that feed into policy design and delivery
- There is a need for good-quality information that captures the complexity of the employment difficulties that people face.
- People-centred info on employment barriers would help to:
 - ✓ identify **untapped sources of employment growth**
 - ✓ facilitate a cross-sectoral perspective on policy challenges
 - ✓ **targeting & tailoring** policy interventions
 - ✓ **integrating services** in a way that works for policy “clients”
 - ✓ consider **priorities** among competing challenges
 - ✓ understand **why** different approaches work (or not)
 - ✓ move from **general principles** of what works, to conversation on **specifics and implementation**



Faces of Joblessness

Objectives

Provide a systematic view on complex circumstances

Align statistics & indicators with real-world experience of joblessness

- **Map** of “disadvantaged”, “vulnerable” groups. Who are they ?
- What **employment barriers** do they face ?
- What **policy levers** to tackle those barriers ?



Faces of Joblessness

Linking policy debates with circumstances “on the ground”

activation & employment
support policies

**Large group of jobless,
complex & ‘messy’
circumstances**



Faces of Joblessness

Linking policy debates with circumstances “on the ground”





Available existing information is incomplete

Existing **high-level** labour-market indicators contain little information on relevant employment barriers...

- ⚠ standard breakdowns (age, sex, ...)
- ⚠ no clear link with problems to be addressed
(*“being young is not a barrier”*)
- ⚠ largely individual-based, little family context

Existing **in-depth** profiling systems designed for needs of specific process / institution (e.g., PES)...

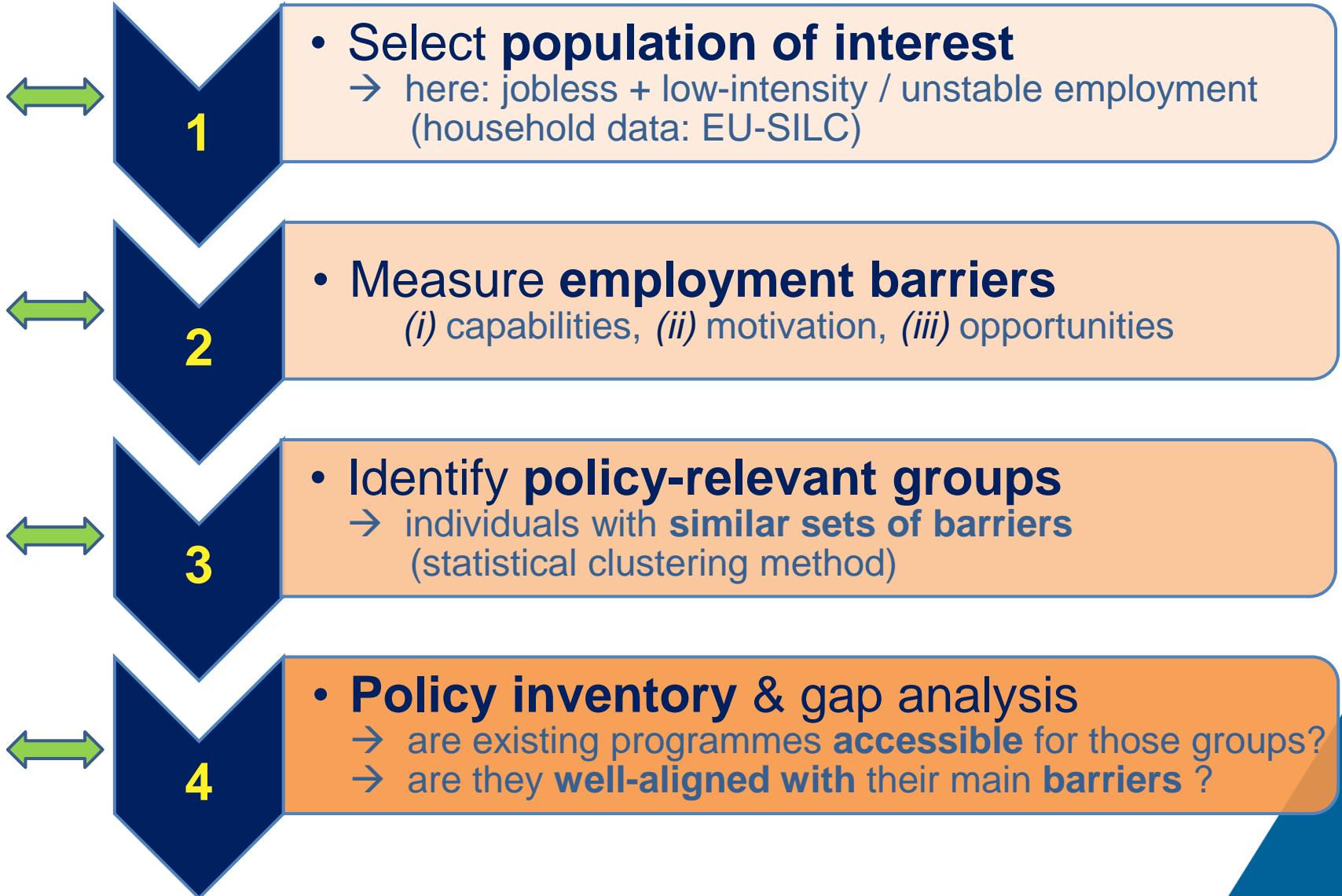
- ⚠ generally not used for higher-level policy dialogue
- ⚠ may not capture circumstances relevant for key policy areas, eg. care responsibilities, incentives
- ⚠ miss big parts of jobless, eg. only registered unemployed



Filling the gap: Main steps

People-centred, “bottom-up” approach

Country dialogue





A joint effort

- Initially a 2-year project 2016/2017, innovative partnership:



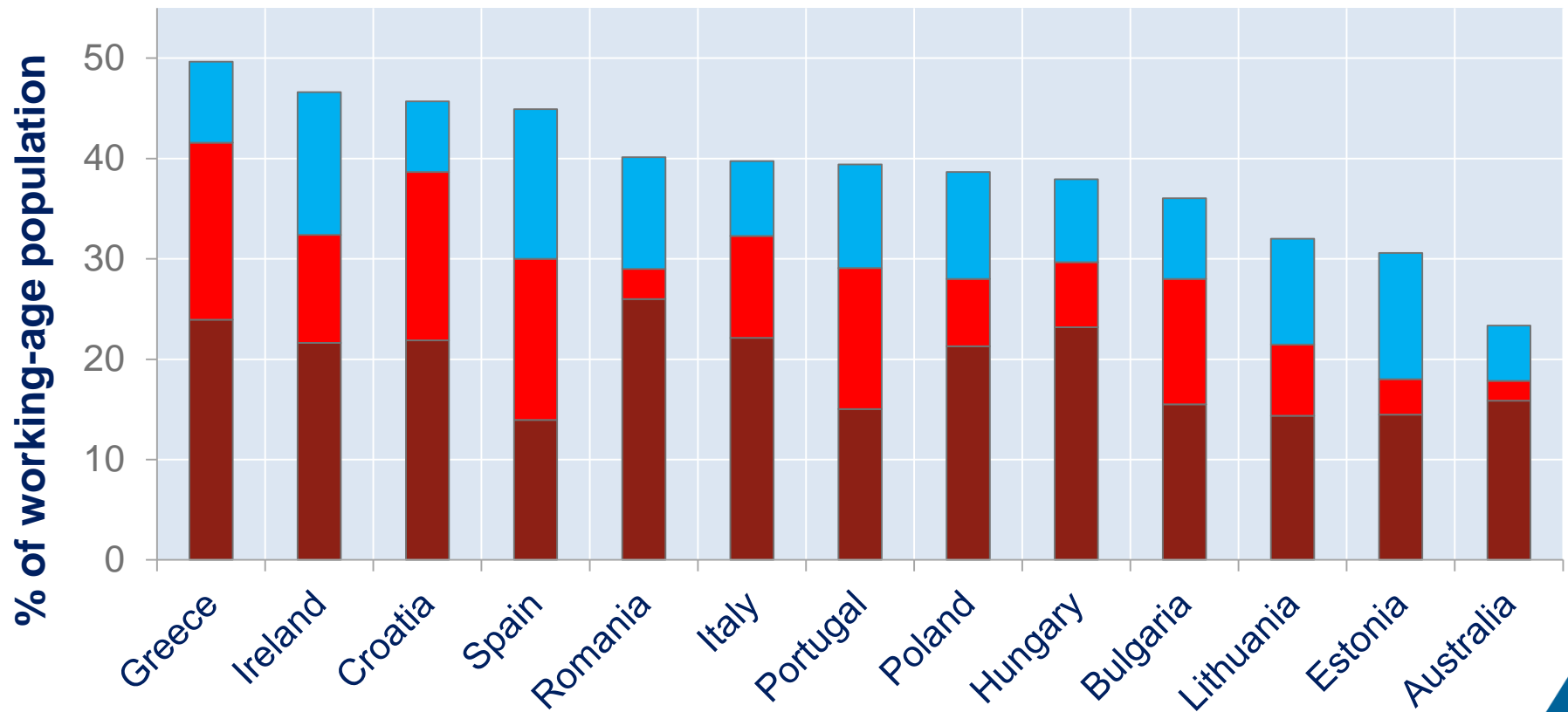
- Unified method and broadly similar process / outputs
- Extensions @OECD:** eg Australia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania
- Main findings**
 - ✓ employment difficulties **very** different across countries & groups
 - ✓ indicates **different needs for support**, even in demographically similar population segments (“older workers”, “youth”, “mothers”)
 - ✓ traditional ways of presenting LM statistics cannot capture this
 - ✓ large majority face **multiple barriers**
 - ✓ existing programmes sometimes of right type but **poor access, coordination**
 - ✓ input into **OECD country policy reviews, European Semester**



Scope for labour-market integration measures.

Up to half have potential difficulties

■ Inactive ■ Persistently unemployed ■ Weak labour market attachment



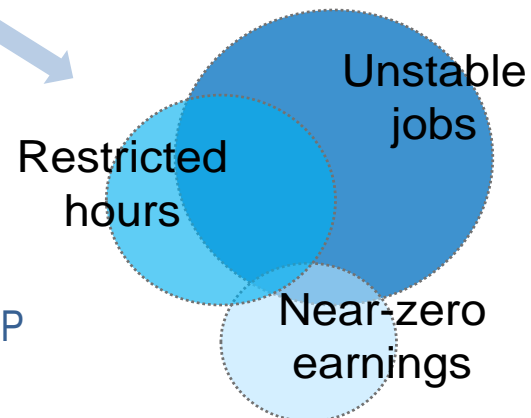
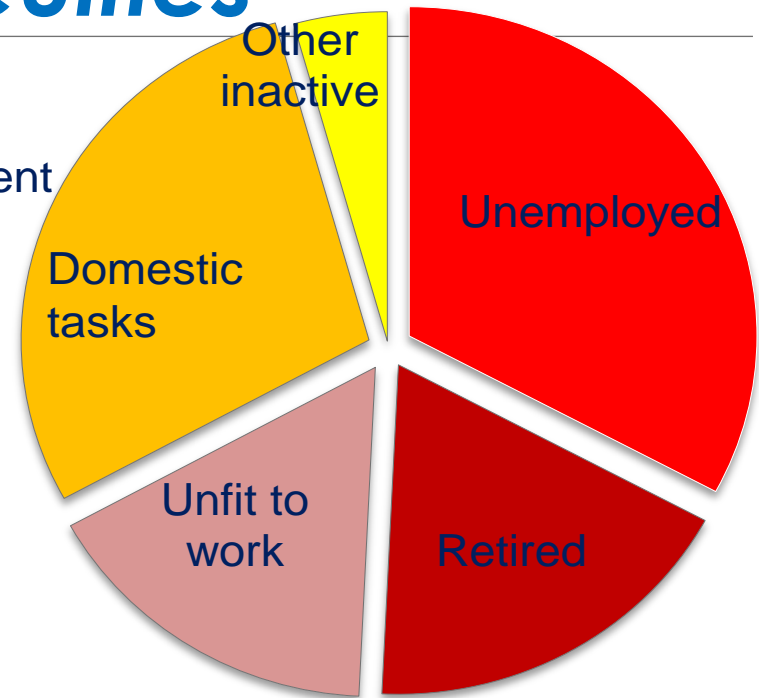
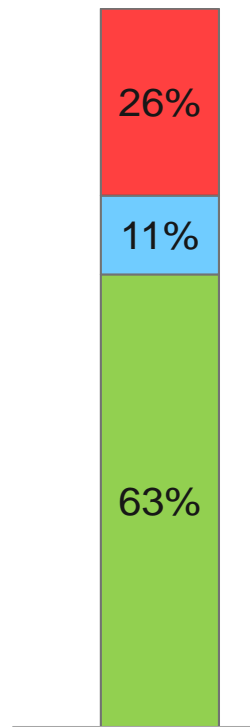
18-64, excluding students, military service

Source: EU SILC and HILDA 2014



“Individuals with potential employment difficulties”

- Persistently out of work
- Weak labour market attachment
- No major difficulties



Average across selected countries: AUS, EST, IRL, ITA, LTU, PRT, ESP
18-64, excluding students, military service
Source: EU SILC and HILDA 2014

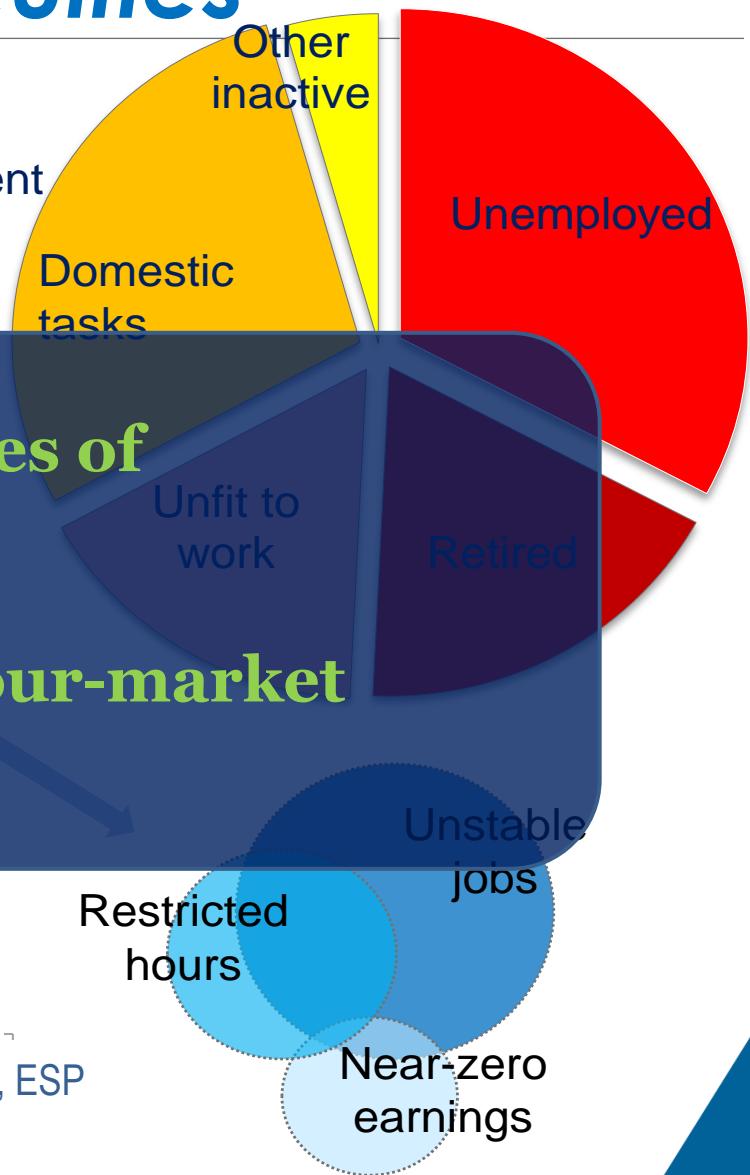


“Individuals with potential employment difficulties”

- Persistently out of work
- Weak labour market attachment
- No major difficulties

➤ **What are untapped sources of employment growth?**

➤ **What is the scope for labour-market integration policies?**



Average across selected countries: AUS, EST, IRL, ITA, LTU, PRT, ESP
18-64, excluding students, military service
Source: EU SILC and HILDA 2014



What difficulties?

A typology of employment barriers



Work-related capabilities

- Education / skills
- Work experience
- Health problems
- Care responsibilities



Motivation / Incentives

- Out-of-work benefits
- Tax burdens on in-work earnings
- Non-labour incomes
- Earnings of other family members



Opportunities

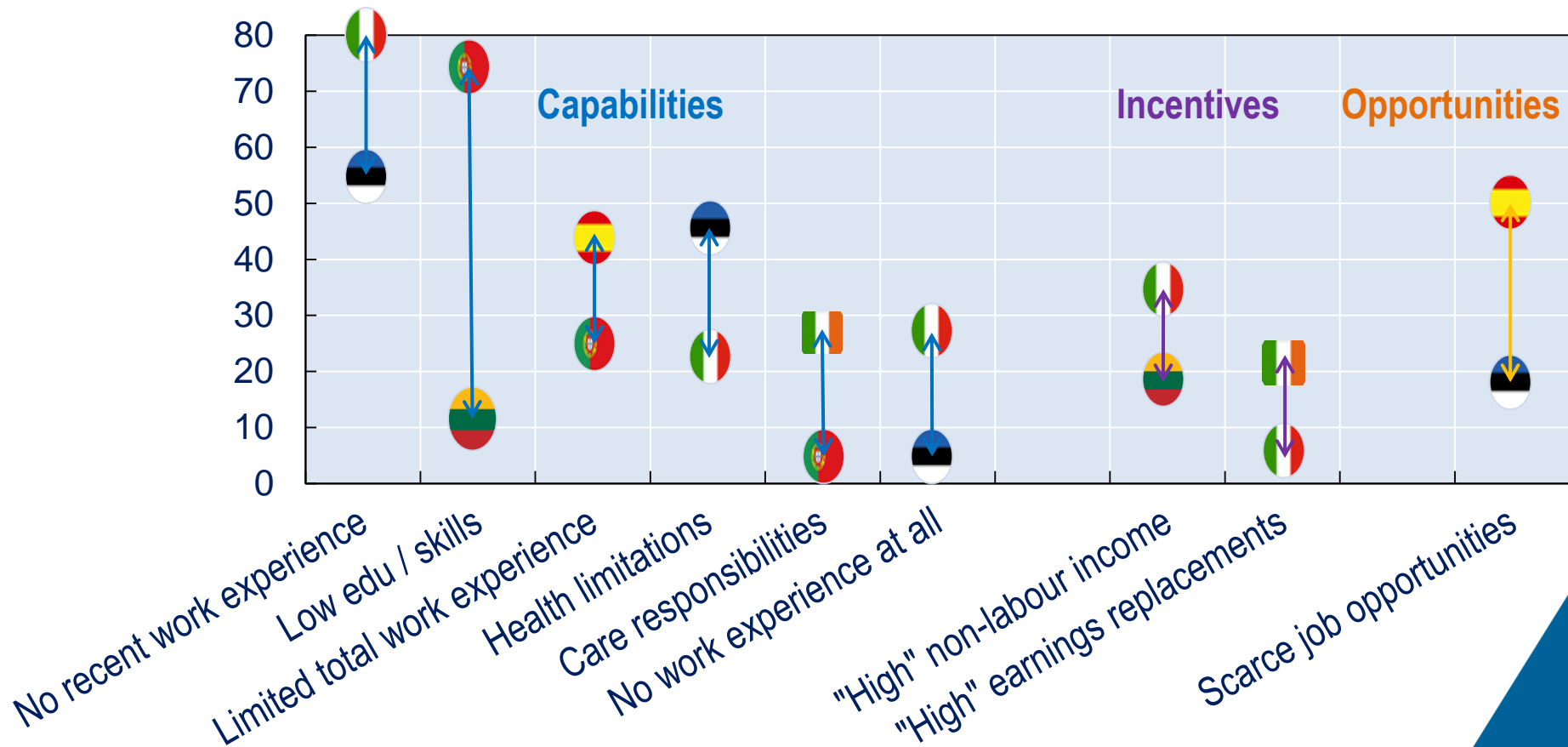
- Cyclical labour-market weakness
- Limited hiring in relevant labour-market segment (eg, region, education)



Employment barriers

Incidence across countries

% of individuals with potential labour market difficulties

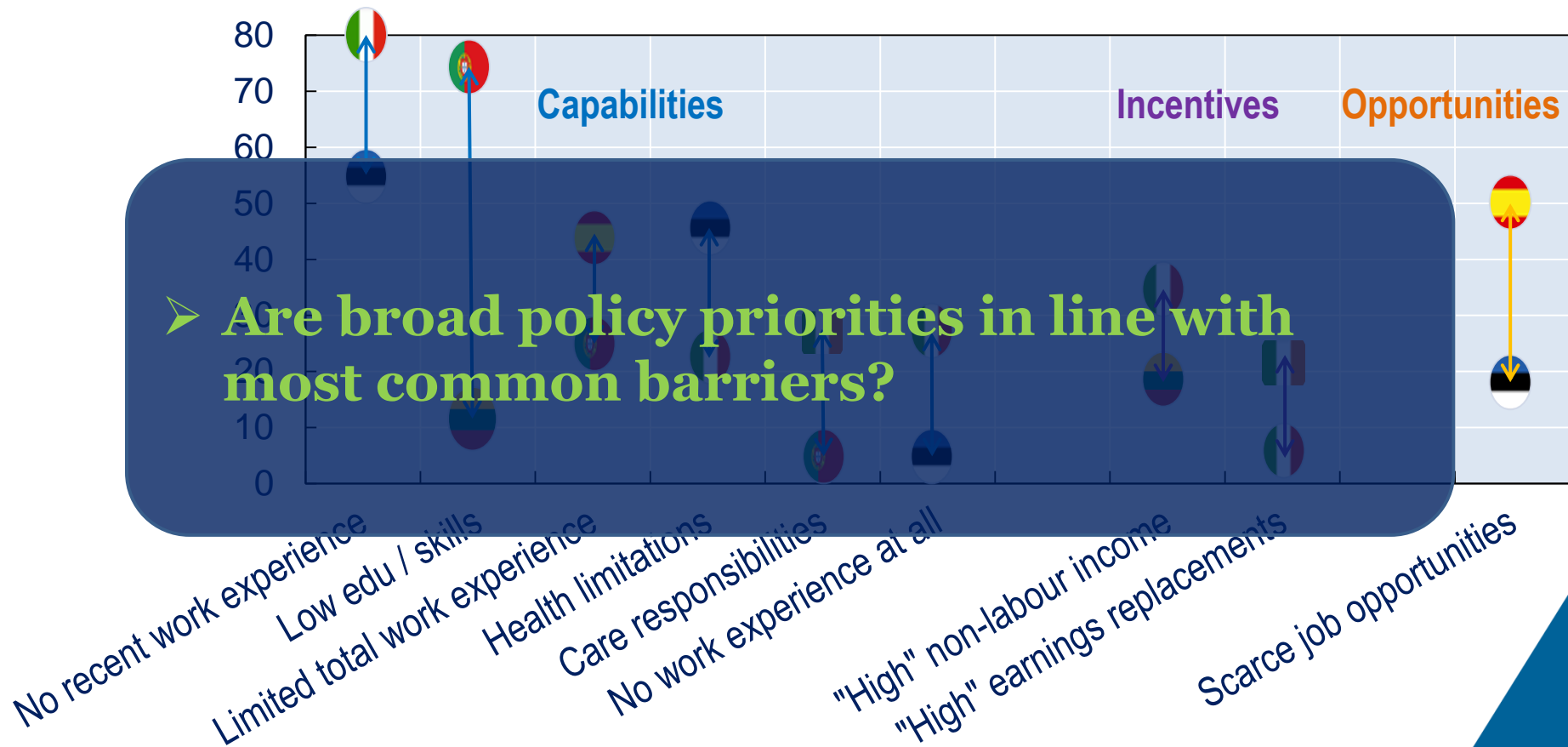




Employment barriers

Incidence across countries

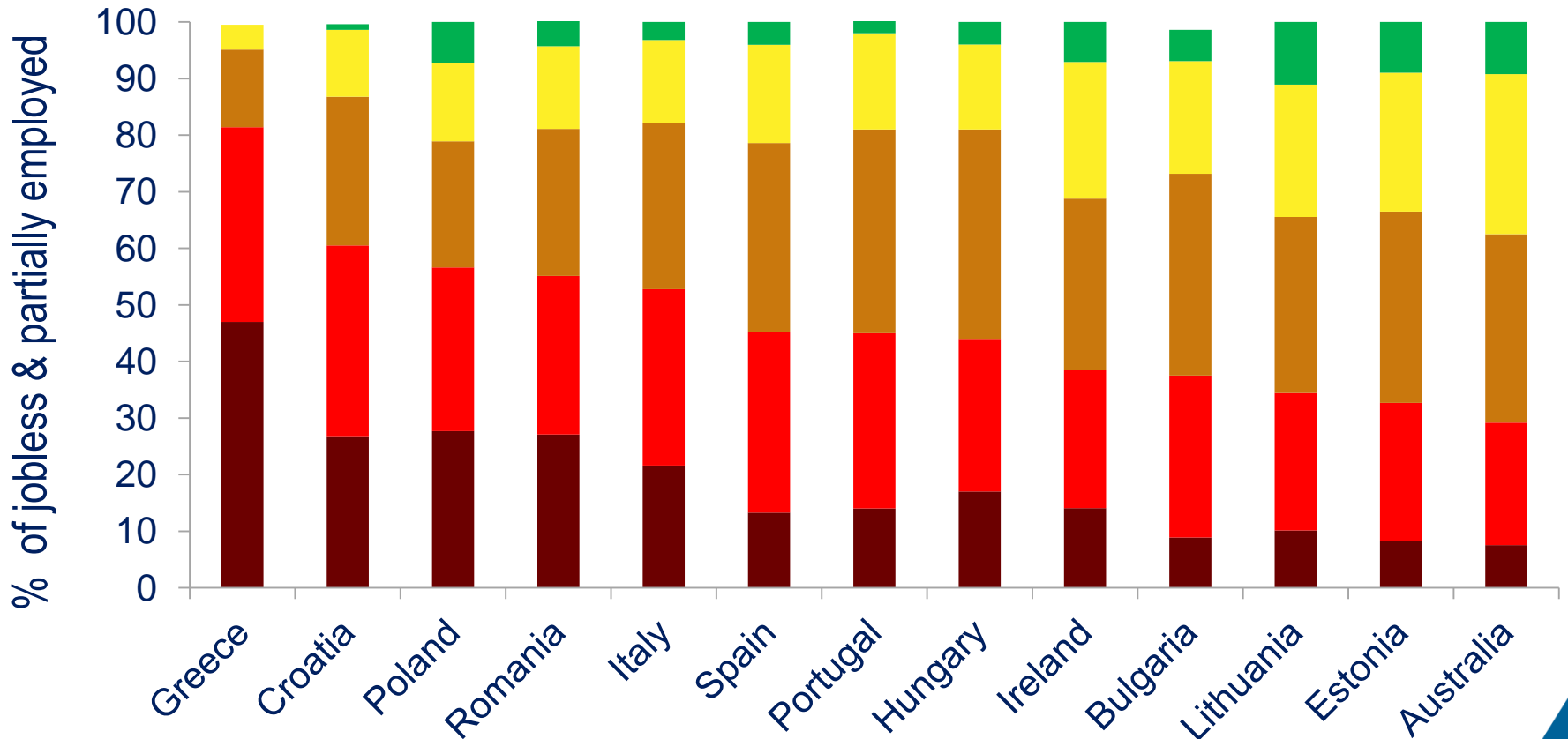
% of individuals with potential labour market difficulties





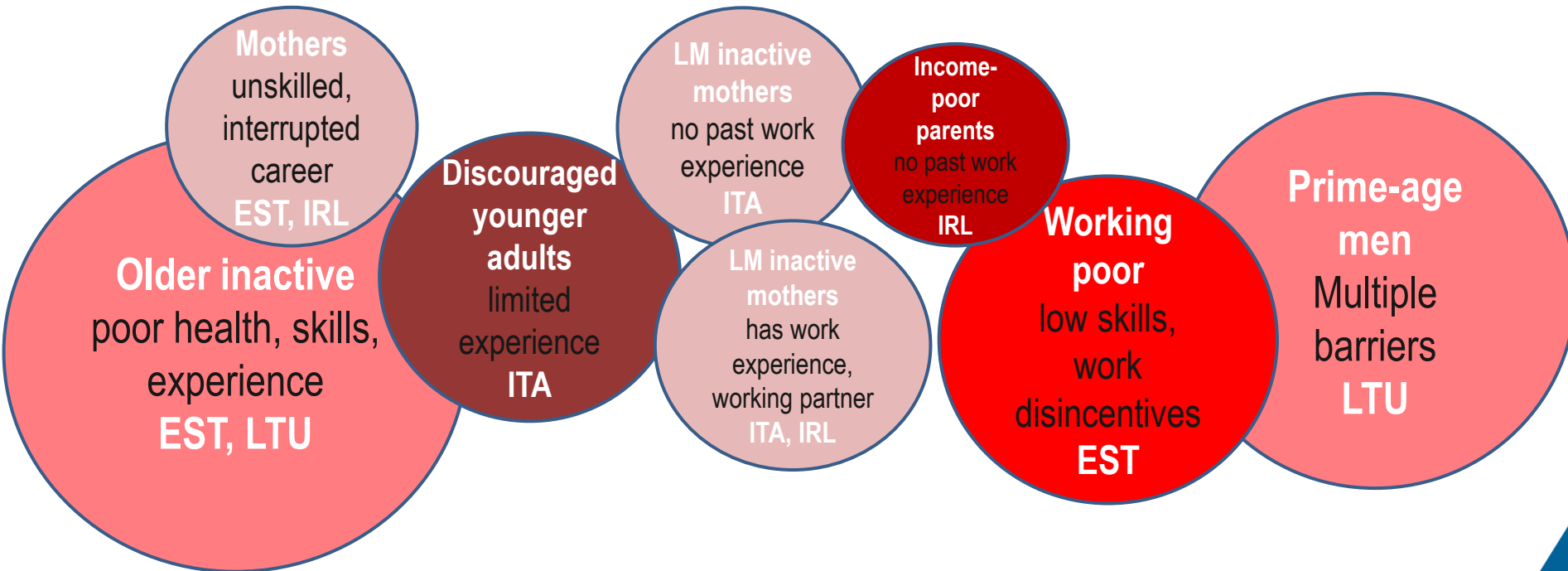
Most face multiple barriers

■ 4 or more barriers ■ 3 barriers ■ 2 barriers ■ single barrier ■ No major barrier





Large number of distinct groups





Large number of distinct groups

Mothers
unskilled,
interrupted
career
EST, IRL

LM inactive
mothers
no past work
experience
ITA

Income-
poor
parents
no past work
experience
IRL

Discouraged
younger
adults
limited
experience
ITA

LM inactive
mothers
has work
experience,
working partner
ITA, IRL

Working
poor
low skills,
work
disincentives
EST

Prime-age
men
Multiple
barriers
LTU

Older inactive
poor health, skills,
experience
EST, LTU

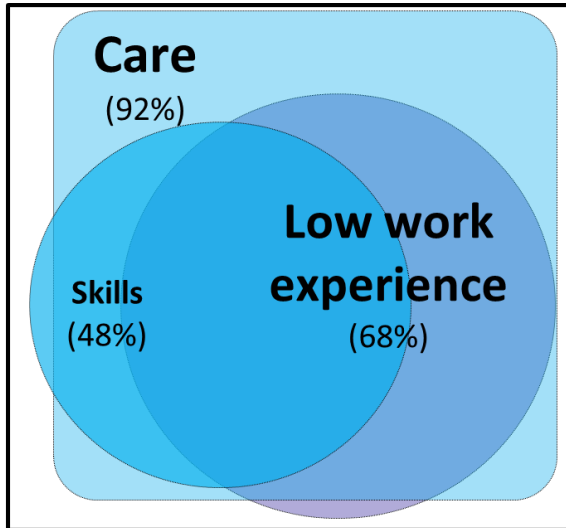
➤ Are groups “on the radar” of activation & employment-support policies ?

➤ Should they be ?

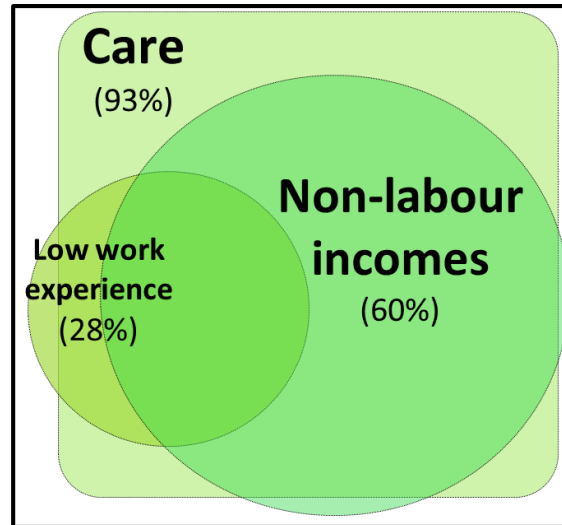
Zooming in: Commonly used labels comprise distinct groups with different “faces”

→ They require different policy approaches

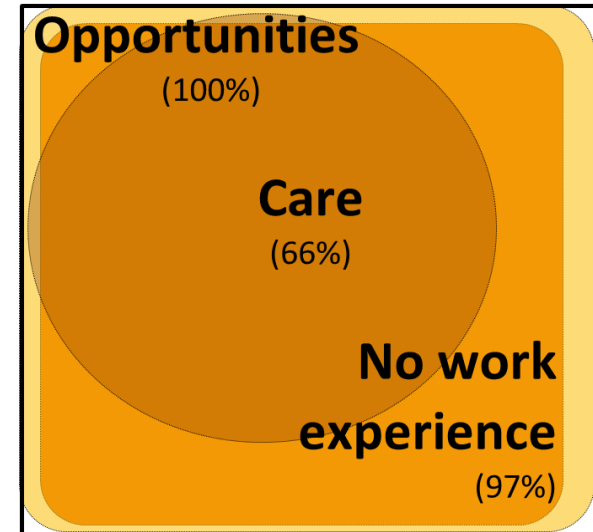
mothers: low-skilled, LM-inactive benefit recipients



mothers: well-educated & working partner



parents: economically vulnerable



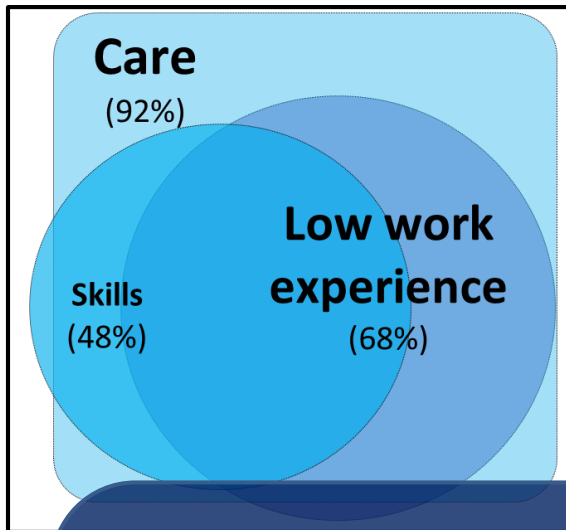


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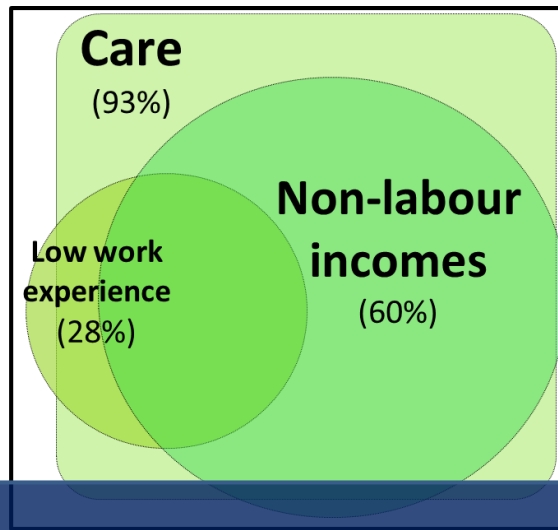
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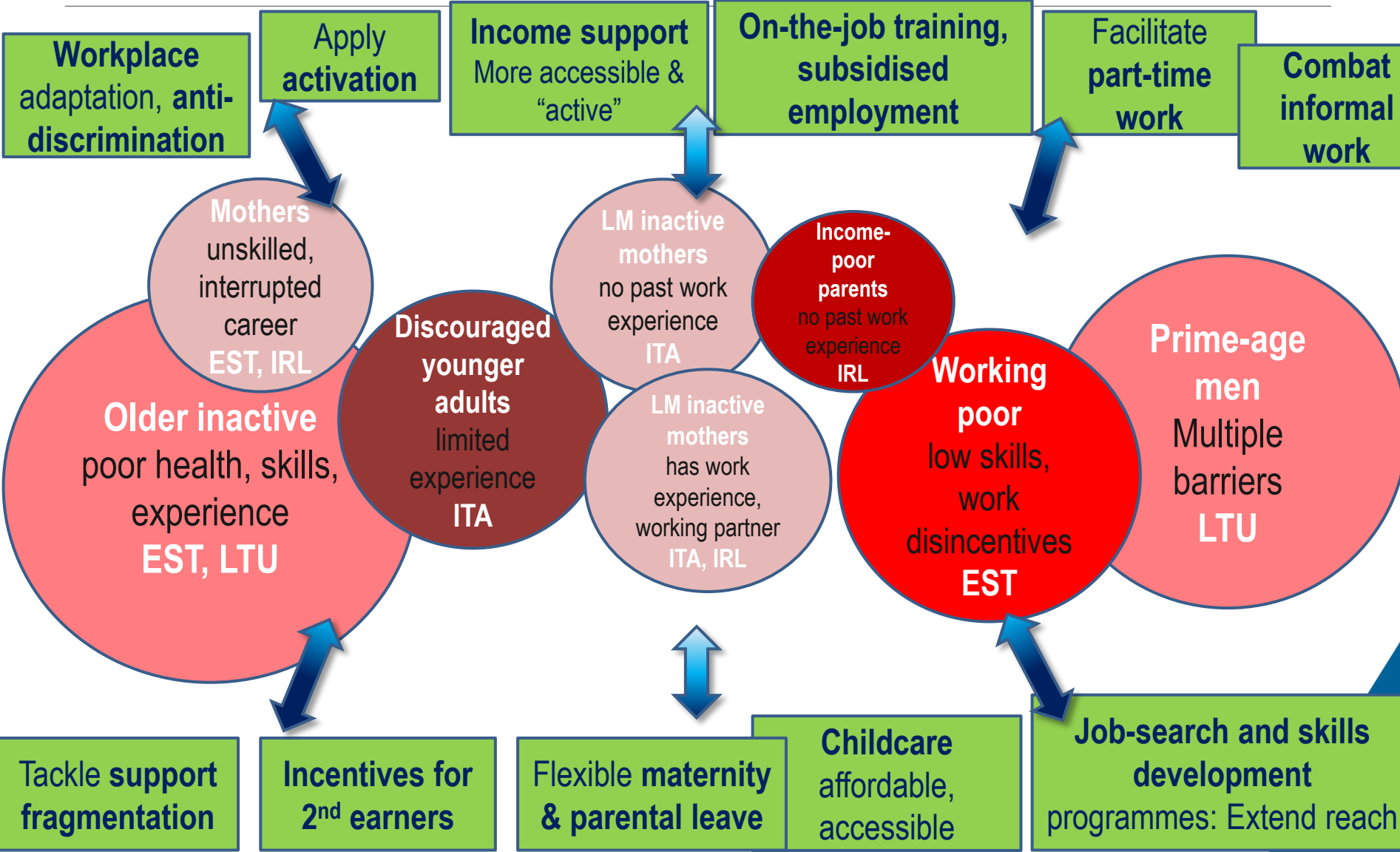


Basis for a people-centred policy inventory.

- Which groups are a priority for support ?
- Are policies aligned with their needs ?
- A need for coordination across policy domains ?



“Messy” circumstances... and their policy implications. *Themes in the policy dialogue*





Faces of Joblessness

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Links & further information:

www.oecd.org/social/faces-of-joblessness.htm

“Faces of joblessness in Australia: An anatomy of employment barriers based on household data”, [OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Paper](#), forthcoming.

www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages.htm

[Connecting People with Jobs](#)

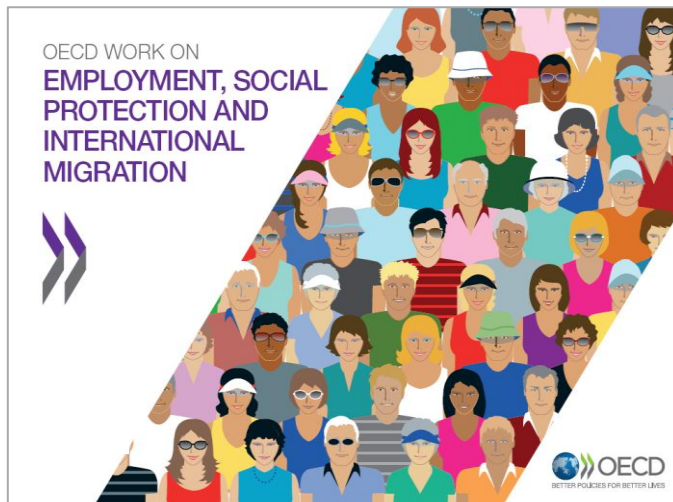
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