

GUIDE

for the outreach and activation of
young people, neither in education,
nor in employment or training
(NEETs)

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

ASA	Agency for Social Assistance
BCCI	Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BCNL	Bulgarian Centre for Not-for-Profit Law
BIA	Bulgarian Industrial Association
BICA	Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association
BLIA	Bulgarian Library and Information Association
CD CRAS	Chief Directorate “Civic Registration and Administrative Services”
CITUB	Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria
CM	Council of Ministers
CPA	Child Protection Act
EA	Employment Agency
EC	European Commission
EPA	Employment Promotion Act
ESAC	Employment and Social Assistance Centres
ESL	Early school leavers
EU	European Union
EURES	EUropean Employment Services – The European Job Mobility Portal
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HEA	Higher Education Act
IPOC	Information and Professional Orientation Centre
JDA	Juvenile Delinquency Act
KRIB	Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria
LC Podkrepa	Labour Confederation “Podkrepa”
LJDC	Local Juvenile Delinquency Commission
LLL	Lifelong learning
LOD	Labour Offices Directorate
MC	Ministry of Culture
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MTITC	Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications
MYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NAMRB	National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
NAVA	National Alliance for Volunteer Action
NAVET	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training
NEAP	National Employment Action Plan
NEETs	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NYGIP	National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan 2014-2020
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OP SESG	Operational Program “Science and Education for Smart Growth “
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PSEA	Pre-school and School Education Act
PSEEC	Pre-school and School Education Evaluation Centre
RED	Regional Education Department
RESD	Regional Employment Service Directorate
SAA	Social Assistance Act
SACP	State Agency for Child Protection

SAD	Social Assistance Directorate
SEN	Special education needs
TD CRAS	Territorial Directorate “Civic Registration and Administrative Services”
UNDP	UN Development Programme
VET	Vocational education and training
VETA	Vocational Education and Training Act
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
YICC	Youth Information and Consultation Centre

1. INTRODUCTION

This Guide was developed under Project VS/2016/0050 “Raising awareness among the young people of the Youth Guarantee in Bulgaria”, financed from the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

The Guide is designed to support the work of the youth mediators in the municipalities, the labour intermediaries, the case managers and the career counsellors, the psychologists, Roma mediators and all other specialists working with young people neither in employment nor in education or training, or the so called NEETs (**N**ot in **E**ducation, **E**mployment or **T**raining).

The NEETs are at the core of the Youth Guarantee – a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

The specialists implementing the Youth Guarantee in Bulgaria are faced with serious challenges: they need to identify, reach out to and activate the young NEETs, to refer them to an employer or get them to register with the Labour Office Directorates, where they should be offered employment, training or continued education.

This Guide is intended to provide guidelines for addressing those challenges.

The choice of specific measures is based on good understanding of the risk factors leading to a NEET status, the social and demographic characteristics of the group, the internal group heterogeneity and the trends in the group's evolution, as well as on good knowledge of the individual profile, interests and preferences of each young person not in employment, education or training. This would ensure that the applied measures are relevant, effective and sustainable.

For this purpose, the Guide provides a short overview of all the issues outlined above. It also contains a methodology describing concrete NEET identification, outreach and activation approaches and an algorithm of practical steps to serve as a rationale for the selection of a specific strategy or support measure.

As part of the general policy background the Guide includes highlights of national strategic and legislative documents which address the issue of young people not in employment, education or training. It also lists the institutions and organizations working on concrete NEETs-related problems which could be sought for cooperation or for building larger partnership networks.

National and international NEETs identification, outreach and activation practices are also laid out in the Guide. These are practices of proven effectiveness which could be transferred and adapted to the local context, and could contribute to resolving the problem with the young people not in employment, education or training.

2. THE NEETs CATEGORY

The term NEETs (an acronym for „**N**ot in **E**mployment, **E**ducation, or **T**raining”) was first used in the 90s in the UK to refer to a specific type of young people aged 16 to 18 who had dropped out of education but had not moved into the labour market.

The term acquired new meaning after the financial crisis from the summer of 2008 when the financial market turmoil affected the economy, trade and all social spheres, slowed down economic development and led to radical changes in the labour market. The crisis had its effect on the lives and prospects of many people all over the world. Its impact was especially dramatic and visible with respect to one particular group – it turned out that many of the young people born at the start of the new millennium were not equipped with the skills, experience and

qualifications necessary to make the transition from education to employment and find professional realization. A large number of them graduated school but remained outside the labour market unable to get oriented in the new environment and with an unclear future. In the period from 2008 to 2012 youth unemployment in the EU doubled – from an average of 15% in February 2008 to 22.5% in July 2012.¹ It reached record highs in some countries – unemployed youth aged 15 to 24 in Greece accounted for 53.8%, and - 52.9% in Spain, and one in three young persons in the EU was unemployed for more than a year.

The high increase of youth unemployment and the ensuing risks of marginalization, social exclusion and poverty necessitated the formulation of new policies and approaches, and the introduction of specific monitoring and evaluation tools for the group of young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Thus in 2010 the Employment Committee of the European Commission proposed a common definition and a methodology for calculating the share of young people who after leaving or graduating school remain for longer periods in the “zone” between education and employment. The term NEETs is used to describe these young people, and the NEETs rate is computed as the share of young people not in employment, education or training of the total population of young people in the respective country.²

In some respects, the term NEETs implies a paradox as it applies absent features to describe a social group: these are young people who are not in employment, education or training. They lack economic, labour or educational identification. It is this lack of “identification” and absence however that make the group “visible” because the economic and labour disengagement leads to unutilized social capital, huge financial losses and lost earnings amounting to billions of Euro. This absence also has another aspect – it poses risks to the social solidarity between the generations especially in countries with rapid population ageing.

Bulgaria is such a country: NSI data shows that at the end of 2016 the persons aged 65 and over were 20.7% of the population of the country. As compared with 2015 the share of this age group in the overall population rose by 0.3 percentage points (p.p.), and as compared to 2001 – by 3.8 p.p.³ The World Bank confirmed this unfavourable trend: “The decline in the working age population in Bulgaria is one of the steepest in the world. Since 1985 the population aged 15 to 64 has dropped from about 6 million to 5 million; 50 years from now it is expected to be only half that. The shrinkage of the working-age population, coupled with rapid population aging, is causing dependency ratios to surge. For every 100 people of working age, by 2060 there will be about 53 aged 65 and over”.⁴

This data and projections raise the significant issue of dependency and solidarity between generations not only in terms of the need for fairer distribution of resources, but also in terms of the responsibility of each generation for the older, preceding generations.

In such a context young people not in employment or education present not only financial and economic problem. The NEET status has ramifications for the personal development and prospects of the young people, results in underutilization of a valuable social resource, entails insecure and underpaid jobs in the future, affects the health and resilience of the young people and puts them at risk of psychological trauma, stress, asocial behaviour, marginalization and

¹ Press Release of the Commission regarding the EU Youth Report, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-948_bg.htm

² Eurofound (2016), Exploring the diversity of NEETs, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, crp.9

³ NSI, http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Population2016_722R06L.pdf

⁴ World Bank, Skills for Work in Bulgaria: the relationship between cognitive and socioemotional skills and labour market outcomes, 2016, p. 9-11

deep sense of alienation. In this respect it is a form of social vulnerability which stigmatizes not only the individual young person, but the entire generation.

Thus, the NEETs become a serious social issue which may produce long-term effects: the absence of a whole generation from the life of society is a pre-requisite for the preceding and next generations also entering the poverty spiral.

3. SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF NEETs

In 2014 UNICEF commissioned a national representative survey “Evaluating the status and analysing the profile of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)”.⁵ It covered people aged 15 – 24 and constructed a detailed social and demographic profile of the young people not in employment, education or training.⁶

3.1. GENDER STRUCTURE

The shares of men and women in the NEETs group in Bulgaria are almost equal: 52% to 48%. In the group of ethnic minorities however the share of women NEETs is almost 3.5 times, and men - 2.3 times higher as compared to the control group⁷. This is mainly due to the specificities of the minority culture⁸ - especially the early marriages and childbirth among the girls forcing them to leave school early which is a key factor for becoming a NEET.

Figure 1: NEETs by gender and ethnic origin (base: 267 people)

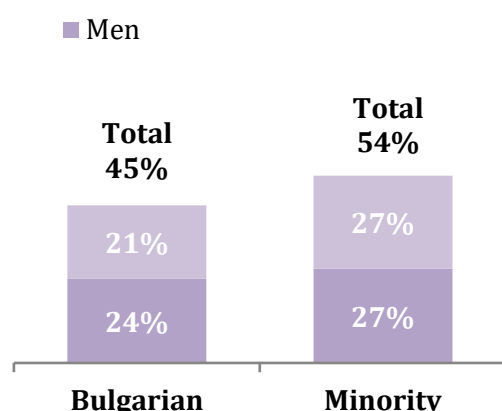
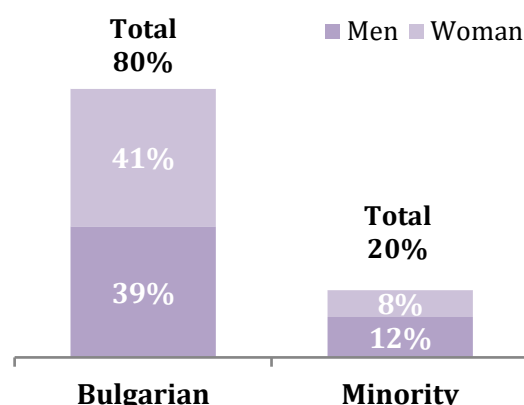


Figure 2: Control group by gender and ethnic origin (base: 933 people)



Source: UNICEF

3.2. AGE STRUCTURE

The NEETs at school age (15-18) account for 10.6%, and the NEETs in the 19-24 age group – to 28%.

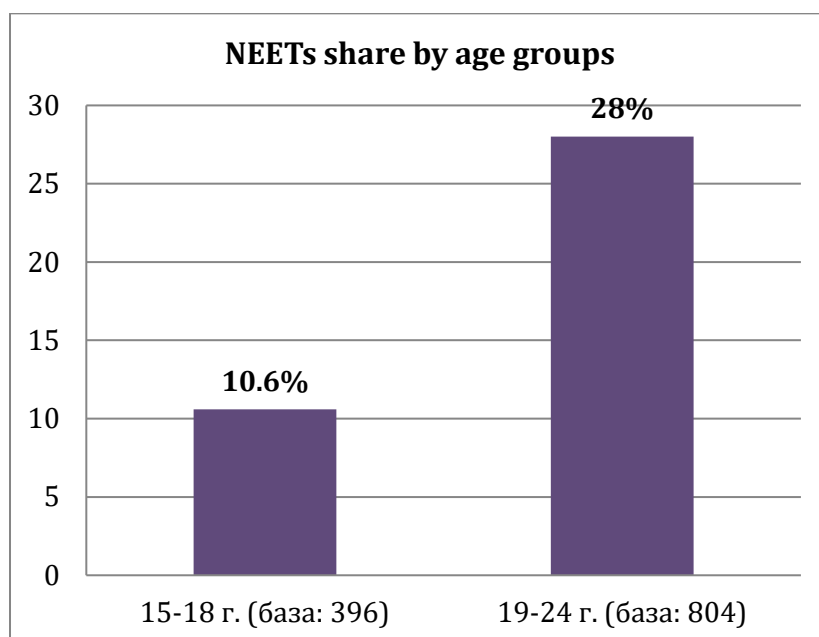
⁵ The full report is available at: https://www.unicef.bg/assets/PDFs/2015/NEETs_BG_Final.pdf

⁶ This chapter is entirely based on the survey results. The figures and tables are included as an illustration of the survey data.

⁷ According to the survey methodology the “control group” includes persons who are not in the NEETs group and who are involved in at least one of the three activities (study, work or training). “Base” is the “number of persons who responded to the respective question or number of persons belonging to a certain group”.

⁸ “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of the Young People not in Employment, Education and Training (NEETs)”, p. 21

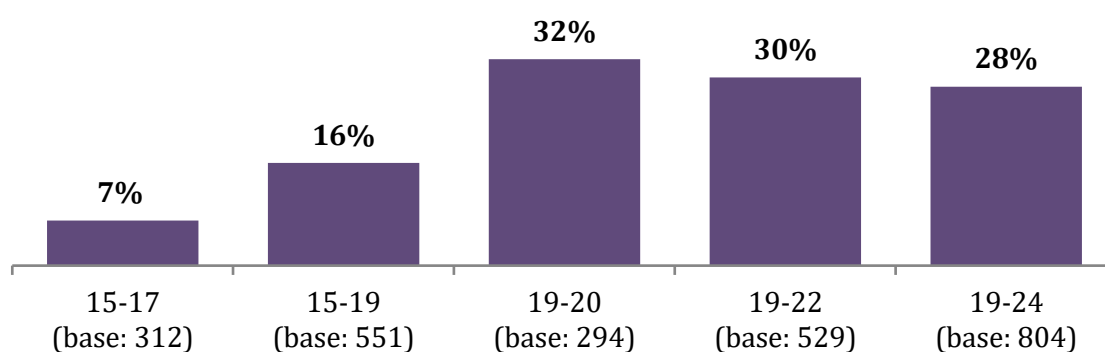
Figure 2: Share of NEETs at school age and after graduating secondary school



Source: UNICEF

The first peak of entering the NEET group takes place in the 15-19 age group and comes as a result of early school leaving, while the second is immediately after finishing secondary school. According to the data every one in three persons who graduate school is likely to become disconnected from education, employment or training for a period of more than one year.⁹

Figure 3: Share of NEETs in the age groups



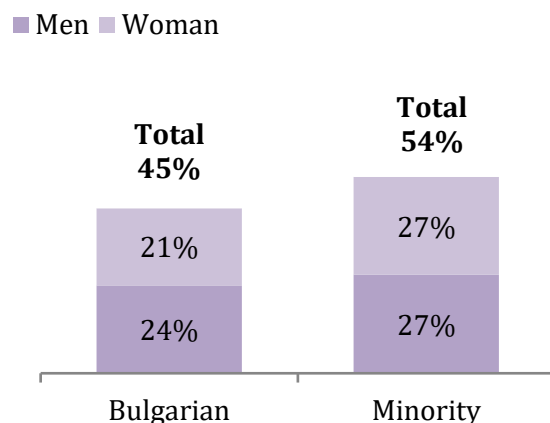
Source: UNICEF

3.3. ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUND

The ratio of Bulgarian to minority (Roma and Turkish) youth in the NEETs group is 45%:51%.

⁹ Id., p. 21

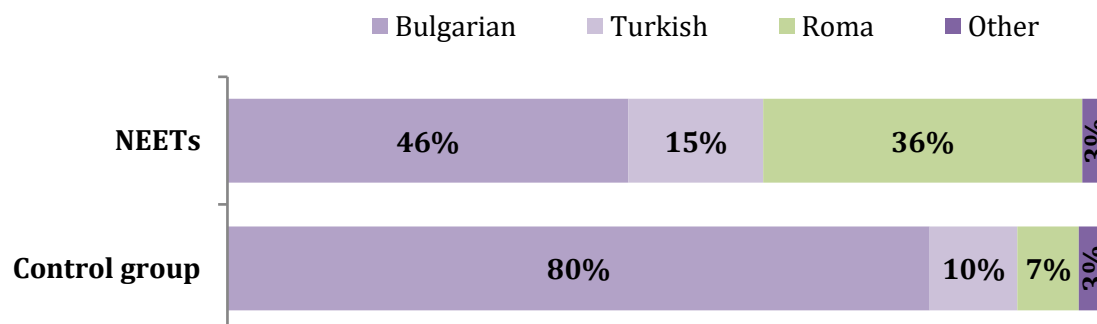
Figure 4: Ethnic structure of NEETs



Source: UNICEF

The further analysis of ethnic groups reveals that the share of the Roma youth is 5 times, and of the Turkish youth – 1.5 times higher as compared to the control group. In terms of gender it was found that a Roma woman is 5 times more likely to become a NEET than a Bulgarian woman.¹⁰

Figure 5: Ethnic structure of NEETs and control group (base: NEETs, 267 people; control group, 933 people)



Source: UNICEF

3.4. EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE

Every one in two NEETs (47%) is an early school leaver. Every one in five (19%) left school before completing their primary education. 86% of the early school leavers are ethnic minority youth with 2/3 being Roma.¹¹

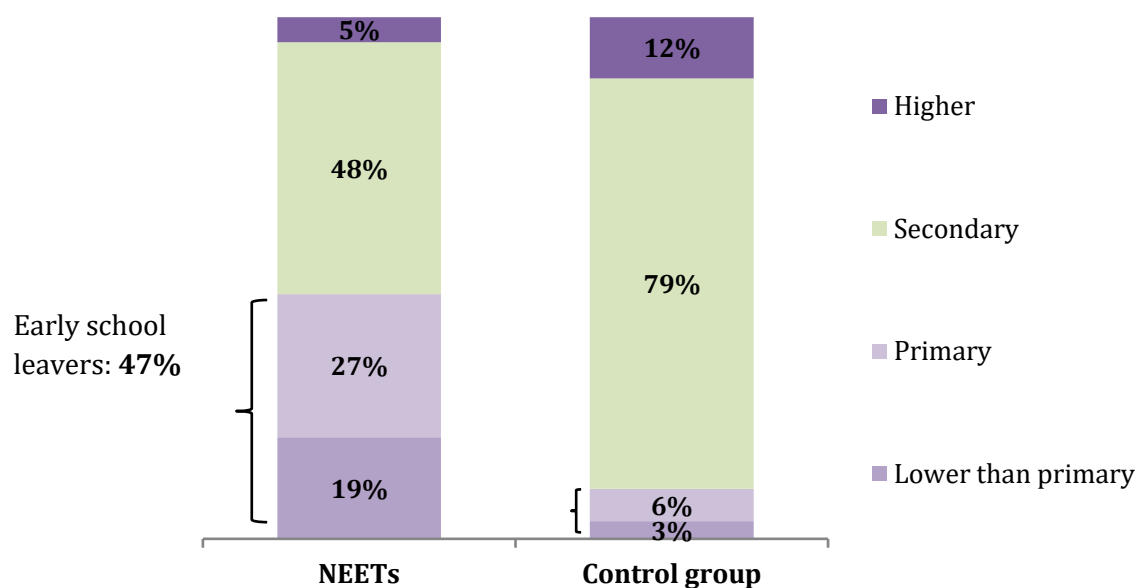
The share of young people who have completed secondary school but have not obtained professional qualification is 48% which is comparable to the share of early school leavers. These are young people who are facing difficulties in the transition from education to the labour market for a variety of reasons both subjective and attributable to the concrete individual (lack of professional qualification, skills and competences required in addition to the secondary

¹⁰ Id., p. 26

¹¹ Id., p. 22

education diploma; family or health issues; lack of work motivation), and objective (limited professional realization opportunities, especially in the smaller settlements, no job vacancies, etc.).¹²

Figure 6: Profile by educational level (Base: NEETs, 267; Control group, 563 people*)

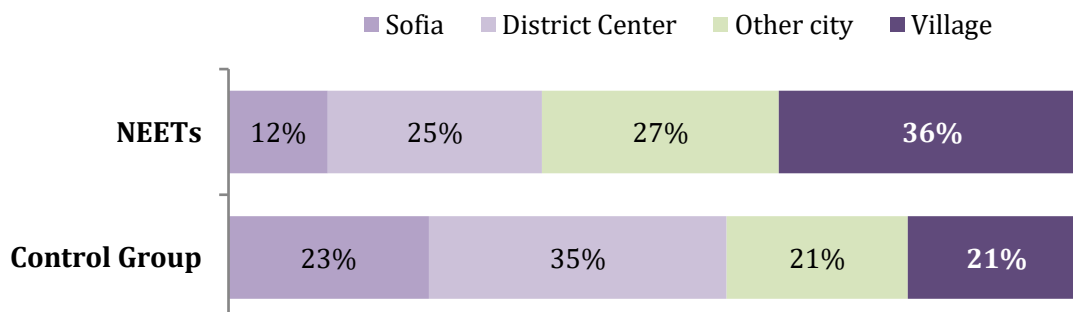


Source: UNICEF

3.5. DISTRIBUTION BY TYPE OF SETTLEMENT

64% of the young people not in employment, education or training live in smaller settlements – villages and small towns (other than the district centres). The NEETs who live in villages are three times as many as those living in the capital - 36%:12%. Every one in four NEETs lives in a district centre city (25%).¹³

Figure 7: NEET and control group structure by type of settlement (Base: NEETs, 267 people; Control group, 933 people)



Source: UNICEF

¹² Id., p. 24

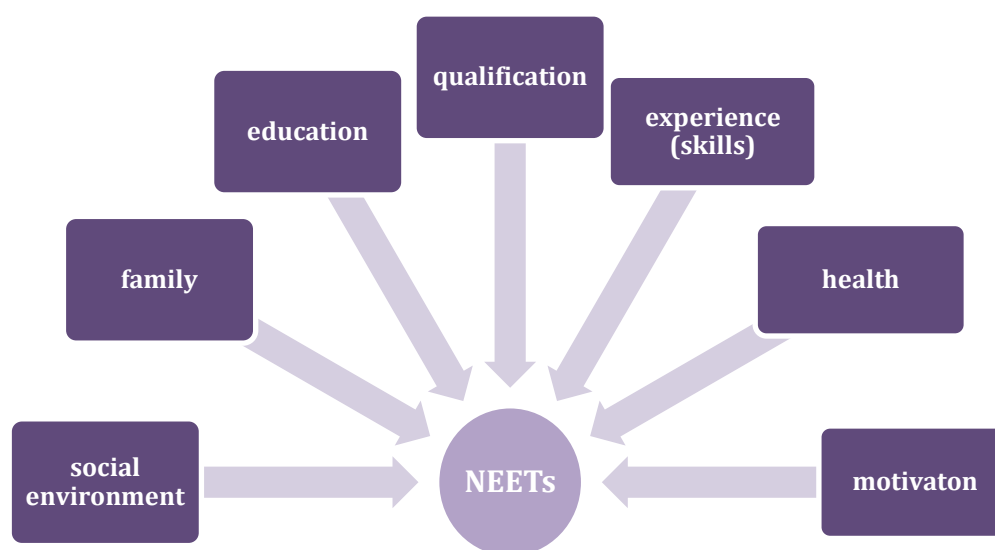
¹³ Id., p. 24

4. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE NEET STATUS

In this section seven key risk factors will be analysed which irrespective of the different approaches to the issue have been identified by all available research relating to NEETs:

- Family environment
- Social environment
- Education
- Lack of professional qualification
- Lack of work experience
- Health
- Motivation to change

Figure 1: Risk factors contributing to becoming a NEET



4.1. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

What are the specific circumstances and problems in the family that contribute to acquiring a NEET status?

- Poverty and poor quality of life

Almost half of the NEETs (46%) have parents or relatives who are long-term unemployed.¹⁴ Unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, directly affects the quality of life of the respective family and may result in behavioural patterns whereby unemployment and lack of education become the norm for several generations – the parents, their children and their grandchildren. This repetitive pattern causes a generational problem – several consecutive generations in a family or extended family having a NEET status.

- Parents and relatives with health problems and addictions

There are people suffering from severe health problems – physical, mental or psychological – in every one in five families of a NEET (18%). The parents or close relatives in every one in ten families (9%) are addicted to alcohol, drugs or other substances.¹⁵

¹⁴ UNICEF, “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of Adolescents and Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs), p. 41

¹⁵ Id., p. 42

- Violence and aggression in the family

About 60% of the young people not in employment, education or training, come from families with prevalent violence, systemic alcoholism, drug abuse, aggression or criminal behaviour.¹⁶ Irrespective of its manifestation – physical abuse, corporal punishment, psychological and emotional harassment, aggression or maltreatment – violence along with alcoholism, drug use or crime may lead to children running away from home, to poor school performance, to children displaying aggression, and to limited opportunities for free choice and realization.

- Absent parents

15% of the NEETs come from families with absent parents. Often the children are left to be raised by grandparents, older siblings or close relatives whom they do not perceive as persons of authority and as a result they become undisciplined, aggressive, and truant. This creates a risk of early school leaving and subsequently becoming a NEET.

Table 1: Persons having at some point lived with risk groups (Base: NEETs, 267; control group, 933)¹⁷

Lived with:	Proportion of NEETs	Proportion of the control group
Persons not having worked for a long time	46%	17%
Persons with serious health problems	18%	10%
Persons with disabilities (physical or mental)	8%	3%
Persons who are absent often and for long periods of time	15%	12%
Persons with whom they are unwilling to live	8%	3%
Persons with criminal record	5%	1%
Persons addicted to alcohol, drugs or other	9%	3%
Violent persons	8%	2%
Total*	117%	51%
Lived with at least one of the above groups	59%	32%

* The total is higher than 100%, as more than one statement may apply to one young person.

Source: UNICEF

- Financial resources

The analysis shows that affluent families where the parents provide excessive financial and material resources to their children even when they are at an age when they should take care of themselves could also become risk factors contributing to acquiring a NEET status, especially when this situation is exacerbated by the lack of work motivation and professional realization.

When we consider the family environment as a risk factor it is important to bear in mind that even when the above circumstances are in place, the family in itself cannot be described as the root cause for becoming a NEET. It becomes a risk factor due to the consequences leading to such circumstances, namely systemic neglect for the needs, requirements and interests of the children, damages to their self-esteem, lack of understanding, attention and love, lack of respect for the rights of the child. When there is no parental support in the family, the children become isolated

¹⁶ Id., p. 41

¹⁷ Id., p. 41

and disconnected and lose orientation with regards to their future and, as a possible consequence, they become NEETs.

4.2. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The migration processes also affect the social environment in which young people develop, especially in smaller settlements. Many of the young people who move to the big city have to deal with fierce competition and higher living standards. Those who are not able to cope with the challenges return to their home towns and villages where they have no friends, no job and no chance of professional realization. These circumstances may cause them to lose motivation, discourage them and put them at risk of developing depression and disaffection.

4.3. EDUCATION

Every one in two NEETs is an early school leaver¹⁸, and every one in five has lower than primary education (i.e. did not finish 8th grade), while every third – has only primary education.¹⁹

The national objective in education by 2020 as set in several strategic documents is to reduce *the proportion of early school leavers to 11%*. The trend since 2012 however shows a steady increase of the share of early school leavers.

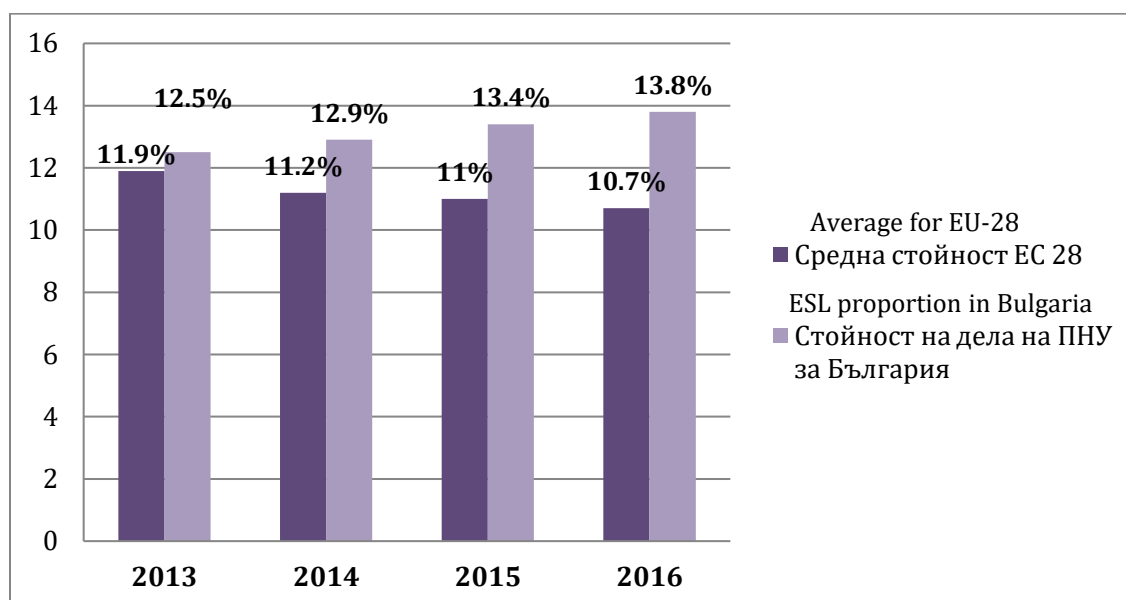
- **In 2013** the percentage of early school leavers aged 18 to 24 was 12.5%, i.e. every one in eight young persons in Bulgaria left school before completing secondary education;
- **In 2014** according to NSI data the share of early school leavers was 12.9%;
- **In 2015** 16 400 pupils left the general schools and 14 300 of those left school before finishing their primary education. This represents a share of 13.4%;
- **In 2016** the rate of early school leavers was the highest for the past years - 13.8%. This means that every one in seven pupils left the educational system early.

The accurate interpretation of this data reveals some of the reasons for early school leaving. The NSI statistical data shows that in the 2015/2016 school year the percentage of pupils leaving school due to moving to another country was 40%, due to family reasons – 37%, and due to unwillingness to go to school – 15%.

Figure 8: *Proportion of early school leavers for the period 2013- 2016 in Bulgaria and EU-28*

¹⁸ “Early school leaver” is a person aged 18 to 24 who completed primary school and is not in any form of education or training (PSEA)

¹⁹ “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of Adolescents and Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)”
https://www.unicef.bg/assets/PDFs/2015/NEETs_BG_Final.pdf, p.53



Source: NSI and Eurostat

The analysis of the social and demographic profile and gender differences indicates interesting trends: according to Eurostat data the share of boys leaving school is maintained constantly higher than the share of girls in a ratio of 100:76.

Table 2: ESL by gender in the EU 28 Member States 28 (%)

EU (28)	2013	2014	2015	2020
Total	11,9	11,2	11,0	10,0
Men	13,6	12,8	12,4	
Women	10,2	9,6	9,5	

Source: Eurostat

In Bulgaria nationally, there are practically no gender differences of the ESL indicator: the share of men is 13.3%, and the share of women - 13.4% (2015).

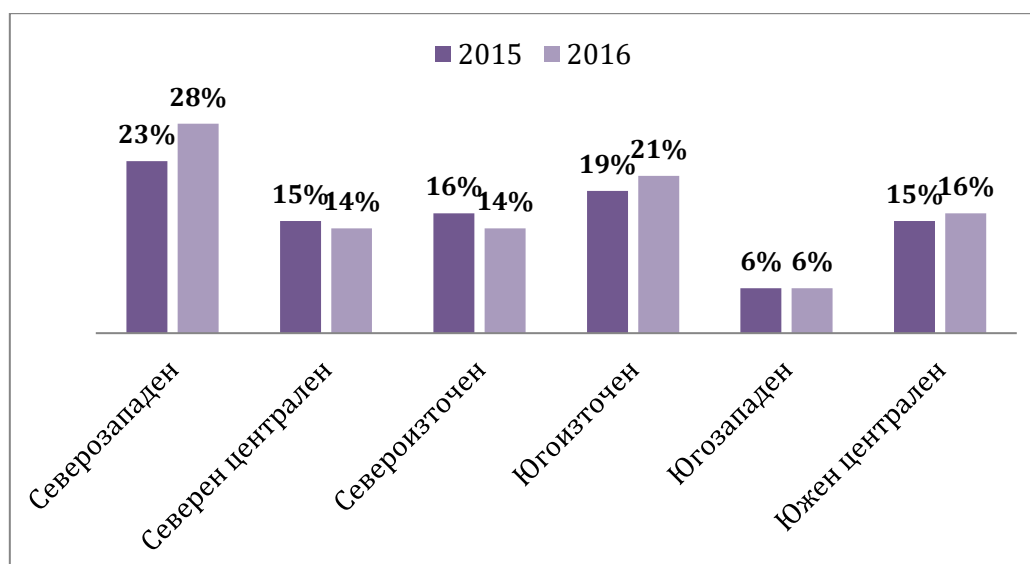
Table 3: ESL by gender in Bulgaria (%)

Bulgaria	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2020
Total	12,5	12,5	12,9	13,4	13,8	11,0
Men	12,1	12,3	12,8	13,3		
Women	13,0	12,7	12,9	13,4		

Source: Eurostat

The ESL situation differs in the different regions of Bulgaria: in 2016 the ESL rates in five of the six regions were higher than the country average. The highest proportions of early school leavers were recorded in the Northwestern and Southeastern planning regions - 28% and 21%, and in both regions these rates increased by 5 and 2 p.p. respectively as compared to 2015. In the North-Central and Northeastern planning regions there was a slight drop by 1 and 2 p.p. respectively in 2016 as compared to the preceding school year. In the Southwestern planning region the ESL share was two times lower than the country average and this has been a sustainable trend in the past years. The 6% rate for 2016 is comparable with the lowest percentages registered at European level.

Figure 9: Proportion of ESL for 2015 and 2016 by planning regions



Source: NSI and Eurostat

The men to women ratio of early school leavers by region shows that the share of women school leavers is higher in the Northwestern and North-Central regions, unlike the South-Central region where the proportion of men is higher.

What are the prerequisites for early school leaving or dropping out of school?

The results from the national representative survey commissioned by UNICEF show that almost half of all NEETs had difficulties in school. 17% say that they encountered serious problems (the people citing difficulties in the control group amount to only 5%). The representatives of ethnic minorities, especially the Roma, have had the biggest difficulties in school. The young people who later face problems with their realization typically had learning difficulties (both in terms of the content and volume of the educational material) – 83%, and experienced problems with doing their homework – 60%.²⁰

The **child marriages and early childbirth** should also be taken into account as a risk factor contributing to early school leaving and acquisition of a NEET status.

The prevalent public opinion is that child marriages are a “Roma tradition”, and that the Roma girls who marry young have low education. A trend has emerged however in the past years of decreasing number of child marriages both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of all marriages and births (about 1.3% in the group of 15-18-year olds, i.e. approximately 3500 persons²¹). Early childbirth is also going down while the educational status of Roma girls is improving, including among the girls who married young.²² In the NEETs group though the share of girls who married early is significant – close to 25%.

In order to reach the Roma girls who leave school early because they marry young we need to better understand the reasons for early marriages and be informed about certain attitudes and specificities of the Roma community. The underlying reasons for early marriage are not related only with the economic situation of Roma families. They are also connected with certain values and social norms. Early marriage is perceived as more important than education in the

²⁰ UNICEF, “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of Adolescents and Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)”, https://www.unicef.bg/assets/PDFs/2015/NEETs_BG_Final.pdf, стр.53

²¹ Id., p. 44

²² UNICEF, Research on the Social Norms which Prevent the Roma girls from Access to Education, <https://www.unicef.bg/bg/article/Romskite-momicheta-i-pravoto-im-na-obrazovanie/1003>

value hierarchy of many Roma communities. What is more, marriage is seen as the most significant sign of a successful realization of a young girl. Early marriage also indicates loyalty to one's kin, and respect to the community norms.

Understanding child marriage as an element of the socio-normative system of the Roma determines the type of approach to be applied with regards to Roma girls who marry early and leave school. In general, this is an approach involving work with and in the community aimed at changing the attitudes of the community and establishing new behavioural patterns and new value ordering. The concrete approaches should account for the specificities of each community in the respective settlement and should be designed in accordance with economic factors, but also with the prevalent social norms and behavioural patterns.

The analysis of education as a risk factor contributing to becoming a NEET also includes the issue of the **functional literacy** of young people.

Functional literacy is an indicator measured by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).²³

The programme results can also be interpreted in the context of the factors contributing to a young person entering the group of persons not in employment and education – the low level of functional literacy implies a deficit of skills and key competences which the employers demand, difficult transition from education to work and low adaptability to the labour market requirements.

What are the results of the Bulgarian students and how functional literacy impacts their future realization?

In 2012 the Bulgarian students attained *mathematical literacy* results which ranked them on 47th place among the 65 countries taking part in the assessment. The *reading literacy* results though somewhat better as compared to the preceding assessment from 2009 are far below the average for the OECD countries.²⁴ In 2014 Bulgarian students were among the weakest performers in *science* - 39% of them were not able to understand and analyse what they read; and about 44 percent are considered functionally innumerate. In 2015 the *scientific literacy* assessment results show that the “percentage of Bulgarian students who are below the critical threshold of attainment has been alarmingly high through all the assessment stages since 2006. 37.9% of the 15-year olds are functionally illiterate in science and mathematics. This attainment of the Bulgarian students falls below the critical attainment level as compared to their peers from the OECD countries (21.2%)”.²⁵

The low level of functional literacy demonstrates a deficit of skills and competences which should have been obtained via education and a disconnect between the theoretical knowledge and its practical implementation.

This conclusion is confirmed by a study of the World Bank from 2016: “The growing mismatch in the demand and supply of skills could be seen in the widening gap between the unemployment rates among the high-skilled and low-skilled workers and in the high long-term unemployment. According to several surveys the employers in Bulgaria share that they have difficulty filling jobs with the right candidates, especially in innovative industries such as IT and high value-added manufacturing. It is also arguable whether the next generation will be better

²³ OECD, Glossary of statistical terms, <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1536>

²⁴ Challenges to school education. Bulgarian students' performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012, MES and CAPSE, p. 21

²⁵ Science and technologies in the school of 21st century. Bulgarian students' performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015, MES and CAPSE, p. 33

²⁵ International OECD study assessing the students performance in reading, science and mathematics, 2009

equipped with the skills that the labour market is demanding — 40% of the 15-year olds are functionally illiterate and innumerate”.²⁶

The performance of the Bulgarian students in PISA and the low levels of functional literacy attained are an alarming indicator of possible increases in the number of young people who have difficulties in transitioning from education to employment due to the lack of skills and competences to apply what they learned in real work environment.

The workforce supply demand mismatch is yet another factor contributing to many young people remaining outside the educational system and the labour market.

4.4. LACK OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE

The lack of qualification combined with the low education may push the young people to the periphery of the labour market, cause them to become long-term NEETs, deprive them of working habits and demotivate and discourage them. Not having sufficient work experience could also become a factor for acquiring a NEET status: only one in three young persons aged 15 to 24 not in employment, education or training has ever worked, while the remaining 67% have no working experience. The lack of experience is identified as a serious barrier to the professional realization of persons with secondary education.²⁷

The lack of experience and qualification means that the person does not have the skills and competences that were expected to be formed by the educational system, and that are sought by the employers: adaptability to business processes, critical thinking and judgment, decision-making skills, motivation, inspiration and willingness to improve, team work, observing and respecting the internal rules, tolerance, communicative skills, creativity, responsibility.

4.5. HEALTH

In Bulgaria the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training of the total number of persons who state that they have a health problem that prevents them to live the life they would like amounts to 39%, and to 65% among those who describe their health as not very good. Having health problems, physical and mental disease or disability puts the professional realization of many young people at risk. One of the possible explanations for this is that their health issue makes it more difficult for them to adapt to the labour market, as well as that the labour market does not provide proper working conditions for them.²⁸

4.6. MOTIVATION FOR CHANGE

The group of young people not in employment, education or training is described as “the lost generation” in many studies as they lack the willingness and motivation to change.

Two big subgroups can be identified within the larger NEETs group based on the declared propensity to change: the first subgroup includes people who are more positive and who expect positive changes to occur within a year. Such attitudes are registered among young people who have completed secondary education and who have obtained some qualification and experience. The second subgroup comprises people who do not have any concrete expectations or who do

²⁶ Skills for Work in Bulgaria: the relationship between cognitive and socioemotional skills and labour market outcomes, 2016, p. 5

²⁷ UNICEF, “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of Adolescents and Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)” https://www.unicef.bg/assets/PDFs/2015/NEETs_BG_Final.pdf, p. 65

²⁸ UNICEF, “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of Adolescents and Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)” https://www.unicef.bg/assets/PDFs/2015/NEETs_BG_Final.pdf, p. 93

not know what they want to do in the future. Such attitudes are prevalent among the low educated youth, the early school leavers, the representatives of ethnic minority groups and the economically inactive persons. In most cases the young people from this group live in villages or smaller settlements.

Table 4: *What do you want to achieve in the next few years?*²⁹ (base: NEETs, 267, control group, 933 persons having marked at least one item of the respective group)

	NEETs	Control group
Work/business (better job, any job, job abroad, own business)	84%	79%
Education	16%	66%
Money/purchases (to make money, to buy essential stuff)	59%	62%
Family/children	39%	43%
Holiday	28%	41%
Driving license	21%	37%
Travel	39%	59%
Other (incl. do not know / did not answer)	10%	7%
Total *	295%	394%

* The sum total of answers exceeds 100% as the question allows selecting more than one answer.

Source: UNICEF

5. NEETs SUB-CATEGORIES

The NEET population is heterogenic. The group is composed of persons living in different types of settlements, with diverse family and ethnic background, educational attainment, professional qualification and experience, and different interests, aspirations and motivation.

Irrespective of this heterogeneity some common typical features could be identified based on which to group the NEETs in different sub-categories. In this way each young person identified as NEET could be “labelled” as a member of a sub-category which would in turn predetermine the type of activation measure to be implemented.

5.1. CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

The most popular classification of the NEET subgroups is the one based on the “*labour market performance*” criterion. Five sub-categories were formed based on this criterion in a survey conducted in 2012 by EUROFOUND³⁰.

- **Unavailable**

These are young people who are looking after parents, relatives, siblings or who are themselves sick or disabled. They are “unavailable” or inactive due to family, personal or health reasons.

- **Disengaged**

²⁹ Id., p. 89

³⁰ Eurofound (2012), NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

This group includes young people who are not seeking jobs or education. It may also include discouraged workers who are not looking for work as they do not expect to find suitable jobs as well as other young people who are pursuing at-risk lifestyles.

The disengaged and unavailable are those who are most ‘off the radar’ of the public employment services, who fail to register, and are thus in the ‘grey zone’.³¹

- **Conventionally unemployed**

This group includes those who are registered with the public employment services and are actively looking for work, which can be further subdivided into long-term and short-term unemployed.

- **Opportunity seekers**

This group includes young people who are actively seeking work or training, but are holding out for opportunities that they see as befitting their skills, educational and professional status, and their interests and preferences.

- **Voluntary NEETs**

This group includes young people who are engaged in artistic activities such as music, theatre, and art and who have their own alternative trajectories – they travel, engage in informal activities and prefer informal, self-directed learning.

In 2016 EUROFOUND³² revised the 2012 categorization and provided a more detailed classification of the NEETs group. Five variables were introduced which are used in the EU labour force survey:

- Seeking employment during previous four weeks (SEEKWORK);
- Reasons for not looking for a job (SEEKREAS);
- Available to start job within two weeks (AVAILABLE);
- Reasons for not being available (AVAIRESAS);
- Duration of unemployment (SEEKDUR).

Based on these five variables the NEETs group was subdivided into 7 sub-categories:³³

- **Re-entrants**

This category captures young people who are ready to start work immediately. They are educated and have professional qualification and experience. This sub-category has a low level of vulnerability.

- **Short-term unemployed (unemployed for less than 1 year)**

This category is composed of all young people who are unemployed, seeking work and available to start within two weeks, and have been unemployed for less than a year. The level of vulnerability among people in this category can be expected to be moderate.

- **Long-term unemployed (unemployed for more than 1 year)**

This category is composed of all young people who are unemployed, seeking work and available to start within two weeks, and have been unemployed for more than a year.

- **Economically inactive due to illness or disability**

³¹ Robert Arnkil, Sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETS) Practitioner’s toolkit, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016, p. 14

³² Eurofound (2016), Exploring the diversity of NEETs, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

³³ Id., p. 32

This category includes all young people who are not seeking employment or are not available to start a job due to illness or disability. This group is vulnerable and needs more social support.

- **Economically inactive due to family responsibilities**

This group includes those who are not seeking work or are not available to start a new job because they are caring for children or incapacitated adults. Young people in this group are a mix of the vulnerable and non-vulnerable; some are not able to participate in the labour market because they cannot afford to pay for care for their child or adult family member, while others voluntarily withdraw from the labour market or education to take up family responsibilities.

- **Discouraged youth**

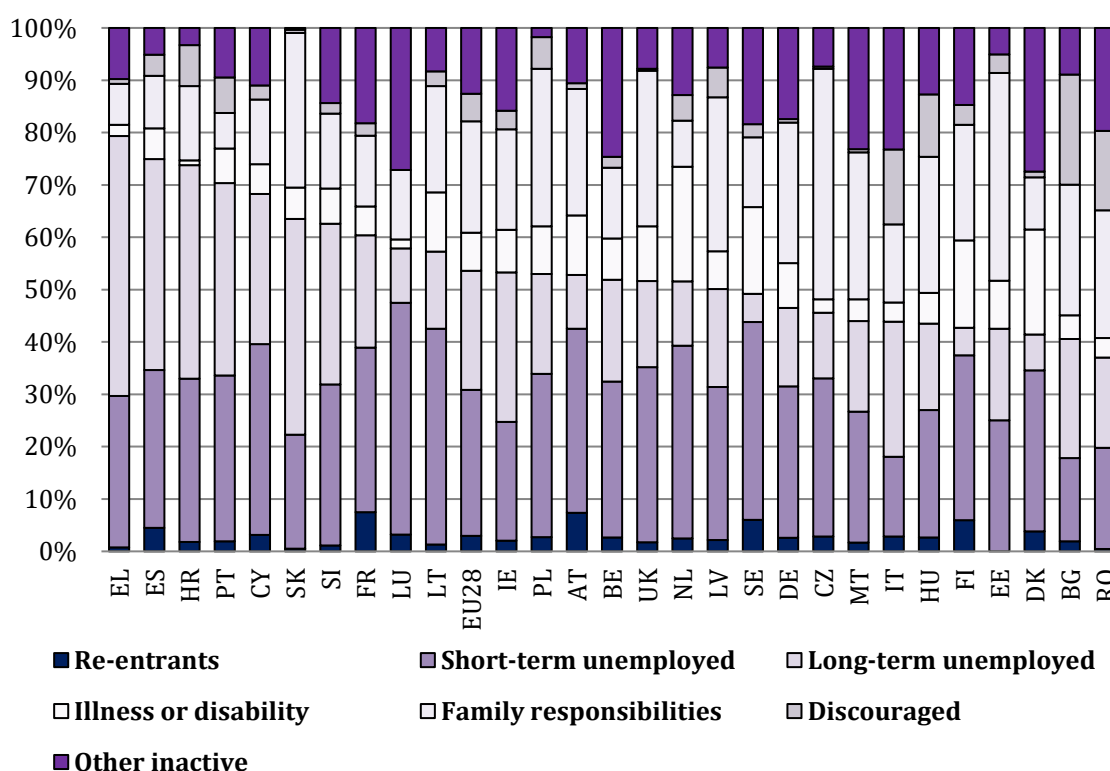
This subgroup captures all young people who have stopped looking for work because they believe that there are no job opportunities corresponding to their profile, interests and expectations.

- **Other inactive youth**

This group contains all NEETs whose reasons for being NEET do not fall into any of the previous six categories. This group is an extremely heterogeneous mix that includes people at all extremes of the spectrum of vulnerability: the most vulnerable, the hard-to-reach, those at risk of being deeply alienated, the most privileged, and those who are holding out for a specific opportunity or who are following alternative paths, such as careers in the arts, that have little formal presence in the labour market or education.

This categorization is adopted by the EU and used by Eurostat to record the trends and dynamics of each sub-category. The figure below shows that in Bulgaria the re-entrants incidence is relatively low, and the proportion of discouraged persons is high.

Figure 10: NEETs share by sub-categories



Source: EUROFOUND 2016

5.2. NEETs SUB-CATEGORIES IN BULGARIA

This categorization of NEETs subgroups is based on the “labour market performance” criterion. It takes into account the EUROFOUND framework, while at the same time is aligned with the indicators applied by the NSI for labour force surveying.

NSI collects statistical data on several groups of people based on their labour market performance: employed, unemployed, economically inactive, including discouraged persons. In this section the focus is put on the groups of unemployed and economically inactive persons. These are the two large NEETs sub-categories which are additionally disaggregated based on education, qualification and work experience.

Unemployed

Pursuant to the Employment Promotion Act *“an unemployed person is a person registered with the Labour Office Directorate who is unemployed, seeking work and available to start work within 14 days from being notified by the Labour Office Directorate.”*³⁴

Three sub-categories of unemployed persons can be differentiated within the larger category of unemployed persons:³⁵

- **Unemployed with at least secondary education and work experience**

This category includes young people with completed secondary and higher education and with work experience. They account for about 15% of the NEETs group. The majority of NEETs in this sub-category are Bulgarian (about 80%), and approximately two thirds have professional qualification. The young people from this sub-category remain NEETs for less than one year. 76% expect things to change within 12 months. They are motivated and willing to accept job offers, and to take part in different forms of training and employment.

- **Unemployed with at least secondary education without work experience**

Every one in five NEETs (19.1%) falls into this sub-category. These young people have education, but no work experience. The males in this subgroup are 63%, and the females - 37%. About two thirds are Bulgarians, and one third belong to ethnic minority groups. Almost 63% live in smaller settlements.

The unemployed with secondary education and no work experience remain NEETs for an average period of 1 year and 4 months. 43% of the youth who have been in this situation for 1 to 2 years expect positive change in the next 12 months, and one in five (23%) does not expect things to change for the better, while one in three (34%) does not know what to expect. This group is vulnerable and at risk of long-term unemployment mainly due to wavering personal motivation and willingness to change.

- **Unemployed with lower than secondary education**

This subgroup has the highest proportion within the unemployed NEETs category (21.7%). It captures early school leavers. About 73% of the young people are aged 19-24, more than 75% live in small villages and towns. The Roma males are prevalent in this subgroup with 61%, the females represent 21%.

³⁴ Employment Promotion Act

³⁵ Data from the national survey of UNICEF “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of Adolescents and Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)” (p.26-30) will be used here to describe the social and demographic characteristics of each sub-category. NSI data will be presented in the Chapter “Recent data, dynamics and trends”.

There are young people with work experience and without work experience among the unemployed with lower than secondary education.

The unemployed with lower than secondary education but *with work experience* remain NEETs for a period of about 3 years and 4 months. The unemployed with lower than secondary education but *without work experience* are at risk of being disconnected from the labour market for a longer period of 4 years in average.

Economically inactive

The second large subgroup within the NEETs category are the inactive youth. According to the NSI classification these are people who remain outside the labour force.

The common features of the inactive youth are that **they are not registered with the public employment services and are not actively seeking work.**

The composition of economically inactive persons³⁶ is heterogenous and includes:

- Young persons who have at some point worked (15%);
- Bulgarians with secondary education and no work experience (36%);
- Representatives of ethnic minority groups with lower than secondary education (35%);
- Bulgarians with lower than secondary education and Roma and Turks with completed secondary education (14%);
- Persons on maternity leave looking after a child aged under 2 (NSI);
- Persons who married early;
- Young persons with financial resources who are not willing and motivated to enter the labour market.

This diverse composition of the inactive youth group makes it necessary to address the *reasons for their being outside the labour force*:

- **Inactive due to health reasons** (physical or mental disability or loss of working capacity);
- **Inactive due to personal or family reasons** (on maternity leave, looking after family members or marrying early; young persons living in extreme poverty, in isolated and marginalized communities; young people whose parents are long-term unemployed and they themselves are not seeking work, i.e. “generational” unemployment; financially secure young persons or youth living with their parents and being supported by them).

In addition to the health, and personal and family reasons for being outside the labour force, there is another reason for a group of inactive young people to not seek work and that is that they do not believe that they would be able to find a job.

These are the so called “**discouraged persons**”, *who are willing to work, but are not actively seeking work because they assume that they will not be able to find a job.*³⁷

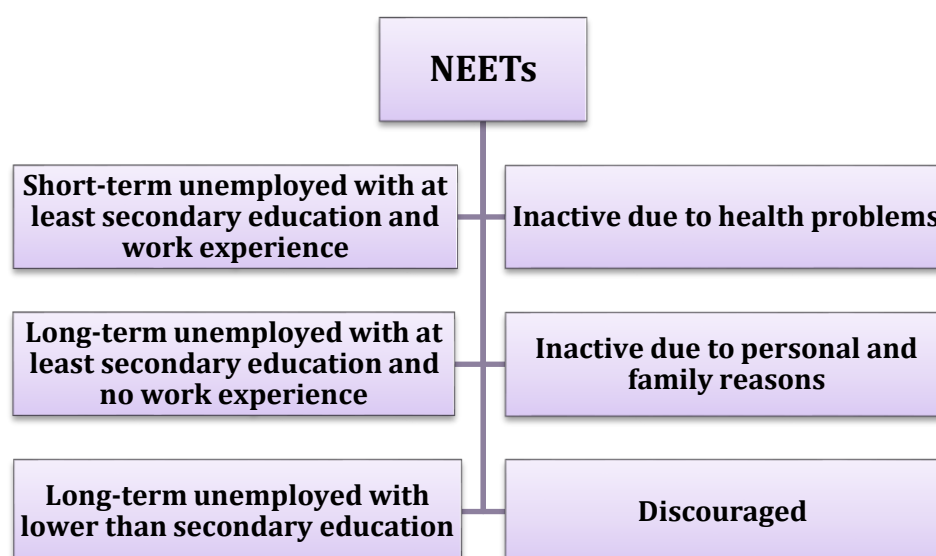
Young persons with high educational level, experience and professional qualification who cannot find a suitable well-paid job and who extend the transition from education to employment by hesitating about their career choice also fall into this category. If they remain in this situation for a longer period they may be demotivated and lose their qualification, which would make their adaptation to the labour market more difficult. Despite the difficulties, they are willing to work, but are not actively looking for a job. The group of discouraged persons also

³⁶ UNICEF “Assessment of the Status and Analysis of the Profile of Adolescents and Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)”, p.27

³⁷ Labour Force Survey Methodology,
http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/metadata/LFS_Methodology.pdf

captures young persons with low education, early school leavers with no professional qualification and work experience. They are willing to work, but are unable to find suitable jobs.³⁸

Figure 2: NEETs subgroups



In conclusion, the unemployed young persons have better labour market prospects. The subgroup of short-term unemployed (with higher level of education and work experience) could be quickly activated and have good employment outcomes. The young persons with lower than secondary education remain outside the labour market for more than 1 year and fall into the category of long-term unemployed. Most of them are looking for a job, but their low educational status, the lack of qualification and work experience are barriers to their employability.

The economically inactive young persons are not registered with the public employment services and are outside the labour force. The fact that they are willing to work is an important advantage and it should be used in the support measures for starting work, enrolment into adult training or reintegration into the educational system.

6. STATISTICAL DATA ON THE NEETs GROUP

6.1. PROPORTION OF NEETs IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The statistical data about the NEETs group serves as a basis for outlining the trends in each of the 28 EU Member States.³⁹

The average shares for the EU for the period from 2008 to 2012 show an upward trend and consistent increase of the NEETs proportion by a total of 2.3 p.p. for the five years. In 2011, 12.9% or 7.5 million young people were excluded from the labour market and education in Europe. In 2011, the economic loss due to the disengagement of young people from the labour market was €153 billion. This is a conservative estimate and corresponds to 1.2% of European

³⁸ No studies or social and demographic data are available on the group of discouraged persons.

³⁹ The data used in this chapter was retrieved in the period June-July 2017. They were up-to-date as of the time of finalizing the Guide (31.07.2017)

GDP. Some countries are paying an especially high price of 2% or more of their GDP: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia and Poland.⁴⁰

The peak of 13.2% NEETs share in Europe was reached in 2012.

In 2016 Eurostat⁴¹ recorded an average share of NEETs for the 28 Member States of the European Union of 11.5%. This is the lowest for the past eight years. The countries where the NEETs rates were the highest in 2016 are Italy (19.9%), Bulgaria (18.2%), Romania (17.4%), Croatia (16.9%), Cyprus (15.9%), Greece (15.8%). The countries with lowest NEETs rates are Netherlands (4.6), Luxemburg (5.4%) and Denmark (5.8%).

Table 5: NEETs rates in the EU-28

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU-28	10.9	12.4	12.8	12.9	13.2	13	12.5	12	11.5
Belgium	10.1	11.1	10.9	11.8	12.3	12.7	12	12.2	9.9
Bulgaria	17.4	19.5	21	21.8	21.5	21.6	20.2	19.3	18.2
Czech Republic	6.7	8.5	8.8	8.3	8.9	9.1	8.1	7.5	7
Denmark	4.3	5.4	6	6.3	6.6	6	5.8	6.2	5.8
Germany	8.4	8.8	8.3	7.5	7.1	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.6
Estonia	8.7	14.5	14	11.6	12.2	11.3	11.7	10.8	9.1
Ireland	15	18.6	19.2	18.8	18.7	16.1	15.2	14.3	13
Greece	11.4	12.4	14.8	17.4	20.2	20.4	19.1	17.2	15.8
Spain	14.3	18.1	17.8	18.2	18.6	18.6	17.1	15.6	14.6
France	10.5	12.7	12.7	12.3	12.5	11.2	11.4	12	11.9
Croatia	11.6	13.4	15.7	16.2	16.6	19.6	19.3	18.1	16.9
Italy	16.6	17.6	19	19.7	21	22.2	22.1	21.4	19.9
Cyprus	9.7	9.9	11.7	14.6	16	18.7	17	15.3	15.9
Latvia	11.8	17.5	17.8	16	14.9	13	12	10.5	11.2
Lithuania	8.8	12.1	13.2	11.8	11.2	11.1	9.9	9.2	9.4
Luxemburg	6.2	5.8	5.1	4.7	5.9	5	6.3	6.2	5.4
Hungary	11.5	13.6	12.6	13.2	14.8	15.5	13.6	11.6	11
Malta	8.3	9.9	9.5	10.2	10.6	9.9	10.5	10.4	8.6
Netherlands	3.4	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.9	5.6	5.5	4.7	4.6
Austria	7.4	8.2	7.4	7.3	6.8	7.3	7.7	7.5	7.7
Poland	9	10.1	10.8	11.5	11.8	12.2	12	11	10.5
Portugal	10.2	11.2	11.4	12.6	13.9	14.1	12.3	11.3	10.6
Romania	11.6	13.9	16.6	17.5	16.8	17	17	18.1	17.4
Slovenia	6.5	7.5	7.1	7.1	9.3	9.2	9.4	9.5	8
Slovakia	11.1	12.5	14.1	13.8	13.8	13.7	12.8	13.7	12.3
Finland	7.8	9.9	9	8.4	8.6	9.3	10.2	10.6	9.9
Sweden	7.8	9.6	7.7	7.5	7.8	7.5	7.2	6.7	6.5
UK	12.1	13.2	13.6	14.2	13.9	13.2	11.9	11.1	10.9

Source: Eurostat

⁴⁰ Eurofound (2012), NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, p. 2

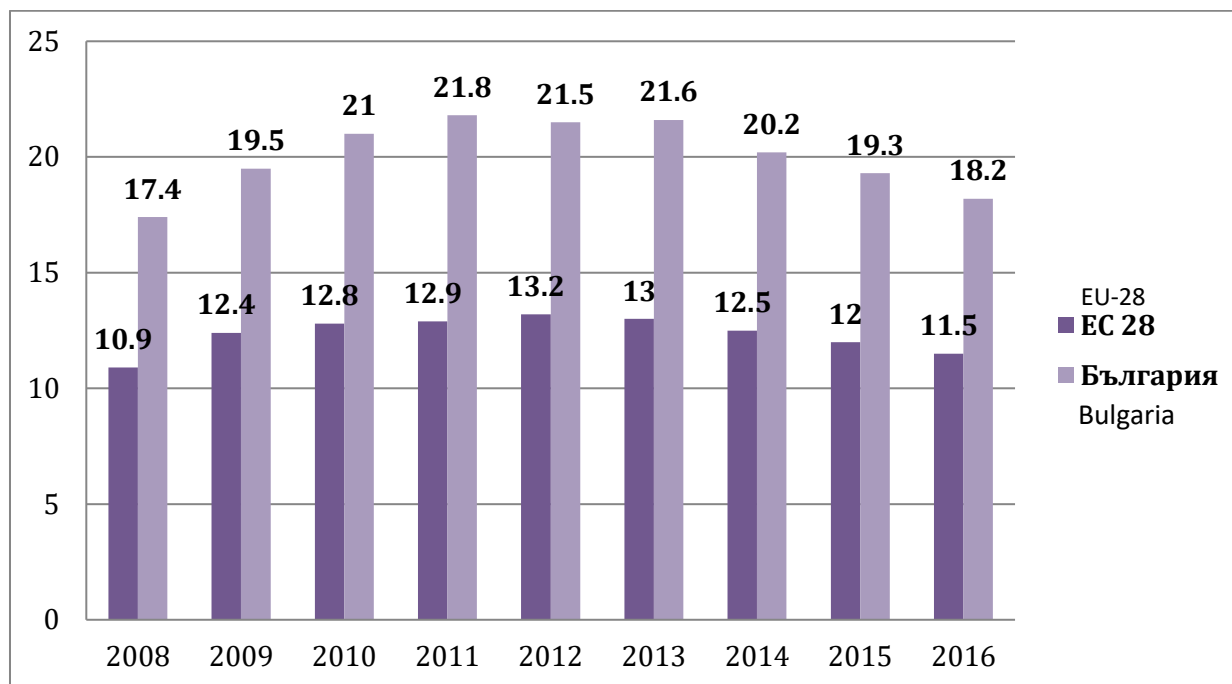
⁴¹ Eurostat: Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEETs rate), <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do>

6.2. NEETs RATE IN BULGARIA

The general trend of gradual though minimal drop of the NEETs rate in Bulgaria is not essentially different than the trends in the other EU countries.

According to NSI data the relative share of persons aged 15 – 29 who are not in employment, education or training in 2014 stood at 24%, in 2015 it was 22.2%, and in 2016 - 22.4%. In the 15-24 age range the proportion of young persons not in employment or education is comparable with that in the other EU countries. It is going down, but remains higher than the EU-28 average.

Figure 11: NEETs rates (15 – 24) in Bulgaria and EU-28 in %



Source: Eurostat

For a period of four years - from 2008 to 2011 the share of NEETs in Bulgaria had been growing to reach its peak of 21.8% in 2011.

In 2012 according to Eurofound data Bulgaria lost more than BGN 2.558 billion due to the disengagement of youth from education and the labour market. This represents 3.3% of the GDP and the losses come from the public expenses for unemployment benefits, social assistance payments, qualification and subsidized employment, as well as from loss of earnings in the economy and lost budget revenues.

In 2011 and 2012 Bulgaria had the unflattering highest NEETs rate among the EU countries and in 2013 the Bulgarian NEETs rate was second only to that of Italy.

In 2015 every one in five young persons (19.3%) aged 15 to 24 belonged to the NEETs group. In absolute numbers this accounts for 132 782 of a total of 687 990 young persons living in the country. In the same year the Bulgarian Northwestern planning region topped the EU list with the highest share of young persons not in employment, education or training. The 45.7% rate for this region is comparable with the above - 40% rates in four other EU regions – the French Guyane, the Greek Sterea Ellada and the two regions in Southern Italy - Calabria and Sicilia.⁴²

The gender breakdown of the data shows that both in the 15-24, and the 19-24 age groups the share of women is higher than the share of men. In the 15-24 age group the proportion of

⁴² Annual Report on the Implementation of the National Lifelong Learning 2014-2020 for 2015, www.mon.bg

women not in employment and education is 20.0% and 18.6% for the men. In the 18-24 age group the shares of women and men are respectively 24.3% and 22.8%.

The breakdown of data by statistical region reveals significant variability. While in the Northwestern planning region every one in three (33.6%) persons aged 15 – 24 is not in employment, education or training, in the Southwestern region one in 10 young persons has a NEET status (10.4%).⁴³

In 2016 the share of NEETs in the 15-24 age group in Bulgaria was 18.2% - the lowest for the country since 2008 but still 6.7. p.p. higher than the EU average.

What is the dynamic in the two largest NEETs subgroups – unemployed and economically inactive, including discouraged persons?

In Bulgaria given that according to the legislation individuals are deemed to be young persons until they reach 29 the NYGIP also covers young persons aged 25 – 29. This is why the data presented below shows the trends in both the 15-24, and 15-29 age groups.

The general trend is that the absolute number of unemployed youth is dropping – the number is twice as low compared to 2013.

The share of inactive young persons remains high – after the slight decrease in the period from 2013 to 2015, in 2016 the number of inactive persons grew. The highest proportion of inactive young persons are those who are outside the labour force for personal and family reasons.

Table 6: Population aged 15 - 29 by labour market status in employment and education (in thousands)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total population aged 15 - 29	1261,7	1222,2	1188,7	1149,2
including not in employment and education and training (NEETs)				
Total	324,8	292,8	264,1	257,0
Unemployed	116,0	91,7	72,9	57,1
Inactive (outside the labour force)	208,8	201,1	191,1	199,9
due to:				
personal or family reasons	91,2	90,8	84,6	98,7
discouraged	64,6	56,1	49,8	42,4
poor health, disability	15,9	14,6	14,0	12,6

Source: NSI

The following conclusions can be made based on the data on unemployed youth (15-29) in 2016 by gender, age, education and type: the number of unemployed men is higher than the number of unemployed women; the highest unemployment rate was recorded in the 25 to 29 age range; young persons with secondary education are the biggest subgroup – their greater in number than the young persons with primary or lower education.

Table 7: Unemployed persons aged 15 – 29 by gender, age, education and statistical region (in thousands)

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	128.9	100.1	78.4	61.4

By gender:				
Male	75.7	58.3	46.4	39.1
Female	53.2	41.8	32.0	22.3
By age:				
15-19	12.6	8.6	7.4	4.8
20-24	52.5	39.0	32.2	22.9
25-29	63.8	52.5	38.9	33.7
By educational level:				
Higher	19.8	15.7	13.0	11.0
Secondary	78.0	57.1	44.3	32.0
Primary or lower	31.1	27.3	21.1	18.4
By statistical region:				
Northwestern region	12.9	10.3	8.0	7.2
North-Central region	14.0	11.1	9.5	7.9
Northeastern region	22.0	12.2	10.1	10.6
Southeastern region	16.9	15.3	15.3	7.4
Southwestern region	34.4	26.0	18.9	15.3
South-Central region	28.7	25.2	16.6	13.0

Source: NSI

The trends observed in the group of young persons aged 15 – 24 are similar. Their number dropped in absolute numbers in the period 2014 – 2016. The number of unemployed persons aged 20-24 is higher. More men than women are unemployed, with the unemployed males in the 20-24 age group being a larger number than those in the 15-19 age group.

Table 8: Number of unemployed young persons aged 15-24 /2014-2016 (in thousands)

		2014	2015	2016
Total	Total	384.5	305.1	247.2
	15 - 19	8.6	7.4	4.8
	20 - 24	39.0	32.2	22.9
Male	Total	221.4	174.2	141.7
	15 - 19	4.7	4.2	3.2
	20 - 24	23.6	19.2	13.7
Female	Total	163.1	130.9	105.6
	15 - 19	3.9	3.2	1.6
	20 - 24	15.4	13.0	9.2

Source: NSI

The share of unemployed young persons aged 15 – 24 dropped in the period from the third quarter of 2016 to the first quarter of 2017 both in terms of total numbers, and by gender. In the first quarter of 2017 a significantly lower share of unemployed young persons was recorded as compared to the same period in 2016.

Table 9: Share of unemployed youth aged 15-24 by gender/ 2016 –2017 in %

		2016_Q1	2016_Q2	2016_Q3	2016_Q4	2017_Q1
Total	15 - 24	29.9	24.3	30.4	26.4	19.6
Male	15 - 24	18.5	15.9	18.5	14.7	10.8
Female	15 - 24	11.4	8.4	11.8	11.8	8.7

Source: NSI

The youth unemployment dynamics by gender displays the same consistent downward trend:

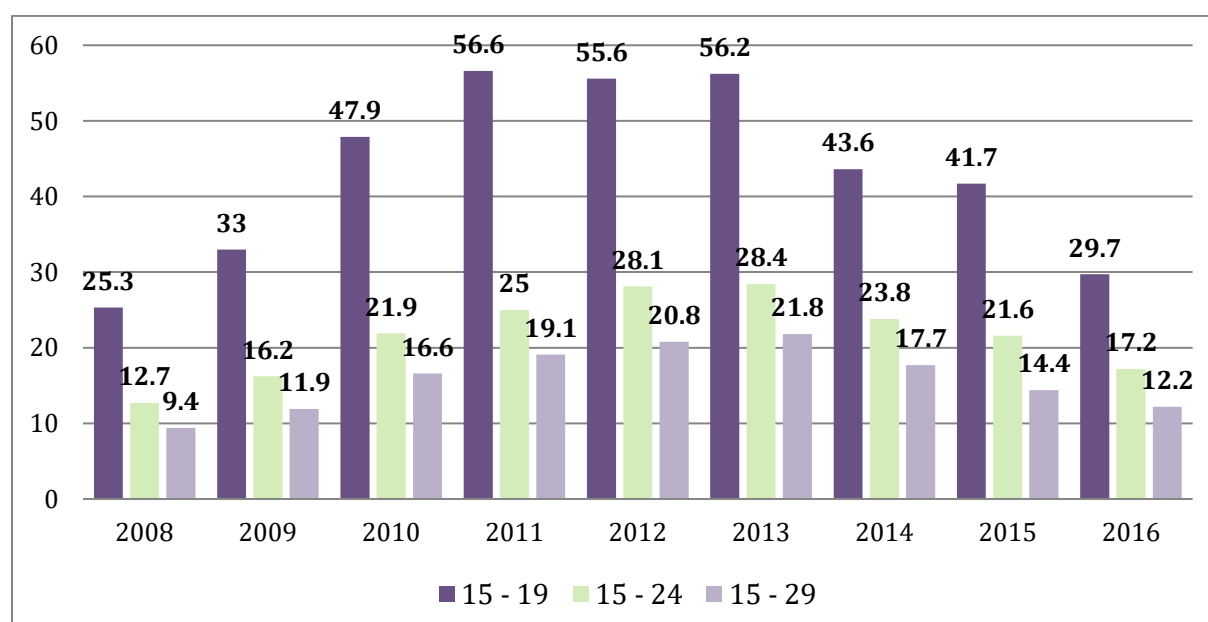
Table 10: Number of unemployed in the 15 – 24 age group (in thousands) and unemployment rate (%) by gender

	Q1/2016	Q1/2017	Change in (Q1/2017 compared to Q1/2016)
Unemployed persons (thousand)	29.9	19.6	- 10.3
Male	18.5	10.8	-7.7
Female	11.4	8.7	-2.7
Unemployment rate (%)	18.4	12.8	- 5.6
Male	18.7	11.8	-6.9
Female	17.9	14.3	-3.6

Source: NSI

The youth unemployment dynamics in the 15-19, 15-24, and 15-29 age groups for an extended period – from 2008 to 2016 - is shown in the figure below. Since 2014 the trends have been for a gradual and steady decrease of the share of unemployed in all of the above age groups.

Figure 12: Unemployment rate among the young persons aged 15-29/ 2008 – 2016



Source: NSI

In 2016 the economically inactive young persons aged 15-24 were 500 000. This is a huge resource that is outside the labour market.

Table 11: Number of economically inactive persons (outside the labour force) aged 15-24 in 2016 (in thousands)

Age	Persons outside the labour force
15-19	293.6
20-24	219.8

Source: NSI

The economically inactive persons are the largest group: in the first quarter of 2017 the number of economically inactive youth was several times higher than the number of unemployed young persons.

Table 12: Number of unemployed, economically inactive (outside the labour force) and discouraged young persons aged 15-24 in the first quarter of 2017 (in thousands)

Unemployed	Outside the labour force	Discouraged
19.6	502.0	16.7

Source: NSI

The above statistical data and indicators provide a general overview of the trends in the group of young persons not in employment, education or training, and in the youth unemployment and employment in the past years. The following conclusions can be made based on this data: the share of young persons in the NEETs group remains high as compared to other European countries, irrespective of the slight drop by 1-2% in the recent years. The dynamics of youth unemployment in Bulgaria displays a downward trend as a result of the active implementation of labour market programmes and measures. The inactivity rate for the young persons aged 15-24 is low. The proportion of young persons seeking work is smaller as compared to the proportion of young people remaining outside the labour force.

7. METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFICATION, OUTREACH AND ACTIVATION OF THE NEETs GROUP

7.1. KEY PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

This methodology is designed to provide tools and methods for identifying, reaching out to and activating young persons not in employment, education or training.

It was developed based on the understanding that in order to be effective work with young persons in the NEETs group should apply a proactive, systemic and holistic approach ensuring sustainability of the results achieved.

Holistic, because it covers all stages in the work with the NEETs: from preventing the risk of becoming a NEET, through the outreach and activation stage aimed at re-engaging the young persons with the labour market and enrolling them in education or training, to the intervention monitoring and evaluation stage.

Systemic, because each activity related to the identification, outreach and activation of NEETs is an element of a larger strategy to overcome the NEETs problem.

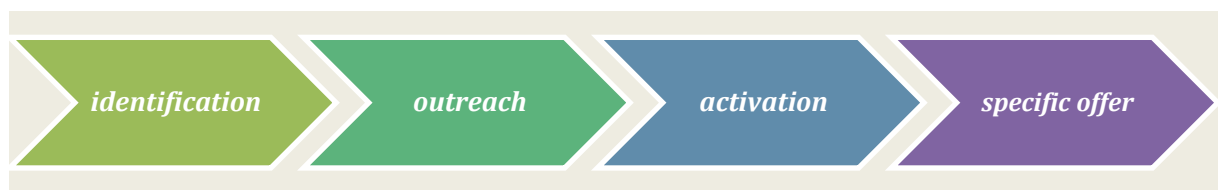
Proactive, because work with young persons from this group requires initiative, resourcefulness and innovative solutions in line with the local context and the individual profile of each identified young person.

These are the key methodological principles for working with the NEETs group.

The path to NEETs re-engagement involves a sequence of actions in three stages: identification, outreach and activation with the end goal being to encourage the young people to choose one of the following Youth Guarantee paths – start work, enrol in traineeships or apprenticeships or continue their education.

Figure: The path to re-engagement of NEETs⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Each stage is described in detail below.



7.2. METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING YOUNG PERSONS FROM THE NEET'S GROUP

Definition

„Identification“ means acquiring the name and contact details of a young person not in employment and education who is not registered with the Labour Office Directorate.

Specific methods for identifying young persons from the NEET group

- **Work in informal setting**

The informal individual and group meetings at locations where young people hang out (cafes, bars, clubs) or during youth events are an effective and widely used practice for identifying NEETs in other European countries.

Tools:

- ✓ Visits to popular youth venues (cafes, bars, clubs, etc.) in order to establish informal contacts with young people and identify NEETs;
- ✓ Informal individual and group meetings and talks with young persons;
- ✓ Attending and taking part in youth events in the respective settlement organized by NGOs and other institutions and organizations.

GOOD PRACTICES

Gang advisers have been established in the Employment Service of the **United Kingdom**. They work on the ground with families and groups at risk with cases of juvenile delinquency, violence and aggression - risk factors for becoming NEET. The goal of the gang advisers is to identify those who are involved in gang activity and those who are at risk of involvement in such activity. They provide the young people with ongoing support with the ultimate aim of getting them into education, training or employment. The gang advisers receive special training on effective informal communication with young persons from the target group.

The employment services in **Ireland** employ the so called “street counsellors” in order to identify and reach the NEETs. Four nights per week the street councillors visit public places where young people hang out, and meet and talk with them in an informal setting. The street counsellors collect valuable information about the attitudes, interests and aspirations of the young people and provide it to the employment services.

In **Graz, Austria** representatives of the international organization CARITAS reach the NEETs through streetwork and visits to public areas. They are tasked with establishing contact with the youth and motivating them to register with the employment services. In Graz a special zone was designated where young people can meet, talk to each other and receive information and advice on issues relating to education, employment and training.

Source: <http://jugendstreetwork.caritas-steiermark.at/>

What can you do?

- ✓ *Map the public places where young people go in your town and make a calendar of events. Establish contact with youth and nongovernmental organizations – they often hold youth events. Visit the places popular with youth, attend the events and make contacts.*
- ✓ *When you come into contact with young people from the target group, show that you care about them, ask them how they see their future, whether they have plans for the future, ask*

them why they are not studying or working, listen to what they say. Demonstrate empathy and involvement. This is the way to build trust and have them feel supported.

- ✓ *Try to use the established contacts to reach more young people. In the smaller towns the young people know each other, they know the employment and educational status of their peers. With each new contact you create an opportunity to broaden the circle of young people you work with as word of mouth is a powerful tool to reach a greater number of people.*
- ✓ *Before you start your fieldwork, you need to prepare your “business card”. This is more than an actual card. This is the way you present yourself. Focus on several highlights: who you are and what you do; how you can be of assistance. Be prepared to relate a concrete case that you worked on which could be used as a motivational story: the stories of successful young people who managed to overcome their difficulties inspire the other young people to change.*

- **Proactive work with schools**

The direct contact and proactive communication of the youth mediators with the school workers is an important method of identifying and reaching the early school leavers who are at risk of becoming or have become NEETs.

Each school has real-time information about the number of students, about the enrollment numbers and the students who are transferred to different educational forms, the students who move to other schools, the early school leavers. This data is processed by the REDs and is shared with the municipal administrations. It is only a small part of the information that the teachers, educators, school counsellors, and school psychologists can provide to the youth mediators. They can also give additional information about the profile, behaviour and attitudes of every early school leaver, about their family and social environment, and about their interests and needs.

Another channel that can be used to identify and reach young persons not in employment and education because of early school leaving is the Early Dropout Warning System which is to be developed under the Strategy for Reducing the Share of Early School Leavers (2013-2020), and whose pilot rollout by MES began in the 2016/2017 school year.

The pilot phase for system testing covers 50 schools and kindergartens in 9 districts and 19 municipalities in the Southeastern and Northwestern planning regions – the regions with the largest share of early school leavers.

The system has four access levels: national (MES); regional – REDs in 9 districts: Vidin, Vratsa, Lovech, Montana and Pleven (Northwestern planning region) and Burgas, Sliven, Stara Zagora and Yambol (Southeastern planning region); municipal – the municipal administrations in 19 municipalities; institutional – 50 schools and kindergartens on the territory of the selected municipalities.

A key element of the Early Dropout Warning System is the “individual records” which include data of each student or child identified to be at risk of early school leaving, concrete measures and interventions to be implemented in each specific case and the responsibilities at each level. The system allows for the constant communication, coordination and interaction between the institutions.

The Early Dropout Warning System is expected to be fully operational on the territory of the entire country by 2020. When it covers all schools and kindergartens in Bulgaria it will be possible to use the system to trace the movement of each young person identified to be at risk of early school leaving.

Tools:

- ✓ Letters to REDs and the schools requesting information about the ESLs;

- ✓ Meetings with school principals in order to collect additional information from teachers, school counsellors and psychologists about the early school leavers (family and social environment, reasons for leaving school, interests, aspirations and motivation of the young person) which to be used for choosing the right method of working with the person.

GOOD PRACTICES

In 2005 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of **Netherlands** introduced the Basic Records Database for Education (a system which is similar to the Early Dropout Warning System tested in Bulgaria). Agreements were signed between the Ministry, the schools and the municipalities and local partnerships were established between the municipal authorities, schools and third parties (NGOs, social partners, social services, etc.). The schools can select and apply their own methods, approaches and initiatives to prevent dropout.

An “individual education number” was introduced as an element of the early warning system which allows for the “school history” of every young person to be tracked from pre-school to university graduation. The system also has a “digital absence counter” which makes it impossible to hide absenteeism. Special amendments were made to the legislation making it mandatory to report absent students. The information on students at risk of dropping out, on the movement of the ESLs, and on the prevention measures taken is shared with the municipalities which take over the case. When the young person is not included in some form of employment or education, the local authorities are obliged to take the necessary action accounting for the needs of the young persons and their specific social and demographic profile.

Source:

https://www.unicef.bg/assets/Conferences/NEETs/BG_PPT/Dennis_van_Gessel_NEETs_Sofia_19.05.pdf

In **Italy** schools identify young people who have dropped out of compulsory education. Twice a year they inform their local PES office of who has dropped out. When this data has been transferred, the responsibility for these individuals also transfers to the PES. The PES contact the individuals concerned to encourage them to register with the local PES and make them aware of the support and relevant services.

Source: *PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services*

Outreach work in **Finland** is carried out by a network of designated outreach workers covering nearly 90% of municipalities across the country. They are in close contact with student welfare teams in schools and follow-up on school drop-outs. In addition, young people are referred to them by social workers, health care institutions, PES and youth workshops. Young people may also contact them spontaneously. Outreach workers are also very active online, using Facebook and social media effectively to reach out to young people. Larger cities in Finland also have outreach workers engaged in “street work”. Mobile outreach work may be undertaken in some of the more sparsely populated regions. As regards the outcomes of the outreach work, 75% of users of the youth outreach work were placed into different measures, in 2012.

Source: *PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services*

In **Croatia**, an agreement has been established and signed between secondary schools, universities, employment services, social and tax services to share data. The aim is to link different databases and exchange data. This provides the ability to track an individual’s path and speeds up the process of identifying those who drop out from the educational system and need (re)education, training or employment interventions.

Source: *PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services*

What can you do?

- *Establish contacts with the schools in your area and build sustainable systemic partnerships with them.*
- *Work actively with the school teams. The teachers, educators, school counsellors and psychologists know who the ESLs are. They can provide you with valuable information about the interests, aspirations and plans of each student, including the young persons at risk of ESL. The teachers know the families of their students and their social environment. The information they share is a valuable resource which can help you in the next stages of your work with the NEETs.*
- ✓ *Use data from the schools, the REDs, the municipal education directorates/departments, including through the Early Dropout Warning System, and the CRAS units, on school dropouts or early school leavers.*
- ✓ *Strictly comply with the provisions of the Personal Data Protection Act when you handle ESLs personal data.*

- **Cooperation with the local authorities**

An important element in the work of the youth mediators with the NEETs is setting up partnerships with the structural units of the municipal administrations, with municipal and district committees with mandate to address youth issues, with the mayors and mayoral deputies.

The municipal administration units (directorates, departments, sectors) responsible for the implementation of the government and municipal policy on education and youth can provide RED and school data on ESLs, supply information about the events calendar and the youth initiatives in the respective municipality or settlement.

The units tasked with implementing the social policy in the municipality can provide information about children and youth at risk, about the social services system in the municipality, about projects and programmes for the social integration of adolescents and young persons from vulnerable groups.

TD CRAS can supply data on the address registration of the ESLs.

The mayors and mayoral deputies in smaller settlements can supply information about young persons not in education, employment or training and provide assistance in identifying and reaching out to them.

Tools:

- ✓ Establish contacts with the structural units of the municipal administrations to inform them about the specific tasks of the youth mediators and the NEETs target group;
- ✓ Letters to CRAS requesting ESLs and/or identified NEETs address registration data;
- ✓ Establish contacts with the LJDCs – they work with minors who commit different offenses and may be able to identify the NEETs in this group;
- ✓ Meetings and talks with social workers who can assist in identifying vulnerable youth in the respective settlement who are not in education and employment;
- ✓ Establish contacts with the municipal council commissions in charge of the social and youth policy to present the work of the youth mediators and seek support when necessary;
- ✓ Letters to the mayors and mayoral deputies requesting them to identify persons in the respective settlement who are not in employment, education or training;
- ✓ Personal meetings with the representatives of the mayoralities in the smaller settlements to ask them to assist in the identification of NEETs.

- **Work with local communities**

When the target group to be identified are Roma girls who are ESLs because of early marriage or childbirth or discouraged persons from the most marginalized communities, especially in regions with compact Roma population, the most effective working methods are those in and with the community. Such an approach is necessary because some Roma communities are closed, and access of external non-community members is almost impossible. Therefore, the youth mediators should rely on the mediation of Roma mediators, Roma activists or NGOs working with the Roma as they have gained the trust of the community.

Tools:

- ✓ Talks with the Roma mediators in the LODs to obtain information about the specificities of the local Roma communities and receive assistance in establishing contacts with the community leaders, and working together and organizing joint visits to the Roma neighbourhoods;
- ✓ Establish contacts with local NGOs working with the Roma;
- ✓ Meetings with local leaders to present the work of the youth mediators and find if they are willing to cooperate in the identification of Roma youth not in employment, education or training;
- ✓ Meetings in the Roma communities with girls who left school because of early marriage arranged through the Roma mediators and NGOs working with the Roma.

Working with Roma boys and girls requires a good understanding of the specific social norms and values of the Roma communities. Experience shows that there are effective tools in place for both identifying, and reaching out to and activating Roma NEETs. These tools will be described in detail and supported by examples of good practices in the “Outreach methods” section (point 7.3.) hereof.

- **Partnerships with community centres (chitalishte) in the villages and smaller towns**

Libraries and community centres (chitalishte) are the most popular cultural and educational institutions in Bulgaria. Every district centre has a regional library, municipal libraries and community centres are located in some municipalities, there is a community centre in almost all villages.

Libraries, and especially community centre libraries in the villages, serve as meeting points for the local community. The librarians and community cultural workers are well-respected and trusted by the locals. They know the residents in the respective settlement well and may be of help to the youth mediators in identifying young persons not in employment, education or training.

Tools:

- ✓ Meetings with community centre (chitalishte) board members and librarians to present the work of the youth mediators and the NEETs target group;
- ✓ Letters to the community centre boards and librarians requesting assistance in identifying young persons living in the respective settlement.

Community centres (chitalishte) and libraries can be partners to the youth mediators not only at the identification stage, but also at the stage of outreach and activation of NEETs. Good practices will be presented in the “Outreach Methods” section (point 7.3.) hereof.

7.3. OUTREACH METHODS FOR INACTIVE YOUNG PERSONS

Definition

“Outreach” to inactive young people includes both the *identification* of a young person not in employment, education or training and not registered with the employment services, and the *establishment of contact* with such a young person.

This is an important stage in the work of the youth mediators because it relates to engaging the NEETs and is a step towards their activation. Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee puts special focus on this stage: “effective outreach strategies towards young people (identification and engagement of unregistered persons) are a key element in the early activation of the NEETs”.⁴⁵

Specific outreach approaches to inactive young persons

- **Informational events and information materials**

Information meetings, press-conferences, briefings, labour exchanges, meetings with employers, and communication materials such as brochures, flyers, leaflets, etc. are some of the most widely used methods to reach the NEETs. They are communication channels and tools which can be used to deliver certain messages to the target group.

Each informational event and each material (brochures, flyers, etc.) used during the events and distributed in public areas should not simply have an informative function, but also aim *to produce change*: e.g. get the inactive youth to register with the employment services and seek advice or consultation on employment opportunities; have the unemployed youth make an informed choice of professional career; motivate the discouraged young persons to actively look for ways to re-enter education or employment, etc.

This is why every detail of the informational event should be carefully planned: preparation of a scenario, decision whether to invite the media and if yes, drafting a press release and compiling press kits. The informational events for young persons could be organized in non-conventional formats such as happenings, workshops, ateliers, etc. which allow for interactions and discussions among the participants.

The information materials can also be produced in formats which are attractive and not only provide information but provoke action, or contain short but inspiring stories.

GOOD PRACTICES

In **Greece** the Employment Service organizes an annual Employment Forum which brings NEETs and employers together and promotes PES services, particularly emphasising on counselling services, training and employment opportunities. Activities of the Forum include discussions on career and job opportunities, panel discussions; workshops; EURES information; help with CV drafting; and, a detailed presentation of the Youth Guarantee initiative and related activities.

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

What can you do?

⁴⁵ Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01), (20)

- ✓ *Think of new formats which to “break” the traditional rigid informational events with presentations of employment measures and programmes. Find partners among the NGOs and the youth organizations, and businesses and hold joint events.*
- ✓ *If you want to not simply inform, but call to action and provoke a change in attitude or behaviour, you need a message! The most appealing and strong messages come from the real-life stories and testimonials of real people. So, find your heroes!*
- ✓ *Ask young people you helped to share their personal stories – the difficulties they had to overcome, the support they found and the decisions they took. Tell your audience how they completed their education, acquired a profession, how they found their realization and how that changed their lives. A good story is something people remember, get excited about and inspired by. Include such stories in the brochures and flyers that you disseminate.*
- ✓ *Collect stories. Include them in the print materials (brochures, flyers, leaflets), share them in the social media. If you can, use them in videos – images are always stronger than words.*
- ✓ *Work with journalists from the local media. Media influence public attitudes, they provoke and motivate. Find “your” reporter, tell them about your work. Tell them about the NEETs group and the change you want to achieve. Give them information and stories to write about. Build partnerships with the media – they can be your allies when you want to raise awareness or reach a wider audience.*

- **Outreach via the social media and Internet**

Social media and Internet can be described as the shortest and most effective way to reach the NEETs.

The young persons aged 15 to 24 who are not in education or employment belong to the **NEETs group**, but in today’s culture marked with the rapid expansion of new technologies they also belong to **generation Z**.

The representatives of generation Z were born at the eve of the new millennium in the period from 90s to 2010s. They are also referred to as „digital natives”⁴⁶ – it is as if they are born with the capability to use digital technologies and they have no difficulties in using smartphones, the Internet, the social media and the software applications which makes them perfect multitaskers. Their habits, rituals and manner of communication are to a great extent a product of the digital technologies.

The psychological profile of generation Z as it correlates with the digital technologies shows that they are pragmatic and practical (therefore at the very beginning they need to be explained “why”); cautious (not prone to taking risk, inclined to make multiple attempts, seek assistance online); autonomous, independent and self-confident (do not want to have their hands held therefore support should be provided in an adequate manner), impatient (short attention span).⁴⁷

One of the important characteristics of generation Z is that they communicate more through the social media and are likely to prefer the indirect contact to the face-to-face communication. The social media are a natural environment for them where they make contacts, seek and receive information and communicate with friends.

The generation Z features apply to many of the NEETs as well. Even when they do not work or study, they use smartphones and Internet and have active profiles in the social media. Some of them seem to make up for the lack of employment by being very active in the most popular

⁴⁶ Mark McCrindle, Seriously Cool. Marketing and communicating with diverse generations, Australia: The ABC of XYZ, 2007

⁴⁷ These features of the generation Zeders were not identified by special research, but are rather empirical observations. Without being exhaustive they provide sufficient pointers with respect to the communication with the representatives of this generation.

social media Facebook. The active use of Internet and the social media, the development of web based services and using the web as the predominant communication channel are approaches that correspond to the profile, preferences and interests of young persons. At the same time this working method saves time, money and resources which can be redirected to other types of activities.

GOOD PRACTICES

A special Youth Guarantee Platform was introduced by the **Portuguese** PES in 2014 to identify, intervene on behalf of and activate NEETs that are at the margins of socio-economic assistance, i.e., who are not registered with PES. As well as identifying NEETs, the Platform allows for participants to express what kind of measure they seek and provides them support in defining their most appropriate path; it collects information concerning youth, which allows for PES to establish direct contact for scheduling information and counselling activities; and, it provides a platform for partners to communicate.

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

The national youth guarantee website has been developed by the employment service in **Spain** in order to provide one, common “meeting point” to all parties engaged, interested or participating in the Spanish Youth Guarantee scheme. A dedicated area has also been arranged for young people: all the registered young jobseekers are given access to a specific private area where it is possible to check offers of employment, participate in e-learning activities and update personal information

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

100% web support is a project of the **French** employment services. This measure builds on the exclusive use of digital channels between jobseekers and counsellors: chat, video, interviews through webcam, web call-back and email with a job counsellor. All emails are responded to within 48 hours. All correspondence is tracked through the jobseekers’ account, which they can access. It also includes e-counselling modules about job search techniques and presenting occupational sectors with high recruitment prospects. Over 100 specifically trained voluntary counsellors are dedicated to this support. It has resulted in over 4 500 video interviews. The first qualitative evaluation shows that 96% of jobseekers are satisfied. The measure is seen as time- and cost-saving, practical, and can be adapted to the needs of jobseekers; while the rate of absenteeism seems lower than in face-to-face interviews. This pilot began in February 2014 in 11 local agencies across seven regions and it is being progressively rolled out on a national basis.

Source: Practitioner’s toolkit sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

A Youth Guarantee Internet Portal was developed in **Bulgaria**. It contains valuable resources and information – documents, guidelines, news and details about upcoming events such as conferences, informational days, round tables, etc. relating to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Bulgaria.

Source: <http://yg.mlsp.government.bg/>

What can you do?

- ✓ *There is higher chance of “meeting” young people not in employment and education in social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and reaching them via Viber, Skype and Messenger than seeing them attend public events or meeting them in public places. Make use of that!*
- ✓ *Create a special Facebook page and invite the young people you work with to join. Invite also young people with successful careers and businesses. The exchange of opinions and*

experience between peers is a good motivational tool for inactive and discouraged young persons.

- ✓ *Share the stories of young people who had to overcome difficulties but found their professional realization. They empower and inspire.*
- ✓ *Post regularly, upload information about various employment and training opportunities, about the initiatives that you think could attract the interest of the target group. When you are in the social networks, speak the Facebook language. Use language that is understandable and that would trigger off a following. A message about an upcoming labour exchange would not collect likes if it is simply copied from an institutional web site. Use moderately emoticons, animation, pictures, popular abbreviations, popular games and applications.*

- **Outreach to Roma boys and girls belonging to the NEETs group**

As mentioned in the section “Methods for identifying young persons from the NEETs group” when working with the Roma community you need to be aware of its specificities: in some Roma groups for instance it is the mothers-in-law that take the important decisions. They are the ones that have the final say as to whether to re-enter education, postpone a first childbirth, enrol in trainings or start a job. In other groups where the Protestant Church is influential in forming the attitudes of the members of the group, the decisive opinion is that of the pastor.

The effective outreach to the Roma boys and girls from the NEETs group requires knowledge of the specificities of the local communities and active mediation by the Roma mediators, Roma activists and NGOs working with the Roma.

There are many methods which have proven their effectiveness: door-to-door social work, motivational meetings and individual talks in the presence of community “insiders”, individual work with the parents of the Roma girls who married early and left school, setting up parent clubs, conducting parent schools in order to educate the parents and encourage them to support their children, including in finishing school, family and group conferences, etc.

One of the most effective approaches in social and community work, including to change the attitudes to education, is to present and popularize the personal life stories of educated Roma youth, who had success in life and built professional careers. Research results show that “even among the most conservative Roma groups in Bulgaria (such as the Burgudjii and the Kaldarashi) as well as in small and detached settlements in rural regions one can identify educated Roma boys and girls, that have not cut off their ties with their communities but on the contrary –are strongly motivated to work for change.”⁴⁸

These young people can be recruited to serve as role-models for the other youth in the community.

GOOD PRACTICES

In 2010 the **Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance, Bulgaria** carried out a series of awareness campaigns under the Preventing Early/Forced Marriages project in several municipalities with compact Roma population in order to pilot activities aimed at preventing early marriages and early school leaving.

A campaign took place in the **Rakovski** Municipality under the slogan “I don’t want to marry, I want to study” which targeted Roma youth and their parents. The main working methods applied in the campaign were community work, group meetings and individual talks. The issue

⁴⁸ Amalipe Centre, Preventing Early Marriages, p. 108,
<http://amalipe.com/files/publications/Doklad-prevenicia-ranni-brakove-bg.pdf>

of child marriages was discussed in relation to the themes of education, employment, the place of the Roma girl in the family, the Roma integration. The team found that most of the parents do not perceive child marriage as a problem, they see it as tradition. The parents are willing to break with that tradition if they could be certain that their children will have higher incomes in the future. The issues that the Roma youth considered as most important were better education and more personal freedom. Many of them are looking for ways to obtain better education in order to find better jobs but the local circumstances – unemployment and lack of jobs in the rural areas – make it impossible to complete secondary education and early marriage is seen as the only alternative.

Teams of Roma women and youth who study in secondary schools and universities were formed in **Rakitovo** to support the Amalipe campaign. The main focus was put on awareness-raising activities, improving the motivation of the young people, and presenting successful young Roma who chose to study instead of marrying young and having them become a role model for the community. Volunteers conducted a door-to-door campaign visiting families at risk and having talks with them and holding family and group conferences.

Source: *Preventing Early Marriages, Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance*, <http://amalipe.com/files/publications/Doklad-prevencia-ranni-brakove-bg.pdf>

The personal life stories of medical Roma students sharing their difficulties and achievements are compiled in the publication “When dreams come true” of Amalipe Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance.

Source: http://www.romahealth.com/images/publications/When_dreams_come_true_BG.pdf

What can you do?

- ✓ *Get acquainted with the specificities of the Roma communities. The Roma and health mediators, NGOs and social workers are your indispensable partners – work with them to select the best approach to the Roma boys and girls.*
- ✓ *Learn who the local leaders, Roma activists and opinion leaders are.*
- ✓ *Find out if there are educated young people in the local Roma community who are willing to work towards changing the Roma attitudes with regards to education.*
- ✓ *Together with the Roma mediators and the school teams identify the girls that are likely to marry early or who are at risk of early school leaving.*
- ✓ *Provide the young mothers with information about the opportunities for returning to school and about the most appropriate reintegration formats – individual schooling, evening classes, etc.*
- ✓ *Join social network groups supporting girls who married early and share information that could be useful to them, including about the opportunities to return to school, enrol in professional qualification trainings, or start work.*
- ✓ *Actively employ peer education to share experience and information, and popularize the personal stories of educated Roma girls who finished their education in order to promote similar behaviour.*

- **Apply the peer education method**

Peer education is a method whereby people at the same age and with similar attitudes and views exchange opinions on different issues. This method is especially effective with young people, particularly if the goal is to prevent certain risks, raise awareness and share personal experience. Young people are more open to internalize information they receive from someone they can identify with. If they hear a story told by their peers in which they can discern some of their feelings and difficulties, they will be much more likely to replicate the pattern of behaviour and follow the steps already proven to lead to achieving a given goal. The main objective with

peer education is to help the young people in obtaining certain knowledge, skills and competences.

The NEETs, particularly in the 15 -19 age group, are susceptible to various influences. At this age they are more likely to receive information from and adopt the behaviour of their peers than to copy their parents and other adults.

This approach may be used to reach and activate young people aged 15-19 and the peer education method seems to be an appropriate tool for this purpose.

GOOD PRACTICES

The **Swedish** PES ran a project in five Swedish towns under which outreach was carried out by young people who themselves were selected from the NEETs group and who were trained to find young persons not in employment or education, motivate them to register with the employment services and persuade them to seek solutions by enrolling in training or starting work.

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

What can you do?

- ✓ *Obtain information about NGOs implementing youth projects which apply this method; meet peer trainers.*
- ✓ *Talk to them and tell them about your work and involve them in identifying themes that they can educate their peers on. Inspire them to be ambassadors of your ideas.*
- ✓ *Together with them and the NGO teams identify the target groups, the training themes and the appropriate training methods.*

• **Partnerships with libraries and community centres (chitalishte)**

As noted in the section “Methods for identifying young persons from the NEET group” libraries and community centres may be of assistance to the youth mediators not only at the NEETs identification stage, but also at the NEETs outreach and activation stages.

GOOD PRACTICES

The large-scale national programme “Global Libraries – Bulgaria” was implemented in the period 2009-2013 in Bulgaria as a joint initiative of the MC, UNDP, MTITC, NAMRB and BLIA. It covered 960 libraries in 911 small and large cities, and villages in 260 of the 264 municipalities in Bulgaria. 71% of the target libraries were located in villages and 95% were in chitalishte.

The libraries under the programme were equipped with computers and peripherals, and the librarians underwent special trainings on ITC use, provision of modern library services, working with the local communities and advocacy. Partnerships were established with ministries and state agencies for the provision of information and specialized services to the local population.

In 2012 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Employment Agency⁴⁹ for disseminating information about job openings and opportunities to apply for participation in employment and education measures and programmes. This information is provided to the libraries by the labour offices and through the libraries it reaches the end users of library services and the local communities. Thus, through the library and chitalishte network the information is available even in the remotest settlements.

⁴⁹ Memorandum of Understanding at:
[//www.glb.org.bg/sites/default/files/Memorandum_of_Understanding_GLBG-Employment_Agency.pdf](http://www.glb.org.bg/sites/default/files/Memorandum_of_Understanding_GLBG-Employment_Agency.pdf)

The libraries, in conjunction with the Employment Agency, hold many webinars in order to reach the unemployed and inactive youth in remote settlements. The webinars are organized by the regional libraries in the district centres and ensure real-time online connection between the trainers (experts from the local employment services) and the participants – unemployed youth who attend the webinars from the chitalishte in their villages. In the webinars the experts from the employment services provide information about job vacancies, about projects and programmes, carry out online trainings on CV and motivation letter writing and answer questions.

The successor of the programme objectives and results is the Global Libraries – Bulgaria Foundation.

Source: <http://www.glbulgaria.bg>

The Lincolnshire Library in East Anglia developed a special library service for NEETs. It includes identifying and reaching out to young persons not in employment and education, studying their needs and developing a library service which meets those needs. The library initiated the establishment of a NEETs Access and Engagement Team consisting of representatives of the local authorities, local cultural institutions and nongovernmental organizations. After identifying the NEETs, the library designed special information services and activities to engage the young people.

Source: <http://www.libr.org/isc/issues/ISC28/articles/5%20-%20Developing%20a%20NEETs%20Based%20Library%20Service.pdf>

7.4. PATHS AND CONCRETE STEPS FOR THE ACTIVATION OF DIVERSE GROUPS OF INACTIVE YOUNG PERSONS

Definition

Activation involves a series of actions aimed to encourage the young people to choose one of the Youth Guarantee Paths – employment, continued education, traineeship, apprenticeship.

These actions together with the specific activation tools and methods could be represented as an algorithm – **a progression of 7 consecutive and logically connected steps** towards an informed choice of a path – a choice aligned with both the group profile, and the individual interests, preferences and aspirations of the young person.



STEP 1: Assessing the risk factors of becoming NEET in each individual case

Identifying the risk factors in each individual case improves the understanding of the “personal story” of the young person, i.e. the reasons for them becoming a NEET. This is important as it provides insights about the life situation of each NEET and hence makes it possible to select the adequate activation and support strategy.

Tool: Table for assessing the risk factors for acquiring a NEET status

Score: *1 – low *2 – medium *3 – high

Risk factor	Description	Assessment of factors by groups
Family	Long-term unemployed parents Permanent care of (sick) parents or other relatives Alcohol or drug addiction in the family	

	Violence and aggression in the family Parents absent for long periods of time Financial resources provided by the parents	
Social environment	Unemployed friends Friends with addictions or antisocial behaviour Community norms: child marriages, early childbirth	
Education	Early school leaving Learning difficulties Systemic absenteeism Antisocial behavior Poor grades at school Poor knowledge of Bulgarian language Unwillingness to study	
Professional qualification and experience	Lack of professional experience Lack of professional qualification	
Health	Serious health problems Disability	
Motivation to learn	Clear willingness to take part in trainings for obtaining professional qualification and work experience or continued education	
Motivation to work	Clear willingness to start work	



STEP 2: Determining the NEETs sub-category the young person belongs to

Developing an individual profile of each young person makes it possible to determine which NEET sub-category the person belongs to which in turn is a pre-condition for selecting the adequate tools and offer of employment, traineeship and apprenticeship, or continued education as envisaged in the Youth Guarantee.

The individual profile is built based on data about the education level, professional qualification, work experience, skills and competences of each young person. It contains key milestones from the person's life history and enhances the understanding of the personal characteristics of the individual.

Tool:

Questionnaire for determining NEETs sub-group (*Attachment No 1*).

After the Questionnaire is filled, the answers are compared and matched to the main characteristics of each NEETs sub-group through the Answers Validation Table.

Validation is an exercise through which the individual profile features are matched to the characteristics of the respective sub-category.

In this way each identified young person is determined to belong to a specific NEETs subgroup.

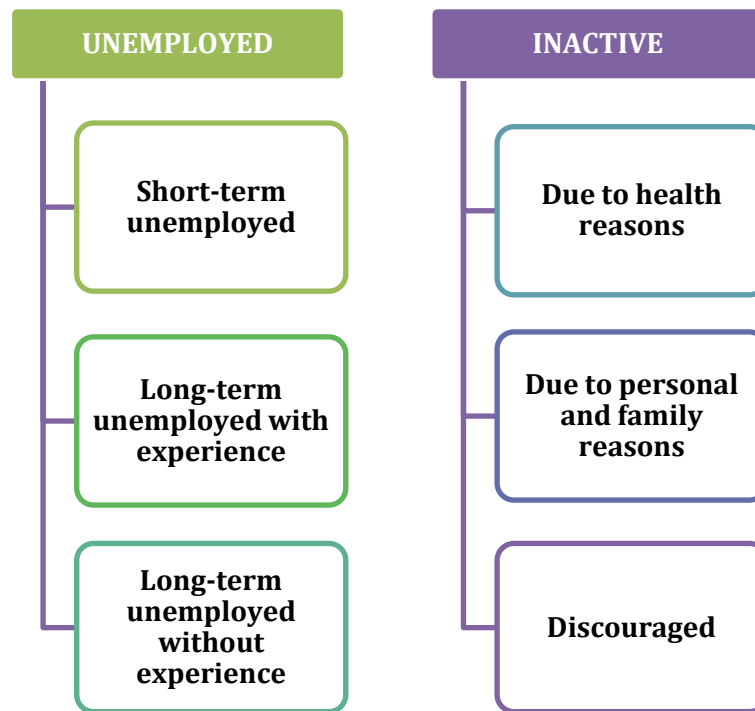
Tool:

Answers Validation Table for determining NEET sub-category:

UNEMPLOYED			
	Subgroup	Main characteristics	valid/ invalid

1	Short-term unemployed	Registered with the employment services Unemployed for less than 1 year With secondary and higher education Has work experience Has professional/work experience Expects change within 12 months Highly motivated Willing to start work immediately Has requirements for the quality of job and education offers	
2	Long – term unemployed with experience	Registered with the employment services Unemployed for more than 1 year With secondary education With work/professional experience Expects change Motivated	
3	Long – term unemployed without experience	Registered with the employment services Unemployed for more than 1 year Lower than secondary education/ESL No professional qualification No work/professional experience Low motivation	
INACTIVE			
4.	Inactive because of health reasons	Not registered with the employment services Not seeking work With physical and mental disabilities, including loss of working capacity	
5.	Inactive because of personal or family reasons	Not registered with the employment services Not seeking work Married early On maternity leave or looking after family members Low motivation	
6.	Discouraged	Not registered with the employment services With various education levels, including ESL With different professional/work experience and qualification Not seeking work, think they would not be able to find adequate work; dissatisfied with the offers Willing to work Can be motivated in a situation of economic growth and improved labour market conditions	

Belonging to a certain subgroup is determined by establishing the “accumulation” of characteristics in the individual profile which correspond to the respective subgroup.



There is a chance for some persons to have characteristics attributable to more than one group (e.g. a person is registered with the employment services, receives social assistance but at the same time is looking for a seriously sick relative).

Such people can be activated if a solution is found to the problem with the sick relative. This means that measures and actions should be taken in their case which first help them resolve the immediate problem which is to some extent a barrier to activation and then apply the respective activation methods and measures.



STEP 3: Identifying the aspirations and preferences of the person

This is a type of personality screening – an assessment of the interests, preferences, attitudes and aspirations of each identified young person. The screening is carried out in order to provide additional information for the individual profile which to serve as a basis for selecting a support measure and an offer.

Tool: Questionnaire for determining the aspirations and preferences (*Attachment No 2*).



STEP 4: Paths for activation of NEETs

The Youth Guarantee is envisaged to ensure that all young people aged 15-29 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, or traineeship

Such concrete offers can only be made following the activation of the NEETs.

What are the paths for activation which the youth mediators can use in their work with NEETs?

Activation path: professional and career counselling, psychological support, consultation and motivation to be active on the labour market

Professional and career counselling helps the young people in choosing a career and a profession/specialization; it supports them in deciding what initial professional qualification they want to acquire, what profession to requalify for or how to improve the professional qualification they have. Through professional and career counselling the young people can be provided with information about the opportunities and forms of acquiring the desired specialization and/or professional qualification.

The young people may be referred to motivational trainings for proactive labour market participation in order to improve their job-search skills (drafting a CV and a motivation letter, preparation for job interviews, developing a behavioural and career plan, etc)

The young persons can receive *psychological support* – individual or group counselling for reducing the stress and overcoming the initial difficulties, for identifying and removing the personal barriers.

They can also be provided with *consultation on the legislative provisions* with regards to the status of employed, unemployed and inactive and learn more about their rights and obligations.

Institutions and organizations that the young people could be referred to for professional counselling, provision of information, consultation and motivation to actively participate in the labour market

LOD

- ✓ For professional counselling;
- ✓ For consultations;
- ✓ For psychological support;
- ✓ For motivation to be active in the labour market in order to improve the job -search skills (drafting a CV and a motivation letter, preparation for a job interview, developing a behavioural and career plan, etc) in the Job Search Ateliers at the LODs;
- ✓ For information and consultation on the choice of profession or qualification, on national and regional education and employment programmes, to be presented with a profession/group of professions, to be referred to educational institutions, including exchanges for university applicants at the Job Centres of LOD.

YICCs and NGOs

- ✓ For information provision, career counselling, psychological support with regards to the future career and professional realization.

Centres for personal development support

- ✓ For developing the capabilities and skills of adolescents and youth with special education needs (SEN) and with chronic diseases or at risk;
- ✓ For career counselling activities in line with the personal interests, prevention of violence and managing antisocial behaviour, pedagogical and psychological support, speech therapy, individual sessions for young people with SEN or at risk (additional psychological and social rehabilitation, speech and hearing rehabilitation, rehabilitation in case of visual, communicative and physical impairments).

Career Counselling Centres

- ✓ For consultations on opportunities to continue one's education, career planning and professional orientation.

Chief Labour Inspectorate

- ✓ For compliance with the labour code and the legislation on safe and healthy work conditions.

Personal Data Protection Commission

- ✓ For protection of privacy at the workplace.

Organizations of employees and workers

- ✓ For information about labour rights and obligations.

Paths for continued education and training for acquiring professional qualification and/or key competences in demand on the labour market

The NEETs can be referred to different institutions and organizations to be provided with information and support for *continued education and/or acquisition or improvement of their professional qualification*.

The quality offer for the youth aged 15 -18 should mostly entail them continuing their education and being included in continued education. The NEETs can also enrol in trainings designed to impart skills and improve their employability.

When an offer is made for continued education it is important to account for both the individual preferences and abilities of the young person, and the forms of continued education most suitable for them. There are several forms of education laid down in the Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA): 1. full-time; 2. evening classes; 3. part-time; 4. individual schooling; 5. personal learning plans; 6. distance learning; 7. combined; 8. apprenticeships and vocational school education (dual education system).

Only persons aged 16 or more can take *evening classes*. Persons aged 14 may take part in evening classes as an exception if for family or social reasons they are unable to attend the full-time daily classes. Evening classes for students with special education needs (SEN) can be held based on an individual curriculum developed in line with the respective framework curriculum for evening classes. This form of education is suitable for persons aged 16 and in some cases as set forth in PSEA for persons aged 14 who want to complete primary and secondary education, for ESLs with poor reading, writing and math skills and for illiterate persons.

The part-time form is suitable for persons aged 16 who are able and willing, and have the capacity to study on their own and pass the examinations. The part-time form includes attending classes, completing assignments and passing exams at the end of the school year.

The individual schooling form is recommended for students who for health reasons certified by the respective medical document issued by an expert medical commission as per the Health Act cannot attend full-time or evening classes or make use of the combined form for more than 30 consecutive school days and for students who for family reasons want to complete their education faster; students with SEN. It is suitable for persons who are willing and able, and have the capacity to finish school faster and for persons with SEN.

The personal learning plans are appropriate for: students at compulsory school age who for health reasons certified by the respective medical document issued by an expert medical commission as per the Health Act cannot attend the full-time daily classes; students at compulsory school age or their parents who chose that form; persons aged 16. It is suitable for persons with health problems who are willing to finish their education (Subgroup: inactive because of health problems).

The dual education is a specific educational format which allows for acquiring professional qualification through: 1. practical training in actual work environment and 2. attending a vocational school. The dual system may be applied by a vocational school in partnership with one or more employers. It is available for students aged 16 of the upper secondary education level.

Distance learning is a format available in the 5th to 12th grade for students who for health reasons certified by the respective medical document issued by an expert medical commission as per the Health Act cannot attend the regular daily school classes; students with SEN; gifted students; students who for family reasons live in other countries and are not able to attend school in that country. Vocational education and training cannot be part of distance learning.

The combined form includes regular daily classes and individual education for one or several subjects from the school curriculum or the individual learning plan.

Adult Literacy Courses – they are held in schools and are suitable for persons who are illiterate.

The initial vocational education and training are designed to impart skills and knowledge of a profession, to ensure acquisition of a professional qualification level or new professional qualification. The quality offer for training should meet as many of the following criteria as possible: be consistent with the profile and preferences with the young person, be in demand on the labour market, be related to a concrete job placement. The offer for professional qualification is suitable for young people who have no qualification or who need to enhance and improve their existing qualification or who need re-qualification.

Institutions which the young people can be referred to in order to receive an offer for continued education and training

Schools, vocational schools

- ✓ For adult literacy courses;
- ✓ For continued education;
- ✓ For vocational education.

Professional colleges

- ✓ For vocational education of persons with completed secondary education and for acquiring professional qualification.

Universities, higher schools, specialized higher schools, independent colleges

- ✓ For acquiring a bachelor's or master's degree in different disciplines.

VEC

- ✓ For enrolling in vocational training courses for obtaining professional qualification or for re-qualification;
- ✓ For taking part in trainings for acquiring key competences.

IPOC

- ✓ For professional and career counselling: assessment of skills, competences, interests, motivation and choice of profession or work.

LOD

- ✓ For participating in education fairs and events showcasing opportunities for continued education;
- ✓ For professional qualification courses.

Employers and employees' organizations and NGOs

- ✓ For in-house company trainings, on-the-job trainings.

Institutions and organizations offering trainings for the acquisition of skills which are in demand on the labour market, including volunteer initiatives

- ✓ For acquiring computer skills;
- ✓ For developing "soft skills"⁵⁰ (including in volunteer initiatives).

Paths for activation towards employment

The youth mediators can support the NEETs in their choice of different types of employment, traineeships and apprenticeships in accordance with their individual characteristics (educational level, professional qualification, experience) and needs.

⁵⁰ Communication and presentation skills, team work, decision-making, time management, conflict management, creative and critical thinking

The young people could be provided with assistance for finding *unsubsidized jobs*. Direct placement with an employer is one of the most sustainable forms of employment. In their work the youth mediators establish contacts with employers from the private and public sectors and when a job vacancy is listed they can refer NEETs meeting the specific requirements for the job. Assistance in finding unsubsidized work could also be provided by the job intermediaries in the labour offices and the private personnel recruitment companies.

The young people may be encouraged to start their own business in manufacturing and/or services on their own or in partnership with others.

Subsidized contracts are an opportunity for many young people to form work habits and become more competitive on the labour market. An offer for subsidized job may be made by the job intermediary in the labour office to young persons who are registered as unemployed. Subsidized employment is suitable for all categories of young people depending on the concrete job and the profile of the young person.

Traineeships are a form of work designed to impart professional skills. The offer for a traineeship is suitable for young people who have no work experience relating to a specialization or qualification acquired.

Apprenticeship is a form of on-the-job training. In the apprenticeship the young person learns a profession or craft from a mentor. The offer for apprenticeship is suitable for youth with primary or lower education who have no professional qualification.

The inactive youth who want to use mediation employment services provided free-of-charge by the labour offices (including placement in unsubsidized jobs and taking vacant positions, inclusion in subsidized employment, on-the-job traineeships or apprenticeships listed with the LODs) should be registered as unemployed with the employment services.

Institutions that the young persons can be referred to in order to receive an offer of employment

LODs

- ✓ For employment mediation and placement in unsubsidized jobs and taking vacant positions, including subsidized;
- ✓ For establishing contacts with specific employers;
- ✓ For inclusion in on-the-job traineeships;
- ✓ For apprenticeships;
- ✓ For participation in job fairs where to receive information about job vacancies and meet employers;
- ✓ For promoting entrepreneurship among unemployed youth.

Private companies – personnel recruitment intermediaries

- ✓ For psychological support and motivation for active participation on the labour market;
- ✓ For consultations on employment and education programmes and measures;
- ✓ For assistance in starting work, including in other towns or abroad
- ✓ For referrals, information and support to the jobseekers to find unsubsidized work

Enterprises providing temporary employment

- ✓ For inclusion in temporary employment.

EURES - EUROpean Employment Services – The European Job Mobility Portal

- ✓ For information about the working and living conditions in the EEC Member States and Switzerland;
- ✓ For updated information about job vacancies published by the employment services in the EURES system;
- ✓ For information about employers seeking to hire through the EURES portal.

Social enterprises

- ✓ For jobs in social enterprises;
- ✓ For exploring the social entrepreneurship opportunities.

Employers' organizations

- ✓ For referral to employers to be placed in unsubsidized jobs.

Path for activation through referral to social services, health and social rehabilitation in order to overcome the barriers to employment

When the barriers to the active participation of a young person are identified (looking after a child or parents, or relatives with severe illnesses), the NEETs (especially those of the inactive subgroup, including the discouraged ones) could be referred to community-based social services.

Institutions that the young persons can be referred to in order to use social services, health and social rehabilitation:

- Municipality;
- Local Directorate "Social Assistance";
- Daycare centres for children and/or elderly people with disabilities;
- Daycare centres for elderly people with disabilities – weekly care;
- Daycare centres for children with disabilities – weekly care;
- Daycare centre for elderly people;
- Centre for social rehabilitation and integration;
- Social Education and Professional Centre;
- Mother and Baby Unit;
- Social Support Centre;
- Centre for Street Children;
- Foster care, public soup kitchens.

In some specific cases the young persons could be referred to residential social services: residential temporary accommodation centres of family type (residential temporary accommodation centre of family type for children/youth without disabilities; residential temporary accommodation centre of family type for children and youth; residential centre of family type for elderly people with mental disorders or dementia; residential centre of family type for elderly people with physical disabilities; residential centre of family type for mentally retarded elderly people; residential centre of family type for elderly people); temporary accommodation centres; crisis centres; transitional homes; sheltered homes (sheltered home for people with mental disorders; sheltered home for people with mental retardation; sheltered home for people with physical disabilities); supervised homes; shelters.



STEP 5: NEETs profiles, paths for their activation and institutions and organizations to cooperate with

Each profile of a young person belonging to one of the two large subgroups – the unemployed and economically inactive NEETs as referred to in *Attachment 3* – combines different characteristics – education, professional qualification, work experience which are typical for the respective group – unemployed and inactive.

The profiles do not cover all possible combinations and it is possible for one person to display different profile characteristics. In this case the activation measures can be combined.

Tool: Table with indicative profiles of young persons, activation paths, and institutions and organizations to cooperate with (*Attachments 3*).



STEP 6: Planning joint activities and initiatives with partner institutions and organizations

This step involves the identification of partners – institutions and organizations – to cooperate with and implement joint activities targeting the NEETs group.

Tool: Table for identifying joint activities and initiatives with partner institutions and organizations targeting different NEETs subgroups.

Partners	Joint activities and initiatives
Municipal administration	
Schools, RED	
LOD, RESD	
Nationally representative organizations of employers	
Nationally representative organizations of employees and workers	
Employers	
Universities, colleges	
Educational institutions (including VECs, IPOCs)	
YICCs	
NGOs	
Private recruitment intermediaries	
Enterprises providing temporary employment	
Social enterprises	
Career Counselling Centres	
Other.....	



STEP 7: Specific offer of employment, continued education, traineeship or apprenticeship

The activation activities are a pre-requisite for implementing the measures under the Youth Guarantee - to ensure that all young people under the aged 15 to 24 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Good practices of activating NEETs

- **Profiling of NEETs**

In **Malta**, a Youth Guarantee pilot project with a profiling exercise of NEETs was carried out. Research and data on the predominant NEETs groups in Malta show that 26.5 % of unemployed youth in Malta were single parents, 9.6 % had a form of disability or learning difficulty hence only employable with restrictions.

The remaining 44.6 % of unemployed youth were not registered as jobseekers, hence the PES was not aware of what this group was doing.

The pilot project addressed young people up to the age of 25 regardless of whether they are registered with the Maltese PES or not. They received an individual profiling and competence assessment, and 40 hours of direct contact with a youth worker, as well as 80 hours of training intervention consisting of: motivation and behaviour; labour market orientation session; CV writing and interview skills; and communication skills. The profiling included recommendations and suggestions for the beneficiary's future development and to further improve his/her capacity. Data protection regulations allowing, the profiling of the dropouts was shared with relevant stakeholders in the sector for further action.

The profiling exercise employed an expectation of the future indicator. Based on this indicator it emerged that NEETs in Malta can be sub-divided into three categories:

Transition NEETs - Those young individuals who have chosen to take time out before progressing onto further or higher education opportunities; *Floating NEETs*- Youth who lack direction and motivation. They tend to have spells of being NEET in between further education courses and employment with no training; *Core NEETs*- Youth with social and behavioural issues, including those who come from families where "worklessness" and unemployment is accepted as a norm and not much importance is given to further and higher education.

After the profiling the young people are included in different trainings – motivation, professional and career development, drafting a CV and a motivation letter, preparing for a job interview. Project results show that almost half of the profiled NEETs have either started a job or have been included in training 12 months after the completion of the scheme.

Source: Practitioner's toolkit sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

- **Partnerships with the businesses**

German PES collaborate closely with Chambers of Commerce, Chambers of Trade, Schools and NGOs to disseminate information about open apprenticeship places in companies under the "No degree without follow-up" project. Practices were closely aligned, to ensure NEETs registered with PES, unregistered NEETs, and young people applying through open market mechanisms have similar chances. Information about open apprenticeship places is centrally registered with the Chambers, and information is shared with PES; who, in turn, bring young jobseekers in touch with the right support systems.

In the project in North-Rhine Westphalia, 32 so-called "Start Assistants" based at several Chambers across the region bring together companies and young people. Their in-depth knowledge of the companies enables them to find the right young person for the employer, and make sure young people find an apprenticeship in a trade that suits them. The "Start Assistants" support young people's vocational orientation, providing them with information on training opportunities – including lesser known industries. They support both companies and young people on their way to closing a contract for an apprenticeship; for instance, by supporting a young persons' application process, or by arranging work trials and internships. Apprenticeships are monitored during the first year of training, both apprentices and companies can call upon the "Start Assistant's" support.

In the years 2013 to 2015, the "Start Assistants" helped 1 800 young people find an apprenticeship place; more than 400 young people find an internship place, and 300 more young people pass an entry qualification.

Source: Practitioner's toolkit. Sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Since 2002 JobTiger, **Bulgaria** has been organizing a large-scale national career event named "National Career Days – Good Career, Good Life" which aims to bring together employers and potential interns and workers, and create opportunities for graduates and young specialists to find professional realization. During the forum the young people can find suitable jobs or internships, communicate directly with the companies they want to apply with, gain experience in meeting with employers and learn presentation skills, take part in interesting discussions, receive career advice and counselling, find out about the knowledge and skills that would ensure successful professional realization. In 2012 the forum was launched with 2500 participants and 38 companies. In 2016 this number increased considerably - 191 employers and 18 300 young persons.

Source: <http://national.careerdays.bg/bg/>

In **Bulgaria** the Employment Agency organizes labour exchanges and there is a special e-jobs section on the Agency's web site where the jobseekers can find information online about job vacancies.

Source: <https://www.az.government.bg/bg/ejobs/>

Junior Achievement, Bulgaria and Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company, Bulgaria implement a joint educational programme "Give Success a Chance" targeting young people aged 16 - 19. The programme is designed to inspire the students to make their professional career aspirations come true and to live a full life. The pilot phase of the programme included Bulgarian cities with high youth unemployment rates and settlements which Coca-Cola has traditionally supported as its manufacturing and logistics facilities are located there – Lom, Targovishte, Kostinbrod and Sofia. More than 500 students from these cities attended a training module to acquire key personal development knowledge. The most motivated and best performing trainees, about 200 people, took part in a two-day training session which included theoretical focus on business skills and practical case-studies for the participants. Coca-Cola employees mentored the participants in the trainings.

An interactive platform was developed under the "Give Success a Chance" programme which ensures free access to theoretical and practical personal development resources. The platform is an interactive educational tool which offers the young people two training modules: business and life skills. Resources will be uploaded providing concrete knowledge and practical personal development skills.

The platform will be launched in October 2017 at www.youthempowered.bg. Access to the platform will be free and all NEETs will be able to use it.

Source: http://www.jabulgaria.org/article/projects/day_start_na_uspeha

- **Partnerships with universities and educational institutions**

In **Greece** there are 51 "Apprenticeship Schools" across the country, and recently opened two "Experimental Apprenticeship Schools" (PSEKs), both focusing on tourism. They are intended to facilitate labour-market integration of young high school graduates, aged 18-20, toward technical and vocational education and training, namely in tourism.

The PSEKs offer three-year programmes that lead to qualifications recognised in Greece and Germany in three different professions: cooks, hotel employees, and food and beverage managers. The employers are actively involved and provide information about job vacancies where the trained youth can practice in real-life work environment. The Greek Employment Service is the main implementing body, but it works in collaboration with the social partners, businesses and experts working with young people.

Source: Practitioner's toolkit. Sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

In **Austria**, Coordination Units for Youth Education Employment were founded on national and regional level. The units organise the collaboration on (vocational) education measures and active labour market policy programmes for young people aged 15-21 who find themselves at the transition from school to work; as well as young people with disabilities below the age of 25. The main tasks of the coordination units are: support and services for co-operation partners such as organisation and moderation of meetings, conferences and working groups; preparation of analyses and overviews of vocational inclusion and labour market integration measures; information management and analysis; improving access to information especially for those employed with funding agencies; organisation of information and expert meetings, reports on vocational inclusion measures for disabled and disadvantaged youth. They co-ordinate the implementation of programmes and projects, such as coordinating youth coaching with other projects and facilitation the networking between different projects and regional support systems.

Source: Practitioner's toolkit. Sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

In the **UK** many universities actively participate or develop their own projects targeting NEETs. The initiatives for young persons not in employment, education or training form part of the social responsibilities and commitments of the universities and produce good results. Opening the universities to the NEET issue in the UK does not simply entail involving yet another stakeholder in the efforts to resolve the issue, but expanding the opportunities available to the young people.

The **Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen, Scotland**, developed a special motivation, education and support programme for young people not in employment and education. The initiative was launched in 2012 and takes place annually. The Gray's School of Arts, which is part of RGU, organizes Extreme Art School – academy for young people outside the labour market and education. For 10 weeks Gray's School of Arts opens its doors for youth aged 16 to 21 with NEET status who are interested in a career in design, media and art. The recruitment of NEETs is mainly done via a media campaign and outdoor advertising. The 10-week course is aimed at attracting gifted young people who to be provided with working skills and motivated to change their NEET status. The participant youth are enrolled free-of-charge in design and arts classes, they can use the university facilities and equipment and be trained by professional artists and designers. The school encourages the young people interested in fine arts to experiment, learn more about art and integrate their own experiences into their art. With the help of the professors and mentors the participants build their own portfolios, get access to employers and creative industries and are given a chance to either continue their education, or start work. By attending the courses, the young people get familiarized with the university life, and establish new contacts with their peers. In the period from 2012 to 2015 about 200 young persons used this opportunity and took part in the art school organized by the university.

Source: <https://www.rgu.ac.uk/news/extreme-art-school-launches-in-aberdeen>

The **College of North East London (CoNEL) in London, England**, works in close cooperation with the local authorities to tackle the NEETs problem. The college organizes free music, technology in music, fashion and design, accounting and various crafts classes based on an assessment of the needs, interests and aspirations of the young people.

Source: <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/TacklingNEETs.pdf>

The **Technical University of Sofia** and the Employment Agency have signed an agreement for cooperation and collaboration towards supporting the employment of young people. Under the agreement the EA provides the Technical University with up-to-date information about apprenticeships, campaigns, initiatives and events, employment promotion programmes and

measures suitable for the university graduates. The two institutions organize specialized labour exchanges, career days and other events with the participation of employers in order to enable the professional realization of the young people.

Source: <https://www.az.government.bg/bg/news/view/agencijata-po-zaetostta-i-tehnicheski-universitet-sofija-ae-s-nova-stypka-v-uspeshnoto-partniorstvo-1186/>

In **Austria** the employment services, training institutions and schools implement the Youth Coaching Programme.

Youth Coaching has three main target groups: those in their final year of education who are in danger of dropping out of the education system or are socially disadvantaged; NEETs who are 19 or younger; and people with learning difficulties who are 25 or younger. The programme provides them with guidance and support at an important junction in their lives – the transition from education to employment. The coaches working with the target groups give information about career opportunities, but they also counsel the young people on how to overcome the challenges they are face with in their transition from education to employment.

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

Lifelong Career Guidance Centres were (<http://www.cisok.hr/>) introduced in **Croatia**. They are under the responsibility of the Croatian Employment Service and they aim to provide guidance to all citizens, and also develop a model for NEETs identification and outreach which can be employed by different institutions.

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

- **One-stop-shop services**

The one-stop-shop arrangements should be made depending on the demand for e-services, the degree of maturity of such services and the manner in which they are organized and provided by the respective administrative unit. With regards to NEETs the one-stop-shop model is feasible providing that the stakeholders (educational institutions, social assistance directorates, labour offices, POCs, etc) offer e-services and these services are integrated into a common platform/single access point.

In **Denmark** several schools and universities have set up a youth unit at educational institutions as a way of offering a single-point provision which offers a broad and cross-sectoral service to young people. The units are made up of representatives from the job centre, health sector, social services and the educational sector

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs: a contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

What can you do?

- ✓ *If the municipality you work in has put in place one-stop-shop arrangements, check which of the services provided are important to your target group.*
- ✓ *Acquire information about the services offered by the social services, the labour office, the training institutions, private recruitment intermediaries which could be suitable for your target group; learn more about ongoing NGO and business projects targeting youth.*
- ✓ *Develop a portfolio of the services provided on the territory of your municipality, the projects and initiatives which you could refer the young persons not in employment, education or training to – in this way you will be well prepared and informed and ready to address any specific issue at any time.*

- **Mobile outreach services**

Six out of ten NEETs live in villages and towns other than the district centres. Often, they cannot afford to travel to the big cities, including to register with the employment services. The distance between the inactive youth and the service-providing institutions could be shortened with the establishment of mobile teams which to reach the NEETs in their towns and villages.

Mobile counselling was established in **Estonia** to provide those living in remote areas with greater access to PES services. The aim of the measure is to provide information and guidance on job search, explore work opportunities and increase awareness about the kind of support PES can offer. The PES is the lead organisation but it works closely with municipalities, schools and youth centres in the delivery of mobile services as they are the ones who know the local people and their needs.

The PACE-Mobil project in **Hannover, Germany** brings together several partners to offer mobile counselling to young jobseekers or young unemployed people in the Hannover region. PES, municipalities, NGOs and youth organisations, as well as education and training institutions work together to provide predominantly three types of voluntary support to young people – outreach work, supporting young people during important meetings (e.g. court hearings and credit counselling) and placing young people into internships and community service. The counsellors work from a small bus to reach different parts of the region.

Source: PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs; A contribution of the European Network of Public Employment Services

In **Bulgaria** the labour offices have mobile teams and off-site workplaces in support of the large companies which seek to hire workers, but also providing assistance for contacting new employers and registering job openings. The off-site workplaces are an appropriate tool to reach the remote areas and provide employment services on-site to the unemployed and inactive persons living there.

Source: <https://www.az.government.bg/bg>

What can you do?

- ✓ *Get information about whether you can become part of the mobile teams of the municipality or labour office in your area.*
- ✓ *Before planning visits to remote areas, get in touch with the representatives of the local authorities, schools and social services to receive the necessary information about the young persons to be identified and reached out to, how to find them and who can help you.*
- ✓ *Maintain constant contact with the YICCs and NGOs in your area, in order to get information about youth events taking places in the smaller towns and villages. Take part in such events, use every opportunity to provide information about trainings and employment that could be of interest to the young people.*

- **Provision of integrated services**

The integrated approach to providing services to the NEETs group requires a close coordination of policies and actions by all relevant stakeholders. Integrated services are possible if there are regional and local partnerships and networks established between the NEETs service providers. One of the most important prerequisites for integrated service provision is *putting together a team tasked with working with young persons not in employment, education or training* composed of representatives of each partner institution or organization. The integrated services for youth allow for the application of a holistic approach covering all actions and monitoring activities relating to the overall process of working with NEETs.

In **Belgium**, a comprehensive range of services was established that links outreach, activation, and reintegration of NEETs along an employment path. The service called Find-Mind-Bind specifically addresses the hardest-to-reach NEETs under the age of 25, who, lost from the system, require a supported path to the labour market.

The method entails three practice levels, which are:

Find: actively identifying and seeking NEETs (by visiting places where young people gather and by building on networks and activities of grassroots organisations); *Mind*: providing a supported path, first by offering tailored guidance by those organisations close to the young person and once ready, guiding them to PES services in order to prepare them for suitable offers of employment or training; *Bind*: providing aftercare and following up on participants.

Using the Find-Bind-Mind method, the partners work to find and provide supported paths for these youths.

Another example are Youth Competence Centres established by the Belgian-Flanders PES (VDAB). The YCCs work at the interface between free time/leisure, work and competence development. Offering second chances and reintegration is another key for promoting possibilities for young people, and this interface is the success factor of the YCC approach.

Source: Practitioner's toolkit sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

In **Bulgaria** there are Employment and Social Assistance Centres (ESAC) established in which joint teams of the Employment Agency and the Agency for Social Assistance provide information about social assistance and employment services, including counselling, psychological support, encouraging proactive participation in the labour market and referral to employment and education. ESACs are set up and function under OP "Human Resources Development" 2014 – 2020.

In 2007 the Youth Employment Agency was established in **Germany** integrating the services of the three key service providers: Employment Agency, Job Centre and Youth Welfare services. The Agency provides support to NEETs and facilitates the transition from education to employment. It operates in 147 settlements involving 100 local employment services, 136 institutions and 25 established service providers.

- **Social entrepreneurship**

Social entrepreneurship is one of the most effective and successful tools for the reintegration of vulnerable youth. As a model combining a business and a social element it has great potential to contribute to overcoming the marginalization and social exclusion of youth from institutions or those leaving the institutions, the early school leavers, unemployed young people with severe health problems or addictions, as well as young persons not in employment, education or training.

Social entrepreneurship is a business endeavour focusing on solving an important social issue while providing jobs and investing in professional qualification trainings, development of skills and knowledge, and improving the motivation for personal development of youth. It is a means of achieving social change as it broadens the horizon and expands the opportunities for professional and personal realization of vulnerable young people. It is the social objective inherent in the business that makes social entrepreneurship a model of support and a second chance to young persons at risk and vulnerable groups, including NEETs.

Social entrepreneurship is an effective and successful instrument for the reintegration of NEETs into education, employment and training both in Europe and in Bulgaria.

"Phoenix Café and Bakery" is a social enterprise in Vidin established in 2015 by the **Phoenix Inspire Bulgaria**. It supports young people who left the Home for Children Deprived of Parental

Care in Novo Selo and who have not been able to start work, as well as other disadvantaged young people in the region by providing them with an opportunity for professional realization.

The vocational training in bakery and cooking and the placement of the trained youth into the actual manufacturing process is only a part of what the enterprise does. The objective of the social enterprise is for the youth to not only acquire professional skills, but also overcome the risk of marginalization and social exclusion. The training course has three stages: development of skills and improvement of knowledge, and practical work in real-life manufacturing facility. At the first stage an experienced member of the social enterprise team teaches recipes and product preparation, then at the second stage theoretical knowledge of the ingredients and cooking techniques is imparted. At the third practical stage each trainee prepares certain products and bakes. By working at Phoenix Café and Bakery the young people not only learn to bake and cook, including traditional British cuisine (the founder of the social enterprise is an Englishman who moved to Vidin), but they also acquire social skills – team work, communication with customers, work discipline, time management, adaptation to changes, confidence in their own abilities, and coping in difficult situations.

The focus in the work of the enterprise is the social impact on vulnerable children and youth – persons from minority ethnic groups deprived of parental care and long-term unemployed youth. Phoenix Café and Bakery has established sustainable partnerships with schools and vocational schools, the Home for Children Deprived of Parental Care in Novo Selo, the Labour Office Directorate – Vidin, and with British and Bulgarian business associations.

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/epale/bg/node/23564>

The Nov Pat Association, Hairedin Village, Vratsa established the Pchela (Bee) social enterprise. The mission of the enterprise is to create conditions for representatives of minority groups, long-term unemployed and persons with disabilities to acquire working habits and skill in the area of beekeeping thus facilitating their social realization and integration. The revenues from the sales of honey and honey products are reinvested into the social activities of the enterprise. Trainings in beekeeping and support for starting an own business are provided by the enterprise. It also provides temporary employment to the trainees.

Source: UNICEF, "Social Entrepreneurship as an Opportunity for Discouraged Young People?" https://www.unicef.bg/assets/PDFs/2016/BCNL_Analysis_FINAL.pdf

In 2015 the **National Alliance for Volunteer Action (NAVA)** established in Plovdiv a social enterprise – a tailoring workshop providing training and employment for vulnerable young people.

Young Roma women from the Stolipinovo neighbourhood are employed in the social enterprise. In order to reach out to them NAVA collaborated with the Social Assistance Directorate and the Labour Office Directorate – Stolipinovo Branch, but also used informal contacts. The objective of the social enterprise is to provide the girls with a chance to reintegrate in the labour market by equipping them with professional tailoring skills and social skills. The training lasts at least 6 months. The team working with the Roma girls includes a professional tailor, business consultant and a social worker who prepares them for their reintegration into the social life. At the end of the training the girls are motivated to find a job and be able to support their families and children. Some of them also decide to finish their primary education at the very least, pass an exam with the enterprise and obtain professional qualification in tailoring. NAVA supports the trainees in their search for work in clothing firms. As of mid-2017 all women who completed their training work in small and medium clothing companies in the region.

Source: National Alliance for Volunteer Action, <http://navabg.com/>

Ctaste (Netherlands) is a social enterprise working in the hospitality business. The vulnerable group it targets are persons with disabilities of all ages. The social element involves hiring representatives of the vulnerable group; in addition to employing the people the

enterprise also provides services relating to personal development, training and education, professional counselling. The enterprise is fully self-sustaining. In its restaurant Ctaste the customers are serviced by blind waiters in full darkness. Another economic activity of the enterprise is the organization of sight-seeing tours of Amsterdam with blind guides. The social enterprise stimulates the development of the talents and capabilities of the people with sensory impairments in order to expand their opportunities to participate in the labour market.

Source: UNICEF, "Social Entrepreneurship as an Opportunity for Discouraged Young People?" https://www.unicef.bg/assets/PDFs/2016/BCNL_Analysis_FINAL.pdf

Social enterprises known as WISE (Work Integration Social Enterprise) are very popular in the **UK**. They are actively working with NEETs. WISE develop and implement special employment promotion programmes targeting the NEETs group, as well as programmes for placement into education and training. The government supports social entrepreneurship by creating a favourable environment for its development: adequate policy framework and economic conditions for the WISE to grow. For the most part the social enterprises in the UK are NGOs or work closely with NGOs.

In 2002 a landscaping and forestry social enterprise was established in one of the rural regions of East Midland known for its large forested areas. The enterprise manufactures and markets wooden products; conducts environmental initiatives and holds trainings. The revenues from its economic activity and public events are invested in personal development and motivational trainings for young persons not in employment, education or training. The enterprise works in partnership with the local university using its facilities and professors for the trainings.

Source: Hazenberg, R. (2012) Work integration social enterprise: a NEETs idea. Doctoral thesis. The University of Northampton, <http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/4965/>

Junior Achievement, **Bulgaria** implements a programme called JA Startup Program for young people over 18 years of age. This is a practical entrepreneurship course based on one of the oldest and well-established programmes of Junior Achievement "Graduate Student Company". The pilot programme started in 2008 and is today implemented in up to 20 universities in Bulgaria. The course provides practical entrepreneurship guidance to the young people.

Source: http://www.jabulgaria.org/category/programs/programs_19_25_years_old

What can you do?

- ✓ *Contact business organizations and NGOs and see whether they have social enterprises and if yes, what their target group is. Present your mission and see if you could refer NEETs to them.*
- ✓ *Establish contacts with universities and colleges (when such are located in your area). Propose joint outreach initiatives for young people not in employment, education and training.*

• Volunteering

The key professional skills relate to concrete and specific requirements for a given profession. They are formed in the process of obtaining professional qualification and gaining work experience. There are however other so called "soft skills" such as flexibility, propensity to change, effectiveness, team work, collaboration, conflict resolution, etc.

A survey of Manpower⁵¹ shows that 54% of the employers in Bulgaria have difficulties in finding good personnel and every one in four cites the lack of soft skills by the applicants as the main reason. The employers seek people who possess the necessary professional qualification, but also have the adequate social and emotional skills. They point out that in some way the soft skills are even more important in the work process than the technical and professional qualification which can be improved through on-the-job training.

The NEETs when they apply for a job find it difficult to prove that they have such soft skills – as the analysis of their demographic profile showed every one in two is an ESLs and the other half have secondary education, while most have no work experience and professional qualification. The fact that they never had a job has yet another implication – many of the NEETs lack soft skills. This represents another barrier to their realization.

One possible way to make up for the lacking soft skills is to involve the young people in volunteer work. As a type of informal training volunteering could contribute to acquiring many of the skills that the employers seek.

The survey “Volunteer Action – Factor for Realization”⁵² shows that if the young people engage in volunteer work this affects positively their future career development and professional realization. Volunteering helps acquire skills such as planning, self-presentation, team work, problem solving and improves the self-esteem, it encourages proactive behaviour, taking initiative, and boosts the motivation of the young people. Every young person who did volunteer work for more than one year develops social, organizational, presentation, and personal skills and becomes an active citizen – these are skills which can be transferred and could be useful in real working environment and which are highly valued by the employers.

For the young persons not in employment, education or training volunteering could be considered as a way to obtain the skills that the employers demand and as an opportunity for them to pursue a cause, communicate with their peers and engage with meaningful activities.

Bulgaria, the National Alliance for Volunteer Action (NAVA) supports the work of 51 Volunteer Centres in various institutions and organizations in the country – schools, libraries, community centres (chitalishte), public support centres, foundations and associations by providing them with methodological guidance, trainings, monitoring and supervision for their teams as a guarantee for sustainability. Establishing contacts and partnerships with the Volunteer Centres could be an opportunity to involve the NEETs in volunteer work.

There are good practices involving young persons not in employment, education and training implemented by the Volunteer Centre at the Municipal Library in Karlovo where following a 6-month soft skills training and volunteer work 20% of the NEET volunteers found a job. Another example is CC Svetlina, Trud Village, Plovdiv where 15 young people not in employment, education or training are engaged in different types of community work.

Source: www.navabg.com

A list of the Volunteer Centres is published on the NAVA web site at: www.navabg.com

The Volunteer Centre at the Regional Library Prof. Benyo Tsonev, Lovech conducts a training course entitled “Let’s Learn Together” for the young people from the Economics, Trade and Services Vocational School in Lovech. In the training volunteers from the Centre present the

⁵¹ Manpower, Talent Shortage Survey. Research Results 2013, http://www.manpowergroup.com/wps/wcm/connect/587d2b45-c47a-4647-a7c1-e7a74f68fb85/2013_Talent_Shortage_Survey_Results_US_high+res.pdf?MOD=AJPERES

⁵² National Alliance for Volunteer Action, „Volunteering – a path to realization”, 2016, <http://navabg.com/bg/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Obobshhtenie-na-izsledvania-dobrovolchestvo-2015-2016.pdf>

professions of archivist, artist and cook and the qualities required to perform the respective profession. The students are also trained how to draft a CV and write a motivation letter. The initiative is part of the “Young and Successful” project of the Mission, Innovation and Citizens – MIC, financed under the Youth Activities Programme of the Lovech Municipality. The project aims to develop the potential of young people aged 16 – 29 with special education needs and facilitate their access to the labour market.

Source:<http://www.liblovech.org/index.php?l=126&id=2567>

What can you do?

- ✓ *Explore the volunteering opportunities in different organizations, including whether they offer the mandatory initial orientation or training on performing specific tasks, whether work is monitored, and if they issue certificates upon completion of the volunteer work.*
- ✓ *Inform the young persons you work with about the volunteering opportunities. Explain the benefits to them.*
- ✓ *Volunteering is a complementary opportunity for the young people to fill their free time while making a decision whether to start work, enrol in trainings or continue their education.*

In conclusion, the choice of a NEETs activation path should take into account many variables. The realities in the lives of the different people could not be “boxed” and many objective and subjective factors influence the choice – on the one hand these are local factors such as economic development, investments, existence of working enterprises, the market dynamics in the respective place, the workforce demand, the availability of vacant positions and on the other – the individual profile and personal choice of the respective persons. “The good choice” take place at the crossing point of the requirements for the respective job, education, traineeship or apprenticeship and the individual needs, interests and aspirations of each applicant.

8. MAIN STRATEGIC PROGRAMME AND LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS

The analysis of legislative and strategic documents shows that the young persons not in employment, education or training, though not always explicitly determined as a target group, are subject to a number of measures and interventions which could be divided in two general groups.

The first group of measures are *preventive*. They are laid down in the regulatory and strategic documents in the area of education, youth and child protection. These measures are aimed at minimizing and mitigating the risk of becoming a NEET.

The second large group are *intervention measures*. They are designed to include the NEETs into the labour market and continued education in order to reintegrate them into employment and education and create opportunities for their professional and career development.

8.1. EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

Europe 2020 Strategy for Intelligent, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

The strategic document Europe 2020 for Intelligent, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth contains five measurable targets for employment, research and development, climate change and energy, education, and poverty and social exclusion, which outline the policy horizon in all EU Member States by 2020. Four of the strategy targets relate to reducing the share of young people not in education, training and employment: 75% of people aged 20–64 to be in work; rates of early school leavers below 10%; at least 40% of people aged 30–34 having completed higher education; at least 20 million fewer people in – or at risk of – poverty/social exclusion.

The European Commission proposed seven leading initiatives to stimulate progress under each priority theme. With respect to education and employment the leading initiatives are: Youth in Action, and New Skills for New Jobs.

European Youth Guarantee

By Recommendation 2013/C 120/01 from 22 April 2013 the Council of the European Union urged the Member States to take decisive and systemic action to tackle the growing youth unemployment caused by the economic crisis and to introduce a Youth Guarantee – a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 years receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Data from the monitoring of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee to date show that 16 million young people have entered Youth Guarantee schemes, 10 million young people took up an offer, the majority of which were offers of employment, the number of NEETs decreased by 900 000 and the unemployed dropped by 1-6 million. Of all Youth Guarantee offers in the 2015 the largest proportion were offers of employment - 70.2%, followed by offers of education - 13.6%, traineeship - 12.1% and apprenticeship - 4.1%.

8.2. NATIONAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

Europe 2020: National Reform Programme

The National Reform Programme (2012-2020) is a fundamental strategic document where the national targets in the five key areas laid down in the Europe 2020 Strategy are set. The national targets for education in Bulgaria are as follows: 11% share of early school leavers by 2020; 36% share of the people aged 30-34 with higher education by 2020; 76% employment of the population aged 20-64 years by 2020; reducing unemployment of youth aged 15-29 to 7%.

National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020

Priority 2 of the Strategy is “Ensuring equal access to quality pre-school and school education”. It is pointed out in the document that poverty and exclusion imply low education levels. At the same time, children raised in poor households, as well as in vulnerable ethnic groups in Bulgaria, receive a lower level of education thus facing preconditions for their long-term social exclusion. Measures are envisaged in the strategy relating to the NEETs: providing support to pupils from vulnerable groups, those living in remote areas, from low-income families, etc. to enable them to go to school and designing social services to support the continuation of school education.

National legislative and strategic documents in the area of education

Pre-school and School Education Act (PSEA)

The new PSEA (in effect from 1.08.2016) introduces a number of novelties in the education system. The most significant ones relate to the secondary education structure. *Based on the level and degree of education* schools in Bulgaria are divided into elementary schools (1st – 4th grade); primary (1st – 7th grade); secondary schools (8th – 12th grade), and based on the content of the curricula they can be specialized or vocational. *Based on the autonomy criteria* the schools are primary (1st – 7th grade), combined (1st -10th grade), innovative schools which develop and apply innovative teaching and student development methods. Pursuant to the new act 19 state educational standards were established – a combination of compulsory requirements in terms of student performance and school conditions, as well as of the processes put in place in pre-school and school education to meet the standards.

Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA)

The new things in VETA (in effect from 07.2014) which have a bearing on NEETs and relate to the professional training and subsequent realization in the labour market are as follows: *dual education system is introduced, validation of knowledge and skills, accumulation and transfer of credits in vocational educational and training.*

Dual education is a form of partnership between the vocational schools, colleges or vocational training centres and one or more employers and implies on-the-job training in real working environment.

The validation of professional skills, knowledge and competences relating to a profession or part thereof, acquired in the form of informal or self-directed learning, is an instrument ensuring that students and trainees possess certain skills and competences that the employers seek, when they do not have a certificate to prove that.

Accumulation and transfer of credits in vocational education and training is a way to acquire professional qualification.

Strategy for Reducing the Early School Leavers (2013-2020)

The Strategy contains an analysis of the reasons for early school leaving and outlines policies and key measures aimed at mitigating the risks and preventing ESL in three areas: *prevention, intervention, and compensation.*

Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Reducing the Early School Leavers (2016-2017)

One of the measures included in the Strategy and in the Implementation Plan for 2016-2017 is the establishment of a *Monitoring and Warning System for children and students at risk of early school leaving or those who never went to schools* (described in the methods outlined in section “Outreach to NEETs”).

Another measure in the Plan is the development and testing of a “School – Labour Market” module of the National Career Counselling Portal.

Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria for the period 2015-2020

The Strategy includes several priority areas some of which are directly related to NEETs: introducing vocational education and on-the-job training (dual education); provision of professional training to students and persons above 16 years of age with special educational needs, developing a system for validation of skills, knowledge and competences acquired in the form of informal or self-directed learning.

Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education and Training in Bulgaria for the period 2015-2020

The more important actions under the Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy relate to the pilot testing and practical implementation of vocational education and on-the-job training (dual education); expanding the network and improving the capacity of vocational training institutions to further develop their capabilities for validation of skills, knowledge and competences acquired in the form of informal or self-directed learning; development and implementation of a model for vocational education and training credits; increasing the inclusion of adults in lifelong learning activities.

Ordinance on the terms and procedures for on-the-job training (dual education).

The Ordinance regulates the terms and procedure of carrying out on-the-job training (dual education) for students aged 16 and above in 11th and 12th grade and for persons aged 16 who are in the labour market.

National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014 – 2020)

Lifelong learning is defined as „all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences“. The national strategic goal for 2020 - to achieve 5% participation of people aged 25-64 in lifelong learning – directly relates to NEETs as it includes all forms of education, training and learning – formal (pre-school, general school, vocational education and training, higher education), informal and self-directed learning (continued education for adults, validation of results from informal and self-directed learning).

Strategy for Developing Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria 2014 – 2020

The Strategy envisages specific measures: using the workforce supply and demand forecasts in Bulgaria to identify the needs for specialists with higher education and planning the university enrolment numbers accordingly; improving the accreditation model and the higher schools rating system; establishing a mechanism for assessing the professional realization of the university graduates; better opportunities for student internships and traineeships during the university studies; establishing a common information network of career centres, etc.

Strategy for the Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities

The Roma youth are at risk of becoming NEETs – they are more prone to leaving the educational system as compared to the other ethnic groups. A variety of measures are laid down in the Strategy: provision of different forms of education designed to preserve and develop the cultural identity of Roma children; education in higher schools, qualification and re-qualification of teaching staff for working in multi-ethnic environment; fully eliminating the practice of placing children without disabilities in special schools for disabled students; preventing all discrimination in kindergartens and schools; creating conditions for studying Roma mother tongue, etc.

Framework Programme for Integrating the Roma in Bulgarian Society 2010-2020

The Programme aims to integrate all Roma children of school age into the educational system; to create conditions for all Roma children and students living in mixed ethnic regions to study and learn in mixed ethnic groups; to close the segregated “Roma” schools; to provide institutional support for preserving and developing the ethnic and cultural identity of Roma children through Roma language and Roma culture classes, etc.

Legislative and strategic documents in the area of employment

Employment Promotion Act (EPA)

The Act provides for two types of employment promotion measures: measures targeting the unemployed and aimed at supporting and encouraging them to apply for jobs or to start own business and measures targeting the employers: to open new jobs, hire unemployed persons, provide trainings to the workers and employees. One of the new measures introduced with the most recent amendments to the EPA (2016) is promoting the mobility of the unemployed: when unemployed persons, including young persons from specialized institutions, who have finished their education start work after being referred by the Labour Office Directorate in another settlement which is at more than 50 km from the settlement of their address registration they will be entitled to receive support for kindergarten fees, apartment rent, and Internet fees, but not for more than 12 months.

Social Assistance Act

The Social Assistance Act provides for NEETs receiving social assistance and using social services on condition that they perform community work except when on maternity leave or when their age and/or health prevent them from working.

The inclusion of NEETs in the social assistance system poses certain risks however: social assistance payments are seen as “passive income” and often the unemployed and economically inactive youth have no incentive and motivation to search for work as frequently the work they could find or they are suitable for would bring earnings that will not be satisfactory to them as compared to the social assistance sums.

Updated Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2013 - 2020)

The Updated Employment Strategy for 2013 - 2020 envisages enhanced opportunities for including the ESLs into professional qualification trainings through the dual education system. Special emphasis is put on activating the unemployed from vulnerable groups, including unemployed under 29 as well as unemployed Roma and people with disabilities, and on improving the services for unemployed youth.

With regards to the NEETs group the Strategy includes measures such as: early support and motivation; case managers and psychologists for the unemployed young persons from the groups at risk (youth leaving the residential homes for children deprived of parental care, young persons with low education or no education, socially excluded young persons); support for highly qualified and educated youth who have no practical experience and who want to start their own business, find a first job or be offered traineeships in the public administration or private companies; second-chance measures are planned in order to overcome the negative consequences of early school leaving as follows: literacy trainings, professional orientation, training for acquiring key competences, applying innovative services and practices locally and nationally, mentored traineeships and apprenticeships, subsidized employment, etc.

National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (2014-2020 r.) (NYGIP)

The National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (2014-2020) was developed in line with the Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee and was approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria. According to NYGIP every young person aged 15 to 24 will receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, traineeship or apprenticeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The young persons registered with the employment services will receive such an offer at the end of the 4th month of their registration.

Several possible NEETs activation and integration paths are defined in NYGIP: referral to local schools and/or REDs for re-entry into the educational system; referral to the local labour office directorate to be registered and use the employment, education, traineeship and apprenticeship services provided by the office; referral to labour exchanges, local cooperation associations, education fairs and other informal support for job searching and inclusion in education; referral to private recruitment intermediaries and enterprises for temporary employment as an opportunity for labour market realization without the mediation of a public employment service and using information technologies for both searching for vacant positions, and preparation of application documents and electronic application.

Legislative and strategic documents in the area of youth and protection of the rights of the child

Youth Act

According to the law the state and the municipalities shall promote and support activities and services for young people and the NEETs support measures lie within the scope of such actions and services.

Youth volunteerism and the principles thereof are the subject of Chapter 6 of the Act. Inasmuch as there is no special volunteers law in Bulgaria, the provisions on youth volunteerism in the Youth Act are important and should be taken into account, especially when a young

person not in employment, education or training is referred to volunteer programmes and initiatives as an opportunity for acquisition of key skills and competences that are necessary for their professional realization.

The Act also contains provisions concerning the National Youth Information System (<http://nism.bg/>) accessible via the web site of the Ministry of Youth and Sports where the following data could be found: data on youth organizations in the country; list of nationally representative youth organizations; studies, analyses and assessments on youth and the youth policies on national, regional and municipal levels; national and European documents related to implementing the youth policy; current information about the funding opportunities for youth activities.

National Strategy on Youth (2012-2020)

A number of problems are outlined in this document mainly relating to youth in small settlements (at risk of becoming NEETs) and measures are defined for the solution of these problems: provision of opportunities to unemployed young people who completed primary, secondary or higher education to gain work experience thus facilitating their transition from education to employment; access to vocational training and education for disadvantaged youth - young persons with special education needs, ESLs or at social risk; reducing the number of young people not going to school and the ESLs; enhancing access to professional counselling services and opportunities for informal learning, etc.

National Youth Programme (2016 - 2020)

The National Youth Programme targets young persons aged 15 - 29 and youth workers and other experts directly engaged in providing services or implementing other activities in support of the development of young people. Two sub-programmes provide funding for different youth activities some of which could target NEETs: Developing a Network of Youth Information and Consultancy Centres (YICCs) and National Youth Initiatives and Campaigns.

National Child Strategy (2008-2018)

Two focal points in the strategy are relevant in terms of NEETs: defining problem areas in the life of children which lead to uncovering the reasons for becoming NEET and the profiles of children from vulnerable groups: children in institutions; children with SEN; children victims of violence and exploitation; street children who are identified as one of the most vulnerable groups of children at risk of becoming NEETs unless adequate measures are taken.

9. INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO THE ACTIVATION AND INTEGRATION IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF NEETs

The institutions and organizations relevant to activating youth and their inclusion in employment, education and training are listed in the National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (NYGIP) and the Framework Agreement for the Implementation of NYGIP signed on 10.10.2014.

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP)

www.mlsp.government.bg

MLSP is responsible for the development and implementation of the National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan and for the organization of the work of the Coordination Council, comprised of representatives of the key institutions and organizations involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Youth Guarantee.

MLSP develops and finances using funds from the state budget or the European funds different programmes and measures for employment and education of young people.

Employment Agency (EA)

www.az.government.bg

EA is responsible for the implementation of the active labour market policy, including for the development and implementation of programmes, schemes and measures for employment, education, traineeships, apprenticeships and for promotion of territorial mobility of young people, including NEETs. EA has 9 territorial branches set up as Regional Employment Services Directorates in Blagoevgrad, Burgas, Varna, Lovech, Montana, Plovdiv, Ruse, Sofia, Haskovo and the labour office directorates. The directors of the labour offices coordinate the implementation of NYGIP in the municipalities they cover.

Career centres are established with the RESDs in the cities of Sofia, Burgas, Varna, Lovech, Montana, Plovdiv, Ruse, Blagoevgrad and Haskovo and with the central administration of the Employment Agency on the territory of the Vazrazhdane Labour Office Directorate in Sofia, where the young people can receive services.

The list of contact details of the labour offices is published on the web site of the Employment Agency: <https://www.az.government.bg/pages/kontakti-dbt/>

The inactive young people can register with the labour offices in order to be able to use the following free services provided by the LODs: mediation for employment on the primary labour market and starting a job, enrolment in on-the-job trainings and traineeships, professional counselling, motivation for active participation in the labour market, inclusion in subsidized employment, support for starting work in another town/city or finding a job abroad through the EURES network, support for starting an own business, referral to labour exchanges, local cooperation associations, education fairs and other informal organizations and/or events; provision of information about private recruitment intermediaries and enterprises which provide temporary employment.

The job mediators in the LODs are tasked with working with young people, including NEETs, by providing them with information about the LODs employment mediation services, establishing contacts with concrete employers, providing information and consultation to the clients (employers and jobseekers) about employment, and workforce supply and demand; they collect, summarize and analyse information about job openings suitable for young persons, including NEETs.

The Roma mediators in the LODs establish contacts and work mostly with Roma youth, and assist the youth mediators in identifying and reaching out to Roma not in employment and education.

The LODs psychologists provide psychological support and counselling to young NEETs and support them in the choice of the most suitable work.

Private recruitment intermediaries

Similarly to EA the private recruitment intermediaries provide employment mediation services. Their operation is regulated in the Employment Promotion Act (Chapter 6, Section I).

The register of private intermediaries with valid licenses is maintained by the Employment Agency and is accessible at: <https://www.az.government.bg/intermediaries>

Young NEETs may be referred to private intermediary companies for receiving psychological support and to be motivated to participate actively in the labour market.

The young NEET jobseekers may be consulted about programmes and employment measures that are suitable for their profile and be assisted in starting work, including in another town or abroad.

Enterprises providing temporary employment

The operation of the enterprises providing temporary employment is regulated in the Employment Promotion Act and the Labour Code (Section VIII “b”, Additional Provisions for working in enterprises providing temporary employment).

An updated list of the registered enterprises providing temporary employment is published with the Labour Office Directorates and on the web site of the Employment Agency:

https://www.az.government.bg/intermediaries/temporary_employment/

Young NEETs may be referred to enterprises providing temporary employment to be included in employment which corresponds to their profile. The enterprises providing temporary employment have no right to require the worker or employee (respectively the young NEET) to pay a recruitment fee for starting a job at the user-enterprise and for signing an employment contract.

Agency for People with Disabilities

The Agency creates and maintains a database of the people with permanent disabilities; it maintains a register of specialized enterprises and cooperatives for people with disabilities; develops programmes and funds projects designed to promote the economic activity of people with disabilities and economic activity to the benefit of people with disabilities.

The nationally representative organizations of people with disabilities are: Union of Blind People, Union of People with Disabilities, Bulgarian Association “Diabetes”, Union of Deaf People, National Association of Employers of People with Disabilities, Union of War Invalids and Veterans, Centre for Psychological Studies, National Centre for Rehabilitation of Blind People, National Alliance for Social Responsibility, Bulgarian Association of People with Mental Retardation, National Association of Blind and Deaf People, National Cooperative of the Blind, Association of Parents of Hearing Impaired Children, Association of Parents of Sight Impaired Children, Association of Parents of Children with Epilepsy, Bulgarian Association of People with Neuromuscular Diseases, National Organization “Small Bulgarian People”, Bulgarian Association for Recreation, Integration and Sports.

The Agency for People with Disabilities maintains a register of the specialised enterprises and cooperatives of and for people with disabilities which can be found at: <http://ahu.mlsp.government.bg/portal/se/>

Centres for Support of People with Disabilities

<http://center.nsrhu.bg/?page=2&lang=bg>

Centres for Support of People with Disabilities are established in Sofia, Varna, Vratsa, Sliven, Panaguyrishte, Svilengrad and Omurtag under a project implemented by the National Association of Employers of People with Disabilities in order to assist in their social inclusion.

Young NEETs from the sub-category of economically inactive persons due to health reasons may be referred for inclusion in employment to the specialized enterprises and cooperatives of and for people with disabilities depending on the type and degree of impairment.

They can receive special job mediation services (mediation and assistance) or special mobile door-to-door services by the Centres for Support of People with Disabilities.

Ministry of Education and Science (MES)

www.mon.bg

The main functions of MES and the Regional Education Departments relevant to the practical work of the experts with the NEETs are as follows: provision of information to MLSP under the Agreement for Information Exchange about young people who dropped out or left school early; taking actions to reduce and prevent early school leaving; applying different forms of learning to retain the young people in the educational system and reintegrate the ESLs; establish an early warning system for young people at high risk of dropping out of the educational system.

Regional Education Departments (REDs)

<http://www.mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=5&subpageId=324>

REDs are territorial administrative units of the Minister of Education and Science.

REDs may provide data received from the regional schools or the Early Dropout Warning System (in the regions where it is being piloted) about ESLs and may support the work of the youth mediators in identifying and reaching out to the young NEETs.

REDs may refer ESLs to suitable schools and forms of continued education (evening classes, part-time study, individual schooling, etc.) depending on the individual profile of the young person or may refer them to adult literacy classes for illiterate and uneducated people.

REDs may provide information about vocational secondary schools and the professions that the young NEETs who want to obtain professional qualification could learn as well as advise them on the best form of education.

Career Orientation Centres

<http://orientirane.mon.bg/>

Under Project BG05M2OP001-2.001-0001 “System for Career Orientation in the School Education” financed by Operational Programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth” of MES Career Orientation Centres were established in the 28 regional centres of Bulgaria which employ 150 career counsellors.

Unemployed inactive young NEETs may be referred to the Career Orientation Centres to receive consultation about the opportunities for continued education, to be supported in the transition from education to employment, as well as to be offered assistance in their future career development.

National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)

<http://www.navet.government.bg>

NAVET creates and maintains a register of the Vocational Education Centres (VECs) and the Centres for Information and Professional Orientation (CIPOs), as well as a register of the professional qualification certificates, the vocational training certificates, the certificates for validation of professional qualification, and the certificates for validation of professional qualification for parts of a profession issued by the vocational training centres.

A lot of useful information is available on the web site of NAVET which the experts that work to activate young people could use: information about the training courses of the VECs: <http://www.navet.government.bg/bg/predlagani-ot-tspo-kursove-za-obuchenie/>; about the documents for professional qualification issued by the VECs: <http://www.navet.government.bg/bg/izdavani-ot-tspo-dokumenti-za-profesio/>

Vocational Training Centres (VECs)

<http://www.navet.government.bg/bg/registar-na-tsentrivete-za-profesionaln/>

VECs provide vocational training to persons aged above 16 for acquiring, updating or improving the professional qualification or re-qualification for a profession or part thereof with I, II and III levels of professional qualification.

Young NEETs, who are 16 or older, may be referred to the VECs for inclusion into vocational training for acquiring professional qualification or re-qualification for a profession or part thereof and in trainings for acquiring key competences.

Centres for Information and Professional Orientation (CIPOs)

CIPOs provide professional and career orientation services: assessment of skills, competences, interests and motivation based on which to choose a profession or type of employment.

The register of VECs and CIPOs is published on the web site of NAVET: <http://www.navet.government.bg>

Young NEETs may be referred to CIPOs to receive career orientation consultations and support towards making a choice of profession or employment which correspond to their interests and capabilities and to the labour market needs.

Educational deficits or insufficient skills may be identified in the CIPOs and the young NEETs may be referred to respective activities designed to fill the deficits.

Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS)

www.mpes.government.bg

The specific role of MYS with respect to NEETs is related to the implementation of the National Youth Programme and its two sub-programmes described in the Section “Main strategic, programme and legislative documents”. MYS maintains contacts and cooperates with the government bodies responsible for the youth policy and with NGOs engaged in the implementation of youth policies. MYS popularizes the NYGIP in order to attract the young people not in employment, education or training to the labour offices.

Youth Information and Consultancy Centres (YICCs)

<http://nism.bg/bg//articles/view/514.mikc-mreja-na-mladejkite-informacionno-konsultantski-centrove-po-nacionalna-programa-za-mladejta-2016-2020.html>

Nongovernmental organizations could apply for projects financed by Sub-programme 1 of the National Youth Programme (2016-2020), managed by MYS, to perform the functions of YICCs. The YICCs are centres working with young people. They provide services to youth in accordance with the identified problems of the young generation nationally and in line with the specific needs of the youth in the region where the respective YICC is located.

YICCs may provide assistance to the youth mediators in the identification of young NEETs, they can include the young NEETs in the target group of their projects and events such as discussions, trainings, workshops and campaigns and involve them in clubs to simulate them to be more active on the labour market and in meetings with the business community.

The young NEETs may receive information, career counselling, psychological support for their future professional career in the YICCs.

National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB)

www.namrb.org

According to the Local Cooperation Agreements the municipalities are entrusted with the coordination of the activities aimed at identifying and activating the young NEETs. The municipal administrations may be active participants in the process of identification of young NEETs who are either ESLs or never enrolled in school so that they can be contacted and referred to the Labour Office Directorates.

The municipalities through their directorates in charge of education and youth may provide the information they receive from the schools and the REDs about ESLs, about the available options for continued education, and about the vocational schools where the young NEETs can acquire the respective professional qualification.

TD CRAS may provide data about the address registration of ESLs and identified young NEETs.

The directorates in charge of the social services in the municipality may furnish information about NEETs and also provide them with services designed to facilitate their activation.

Nationally representative organizations of employers

The Framework Agreement is signed by the 4 representative organizations of employers in the Bulgaria – BIA, BCCI, KRIB and BICA.

Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA): <http://www.bia-bg.com>

Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI): www.bcci.bg

Confederation of Employers and Industrialists in Bulgaria (KRIB): <http://krib.bg>

Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA): <http://bica-bg.org/>

The nationally representative organizations of employers may provide information to the employers about specialized job fairs for the young NEETs, to encourage the employers to list subsidized and unsubsidized job openings with the Labour Office Directorates, and to stimulate hiring NEETs.

Nationally representative organizations of workers and employees

The nationally representative organizations of workers and employees which signed the Framework Agreement are CITUB and LC “Podkrepa”.

Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB): <http://www.knsb-bg.org/>

Labour Confederation “Podkrepa”: <http://podkrepa.org/>

Young NEETs may be referred to the local branches of the nationally representative organizations of workers and employees to receive information about their labour rights and obligations.

The two trade unions can involve young NEETs as a target group in their projects.

Nongovernmental organizations supporting adolescents and youth (NGOs)

The informational portal of nongovernmental organizations in Bulgaria <https://www.ngobg.info/> contains up-to-date information about jobs, volunteer work and NGO initiatives, including concerning young people and may be used in the work with NEETs.

The Ministry of Justice maintains a Central Registry of Not-for-Profit Legal Entities Working in Public Benefit which is accessible at <http://ngo.mjs.bg/>

Young NEETs can be identified as a target group in projects aimed at the social integration of vulnerable groups implemented by NGOs.

They can be included in motivational trainings, in trainings for developing the so called “soft skills”, in mentorship programmes in support of youth groups at risk, and in apprenticeships (providing they have the necessary education).

Young NEETs may be encouraged to take part in volunteer initiatives or be included in social enterprises set up by NGOs.

The NGOs working with youth may take part in stimulating and motivating NEETs to re-engage with the educational system by providing them with opportunities to participate in different informal education forms and in volunteer initiatives.

Social enterprises

A register of the social enterprises in Bulgaria was established under a project implemented by MLSP in partnership with the National Statistical Institute, the Central Cooperative Union and the Agency for Social Assistance. The register is accessible at:

<http://seconomy.mlsp.government.bg/page.php?c=34>

Social enterprises provide opportunities for the reintegration of young persons not in employment, education or training.

As a vulnerable group on the labour market young NEETs may be employed in social enterprises where they could work, acquire professional skills and develop the so called “soft skills” – team work, cooperation and mutual assistance in the work process, communication and presentation skills, time management skills, work ethics and discipline, initiative, responsibility, willingness to learn on the job, flexibility and adaptability to the work environment, etc.

Community centres (chitalishte) and libraries

<http://chitalishta.com/index.php?act=regions>

<http://bibliobg.com/>

As of 2017 the Register of national chitalishte with the Ministry of Culture contains 3 645 registered centres 70% of which are located in smaller towns and villages, i.e. the settlements where according to the prevalent demographic profile most of the young persons not in employment, education and training are.

The chitalishte in the villages and smaller settlements can cooperate with the youth mediators in the identification of young NEETs.

They may be instrumental in disseminating information about job openings, professional qualification trainings, employment initiatives and continued education received from the LODs to the local community.

The young NEETs may be referred to the free computer literacy courses for adults which many regional and municipal libraries and chitalishte organize at regular intervals in the bigger cities.

In conjunction with the LODs, community centres, regional and municipal libraries webinars on drafting a CV and motivation letter, and searching for work online may be organized for the young NEETs who live in villages or remote settlements and do not have easy access to information. The institutions and organizations relevant to the activation and integration of young NEETs in employment, education and training are listed in the in the National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (NYGIP) and the Framework Agreement for the Implementation of NYGIP signed on 10.10.2014.

10. INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

The group of NEETs – young people not in employment, education or training, is a relatively new social phenomenon in Bulgaria and hence it has not been thoroughly researched.

They represent a challenge as they do not comply with the established social norms and because by virtue of their status they pose more questions than give answers. It is unlikely that a universal solution to the problem can be found. Tackling the young NEETs issue would require policies taking into account the local specificities; a horizontal approach integrating preventive and intervention measures in the areas of education, employment and lifelong learning; and establishing partnerships which pull together the resources and energy of institutions, organizations and individuals and which are systemic and sustainable in their nature.

It also necessitates a wider and more active public debate going beyond their social and demographic profile and the factors contributing to them entering the “grey zone” between education, training and employment; beyond the reintegration and social inclusion measures. A conversation should take place about the ways in which these people can radically change the future prospects of several generations. A conversation which to shift the prevalent public attitudes from negative critical bias to understanding and support. A conversation in which we all are actively and consistently looking not so much for answers, but for innovative and courageous solutions to the NEETs problem.

11. INFORMATION RESOURCES

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Employment Promotion Act

Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA)

Youth Act

Social Assistance Act

European Youth Guarantee

Europe 2020: National Reform Programme

National Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (2014-2020) (NYGIP)

National Child Strategy (2008-2018)

National Youth Strategy (2016 - 2020)

National Strategy for Reducing Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion 2020

National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014 – 2020)

Ordinance on the terms and procedures for on-the-job training (dual education).

Plan for the Implementaion of the Strategy for Developing Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria 2015-2020

Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Reducing the Share of Early School Leavers (2016-2017)

Framework Programme for Integrating the Roma in Bulgarian Society 2010-2020

Europe 2020 Strategy for Intelligent, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

Strategy for Reducing the Share of Early School Leavers (2013-2020)

Strategy for Developing Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Bulgaria 2015-2020

Strategy for Developing Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria in the period 2014 – 2020

Strategy for Educational Integration for Chidren and Students from Ethnic Minorities

ATTACHMENT 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DETERMINING THE INDIVIDUAL PROFILE AND IDENTIFYING THE NEETs SUBCATEGORY

Personal information		
1.	First name, second name, surname	
2.	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M
3.	Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 15-18 <input type="checkbox"/> 19-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29
4.	Place of residence / settlement
5.	Ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish <input type="checkbox"/> Roma <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> No answer
Education		
6.	What is the highest completed level of education you have?	<input type="checkbox"/> I have no education <input type="checkbox"/> elementary (1-4 grade) <input type="checkbox"/> primary (1-8 grade) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary (1-12 grade) <input type="checkbox"/> vocational secondary (vocational school) <input type="checkbox"/> college <input type="checkbox"/> higher (bachelor's degree) <input type="checkbox"/> higher (master's degree)
7.	What school did you graduate?	<input type="checkbox"/> General <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary 1-12 grade <input type="checkbox"/> Primary 1-8 grade <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational school <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized school (language school, humanitarian sciences, mathematics, natural sciences, ITC) <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized (arts, sports) <input type="checkbox"/> Special (education and support for students with sensory impairments – sight or hearing loss) <input type="checkbox"/> Reform school (boarding school, social and pedagogical reform school) <input type="checkbox"/> Prison school

		<input type="checkbox"/> Other ...
8.	What document for completed educational level do you have?	<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma for completed ...grade <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate for completed ... grade <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree diploma <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have a document
Professional qualification		
9.	What profession have you acquired?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have a profession /and specialization
10.	<i>To those who specified a profession:</i> How did you acquire the profession /specialization?	<input type="checkbox"/> In a vocational school / vocational secondary school <input type="checkbox"/> Art school <input type="checkbox"/> Sports school <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational college <input type="checkbox"/> Continued Education Centre (CEC) <input type="checkbox"/> Centre for Information and Professional Orientation (CIPO) <input type="checkbox"/> In college <input type="checkbox"/> In university <input type="checkbox"/> other:
11.	<i>To those who specified a profession:</i> What document for acquired qualification for profession or part of profession do you have?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I have no document certifying professional qualification
12.	Have you ever worked in the field of your qualification/specialization?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
13.	<i>To those who answered "Yes":</i> How many years of relevant professional experience do you have?	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	<i>To those who answered "No":</i> What is the reason for you to not have worked in the field of your qualification?	<input type="checkbox"/> I have not searched for work in this field <input type="checkbox"/> I have not found suitable work <input type="checkbox"/> I think I should change the direction of my professional development <input type="checkbox"/> No answer
15.	Have you worked in a management position?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
16.	What is the extent to which you possess the necessary knowledge and skills to practice the profession/specialization you acquired?	<input type="checkbox"/> I think I am perfectly prepared <input type="checkbox"/> I think I need additional qualification <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to acquire new professional qualification <input type="checkbox"/> I do not intend to practice this profession
Professional experience		
17.	Have you ever worked?	<input type="checkbox"/> No, never <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, for more than 1 year
18.	<i>To those who answered "No":</i> Why have you not worked so far?	<input type="checkbox"/> I have no education, I left school early <input type="checkbox"/> My education was not appropriate for the job I applied for <input type="checkbox"/> I have no professional qualification <input type="checkbox"/> I have no professional experience <input type="checkbox"/> I am looking after parents/relatives/siblings/children <input type="checkbox"/> I was on maternity leave

		<input type="checkbox"/> I never had to work, I have enough money <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know <input type="checkbox"/> I don't want to answer
19.	<i>To those who answered "Yes":</i> What was your last job?	
20.	How long did you work in your last job?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> Between 1-2 years <input type="checkbox"/> Between 2-3 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 years
21.	What was your employment contract?	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent employment contract <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed-term employment contract (temporary, seasonal or short-term employment) <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time employment contract <input type="checkbox"/> I worked without a contract <input type="checkbox"/> I don't remember/don't want to answer
22.	What happened with your last job?	<input type="checkbox"/> I was fired <input type="checkbox"/> I was laid off <input type="checkbox"/> I quit <input type="checkbox"/> I don't remember/don't want to answer
23.	Did you have any difficulties in your job?	<input type="checkbox"/> I did not have difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, with the management <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, with my peers <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, with the nature of work <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, with the working conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, with the working hours <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, with the lack of good transportation to my workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, with the pay (irregular payment of wages, social security not paid on the actual income, no social benefits) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I worked without a contract <input type="checkbox"/> Other
24.	Are you registered with the employment services?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
To those who answered YES:		
25.	How long have you been registered?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> Between 1-2 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> More than 3 years
To those who answered NO:		
26.	Are you searching for a job?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
27.	To those who answered "No": Why are you not searching for a job?	<input type="checkbox"/> I have a serious health problem <input type="checkbox"/> I am with permanently reduced working capacity (invalidity) <input type="checkbox"/> I am looking after my parents or other family members <input type="checkbox"/> I am on maternity leave <input type="checkbox"/> I have no education <input type="checkbox"/> I have no professional qualification <input type="checkbox"/> I have good education and qualification, but I do not receive suitable offers <input type="checkbox"/> The pay I am offered does not meet my expectations <input type="checkbox"/> I am financially secure and there is no reason for me to work <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....

Skills and competences		
28.	What foreign languages do you speak?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> I don't speak a foreign language
29.	<i>For those who speak a foreign language:</i> Determine the level (from 1 to 3; 1 is the lowest) of language proficiency.	<input type="checkbox"/> Spoken <input type="checkbox"/> Written <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehension
30.	Can you work with a computer and use the Internet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am perfect with computers <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I am relatively good <input type="checkbox"/> No, I cannot work with a computer
31.	Have you taken part in projects and initiatives as volunteer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have <input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know what volunteerism is
32.	To what extent do you possess the following skills: (from 1 to 3; 1 is the lowest):	<i>Organizational skills:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I can organize my work well <input type="checkbox"/> I can determine the priority task that I need to perform first <input type="checkbox"/> I can manage people <input type="checkbox"/> I can solve conflicts <i>Social skills:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I am communicative <input type="checkbox"/> I can work in a team <input type="checkbox"/> I am not afraid of public speaking <i>Personal skills:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I am tolerant, I agree with other people's points of view <input type="checkbox"/> I am responsible and respect my commitments <input type="checkbox"/> I am creative and look for unconventional solutions <input type="checkbox"/> I am sensitive and show compassion to other people's problems <input type="checkbox"/> I am caring and willing to help people in need

ATTACHMENT 2: QUESTIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE ASPIRATIONS AND PREFERENCES

This questionnaire is designed to assess the propensity to change and improve one's life, the willingness to study and work, the person's interests, aspirations and preferences in terms of their future development.

The themes covered in the questionnaire are more general. They relate to the individual's propensity to change, start work or study (continued education and inclusion in trainings for acquisition or improvement of the professional qualification).

The questions are for the most part personal and require trust and empathy, and supportive behaviour.

The purpose of this model questionnaire to retrieve personal information and identify the aspirations and attitudes underlies the less precise wording of the questions which in turn allows for looser interpretation based on the personality of the respondent. Some questions are open and intended to collect information: they contain question words such as who, how and why (What is your current occupation? How did you find this job? Why do you want to have a new profession?). Others involve a choice between alternatives and include a limited number of options (You want to be employed with a full-time or part-time contract?). Yet others are questions that you show empathy and compassion with (Do you think you will be successful? Is there something that you want to tell me that I did not ask you about?)

The so called closed questions entail a limited number of answers. They are designed to identify the preferences of the respondent in a given area (Which form of learning is most suitable for you – evening classes, regular classes, part-time, etc.)

The respondent may give more than one answer to some of the closed questions, but it would be advisable to prioritize and order their preferences in order to make the most appropriate choice.

Theme 1: Self-evaluation

- If you have to describe yourself in three words, which would those words be?
- What words do your friends use to describe you?
- And your parents?
- What in your opinion are your strengths?
- What skills do you have?
- What in your opinion are the things that you can do better than other people?
- Tell me about a time in your life when you felt proud with yourself?
- Is there something that you did in school or at the workplace that makes you proud?
- What are you doing now?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- Do you have a hobby?

Theme 2: Attitude / propensity to change

- Describe your regular day. What do you usually do?
- Do you like this kind of life?
- How do you see your life in 1 year?
- Do you want to change something in your life?
- What goals do you want to achieve in 1 year?
- What should you do to achieve it?
- Which of these things do you think is possible to happen and help you achieve your goal?
 - Start work
 - Find a job abroad
 - Start your own business
 - Enrol in a foreign language or computer literacy course
 - Acquire new profession
 - Complete your education
- What do you need to achieve your goal?
 - a profession
 - experience, practice
 - skills
 - information
 - money
 - advice
 - support from my family and relatives

Theme 3: Attitude / willingness to start work

- What field do you want to develop in?
- What in your opinion are the things that you do best?
 - manual work
 - writing
 - organizing
 - working with people

- I am good with computers
- I am good with languages
- What kind of work would you like?
 - involving travel and movement
 - involving working with people
 - involving working with documents
 - involving working in an office
 - physical work
 - creative work
- Do you want to start work?
 - under certain conditions
 - yes, but I can't right now
 - I don't, and I can't
 - What conditions would you impose to start work?
 - I have no special requirements, any job will do
 - I want to do something that I like
 - To bring satisfaction
 - I will only agree to start a job which befits my qualification
 - To give opportunities for professional development
 - I want the working hours to be fixed
 - The working hours to be flexible
 - Good salary
 - To be able to work on my own
 - To work in a team
 - To be conveniently located
- What type of contract would you prefer – permanent or part-time?
- Can you start work immediately?
- If you could choose, where would you work – in Bulgaria or abroad? Why?
- Have you ever thought of starting your own business? If yes, what would you need: capital, training, people, market research?

Theme 4: Attitude / willingness to study (continued education, training for acquiring professional qualification and/or key competences)

- How were you doing in school?
- Did you have a favourite subject in school?
- Did you like going to school?
- Do you remember a teacher who supported you in coping successfully with something?
- If you were the principal of your school, would you change something in the school to make it more interesting?
- Do you think education is important for personal development and professional realization?
- If you want to continue your education, what form of learning would you prefer – *regular / evening classes / part-time / individual schooling / self-directed learning / distance learning / combined / training on the job (dual education system)*?
- Do you want to be included in training for acquiring professional qualification and/or key competences?
- Why do you want to have a (new) profession?
- Have you so far attended extracurricular trainings – out of school, college, university?
- What are the important things that you want to learn in the training?
- Do expect it to be easier to find a job after the training?
- What forms of training would you take part in?
 - Language courses

- Computer literacy courses
- Course to acquire a new profession
- Course for improving the professional qualification
- Re-qualification course
- Courses related to hobbies, culture, arts and sports

Final questions (“wrap up the conversation”)

Is there something you want to share with me that I did not ask you about?
Imagine we meet again in a year. What do you think will have changed?

ATTACHMENT 3: PROFILES OF NEETs, ACTIVATION PATHS AND INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO COOPERATE WITH

SUBGROUP: UNEMPLOYED

<i>Subgroup 1: Unemployed with higher education</i>			
Profiles	Activation paths	Institutions to partner with	Specific offer
Person with higher education and professional experience	Referral and support for starting a job and direct employment in listed unsubsidized jobs	Private and public employers Employers' organizations LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Referral to the local Labour Office Directorate for registration and provision of employment services	LODs	Job offer
	Referral to labour exchanges, enterprises providing temporary employment, implementation of local cooperation agreements and other informal forms of support for job seeking	Labour exchanges LODs Private recruitment intermediaries Employers Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees Municipalities – youth mediators Enterprises providing temporary employment	Job offer
	Support for the territorial mobility within the country - if no suitable offers are available in the respective settlement corresponding to the education and professional qualification of the person	LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Referral to the network of European employment services EURES for information about employers and job listings	EURES – EA counsellors and assistants LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Support for starting an own business for young people with motivation and business ideas, etc.	LODs Private recruitment intermediaries NGOs providing trainings for starting an own business For financing of startups: LAUNCHub https://www.launchub.vc ;	Job offer/ own business

		Eleven http://www.11.me/ (startup accelerators), investment companies, banks, National Innovation Fund	
Person with higher education and no professional experience	Referral and support for starting a first job and direct employment in listed unsubsidized jobs	Private and public employers Employers' organizations LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Referral to the local Labour Office Directorate for registration and provision of employment services	LODs	Job offer
	Support for acquiring work experience by traineeships in the public administration or private companies	LODs Employers' organizations Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Referral to labour exchanges, enterprises providing temporary employment, implementation of local cooperation agreements and other informal forms of support for job seeking	Labour exchanges LODs Private recruitment intermediaries Employers Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees Municipalities – youth mediators Enterprises providing temporary employment	Job offer
	Support for the territorial mobility within the country - if no suitable offers are available in the respective settlement corresponding to the education and professional qualification of the person	LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Referral to the network of European employment services EURES for information about employers and job listings	EURES – EA counsellors and assistants LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Support for starting an own business for young people with motivation and business ideas, etc.	LODs Private recruitment intermediaries NGOs providing trainings for starting an own business For financing of startups: LAUNCHub https://www.launchub.vc ; Eleven http://www.11.me/ (startup accelerators), investment companies, banks, National Innovation Fund	Job offer/ own business

Subgroup 2: Unemployed with secondary education			
Person with secondary education and with professional experience	Referral and support for starting a job and direct employment in listed unsubsidized jobs, as well as referral to enterprises providing temporary employment	Private and public employers Employers' organizations LODs Private recruitment intermediaries Enterprises providing temporary employment	Job offer
	Referral to the local Labour Office Directorate for registration and provision of employment services	LODs	Job offer or offer of traineeship
	Referral to labour exchanges, enterprises providing temporary employment, local cooperation associations and other informal forms of support for job seeking	Labour exchanges LODs Private recruitment intermediaries Employers Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees Municipalities – youth mediators	Job offer
	Support for the territorial mobility within the country - if no suitable offers are available in the respective settlement corresponding to the education and professional qualification of the person	LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Referral to the network of European employment services EURES for information about employers and job listings	EURES – EA counsellors and assistants LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Counselling on opportunities for continued education in higher schools, education fairs	Universities Specialized higher schools Independent colleges REDs LODs CIPOs/Career centres YICCs/NGOs LODs/career counsellors Municipalities – youth mediators	Offer of continued education in higher schools
	Referral (when the person wants) to trainings for acquiring professional qualification, for acquiring new or part of profession, for acquiring key competences in	POCs LODs/career counsellors CIPOs/Career orientation centres	Offer of continued education

	demand on the labour market; for continued education)		
	Support for starting an own business for young people with motivation and business ideas, etc.	LODs Private recruitment intermediaries NGOs providing trainings for starting an own business For financing of startups: LAUNCHub https://www.launchub.vc/ ; Eleven http://www.11.me/ (startup accelerators), investment companies, banks, National Innovation Fund	Job offer/ own business
Person with secondary education and no professional experience	Referral and support for starting a job and direct employment in listed subsidized and unsubsidized jobs, including traineeships and apprenticeships	Private and public employers Employers' organizations LODs Private recruitment intermediaries Enterprises providing temporary employment	Job offer
	Referral to the local Labour Office Directorate for registration and provision of employment services	LODs	Job offer/offer of traineeship
	Referral to labour exchanges, enterprises providing temporary employment, local cooperation associations and other informal forms of support for job seeking	Labour exchanges LODs Private recruitment intermediaries Employers Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees Municipalities – youth mediators	Job offer
	Referral to trainings for acquiring new profession, for improving or enhancing the professional qualification or for requalification, or for acquiring key competences	LODs POCs	Offer of continued education
	Professional and career orientation and counselling, motivational trainings for active participation in the labour market	Career orientation centres CIPOs LODs YICCs/NGOs Employers' organizations	Support for inclusion in employment
	Counselling on opportunities for continued education in higher schools, education fairs	Universities Specialized higher schools Independent colleges	Offer of continued education

		LODs – including psychologists and career counsellors CIPOs/Career centres YICCs/NGOs LODs/career counsellors Municipalities – youth mediators	
Subgroup 3: Unemployed with lower than secondary education			
Persons with primary or lower education (ESLs) and no professional experience	Referral to unsubsidized job openings listed by employers which are suitable for persons with low education and no qualification	LODs Employers Private recruitment intermediaries Enterprises providing temporary employment	Job offer
	Referral to the local Labour Office Directorate for registration and provision of employment and apprenticeship services	LODs	Job offer, offer of apprenticeship, training
	Referral to subsidized employment	LODs Employers Private recruitment intermediaries Enterprises providing temporary employment	Job offer
	Referral to social enterprises	Social enterprises, NGOs	Job offer
	Referral to literacy courses for completing a higher education level	REDs Schools, vocational schools Roma mediators NGOs, working with the Roma	Offer of continued education
	Referral to apprenticeships – for young people who do not want to be included in education and training	LODs Employers Associations of artisans Regional Chambers of Artisans Private recruitment intermediaries Enterprises providing temporary employment	Offer of apprenticeship
	Referral to training for acquiring professional qualification – profession or part of profession and for developing key competences	REDs Schools, vocational schools CPOs Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees Social enterprises of NGOs (including for volunteer work)	Offer of training

	Professional and career orientation and counselling, motivational trainings for active participation in the labour market, psychological support	LODs CIPOs Career Orientation Centres Centres for Supporting the Personal Development YICCs/NGOs Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees	Support for inclusion in employment / training
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SUBGROUP: ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE PERSONS

For all persons in the group is economically inactive: inactive person due to looking after a small child, maternity leave; inactive person due to looking after seriously sick parents and relatives; person who left a residential home for children deprived of parental care depending on the educational profile, professional qualification and experience the following activation paths are applicable:

Activation paths	Institutions to partner with	Specific offer
Referral to the local Labour Office Directorate for registration and provision of employment, traineeship and apprenticeship services	LODs	Offer of employment, traineeship, apprenticeship, training
Professional and career orientation and counselling, motivational trainings for active participation in the labour market, psychological support	LODs CIPOs Career Orientation Centres Centres for Personal Development Support YICCs/NGOs Employers' organizations	Support for inclusion in employment / continued education
Referral to subsidized and unsubsidized jobs listed by employers or to enterprises providing temporary employment	LODs Employers Private recruitment intermediaries Enterprises providing temporary assistance	Offer of employment
For inactive persons with lower than secondary education: referral to continued education and completion of higher level of education (finishing primary and/or secondary education); Referral to training for acquiring professional qualification – profession or part	REDs Schools, vocational schools POCs Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees Social enterprises	Offer of continued education/ training

of profession and for developing key competences	NGOs Municipalities – youth mediators	
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Specific activation paths for inactive persons depending on the reasons for inactivity

Subgroup 4: Inactive because of family and personal reasons			
Profile	Activation paths	Institutions to partner with	Specific offer
Inactive person due to looking after a small child, maternity leave	Referral to social services for children in order to overcome the barriers to being included in employment/education	Municipal administration Local Social Assistance Directorates Public Support Centre Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration Mother and Baby Unit Centre for Work with street Children Daycare Centre for Children with disabilities (including weekly care) Social Training and Professional Centre	Use of social services
Inactive person due to looking after sick parents or relatives	Referral to social services for elderly people	Municipal administration Local Social Assistance Directorates Daycare Centre for Elderly People with Disabilities (including weekly care) Daycare Centre for Elderly People Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration Soup kitchens Family type home for elderly people (with mental disorders or dementia/ with physical disability/with mental retardation) Sheltered home (for people with mental disorders/mental retardation/physical disability) Supervised home/shelter	Use of social services
Persons who married early <i>(depending on the educational profile, professional)</i>	Referral to the local Labour Office Directorate for registration and provision of employment, traineeship and apprenticeship services	LODs	Offer of continued education/training
	Referral to local schools and/or REDs to re-enter the educational system. Referral to literacy courses	REDs Schools, vocational schools	Offer of continued education

<i>qualification and work experience)</i>			
	Provision of information, counselling, motivation for active participation on the labour market, psychological support	NGOs working with Roma communities LODs / Roma mediators Social services CIPOs Centres for Personal Development Support Career Orientation Centres	Support for inclusion in employment/education/training
	Encouragement for continued education and obtaining a higher level of education (finishing primary and/or secondary education), acquiring a profession or part of a profession, development of key competences	REDs Schools, vocational schools POCs Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees Social enterprises NGOs (including for volunteer work)	Offer of continued education/training
	Referral to unsubsidized jobs listed by employers	LODs Employers Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Referral to subsidized employment	LODs Employers Private recruitment intermediaries Enterprises providing temporary employment	Job offer
Subgroup 5: Inactive due to health reasons (physical or mental disability or invalidity)			
Inactive person due to health reasons with completed higher education	Professional counselling, provision of information and motivation for active participation on the labour market	Support Centres for People with Disabilities Employers' organizations NGOs working with people with disabilities Specialized labour exchanges Employment consultants for people with disabilities LODs CIPOs	Support for inclusion in employment/education
	Referral for direct hiring to listed subsidized/unsubsidized jobs	Employers hiring people with disabilities Employers' organizations Specialized enterprises and cooperative for people with disabilities LODs Private recruitment intermediaries	Job offer
	Support for starting an own business (business activity of people with disabilities)	Specialized enterprises and cooperative for people with disabilities	Offer of own business/employment

		LODs Employment consultants for people with disabilities For financing of startups: LAUNCHub https://www.launchub.vc/ ; Eleven http://www.11.me/ (startup accelerators), investment companies, banks, National Innovation Fund	t
	Counselling on the opportunities for continued education in higher schools and referral to education fairs	Universities Specialized higher schools Independent colleges LODs CIPOs/Career centres YICCs/NGOs LODs/career counsellors and psychologists	Offer of continued education
Inactive person due to health reasons with secondary education	Referral to vocational training to acquire a profession or part of a profession	POCs Organizations of employers, and of workers and employees NGOs Social enterprises Employment consultants for people with disabilities	Offer of training
	Referral to traineeships in the field of the acquired professional qualification	LODs Employers and employers' organization hiring people with disabilities Specialized enterprises and cooperative for people with disabilities Private companies – intermediaries Social enterprises Employment consultants for people with disabilities	Offer of traineeship
Inactive person due to health reasons with lower than secondary education	Referral to local schools and /or REDs to re-enter the educational system	REDs Schools Vocational schools	Offer of education
	Referral to literacy courses Offer of continued education: individual learning Referral to apprenticeship	Employment consultants for people with disabilities Employers	Offer of apprenticeship
<i>Depending on their education and professional experience activation measures appropriate for subgroups 1, 2 and 3 could be applied to the inactive people due to family, personal or health reasons. In all cases however the activation path should take into account the individual profile of the respective person.</i>			

Subgroup 6: Discouraged persons

It is recommended **that all discouraged persons:**

- Register with the LODs and use their employment, traineeship, apprenticeship and training services (Institution: LOD)
- Receive psychological support, motivational training for active participation on the labour market, consultations on employment and training programme and measures, career counselling (Institutions: LODs, CIPO, NGOs/YICCs, Career Orientation Centres)

All paths applicable to unemployed persons with higher education with/without work experience are appropriate **for the discouraged persons with higher education with /without work experience.**

The paths applicable to unemployed persons with secondary education with/without work experience are appropriate **for the discouraged persons with secondary education with/without work experience.**

The paths applicable to unemployed persons with lower than secondary education are appropriate **for the discouraged persons with lower than secondary education.**

The paths applicable to persons in subgroups 4 and 5 are appropriate **for the discouraged persons who are economically inactive due to personal, family or health reasons** provided that they take into account their individual profile.

