iNEETiative – A Holistic Approach to Youth at Risk and in a NEET situation

Bucharest – Romania 19th – 23rd May 2015

Trainers' Report







About the Training

This seminar was a follow-up to a seminar held in Finland in 2014 entitled 'What is Your NEET' (<u>www.salto-youth.net/neetseminar</u>) to which 35 participants gathered from various sectors to discuss better ways to work with and inspire vulnerable young people Not in Education, Employment or Training.

iNEETiative seminar took place in Bucharest, Romania in May 2015 and welcomed 32 cross-sectoral stakeholders from formal, non-formal and business backgrounds to work together to find innovative and realistic methods of reaching and connecting with young people who are currently in a difficult life situation. One common goal was to encourage ongoing future cooperation between the participants who are all currently working in some capacity with young people who are off the radar as far as the job market or education is concerned.

The seminar focused on exploring good practices both coming from the participants' experiences and from several field visits organised in Bucharest. Part of the activities involved participants visiting successful local projects working with and giving opportunities to young people within this target group. Participants had the opportunity to hear presentations from local experts as well as sharing their own good practise with the rest of the group.

The seminar was coordinated and funded by the Romanian National Agency in conjunction with SALTO Inclusion as part of the Erasmus+ programme. Participants were representing Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey.

The planned outcomes of the seminar were for participants to:

- Exchange possible ways to work together and stimulate development of connected services
- Analyse and collect good practices and identify the underlining success criteria
- Rethink their own practices
- Analyse the role of different stakeholders and what they can do
- Get to know different realities
- Feed into the bigger SALTO Inclusion research on NEET
- Get information about Erasmus+ programme funding possibilities





The agenda of the seminar was as follow:

	Tuesday 19th May	Wednesday 20th May	Thursday 21st May	Friday 22nd May	Saturday 23rd May
9:00		Breakfast			
9:00 – 10:30	ARRIVALS by 17h	Get to know each other		Analysing & rethinking practices	
		Intro	Sharing good practices		DEP
10:30 - 11:00		Café	Café	Café	
11:00 – 12:30		Clarification of concepts surrounding the NEET issues		Available funding and resources	
			Romanian reality – expert input		
12:30 - 14:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:30		Challenges & realities of your target group and your organization	Leaving at 13.30h Working together & action plans Visit to local projects working with young people who are in NEET situation Café Guided city tour, 17:00 Informal reflection Evaluation	DEPARTURES	
15:30 - 16:00		Café		Café	
16:00 – 17:30		Identity the roles of stakeholders and key elements of cross- sectoral cooperation			
17:30 - 18:00		Reflection Session			
19:00 - 20:00	Dinner in the hotel	Dinner in the hotel	Dinner Out	Dinner out	
20:00	Welcome Evening &Getting to Know Each Other	Intercultural picnic	Free night	Free night	





Workshop Outcomes

Clarification of concepts

In order to assure that the group had the same understanding of the concepts used during the seminar, at the beginning of the workshop the facilitators offered clarifications of the followings terms: NEET, Youth Guarantee, youth, Erasmus plus, unemployment, practices, methods, non-formal learning, informal learning, field visits.

The facilitators offered brief definitions of the terms in order to establish a common understanding for the duration of the seminar.

Also in the beginning of the seminar, Ian Goldring, Director of Project Works Association was invited, as an expert, to bring a definition of young people in a NEET situation, to present the damages and the costs related to young people facing a NEET situation and to generate discussion about what actions can be taken in order to improve the situation of the young people facing a NEET situation.

The well-structured presentation included examples of categories of young people facing a NEET situation, statistics of young people in a NEET situation, a presentation of the risks factors that contribute to create a NEET situation, data regarding the costs and the damages that the society must pay for NEET and measurements in order to assure a pathway to employment. At the end of the presentation a discussion was generated about concrete actions that can be done for young people facing a NEET situation.

The input was well-received by the participants and the expert created a constructive interaction with the group.





Challenges and realities of the target group and the organisations

The session about "challenges and realities of your target group and your organisation" intended to capitalise on the experience of participants and offered space for the group to share their work with the young people that are in a NEET situation.

Each participant was invited to draw a map of the country where they work and inside the map to answer to the follow questions:

• Who are the people that are in a NEET situation in your country?



- What is the unemployment rate of young people in your country?
- What are the main problems / challenges that the young people are facing in your country?

Through the session the diversity of the professional backgrounds of the participants and their target groups was shown. The participants were representing diverse NGOs, public bodies and the private sector. The target groups with which they work was very heterogeneous, as follows: children and youngsters with difficult family backgrounds; young people with disabilities; children and young people at risk (children from minorities with focus on Roma children etc.) and their families; youth who dropped out from school; early school leavers; unemployed young person; lone parents & their children; Travellers; migrants and refugees.

The unemployment rate varies from 9.5% in Netherlands up to 53.2% in Spain. A range that was much discussed in the group. Also the official numbers were discussed, for example the case of Romania, where the official number of youth unemployment is 22.7 % but there are also young people that are not registered.

The main challenges faced by the young people in different countries are the lack of support (social support, family support and financial support), low access to the labour market, lack of job opportunities, the fact that competences



developed in schools are not related with the jobs offers, the young people in NEET situation are not seen as innovators, actors of change.

The exercise proposed was well received by the group, the participants shared their experience in the field and also had the opportunity to learn from the others' own realities. At the end of the exercise a map of Europe was illustrated on the floor. The exercise also showed the large spectrum of experience within the room. There were persons working directly with young people in a NEET situation (using different methods, from coaching to art and environment), there were persons working in public institutions that address young people in NEET institutions and also there were persons that work with social workers / youth workers that are in contact with young people in a NEET situation.







Collaboration between Different Stakeholders

The participants were given the opportunity in groups to describe the realities of cross-sectorial collaboration in their countries by means of a practical creative task where they were invited to design and build a three-dimensional sculpture which conceptually demonstrated how collaboration works.

Almost all the groups described a lack of true collaboration between governmental organisations and the NGO sector. Although some described funding being available it was apparent during the exercise that this was an area internationally with much room for positive development.

Several group members talked about interesting streams of funding from non-governmental, profit-making organisations and the group discussed the importance of exploiting the **Corporate Social Responsibility** policy of big business internationally for the good of work with young people in a NEET situation. One specific example which was demonstrated well was applying for funds from National Lottery charity arms, and more specifically a fruitmachine company that donates a percentage of its takings to good causes.



Most groups cited the European Commission as a partner in cross-sectoral work highlighting that most organisations are currently using EU funds in one way or another. Many groups also emphasised that government cuts were having a negative impact on the work that they are able to do.

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Another interesting element was that some groups described cross-sectoral collaboration as chaotic. That there are too many directions in which young people can be pulled, and this, especially for those young people that are hard to reach in the first place, can be extremely confusing and can effectively become a barrier to their involvement in the support structure designed to help them.





Sharing of Good Practice

The trainers chose six individuals to present an example of their practice in their field. They were chosen in relation to their diversity and we tried to choose representatives from different sectors.

- One Polish participant was a representative of an international, profit-making recruitment consultancy (Reed in Partnership http://reedinpartnership.co.uk/latest-news/reed-in-partnership-launches-in-poland.aspx). She described how, although working with young people in a NEET situation was new to her firm, it is something that the company is currently making a priority. Their plan is to offer advice and support on effective interview techniques learning what the employer means when they ask specific questions, and what your answers say about you as an individual. Although she had no experience in that area to this point is was encouraging to see a private business targeting young people in a NEET situation.
- A participant from Luxemburg works for an NGO offering 'education for social change' (4motion <u>www.4motion.lu</u>) The organisation's main aim is to get into schools, or to reach young people for whom school is not a place where they are successful, and carry out holistic and diagnostic training with them to help them find meaningful employment. We were shown an example of the kind of activity done with the young people where they try to focus the young person's attention on their, perhaps hidden, skills, in order to link them to the kind of work at which they might be successful.
- A French participant presented their NGO that was working heavily with European funding to offer international mobility opportunities for young people with fewer opportunities and adults with special needs (Itinéraire International - <u>www.itineraire-international.org</u>). We were told that participants are split between international employment, internships and voluntary service. They highlighted the importance of a holistic approach including supportive preparation, contact during the mobility and extensive follow-up and evaluation once the participant returns home.
- A Spanish participant presented the work done by her organisation in order to increase employability among young people (Fundación ACCIÓN CONTRA EL HAMBRE -<u>www.accioncontraelhambre.org</u>). They work with collaborative learning, solidarity, and development of personal competences using coaching methods. Participants organise themselves like a company to reach a common goal: entry to the labor market. This model was presented as a new model that breaks with the directive and paternalistic focus. Participants become the lead actors, increasing their initiative and responsibility.
- A Belgian participant gave an intense presentation was shared about using creative approaches towards young people in order to decrease school dropout and marginalisation of our society (Mishto "Back to Earth" project). The representative of the organisation shared their example of organising workshops in the Romania ghetto. They have used art (photography) in order to document photographically their life and situation in the ghetto. Lots of youngsters from the ghetto are still now, almost one year after the project, using their photographical skills learned in that period and continuing the creative way of expression. Due to the success of the pilot project the organisation continued to use the same methodology for international events with youngsters in a difficult situation.
- Another presentation was about a societal innovator from the Netherlands (Studio Moio <u>www.studiomoio.nl</u>). They approach young people at risk as innovators, developers, solvers





of social problems and they ask them to become 'world-changers'. They bring new insides & execute ideas on Elderly Care, (youth) unemployment, refugees, urban development, school dropout and others. By changing the position of those youngsters, they gain confidence in themselves and society and see more possibilities to choose direction in their own life. They get involved in society; they learn they can be valuable in that society.

The session about the best practices was inspiring both for the persons that presented and the other participants. During the presentations, the others were invited to analyse the sessions, taking into consideration the following aspects:

- From what you have seen/heard what makes, for you, a good practice? Is there something that surprised you?
- How would you measure the impact or the success of a good practice?
- What is easy for you to transfer to your reality? And why?
- What would you improve in the practices that you have seen? And why?

At the end of the morning dedicated to best practices, Mrs. Ancuta Plaesu, Senior Research Fellow Youth Research Department at Institute of Education Sciences Bucharest, Romania presented some data about Romanian NEETs - characteristics, risks and life contexts. The presentation was very much appreciated because after sharing concrete examples of projects that can be done for young people facing a NEET situation, the group felt the need to receive also some data / references about the situation in Romania. The expert based her presentation on the research Social inclusion of Romanian young people Not in Education, Employment or Training – qualitative field research and discussions about the methodology used in the research, the statistical portrait of a young person in a NEET situation in Romania, public policies for NEETs in Romania, risks regarding employment, risks related to education and training and recommendations and areas of intervention.

Also, Romanian participant Veronica Stefan helpfully described in detail the conclusions of a study conducted by the Romanian Youth Council together with UNICEF regarding youngsters in a NEET situation.

A discussion was also generated at the end of the presentation. Many issues were being raised both by the participants and by the expert.





Field Visits

Ateliere Fara Frontiere

This was an extremely interesting and inspirational field visit for a number of reasons. This is essentially a recycling organisation that takes used and broken computers and refurbishes them to a usable state. They also recycle advertising meshes and banners turning them into functional items like bags, aprons and tablet covers. All of this is very commendable, not least because of the recycling but also the philanthropic nature of the organisation donating a percentage of their wares for free and selling the rest at a reasonable price.

But how does this field visit relate to young people in a NEET situation? Well the organisation has an extremely inclusive employment policy. Apart from the directors almost all of the employees are people suffering from disadvantage in some way: from adults with learning difficulties to young people in a difficult situation. The organisation gives full training to the employees and they can learn real skills from intricate sewing to building computers from scratch. These are all fully transferable skills and would help them to be employed elsewhere in the future should they want to move on.

We were given a friendly tour and the manager was able to answer all of our questions. The main

negative point that could be made about this field visit was that it didn't really show us any transferable methods of ways to work with young people in a NEET situation. This organisation is a social enterprise and due to the nature of their work they are position offer in а to opportunities to young people that might not get those chances elsewhere, but



several of our participants are not working for such organisations and it would have been more fruitful to discuss ways of reaching these young people in the first place, and the most effective methods of training them to do the job. That said, all of our participants were touched by the tour and felt inspired by the ethos of the organisation.

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Prezi of organisation: <u>http://bit.ly/1Gs55rk</u> Contacts (for information or to order bags etc): Andrei Breazu: <u>andrei.breazu@atelierefarafrontiere.ro</u> Marta Tanase <u>marta.tanase@atelierefarafrontiere.ro</u>





PARADA Foundation

Another visit was organised at Parada Foundation which is a Romanian Foundation that supports homeless children, young people and families through its social, educative and social – professional integration services. It was a very emotional visit because the participants had the opportunity to interact with some of the beneficiaries of the foundation.

Also the director of the foundation Mr. Ionut Serban Jugureanu – Director Executive presented in detail the history of the organisation, previous work done by the foundation and what they actually do on the streets with the youngsters.

The mission of the Foundation is the complete and stable re/integration of the persons at high risk of social exclusion, by using a programme to which beneficiaries participate, first as partners of the Foundation and then as decision makers of their own development. PARADA Foundation implements a variety of projects; they use lot circus methods to work with homeless young people. Besides that, they provide services such as:

- "CARAVANA" Night Street Intervention
- Day Centre
- Family Type Units
- Children and Young People's Reintegration and Support in the Family
- Home Support for Young People and Families in Difficulty
- APEL Service for Professional Training and Integration
- "Agora" Circus Troup
- Artistic Tours

The visit was very emotional, especially when the director mentioned the harsh reality from the streets. He mentioned that they manage to save some of the youngsters from the streets, but others return to the street, or even end up dying due to drugs or health issues. The visit had a strong

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impact. The participants saw in practice what methods they can use for a very difficult group (homeless young people), they also saw how they can interact with them and approach them. Due to the fact that not all the participants work with this specific target group, the transfer of the knowhow will be hard to manage.



Website: <u>http://www.paradaromania.ro/</u> Youtube: <u>https://www.youtube.com/user/FondationPARADA</u> Contact: Ionut Jugureanu: <u>i.jugureanu@paradaromania.ro</u>





Future funding

In order to provide concrete tools for transforming the participants' ideas into projects, the following funding opportunities were presented:

- Erasmus Plus programme The European Programme that brings together seven existing EU programmes in the fields of Education, Training, and Youth http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/
 Europe for Citizens A European programme that encourages understanding of the EU's history and diversity and promotes democratic participation of its citizens.
 https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens this session was chaired by Gabriela Nicolau an expert consultant in the Europe for Citizens Point, Romania
- European Youth Foundation is the Council of Europe's fund to provide financial support for European youth activities http://www.eyf.coe.int/fej/
- Other ideas for funding most of the ideas listed were connected with involving private sectors, starting fund raising campaigns and crowd-funding

Ideas for Future Cooperation

There was a tangible energy within the group for working together in the future, especially using Erasmus+ funding either for applying for Youth Mobility or Strategic Partnerships or other similar actions.

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Five key areas of group interest were highlighted during the OPERA method:

• Birth Rate

This was a conceptual idea, and very little concrete was planned finally, but it was highlighted that lobbying needs to be done at a European and International level to promote sex education and to acknowledge that there are many future NEETS who are currently babies, and societies need to act early – prevention being better than cure.

• Empowerment of Young People

It was suggested to create a project to empower young people, particularly those in rural areas, to get involved in group activities such as meaningful work experience, sports and practical environmental activities to empower them to learn new skills and work as part of a team. A Youth Exchange was suggested for this activity.







• International Collaboration

This was designed to be a Strategic Partnership between like-minded organisations to work together on a research project discussing causes of NEET situations, challenges youngsters face. The output was a publication of methodologies and shared tools.

• Tools/Methods

The proposed idea here was to apply for funds to create a seminar designed to share best practice amongst professionals working with this target group.

Eals/METHODS



• Stakeholder Collaboration

The idea here was to create a network of cross-sectorial organisations working with young people within a specific region, including governmental organisations. Best practices within those groups would be shared and an international element would then be brought in using Erasmus+ funding.



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The Programme for Learning

The programme was structured in order to fulfill both the seminar objectives and the participants' needs. The flow of the programme was appropriate for the group dynamic. The methods used answered different learning styles, from sessions focusing on actions, to more theoretical approaches. Based on the feedback received from the participants the most appreciated sessions

were the ones dedicated to field visits, the connection between various stakeholders and the Challenges and realities of the target group & the organisations.

The participants consider the programme full, well structured, efficient and proactive.

The methods used were evaluated as interactive, and focused.

Some of the participants declared that they would have liked more time for the field visits, a more clear definition of youth work, more theoretical / policy information.



It was also expressed the need for more time for informal discussion, networking and future planning. All in all, the program responded very well to the participants' needs.





Feedback from Evaluation Forms



1. To which extent did the seminar reach its objectives? possible range 0 (not at all) – 6 (fully)

Based on the results from the evaluation forms, 88% of the participants declared that the objectives of the seminar were reached. 47% declared that were fully reached and 41% reached. Also the rest of 13% declared that the objectives were reached more than 50%.

Participants' comments:

- It was a good correlation between the objectives and activities. The objectives were chosen very well.
- Case studies and field visits are really useful
- I think it required to have people from the NGOs of people with disability
- The seminar and the staff were great. Maybe we should have some more time. A day perhaps.





The graphics show an improvement of knowledge about young people in a NEET situation. Before the event 47 % declared that they had no knowledge or a little knowledge and 53% declared they have some knowledge within which only 3% declared that they have an extensive knowledge, at the end of the seminar, 100% declared that they know from having a more clear idea to have extent knowledge (44%). This proves that the seminar provided enough information in order to increase the knowledge of the participants regarding young people in a NEET situation.

Participants' comments:

- Perfect matching between theory and practice.
- I just realized that the NEETs are similar all over Europe.
- Nothing major improved in terms of definitions, but a lot in terms of experience of youth workers and their concrete examples.
- Now I want to work with NEETs, I think it's so important.



 What is your knowledge of concrete tools to address issues of young people in a NEET situation? (0-no knowledge, 6 – extended knowledge)

As previously mentioned, the graphics show an increase of the knowledge regarding concrete tools to work with young people facing a NEET situation. Before the event, the knowledge was rated as very little – 59 %, while after the event 91% participants declared that they know and have an extensive knowledge about the tools. This shows that the seminar provided examples of concrete tools that can be used in working with young people facing a NEET situation.

Participants' comments:

- I feel that the good practice sharing session could have been more specific to present tools that already work.
- The specific examples really inspired me to work on it back home.
- I did not really learn about new tools, more about the importance of collaboration and exchange, but it's a tool!

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- A lot of questions have been answered





4. How do you understand cross-sectorial cooperation in the field of tackling young people in a NEET situation?



Regarding cross-sectoral cooperation, at the end of the seminar 69 % declared that it is clear and very clear for them, 25% that is clear while 6% considers that it is not so clear. But compared with the participants' knowledge about this type of cooperation before the event, where 53% declared that they didn't know about it or their understanding about it was limited, a significant improvement was made.

Participants' comments:

- I realised that cross-sectoral cooperation is the key!
- The diversity amongst the participants helped me to understand and appreciate.
- I have several ideas to bring back with me in order to collaborate better with other sectors.
- Sadly cooperation issue has not been concretely discussed.





5. To which extent do you see yourself collaborating in future projects/creating cross-sectorial partnerships with participants from this seminar/professionals from other sectors?



(0 – not at all, 6 – very likely)

Regarding future cross-sectoral collaboration, 82% declared that it is most likely and very likely to start this type of collaboration and 13% that is possible to have this type of collaboration. Still 6% consider that they will most probably not start a cross-sectoral cooperation. But the willingness of cross-sectoral cooperation changed after the seminar, because before the seminar 62% declared that they most probably will not start a cross-sectoral collaboration. The seminar brought to the participants a more extensive knowledge about cross-sectoral cooperation and raised the motivation of the participants to collaborate with other sectors.

Participants' comments:

- I will be collaborating in the future; I am dedicated to do this!
- I have identified potential areas.
- The things we have discussed and networks we established are really practical and potential of future collaboration.
- It's my goal for the future but we need to know much more about it.
- Yeah! That was the biggest eye-opener. I really would like to cooperate cross-borders.





How confident are you in using European Funding programmes like Erasmus+ in addressing the issues of young people in a NEET situation? (0 – not at all, 6 – very much)



At the beginning of the seminar, 57 % of the participants declared that they were not confident enough to use European Funding programmes, while only 43 % declared they were confident. After the seminar the participants increased their confidence in using European Funding programmes, 88 % declared that they are confident and very confident in using European Funding programmes.

Participants' comments:

- I would like to have more concrete information; Erasmus+ is very difficult for a person who is new in that field.
- I'm very grateful for all explanations. It was very helpful.
- You helped with ideas and practices that I can implement through Erasmus.

Logistics

The location of the event was rated by the participants as appropriate. Some improvement could have been made regarding the use of multiple rooms; some participants considered the working room too small and too hot.

The materials provided were very much appreciated. They were sufficient and well-organised in accordance with the activities.

Also from a logistical point of view, the field visits were appreciated. A big plus was also for the intercultural picnic, which was organised at Creative Recycling which is an NGO working on recycling and community development. For them creative recycling is about giving the chance to communities and institutions with small budgets (schools, culture spaces etc.) to "revive from trash". The evening spent in the garden of Creative Recycling was very much appreciated. Besides being a space for an intercultural picnic, the group also had the chance to see how the organisation works and also they had the opportunity to experience another tool that can be used when working with young people in







a NEET situation: drumming. Jean Baptiste Odobeştianu – sound therapist, trainer and licensed social pedagogue, offered a mini-workshop on drumming.

Creative Recycling

D'Avent Association <u>www.reciclarecreativa.ro/en</u> <u>www.facebook.com/ReciclareCreativa.ro</u> the facebook page of the pavilion: <u>https://www.facebook.com/IntrareaVioloncelului</u> e-mail: <u>creativ@davent.org</u> tel: 004 0748.567.940 **Drumming** Jean Baptise Odobestianu: <u>odobestianu@yahoo.com</u> www.facebook.com/jeanbaptiste.manitou?fref=ts







Logistics Feedback from Evaluation Sheets Possible range 1 (weak) – 4 (very well)



Meeting Rooms





Supply and Materials



Evaluation from the participants (open questions):

What is the most important thing that you take home with you?

- International feeling of group cohesion, friendship _
- New ideas, inspiration and optimism _
- _ Energy
- New methods and tools that can be adapted for any situation _

Ι N C

A clearer image and overview of NEET situation and possible ways to address this issues _

How you would evaluate the facilitation of the seminar?

- Excellent
- They had a good rhythm _
- Nothing to add
- They were very balanced, great professionals
- 6.5 out of 10 [©] roles in the team were not clear; the group sometime lost the topic





Anything else to add?

- Thank you! Excellent organisation by the Romanian NA
- This is not my first seminar, but it's definitely the one that I learned the most in. For this I'm grateful.
- The days were really long so towards the end I felt quite out of energy.
- Great group. Everyone has done her/his best to transform this experience in a meaningful and useful one.
- The best seminar that I have attended, seriously. Thank you all!

Conclusions

The seminar reached its objectives. It was an event that brought together a diverse group. The participants were having different professional backgrounds and that enriched the dynamic of the seminar. The flow and the methods proposed by the facilitators were appropriate and facilitated the learning process of the participants.

The most appreciated part of the seminar were the moments where they exchanged information and saw in practice how to work with young people facing a NEET situation. During the seminar the participants developed their competences in working with young people facing a NEET situation, in accessing European Funds for their work and in working cross-sectorally.

The logistics of the seminar contributed a lot to the process of the seminar. The participants felt welcomed and appreciated and this improved the group dynamic.

What was recommended for a further event was more days for the seminar – in order to enter more deeply into some of the topics and some participants felt the need of a more theoretical approach also.

These types of events are necessary in order to bring a deeper understanding of young people facing a NEET situation and also for creating networking among professionals who work in this field, because this is much needed in order to improve the life of the young people facing a NEET situation.



