



REPORT ON GOOD PRACTICES

The aim of the preliminary research is to investigate actual and up-to-date support activities targeting NEETs at local, regional and national level and identify gaps for our model to fill.



THE EYP CONSORTIUM



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1. Executive summary

Youth unemployment in the EU is estimated to 32.5%. More than 40% of young people remain unemployed in countries such as Greece, Spain and Italy. In addition, NEET rates throughout the European Union remain alarmingly high. This situation brings different kinds of problems, too. The economic cost of not integrating NEETs is estimated at over €150 billion, or 1.2% of GDP. Some countries, such as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia and Poland are paying 2% or more of their GDP. Moreover, young people not in employment, education or training are at higher risk of being socially and politically alienated. They have a lower level of interest and engagement in politics and lower levels of trust.

The “Employable Young People” program offers a new way to deliver work to young people and support NEETs’ personal development, while actively engaging territorial stakeholders and local businesses in the process, allowing the NEETs to be supported within work and social situations.

The program facilitates the collaboration between local communities, young people, businesses and local establishments in an innovative way that provides support for young people by increasing their awareness and their responsibility for the creation of a better support system.

The program is expecting to improve young people's motivation, confidence, self-esteem and attitude toward social interactions as well as their soft and interpersonal skills necessary for today's work force and for integration and society. The aim of the program is to let them understand how to be a part of the work force, by having a more active participation in daily life within the society and to increase their cultural awareness.

The report includes details of the research and activities organized by each partner country concentrated on the reasons why NEETs are unable to find a job, the possible solutions that can help them enter the work force and innovative ways to succeed in that process.

Indeed, NEETs answered that one-to-one non-formal training was the most efficient for their needs, as the majority of them received opportunities to be recruited according to their newly acquired skills.

The EYP program proves to be implemented on the best timing as European youth suffers from unemployment in the main financial sectors. With its innovative ideas tested on NEETs in six European countries, EYP brings a new methodology that may be proven effective against youth unemployment and a possible addition in the list of solutions to the problem.

2. Aim of the report

The aim of the project is to assist NEETs in their first steps into the society. The goal of this report

is to present an analysis of the NEETs situation and illustrate some of the unemployment's problem in Europe, and in each partner country specifically.

The research started with offering some additional resources and the best practices collected from different local service providers. It also presents alternatives and solutions for this difficult situation through reporting of all the good practices developed in this field. The report provides a summary of the experiences and up-to-date learning associated with the “Employable Young People (EYP)” project.

This report is intended to show the studies of the NEET phenomenon from a practical perspective by including young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training. It is, also, aimed to refer to the results of the identification of the NEETs’ problems and the existing good practices in the countries that are participating in the project and of the actual up-to-date NEET support activities offered.

3. Methodology

The partners investigated actual and up-to-date materials available at local, regional and national level in their respective countries. They looked for any relevant data and information on support activities targeting NEETs and young people, youth exchange programs, work/study camps targeting NEETs and to identify gaps and offer the consortium enough information to build the EYP PROGRAM methodology.

The principal activity of the EYP project included the research that was conducted by the member countries. The need for individuals with relevant experience to NEETs who had answers and opinion on the situation proved to be more helpful for the start of the project. In that way, it gave a basic structure to the further activities. Online research, questionnaires to focus groups and interviews were the material used to support the next stages of the project, with differences and adjustments among the countries.

The information was gathered in three ways:

- Secondary research from at least 5 resources at national level on successful and innovative methods used to support NEETs (to look for a job, to improve competences and skills etc)
- Questionnaire so that at least 5 services providers/ training institutions / local government / social services / association working with the target groups / schools can be interviewed at local or regional level, and to concentrate on the solutions adapted to support NEETs.
- Focus group of 10 NEETs / young unemployed people who participated in any activities to improve their skills or competences.

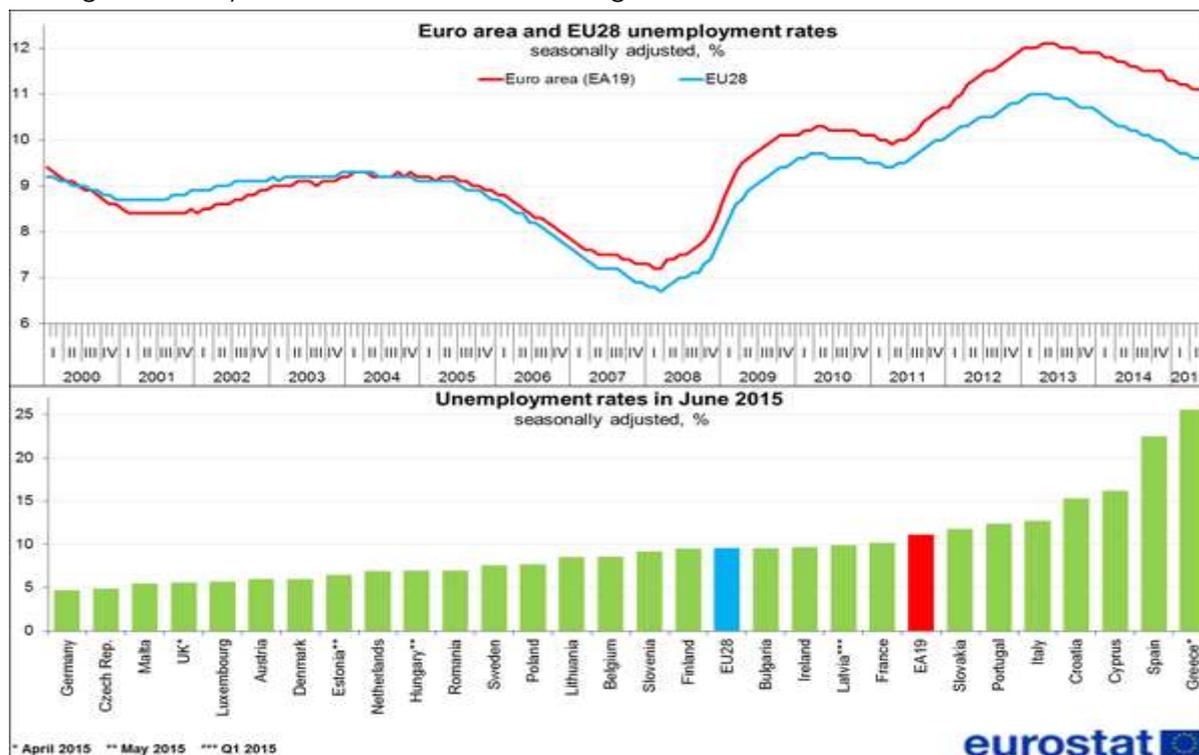
4. NEETs situation in the EU

The term of “NEET” was created to define a special social group of young people: those who are NOT in Employment, Education and Training. The term has come into the policy debate in recent years due to disproportionate impact of the recession on young people (under 30 years old). As

it follows, there is much evidence that this definition is not comprehensive when it has to describe some specific risk factors, since the same source indicates several risk sources for a youngster to become a NEET: education, immigration, disability, parental divorce, unemployment, household income, (geographical) location.

Because the term of “NEET” diverge from country to country subsequently, more and detailed information can be found for each country definition in the report. For example in Spain the definition of NEET has a quite pejorative meaning for society in general while the concept is wide enough to include not only young people with plenty of social added problems that they are not studying nor working but also young people that due to the current economic circumstances, they are not actually studying and they are struggling to get into labor market, as it is the case for University graduates.

The unemployment rate for those under thirty is nearly double the average rate.¹ Those with low levels of education are three times more likely to be NEET than those with third-level education. The risk is 70% higher for young people from an immigration background than nationals while having a disability or health issue is also a strong risk factor.



Young people across Europe have been hit hard by the most recent economic crisis and their labour market perspectives have deteriorated sharply in the majority of EU Member States. While there are some cautiously positive developments, almost two thirds of EU Member States continue to experience the highest youth unemployment rates in their history. More than 40% of young

¹ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/>

people remain unemployed in countries such as Greece, Spain, Croatia and Italy. In addition, NEET rates throughout the European Union remain alarmingly high.

Following the youth unemployment trend, the NEET rate at European level also decreased markedly throughout 2014, from 13% in 2013 to 12.4% in 2014, the same level recorded in 2009. This decrease was recorded in 20 Member States and driven by the performance of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal and the United Kingdom. In all these countries, the decrease was more than 1% in comparison with the value recorded in 2013. Conversely, a marked increase in the size of the NEET population was recorded in Malta and Luxembourg, which remains, however, one of the Member States with the lowest level of NEETs in Europe.

As it appears, in Greece, unemployment remains very high, while its structure and the particularly high percentages of youth and long-term unemployed emphasize the high social cost of economic adaptation. During 2014, youth between 15 and 24 years of age demonstrated a 52.4% unemployment percentage, while the monthly data from the Manpower Employment Organization show that the number of long term-unemployed has increased by 78,000 people during the year, reaching a total of 443,700 individuals. It should be noted that the economic cost sustained by Greece due to the non-participation of youth in the labor market comes up to the 3.3% of the GDP (E.U. 27 1.21%).

Despite being part of the wealthiest regions in Italy, Piemonte has one of the highest unemployment rates in Italy. According to the National Statistics institute, NEETs (15 to 34 years of age) are at least 185,000 units (data from January 1st 2015) a bit less than 20% of the total youth population of the region (total regional population 4.5 million). Since the beginning of the economic crisis back in 2008, the percentage grew to 48%.

In Romania, the number of NEETs is estimated to 441,000 youngsters, but only 79,000 are in the records of national employment agencies. At the end of 2015, the National Agency for Labor indicated an official number of 55,279 unemployed people aged 16-25, but without mentioning if these youngsters are involved or not in an educational or training program. In the years 2008-2012, Romania had a NEET rate above the European average within 15-24 age category. The highest rate of NEET in this age was recorded in 2011 - 17.4% of the total population aged 15-24 years, while in 2012 this percentage dropped to 13.1%. According to Eurostat statistics, in 2014 in Romania there was a total of 2.29 mil population aged 18 and 24 years, 17% of these not being involved in any form of education, as well as not employed.

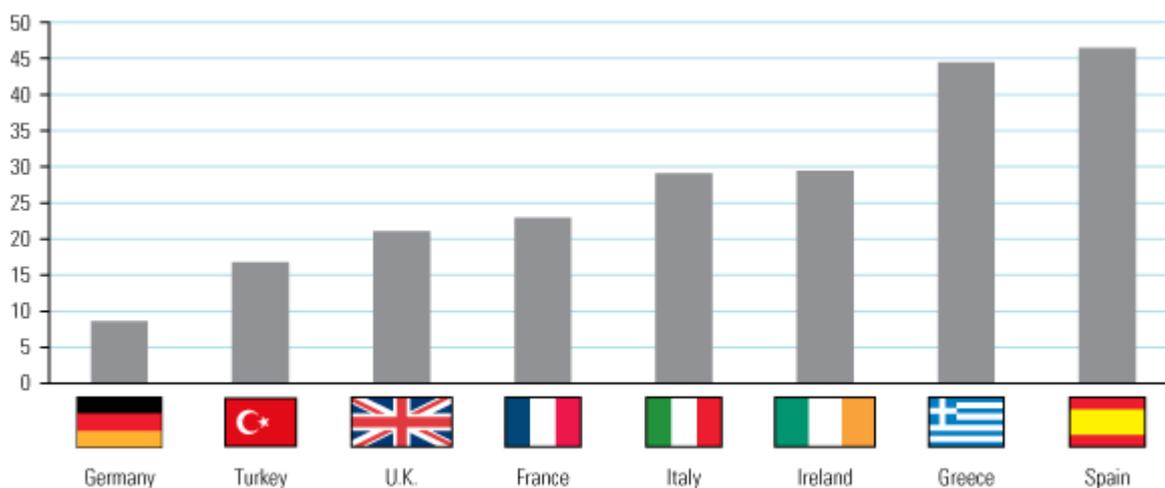
Scotland's jobless total increased by 18,000 between June and August 2015 to stand at 170,000, according to official figures. The rise contrasted with a fall of 79,000 in UK unemployment, to 1.7 million, over the same period. The Scottish jobless rate stands at 6.1%, compared with 5.4% for the whole of the UK. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) data also showed employment falling by 6,000 to 2,610,000 in Scotland. However, the results for school leavers in the academic year 2014-15 in Scotland indicate that 93% of students were in a positive destination in September/October 2015. The majority (67%) of school leavers had continued into further or higher education, whilst 21% had found employment (many through the route of a Modern Apprenticeship). In 2007/08

Scotland had been close to the bottom of the Scottish league table for progression into positive destinations. However, the latest results show Scotland above the Scottish average.

As far as Spain is concerned, according to data from the Labor Force Survey prepared by the National Institute of Statistics, in the third quarter of 2014, the region had an active population of 699,700, 535,400 of whom were employed and 164,400 were unemployed, resulting in an activity rate of 59.18%. The unemployment rate stands at 23.49% (higher for women) and is higher than the Spanish average of 21.18%. The unemployment rate fell for both genders and all ages except the over-55s. According to information from the National Public Employment Service's Jobs Observatory in Murcia, in September 2015, there were 130,354 unemployed individuals registered at the employment offices, representing 3.18% of the national total. Of these, 55.91% were women; around 20% were aged under 30; around 42% were over 45; 13.30% were foreign nationals; and around 44.70% of the unemployed had been out of work for more than a year.

Turkey Has Relatively Low Unemployment Rate Among Youth

Unemployed Workers Aged 25 and Under As a Percentage of Labor Force



Source: Eurostat and U.S. Global Investors

The unemployment rate in Turkey increased to 10.77 percent in June of 2016 from 10.21 percent a year earlier. Non-farm unemployment also rose to 12.2 percent from 11.7 percent and the jobless rate among those aged 15 to 24 went up by 1.7 percent to 19.4 percent. Unemployment Rate in Turkey averaged 9.91 percent from 2005 until 2016, reaching an all time high of 14.80 percent in February of 2009 and a record low of 7.30 percent in June of 2012. Unemployment Rate in Turkey is reported by the Turkish Statistical Institute. However, overall, Turkey has the lowest unemployment rate among youth in relation to Europe.

5. Presentation of best practices of the NEET providers

Youth Service providers in Europe seem to emerge and assist effectively many of the young NEETs that are ready to land a job. They intend to provide employment and financial assistance, counselling to parents, budgeting courses and family-related services in health, education or legal advice.

During the EYP program process, the partner countries discovered a variety of key activities to help NEETs find the best possible way to prepare themselves for an imminent work position. Greece, Italy, Romania, Spain, Turkey and Scotland observed that there are some regular internships and training programs for young unemployed people in specific domains, such as sports, fair trade shop management, service, art and social assistance. The main idea is to raise self-awareness and self-confidence, so that the young people can be ready to perform efficiently in the workplace. Each country has as a mission to check the limits of young people not prepared for a profession through meetings with coaches and experts in the field of psychology. These people try to provide them with the necessary tools of expertise, life and soft skills, in order to help them make a safe start in the labour market.

More specifically, starting by Greece, the main practices focus on the regular inclusion of NEET people in the training courses around the country, on the cooperation with other organizations and the cooperation and assistance to people that wanted to attend some sessions in their communities. With the purpose of inspiring self-awareness, self-acceptance through self-improvement development skills, NEETs are offered trainings that give them the chance to check their abilities according to the job vacancies requirements.

Several organizations are gathered in order to assist NEETs and engage them in the EYP program. Almost all students who have completed their studies, benefit from partnerships and internships. Many of those who completed the internship, are recruited by companies. Also, they are given the opportunity to improve, exploit and apply the skills they learn in the 10-month trainings. A large majority of the NEET providers reached, many of them focus on the new technology tools and the new types of learning (e-learning platforms, innovative learning tools, etc.), so as to provide qualitative training to the NEETs. This process appears to be efficient, as many of the young to-be-employed are promptly recruited. Another innovative and effective process is the direct cooperation of training institutes with possible employers without the intervention of heads of administrations.

Several activities are also organized in Italy that include sports, motivational training and research for new effective methods in preventing young people from becoming “chronic” NEETs. Sports are proven to be very effective as through training and coaching, the participants learn more about leadership, the ability to follow team rules, organizational skills, communication, creativity and others. It is an effective way to fight social exclusion because sports increase self-esteem and help develop soft skills required in the labor market. The goals of the following trainees in other groups of people are similar. Based on active listening, fun and creativity, the participants are trained on crisis and change, relations, time, emotions and planning. Other activities include the introduction of new methodologies to engage with NEETs, to remove the obstacles and to re-motivate them, like storytelling.

Moreover, the engagement of NEETs is innovative and replicable as it is based on local network actions, informal actions where the NEETs usually hung out (PUSH strategy), more attractive ways to offer training, aggregation reasons and work (PULL strategy). Storytelling is used as a methodology to reactivate the NEETs motivation in looking for a job and to engage them in the will to do something for themselves, to stimulate a deep self-analysis, on the past experiences and

projections toward the future. The process facilitates relations dynamics and develops competences to orient youth in knowing what to choose and plan.

In Romania, a number of young NEETs participate in six-month internships in local small companies in order to work on support activities, with a dual monitoring from employers and a representative of services provider. Some of them follow six-week programs that deliver entrepreneurial education, where they get multiple soft skills related to working in team, time and risk management, public speaking, negotiating etc. They receive information on how to brand themselves for getting a job during activities such as understanding labor market, developing professional strategies etc. They, also, participate in simulations of job interviews, role plays for negotiations and employment projects as to how to get a job. With the aims of increasing the responsibility for beneficiaries' own destiny and career path, of improving the quality of life for disadvantaged youngsters by increasing their self-confidence and of improving the attitude for setting personal and professional objectives, NEETs and other disadvantaged youngsters are influenced, some of them carrying small works (mainly daily), paid (occasional symbolic) or unpaid, work that meets a very specific business need.

In Scotland, a number of groups of NEETs is supported by the local authorities to offer a taster into soft skills/vocational, basic training in individual discussions/therapy sessions with activities of cookery, photography, art work, gardening. Other groups participate in the program "junction", where the members are being educated as staff in order to support Autistic and Aspergers young people. Three candidates, among those who were interviewed, are currently involved in practical projects; two are doing painting and decorating, one is doing joinery. The activities lead them to more advanced training, help them improve their positive outlook on life, encourage them to work within a team, improve their social skills, help them learn a worthwhile and practical expertise and show and expect certain levels of respect.

Given that low attainment is a characteristic of NEETs, Scotland recognizes that participating in education and training – rather than employment in jobs without training – is the most effective way of enabling these young people to access and sustain employment opportunities throughout their adult lives. The actions put forward in "*More Choices, More Chances*" intend to underpin the efforts required across government to turn the problem on its head and realize the potential of these young people. One of the most important aspects of training that young people experience is the time spent with a local employer on a work placement. This gives them a good perspective on what is expected of them in the workplace; it can greatly enhance their confidence and give them workplace skills, which they can then take with them into employment or apprenticeship. Taking a young person on a 13-week work placement through the *Employability Fund* gives the employer a chance to assess their abilities whilst giving training in the tasks they will be expected to carry out.

Heading to the South, a customized mentoring that offers training, internship or jobs (Youth Guarantee Scheme) and a mentoring program for business creation is organized in Spain. Companies are given public grants to support the recruitment of the target group and target groups are given public grants to create companies. Also, "Senior" mentors, retired people who have been active professionals in different sectors (finance, marketing, HHRR) guide young

people in the development of a business plan. On the other hand, the municipality of Murcia offers a program of first professional qualification for youth in order to get into labour market and acquire a basic training like ITC, social and communication skills, internships and a mixed employment and training program for youth under 25 years old. This program aims to insert young people in labour market through the development or implementation of projects of public interest.

In Turkey, groups of young NEETs are given the opportunity to gain personal development skills in short term training courses customized in their goals. The regular classes aim to encourage NEETs for the social and business life. In order to boost their self-confidence, self-awareness and self-acceptance, they are checking their self-abilities according to the job skills during the trainings.

6. Interviews with NEETs

Interviews were of the most important features of the research before and after the activities that attended by the participants. The results focused on the observations of the NEETs regarding their situation, the possible solutions available for their career and the bad practices that not be followed anymore.

In Greece, the young trainees found that *industrial relations are relations of interests* and this could be a factor that shows each person's personal limits. Instead of feeling that they belong to a decadent group, they should feel they belong to a creative team, not judged. That is why they concluded that regular groups should be created in every school, so that the NEET participants will be free to express themselves and find ways to coexist in this protected area.

In Italy, a group of young NEETs is trained on sports, among others. The practice offered a powerful way to hook and engage young people and it would be more powerful if it were as free as possible, if there were concrete work opportunities at the end and if it was constant in time. It is important to notice that girls are more difficult to hook than boys are, so the sport has to be chosen accordingly.

Interviews were conducted, video-spot circulating was used and in the end a percentage of the participants found a job, were inserted in the Youth Guarantee Internship program or decided to continue their studies.

In collaboration with the Centrul Scolar pentru Educatie Incluziva, the partners in Romania organized one focus group with 14 youngsters aged 17-24 years old, among others. They concluded that the best activity was the *non-formal education*, as it differed from the school approach, and especially the internships, where they were able to learn more about working in teams, time and resources management and to develop their communication and presentation skills. As a result, all of the youngsters mentioned that they have an increased self-confidence in their abilities of finding a job in the next period, even those who are unemployed at the moment. Some youngsters mentioned that they do not understand exactly how they should use all the knowledge and information received after the programs are finished, mostly because they don't see a clear link between the content of the program and the real job situation within their

communities. Also, some negative points were included in the limit of time for the programs and sessions, since some youngsters considered that they could use the knowledge and experience better, if they had more time to study the inputs. Another small aspect in this regard would be the fact of not involving other local actors, such as companies (except those involved in internship programs), since this would create the space for testing their knowledge and skills.

In Scotland, during the B.L.E.S. program, the young people responded well to the expectation of those supporting them through the course work, giving them a feeling of self-respect, confidence and empathy of their peers.

In the Region of Murcia, Spain, most trainees were satisfied with the participation in supporting services and this participation was translated in more self-esteem and personal development. In most cases, even if at the end of the process they did not get a job, at least they were satisfied because they considered that now they knew better the tools and the way to get back into labor market. Nevertheless, a high number of respondents pointed out that all these services are temporary and they depend in most cases on receiving public grants to operate. At the same time, another important aspect where there is room for improvement is the coordination within services at regional level. Most respondents said that it should be very positive to have a higher interaction among all services.

In Turkey, NEETs appeared to lack trust in themselves and confidence, so they were encouraged to take classes that would motivate their creation and imagination. The participant groups were and are provided with a variety of activities and opportunities for a future job. Short term training courses and coaching in skills development are regular in order to help NEETs check their abilities in accordance with the job skills. In most cases, at the end of the process, NEETs are not recruited in a work position, so they are hopeless for their future plans. This led them to have lack of confidence, too.

Overall, the responses of NEETs vary from country to country with only some of them to present similarities. In Romania, Scotland and Spain, the NEETs appear to be more confident after the trainings even though they may not land a job. The tools that they have learnt satisfy them to look more minutely for a work position. On the contrary, NEETs in Greece and Turkey feel hopeless and judged by the society, as they are not given many opportunities of job interviews.

Apart from their feelings, the NEETs shared that there is a general state of non-cooperation among the state, the local actors, the regional providers and the young people. In Spain, the stakeholders suggested that there should be higher interaction among all services. In that way there would be more concrete work opportunities. In Italy, the programs and trainings would be more powerful if they had lower cost. In Greece, the NEETs observed that it would be easier for them to find a job if the business relations were not characterized by favoritism and nepotism. Lastly, a common perception was that the training programs should ideally have the character of non-formal education and last longer.

7. Conclusions/Recommendations

This report aims to show in detail the findings of the inside research and the good practices sought in the participating countries. Furthermore, the report presents the NEETs status by analysing the given opportunities, the beneficial activities, and the problems they face and finally recommends ways and solutions that will lead at least to the reduction of the phenomenon.

Support to NEETs can be provided in different ways. As a result, we recommend that NEETs should be:

- a. Mentored on how to improve their skills and competences to gain qualifications that will help them enter education, training or labour market.
- b. Offered real work abilities development through their cooperation with real local work frameworks.
- c. Offered toolkits that provide practical information and guidance.
- d. Involved in internship programs and come in contact with small businesses from their community.
- e. Have access to a trusted adult to advocate on their behalf, giving them one-to-one support to access the services they need to progress towards the labour market
- f. Provided with expertise in domains with greater chances of recruitment.
- g. Motivated by receiving examples of success stories of other young people who were in similar situation.

Except of the practical solutions it must be pointed out that, the support of the whole society plays a very important role. NEETs must not feel judged but on the contrary we should increase their self-confidence on their abilities by giving them a boost of confidence and motivation in order them to create a development path they find suitable and to enter the labor market with the necessary life and soft skills, skills of time and resources management. In this regard all local actors, stakeholders etc. should be involved in a higher degree.

E-learning platforms, innovative learning tools, non-formal education and internships are the tools that can be used to engage NEETs in the process of acquiring qualifications. The low investment in terms of financing plus the small number of training hours is a dissuasive factor concerning the possibilities of NEETs to enter the labour market. Furthermore, it is crucial to improve the connection between companies, VET providers, stakeholders and NEETs. Companies represent the future employers of young people and young people represent the future of the companies. The importance of both parts is immense and has to be considered as such.

In conclusion, the research phase has showed that there is still space for improvement in the case of actions and activities or methodologies linked with NEETs. All data agree that there are several challenges that have to be overcome in order to activate and help NEETs in a more efficient way.

EYP project intends to be a key component of the supporting mechanism required by the NEET group. The project and its results will be used as a guide and will contribute to the improvement of EU's policy for youth and lifelong learning issues especially in the field of NEETs.

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