

Module 4: National/European policies and strategies addressing the involvement of NEETs in the society

SustaiNEET

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH

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INTRODUCTION

Youth education and employment policy remain at the top of the EU policy agenda, where they have long been. A number of policy interventions have aimed to address social exclusion and disadvantage among young people, as well as to further support young people's transitions into education, training or employment. There are several approaches, at a variety of different levels, for assisting people at risk of becoming NEET. These include strategic level on national and local level policy approaches, and practice level including preventative and reintegration methods.

All EU countries have committed to implement programmes such as Youth Guarantee in 2013, in response to the poor outlook for young people. The employment objectives of the strategy are being delivered through the Youth Employment Package, that encompasses a broad range of measures, including initiative target directly a young people and other aimed directly at the labour market. However, Youth Guarantee is just one of the many examples.

In the following module, you will see different approaches, strategies and good practices, mainly from the four project partner countries – Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy and Spain.



I. European policies and approaches focused on NEET

European Member States are actively engaged in the design and implementation of policy measures aimed at increasing youth employability and promoting higher employment participation for young people as well as the reduction of NEET. There are several approaches, at a variety of different levels, for assisting people at risk of becoming NEET. These include strategic level on national and local level policy approaches, and practice level including preventative and reintegration methods. Moreover, developing a strategic approach to outreach NEETs at national level helps ensure consistency, coordination and common standards between all EU members.

It is a fact that Member States share a sense of urgency for a better understanding of the problem and for immediate interventions aimed at promoting youth unemployment and preventing the disengagement of young people from the society life, especially now during a crisis. Moreover, while the integration of young people into society has been traditionally imagined as a sequence of steps from school to work, now modern youth transitions tend to be complex and protracted, with young people moving frequently in and out of the labour force. Consequently, traditional approaches to understanding the vulnerable position of young people in the labour market have become less effective, as many of these transitions are not captured by conventional indicators of unemployment¹.



¹ https://www.cliclavoro.gov.it/Barometro-Del-Lavoro/Documents/NEET_2012_EUROFOUND.pdf



In the following part, we will see some policy initiatives and approaches aimed at addressing youth disengagement, including policies for prevention measures, early intervention, activation and labour market integration.

- **Education policies**

The level of education that a young person achieves therefore has a strong influence on his/her chances of finding work and remaining in work. Education has always been a key element of youth employment policies as it is well established that higher levels of education amongst the population contributes to the longer-term growth performance of countries. Education policies include both measures that prevent early school-leaving and measures that re-integrate early drop-outs into education or training.



Reducing early school leaving to less than 10% across EU Member States by 2020 is one of the EU's priorities in the field of education². The Commission is working with Member States to implement comprehensive strategies to prevent early school leaving and to engage early school leavers in education and training, because the prevention is the "ideal solution" for youth most likely to become NEET. Recognizing that there are supports that can be provided within the school environment, at home or through holistic support measures that can improve student's chances of staying in education or training, is essential step for helping young people.

Comprehensive strategies on early school leaving comprise a mix of policies, coordination across different policy sectors and the integration of measures supporting the reduction of early school leaving into all relevant policies aimed at children and young people. In addition to education policies that promote high-quality school systems, these are principally social

² https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/school/early-school-leaving_en



policy and support services, employment, youth, family, and integration policies. Horizontal coordination between different actors and vertical coordination through different levels of government are equally important. Strategies on early school leaving should comprise prevention, intervention and compensation elements. Member States should select the detailed components of their strategies according to their own circumstances and contexts, because each country is different.

According to Council Recommendations on policies to reduce early school leaving, the prevention policies aims to reduce the risk of early school leaving before problems start. Such measures optimise the provision of education and training in order to support better learning outcomes and to remove obstacles to educational success. Intervention policies aim to avoid early school leaving by improving the quality of education and training at the level of the educational institutions, by reacting to early warning signs and by providing targeted support to pupils or groups of pupils at risk of early school leaving. They address all educational levels, starting from early childhood education and care to upper secondary education. Moreover, intervention policies at individual level aim to provide a set of support mechanisms for individual students at risk of dropping out which can be tailored to their needs. They focus both on personal development in order to build resilience for students at risk, and on redressing concrete difficulties which can be of a social, cognitive or emotional nature. Apart prevention and interventions policies, there are also compensation policies aiming to help those who left school prematurely to re-engage in education, offering routes to re-enter education and training and gain the qualifications they missed³.

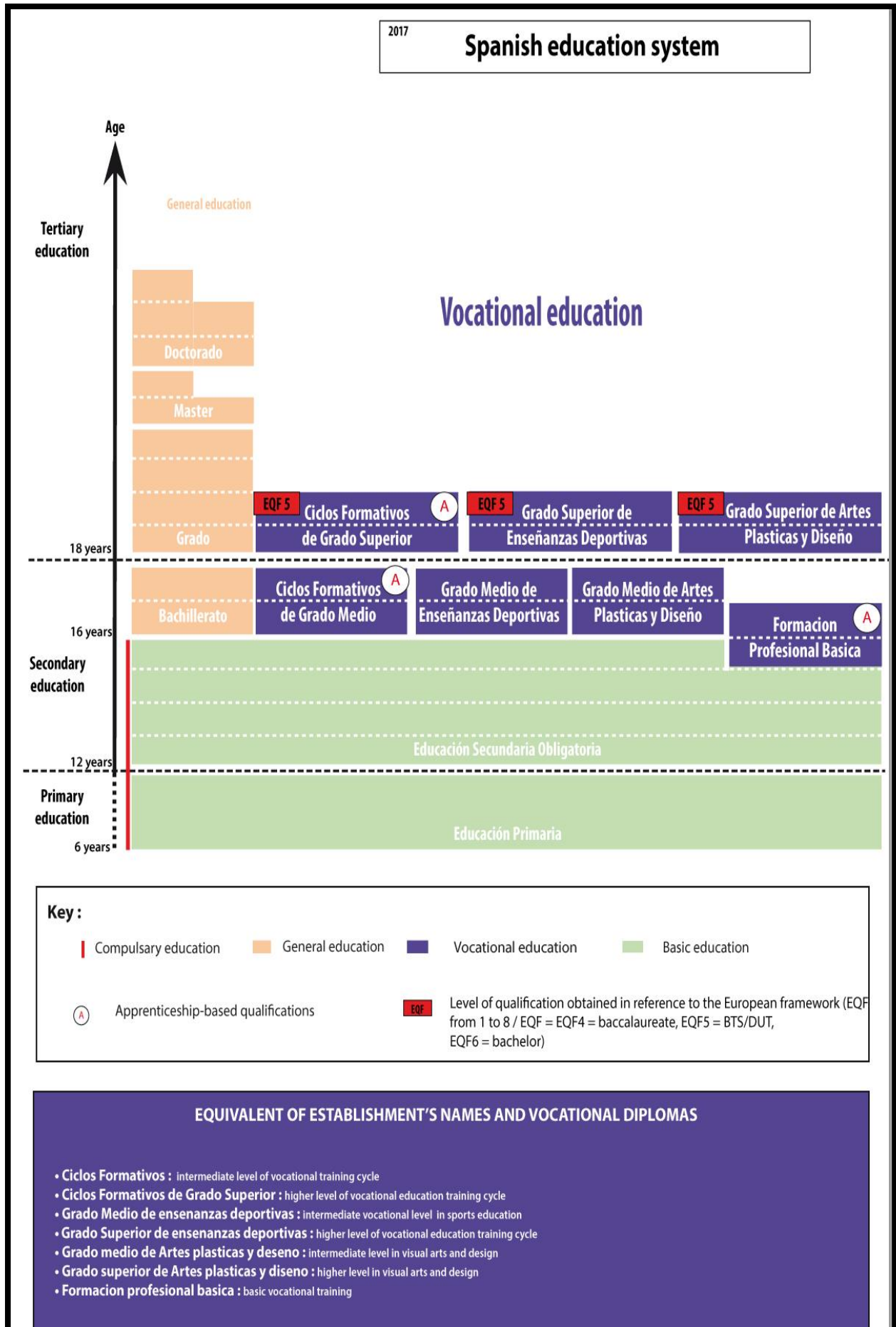
In Spain, for example, “initial vocational qualification programme” offer early school-leavers the opportunity to enrol in training courses to gain a professional skills diploma or a secondary compulsory education qualification, while allowing them to later enrol in a regular vocational education training course. Moreover, The Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport is in charge of proposing and setting up national VET policy aimed to qualify students in a professional field, make their adaptation to changes in the labour market easier, foster their personal development and prepare them to exercise their rights and duties in life as citizens as well as allow their progression in the education system and learning throughout life⁴.

Several lines of action for vocational training and re-qualification as well as for generating employment opportunities and promoting recruitment are proposed within the Spanish Annual Plan for Employment Policies (Plan Anual de Política de Empleo - PAPE) at national and regional level.

On the figure below you can see how the Spanish education system looks like.

³ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32011H0701\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32011H0701(01))

⁴ https://www.refernet.es/docs/default-source/informesactividades/informe_nacional_2016_en.pdf





- **Transition from school to work**

Once students are equipped with the necessary skills and competences, there are policy initiatives available which can ease their entrance into the labour market. In most EU countries, a combined and coordinated approach – including provision of information, career advice and guidance, mentoring, job-search assistance and job-matching services – seems to be the most useful set of measures for smoothing school to work transitions. Measures providing work experience such as internships, traineeships and apprenticeships are very successful in fostering youth employability. Moreover, traineeships allow young people to gain a first work-related experience and learn how to apply knowledge in practical tasks. They also enhance the employability of young people by developing skills which are relevant to employers.

For example, in Italy, in the field of vocational training, the agreement of 24 September 2015 introduced a trial that intends to strengthen the dual system⁵. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, through ANPAL Servizi, has selected 300 vocational training centers that are carrying out this experimentation, which allows young people enrolled in education and vocational training courses to obtain a professional qualification and / or diploma through courses provide for an effective alternation between training and work.

The tools with which the dual system operates in Italy are:

- Professional education and training (IeFP) - in Italy education is compulsory up to the age of 16 and is completed with the "right to education and training" aimed at achieving an upper secondary education qualification or a professional qualification lasting at least three years within the age of 18; the right can be discharged in upper secondary education (high schools, professional institutes, technical institutes) or in vocational education and training, carried out at the vocational training centres accredited by the regions or, where provided, at the State professional institutes. The courses can be three-year, for the professional qualification, or four-year courses, for the diploma;
- the alternation between school and work, obligatory in every educational institution and type of course, is a didactic methodology introduced in the educational system with the aim of enriching the paths of the second cycle with skills that can be spent in the labour market (now called "paths for the transversal competences and for the orientation");
- The simulated training company is another way of carrying out school-work alternation, implemented by setting up a virtual company animated by the students, which carries out a market activity on the net (e-commerce) and refers to a real company (tutor company) that constitutes the reference model to be emulated in every phase or business life cycle.

⁵ The dual system is an integrated training model between school and work which, by creating an ongoing and coherent relationship between the education, professional training and work systems, aims to reduce the skills gap between educational institutions and the company with the ultimate goal to reduce early school leaving and youth unemployment and to facilitate the entry of young people into work.



There are many and diversified formulas for the insertion in the company of young people, who normally also include simultaneous training in the job task. The offer of traineeships and apprenticeships is one of the measures included in the national strategies of many countries to combat youth unemployment and NEETs. According to European Union statistics related to NEET, in 2019, some 11.1 % of young people aged 15–19 in the EU made use of more flexible transition from education to work, a share that rose to 18.7 % among those aged 20–24, before falling somewhat for older age groups — 14.3 % among those aged 25–29 and 10.6 % for those aged 30–34⁶.



However, there are countries such as Estonia, where studies based largely on apprenticeship are less common than traditional programs and workplace-based study-schemes are not used widely. Moreover, there are open market traineeships (practical experience offered by the companies), which are most often offered to students, but are outside the formal education curricula and therefore not controlled by the educational institution. However, since 1 July 2014, it is required to register any person working (or doing any activities, including as a trainee) in the premises of the employer at the Tax and Customs Board. This also includes the case where there is no salary/wage provided – in this case, work has to be registered as volunteering. Conditions for active labour market policy (ALMP) measures are regulated by Labour Market Services and Benefits Act. The regulations for ALMP type traineeships largely comply with the Quality Framework for Traineeships recommendations, with the exception of the proper recognition of the traineeship and transparency regarding hiring chances.

The Estonian Ministry of Education and Research launched a program PRÕM for the years 2015-2020 to support the development and the quality of traineeships and apprenticeships in formal education (legal base of the initiative: Regulation by the Minister of Education and Research „Tegevuste „Praktikasüsteemi arendamine kutse- ja kõrghariduses sh õpetajakoolituse koolituspraktika” ja „Kutsehariduse maine tõstmise, töökohapõhise õppe

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Statistics_on_young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_or_trainin_g#The_transition_from_education_to_work



laiendamine” (PRÕM) toetuse andmise tingimused”, 2015). The main aims of this programme was to create 8 000 apprenticeship study places and that 6 000 apprentices should acquire a qualification in the period 2015-2020. Some of the activities which the programme offers are the development of systems for traineeships and apprenticeships in vocational and higher education including, trainings, guidelines, best practice, etc.; raising awareness about the importance of practical studies; monitoring and research for better traineeships and apprenticeships; promotion of vocational education⁷.

- **Employment policies**

Many EU countries have introduced a variety of incentives (tax system reliefs, subsidies, non-wage labour cost cuts, etc.) to encourage companies to recruit and train young people and to create additional jobs for them.

Some Member States are taking action to promote youth entrepreneurship, start-ups and self-employment via the provision of special services for young people willing to start their own business. According to The Joint Employment Report 2018 published by the European Commission and the Council, in Hungary, since autumn 2017, a loan facility (that can be combined with several other grant instruments) is available to support individuals to become entrepreneurs or to social enterprises to promote the expansion of their market activities⁸. Also in Finland, as of 2018, it is possible to receive the unemployment benefit in the form of a grant for starting-up a new business and while working as a part-time entrepreneur.



Some Member States reduced labour costs by decreasing the tax wedge, often targeting the lowest incomes. The tax wedge was tackled mainly for low-income earners, through reforms focused on personal income taxation, often by increasing tax allowances (i.e. the tax-free amount of income) or introducing progressivity in the overall system. For instance, a major reform was adopted in Lithuania, amending the Law on Personal Income Tax, introducing progressivity instead of the previous flat rate and increasing the tax-exempt amount of income.

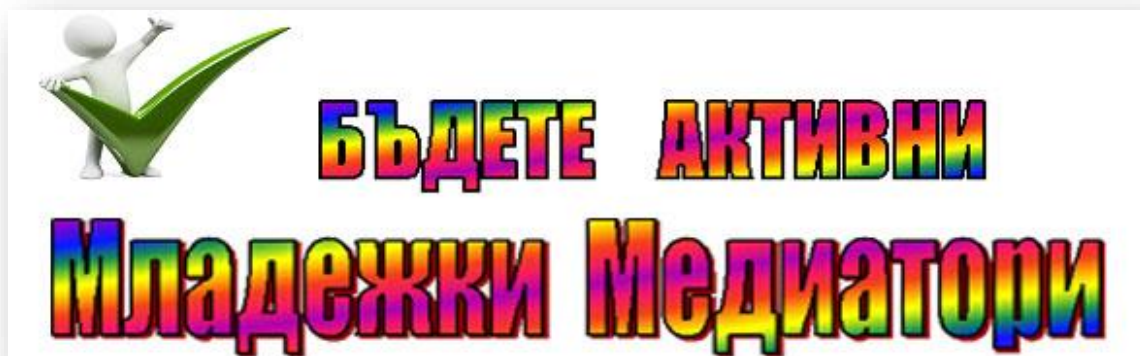
⁷ <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/35-traineeships-and-apprenticeships-estonia>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1547650919951&uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0761>



Each Member State has its own national, regional and local programmes concerning youth employment and the integration of NEET in the labour market.

For example, in Spain, measures related to youth employment are taken by the State Administration, but also to a great extent by the Autonomous Regions. The measures in general, and particularly those related to youth matters, are included in the Annual Employment Policy Plan (Plan Anual de Políticas de Empleo, PAPE). Also, in 2015 the national Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education (POEFE) was adopted, which is one of the three main state-wide operational programmes for the 2014-2020 period, together with the Youth Employment Programme and the Social Inclusion and Social Economy OP.



In Bulgaria, since 2008, the Bulgarian Employment Agency has implemented the National Program "Activation of inactive persons" (Национална програма "Активирание на неактивни лица"), whose main objective is to activate and integrate inactive persons to the labour market, including discouraged and unemployed ones, by means of individual and group application of tools and services to attract and motivate them to register at the Labour Offices and to encourage them to engage in training and/or employment. The unemployed, including the disadvantages groups on the labour market, are supported by case managers, psychologists, labour and career counsellors during the period. This support is aimed at motivating active labour market behaviour to accelerate their access thereto and improve employability. The experience so far shows that this is how quick transitions to employment are made for those who want dynamic career development⁹.

In addition, to remove logistical and practical barriers to youth employment, almost all European countries have introduced geographical mobility grants and other special measures focused on young people who have special needs or who come from disadvantaged or immigrant backgrounds. These special measures and strategies aimed to help the reduction of NEET as well as to ensure young people's engagement in education, employment and training. Moreover, at a practice level, there are good systems to monitor progress and impact; effective preventative measures are in place (for example, good working between schools, the Connexions Service and Job Centres, especially at transition

⁹ <https://www.az.government.bg/pages/nacionalna-programa-aktivirane-na-neaktivni-lica/>



phases); there are resourced action plans with clear targets and a timetable for implementation; a flexible curriculum offer are in place; and young people are closely involved in developing, reviewing and revising local-level plans.

At a strategic level, countries are trying to simplify opportunities for employers to work with young people who are NEET, engage local employers in strategy development and the design of offers, support planning officers to work with employers to create opportunities, research the local drivers of NEET status, and develop better targeted support. While at a practice level, national government through communication campaigns improve the opportunities for NEET young people, raise awareness of what local employers can offer, identify links between initiatives for vulnerable young people, enterprise development and employer support, and involve local employers in careers guidance in schools.

However, tackling the NEET issue require multi-faceted approach such as prevention and reintegration practice-level approaches. Strategies need to be in place and to identify young people at risk of disconnection, and to provide appropriate interventions for them from an early age. Moreover, it's important, that early intervention strategies are ongoing and continue throughout primary and secondary education to keep young people on track. There should be careful and continuous monitoring of young people's attendance, behaviour and achievement patterns, and targeted support should be provided if problems are identified.





II. European programmes and initiatives supporting NEETs

In the second part of our module, we will see some European programmes and initiatives that aims to support unemployed youth, early leavers from education and training, and/or young people whose qualifications do not meet labour market needs.

- **Youth Guarantee**

In April 2013, EU Member States made a political commitment to ensure young people's successful transition into work by adopting a Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee (YG) scheme¹⁰. The principle of the Youth Guarantee has been reaffirmed by the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Under the YG Member States should ensure that all young people under the age of 25 year receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. In practice this means that within four months of leaving school or losing a job, a young person under 25 should either get a job offer for a job suited to their profile (education, skills and experience); or acquire the education, skills and experience required to find a job in the future through an apprenticeship, traineeship or continued education offer. Later, the age range was extended up to 29.



The YG 'offers' generally fall within the four categories identified in the Recommendation. Typical examples include:

- ✓ Employment: open labour market employment (subsidised or not), self-employment;
- ✓ Supported through start-up and dedicated subsidies;
- ✓ Continued Education: education opportunities including job-related training, reinsertion into the regular education system, bridging courses supporting this reinsertion, second chance education;

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>



- ✓ Apprenticeships;
- ✓ Traineeships: open-market and ALMP traineeships.

The Youth Guarantee has shifted the focus to early intervention and outreach to NEETs, and highlighted the gaps in delivering services to unemployed youth. As a result, the majority of public employment services have improved and expanded their services for young people. Apprenticeship and traineeship reforms have helped better prepare young people for the labour market and build relevant skills. Coordination among employment, education, social and youth policies has increased. New partnerships have been set up with social partners, youth services and youth organizations.

The EU has supported Member States in developing their national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. The Commission helps monitor the implementation of the national schemes and facilitates mutual learning through the European Employment Strategy Mutual Learning Programme and activities financed under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.



In the context of the YG, innovative approaches implementing employment measures have been introduced. In 2015, for example, Estonia launched “My First Job” (Minu esimene töökoht¹¹) - for low-skilled youth, providing a one-year wage subsidy and coverage of training expenses during a two-year period. The programme was implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the other partners involved were the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund and Youth Centres (NGOs).

The measure targets young unemployed aged 17-29 with low educational attainment and lack of work experience who have not been able to find employment on their own during the first months of unemployment. My First Job was mainly funded by the European Social Fund, which provides 85 % of the total budget. For the period 2014 to 2020 the total budget allocated to My First Job was EUR 18.9 million. The subsidy itself has a value of 50 % of the employee’s monthly salary. However, the maximum value cannot be more than twice the minimum wage.

Moreover, as part of the employment contract, the young person must receive on-the-job and work-related training where appropriate to develop their skills and increase their

¹¹ <https://www.tootukassa.ee/content/teenused/noorele>



competitiveness on the labour market. Employers are eligible for a subsidy to cover the full cost of this training (up to a limit of EUR 2 500 per employee). If the contract is for any reason terminated by the employer either before the end of the second year or, if it is a fixed-term contract, before the specified end date, the subsidy must be paid back in full. This is to encourage employers to retain the young people.

Always within the Youth Guarantee programme, Member States provide start-up incentives consisting of programmes to facilitate access to credit, providing start-up grants, or fostering micro-franchising mechanisms. For example, in 2016, the financial instrument SELFIEmployment (Fondo Rotativo Nazionale) was launched in Italy aiming to enhance self-employment young people. SELFIEmployment was intended to identify young people who would most benefit from a loan/microcredit and provision of training to ensure that they make good use of it. There were three categories of loans: Microcredit (EUR 5 000 to EUR 25 000), Extended microcredit (EUR 25 001 to EUR 35 000) and Small loans (EUR 35 001 to EUR 50 000).



The programme is implemented as follows: young people who are registered with the local PES are made aware of SELFIEmployment by the employment service (either via e-mail or their careers counsellor). Those who decide to apply then submit their business plan to Invitalia. The plan should include a market analysis, budget, and details of the applicant. Many applicants have already completed business skills training through a measure provided by Regional Governments or Regional Chambers of Commerce under the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). Also, Ente Nazionale Microcredit assists with applications. The merits of each proposal are then assessed by Invitalia according to their economic and financial sustainability. Within 60 days, applicants receive a decision on whether or not the loan has been granted. Applications from candidates having undertaken business skills training under the YEI Measure are prioritised¹².

According to the implementing body, the lessons learnt include:

- ✓ local stakeholders should raise awareness of the microcredit/loan opportunities, including the PES and educational services, in order to best identify and target those eligible for the loans;

¹²

https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=ygreports&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&doc_submi t=&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0



- ✓ a regional network is fundamental to success. The national communication campaign, online and social media campaign, regional workshops and tutorial video have been success factors;
- ✓ post start-up tutoring for successful applicants.

- **Youth Employment Support: a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation**

Recently, the European Commission presented its proposal to reinforce the Youth Guarantee, to respond to the current challenges posed by the Coronavirus crisis and better prepare young people for the future labour market opportunities, including for the green and digital transitions. With NextGenerationEU and the future EU budget, the Commission already proposed significant EU financing opportunities for youth employment.

The Youth Employment Support package is built around four strands that together provide a bridge to jobs for the next generation:

- ✓ The Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on **a Bridge to Jobs** reinforces the Youth Guarantee and steps up the outreach to vulnerable young people across the EU, now covering people aged 15 - 29. The aim of the Bridge to Jobs is that a young person can take up a quality offer of continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship or a job within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. During these four months, the young person should be made aware of all the options they may have and be guided towards an offer. The Bridge to Jobs recommends tailoring individualised action plans, taking into account the young person's preferences and motivation in preparing the take-up of one of the four types of offers. The preparation can consist of counselling and guidance activities, validation of existing competences, and enhancing existing skills, including digital skills¹³.
- ✓ The Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on **vocational education and training** aims to make systems more modern, attractive, flexible and fit for the digital and green economy. More agile, learner-centred vocational education and training will prepare young people for their first jobs and gives more adults opportunities to enhance or change their careers. It will help vocational education and training providers to become centres of vocational excellence, while supporting diversity and inclusiveness¹⁴.
- ✓ **A renewed impetus for apprenticeships** will benefit both employers and young people, adding a skilled labour force to a wide range of sectors. The European Alliance for Apprenticeships has made available more than 900,000 opportunities. The renewed Alliance will promote national coalitions, support SMEs and reinforce the involvement of social partners: trade unions and employers' organisations. The

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_1194

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=67&langId=en&newsId=9728>



goal is to sustain the apprenticeship offers now, as apprentices we train now will be highly skilled workers in a few years' time.

- ✓ Additional **measures to support youth employment** include employment and start-up incentives in the short term, and capacity building, young entrepreneur networks and inter-company training centres in the medium term.

Youth Employment Support



A Bridge to Jobs – reinforcing the Youth Guarantee



Future-proofing EU’s vocational education and training policy



A renewed impetus for apprenticeships



Additional measures for youth employment

#EUBridgetoJobs



- **European Social Fund**

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the European Union's main financial instrument for supporting employment in the member states of the European Union as well as promoting economic and social cohesion. ESF spending amounts to around 10% of the EU's total budget.

The ESF is one of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), which are dedicated to improving social cohesion and economic well-being across the regions of the Union. The funds are redistributive financial instruments that support cohesion within Europe by concentrating spending on the less-developed regions.

The particular aim of ESF spending is to support the creation of more and better jobs in the EU, which it does by co-funding national, regional and local projects that improve the levels of employment, the quality of jobs, and the inclusiveness of the labour market in the Member States and their regions.

The implementation of the ESF on the ground is achieved through projects which are applied for and implemented by a wide range of organisations, both in the public and private sector. These include national, regional and local authorities, educational and training institutions,



non-governmental organisations and the voluntary sector, as well as social partners, for example, trade unions and works councils, industry and professional associations, and individual companies.



Investing in people European Social Fund

The ESF is funding thousands of projects and programmes across Europe which are helping young people get the know-how and opportunities they need to join the workforce. A specific emphasis is on helping those that are currently not in Employment, Education or Training. Many ESF activities offer training opportunities to give young job-seekers the skills and qualifications that are in demand on the jobs market, including green skills that are increasingly needed. As low-qualified young people are more likely to be unemployed than those with qualifications, ESF projects focus on providing this group with the work-related skills that can lead to stable employment¹⁵.

Let's see two interesting projects funded by ESF!



In Spain, Vives Eemplea programme provided a raft of measures to support those who struggle the most to escape unemployment including people with low educational attainment, single parents, immigrants, refugees and people with disabilities. Since its launch in 2014, the programme has established 44 teams across Spain and helped more than 1 500 individuals. Around 54 % of participants have managed to

find jobs. A further 29 % have begun academic studies which will equip them with more skills. The project duration was from April 2014 until December 2019, and the aim of the programme was to identify each person's strengths and weaknesses while building confidence and motivation for working life. Participants leave the courses with a tailored, goal-oriented employment plan. The Vives Eemplea staff remain on-hand to offer advice and support as people look for work¹⁶.

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=534&langId=en>

¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=1879>



The “Decent work for youth” project was created by the Johannes Mihkelson Centre, a social enterprise based in Tartu, South Estonia. It comprised six activities, all designed to encourage people aged between 16 and 29 to find decent jobs, continue their education and be more active in the community.

The “Find your dream job” training programme helped young people to develop their social skills and take responsibility for their future. Together with other activities including counselling and mentoring, and practical training in specific subjects and work locations, it created a comprehensive support package to help participants decide how to take their

career forward. More than 100 young people from the Tartu, Valga and Jõgeva counties took part in the activities, which included group and one-to-one work and were offered completely free of charge. Moreover, 47% of the young people who participated in the “Decent work for youth” project have already found a job and started working¹⁷.

In the following [link](#), you can find many others project examples funded by ESF thought the years.

III. The importance of partnership collaboration

To be effective and to reach NEETs, Member States need to develop their strategic approaches. Moreover, local, regional and national level cooperation and coordination of outreach activities is crucial. Countries have to involve a range of relevant government and non-government stakeholders, such as employment services, education, health, social services, municipalities, NGOs and other relevant public authorities, depending on the country context. It is important to find a common ground within the partnership as everyone should work towards the same goals. This is because a single stakeholder on its own cannot successfully reach the different sub-groups of NEETs.

At this point, is important to mention the crucial role of involving youth workers and NGOs in the outreach activities. NGOs can play an effective role in many youth NEET oriented programmes.

According to “Effective Outreach to NEETs report”, the use of grassroots NGOs and cultural mediators is especially successful in reaching NEETs with ethnic minority background. This is because they have already established trusted relationships with the community, either through a shared cultural heritage or ongoing work and support.

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=46&langId=en&projectId=3629>



For example, in Bulgaria, this approach is implemented under the National Programme “Activation of Inactive Persons” through the work of Roma mediators (appointed in the labour offices) and youth mediators (appointed in the municipalities with the highest youth inactivity rates). Between January 2014 and December 2017, as a result of the work of the Roma mediators 15,918 young people aged up to 29 were activated to register with the public employment service. For NEETs with family responsibilities, especially young women, and NEETs with a disability, outreach can be effective when it is done in coordination with the provision of parental benefits and disability benefits. Alongside receiving benefits, young people are informed in an open way about opportunities (clarifying their relationship with the conditions for further benefits).



There are some cases, where the municipalities and PES are responsible for mapping inactive young people, but thanks of the agreements with NGOs, they leave later the NEET to them. So NGOs according to the specific needs, can organize different workshops and perform different non formal educational activities. Moreover, involving youth NGOs allows to capitalise on their strengths which a traditional public employment service might not have. They already have relevant contacts and specialised workers with in-depth knowledge of young people and bring additional resources which PES might lack due to the size of caseloads or the experience and skills of their staff. They find it easier to build a trust relationship with hard-to-reach youth through their regular activities. Young people perceive public services as being out of touch, unable to help and the embodiment of authority (some young people might struggle with this given previous negative experiences). NGOs are often held in higher regard by young people than PES as they may perceive their service offer as being more relevant and attractive to them. Moreover, PES need to have evaluation discussions with external partners such as NGOs and youth workers, because they can give it important feedback from different parts, about what is working, and what does not.

Often, youth NGOs work with other local agencies in order to provide support for young people to overcome their barriers to accessing collage, apprenticeships or employment. Moreover, youth workers can teach youth on employability skills such as CV writing, application forms and interview technique to improve a young person's chances of successfully applying for jobs. Also, for the young people who don't know what their next steps should be or perhaps don't have the confidence to seek out opportunities, youth NGOs offer key worker support to improve social and emotional capabilities in order to determine a young person's goals and ambitions.



Conclusion

Member States are trying a number of measures to prevent young people from becoming NEET and to reintegrate those who are already NEETs. The involvement of several stakeholders in the design and delivery of youth employment measures is crucial for achieving such goals. Successful educational and employment policies and strategies have involved collaboration and cooperation of different agencies and sectors, as well as some cross-area coordination and information sharing. Moreover, national and European policy decisions have a significant impact on opportunities open to young people, so it has been proven that such policies may bring beneficial outcomes both nationally and internationally.

Within this module, you could find several policies and strategies focused on NEET, as well as interesting good practice and examples mainly from the four project partner countries – Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy and Spain. We encourage you to search by yourself for good examples supporting NEETs in your own community as well as personally to support such young people who need our help to get back on track!