The individual project led by Jean-Michel Bonvin draws on Amartya Sen’s theoretical framework to develop an analytical model of agency within structure. It includes notably a mixed-methods study on the living conditions of people on disability benefits and a qualitative study on young adults on social assistance.

The aim of IP5 is to understand to what extent social integration policies are effective in protecting vulnerable people and helping them living a valued life. In order to investigate this issue, IP5 mobilises the capability approach (CA) developed by Amartya Sen. According to Sen, the ultimate objective of welfare policies is to increase people’s capabilities, i.e. their real freedom to lead a valuable life. Rather than focusing on employability or efficiency, the CA invites us to question the appropriateness of welfare intervention regarding individuals’ trajectories, on their experience of disability insurance. On this basis, the qualitative part of the study will start by the end of 2014. It will involve semi-directed interviews carried out with recipients and providers of disability benefits in the canton of Vaud. The second one is focused on their “institutional trajectory”, from the moment they claim for disability benefits to the administrative closure of their case. Using cluster analysis, we identified the main trajectories of disability recipients. We relate them to a series of socio-demographic variables (sex, age, nationality) and also to the legislative reforms undertaken by disability insurance. On this basis, the qualitative part of the study will start by the end of 2014. It will involve semi-directed interviews carried out with recipients and providers of disability benefits in the canton of Vaud. This second part of the study will assess with a capability perspective the impact of disability insurance on recipients’ trajectories, on their experience of disability and more specifically, on their capability for work, i.e. their real freedom to take a job they have reason to value.