

# Community networks for NEET social inclusion

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT****PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE** **PORTUGAL**

## Timeline

**ID number 39079**

## Background

Youth unemployment is a long-term issue in Europe. Portugal is one of the European countries affected the most: in 2019, 9.5% of young people aged 15 to 34 were NEETs (not in education, employment, or training).

The core areas of action of the Erasmus+ project NEETs in ACTION – Community networking for integration of young people in a NEET situation were centred around the keywords of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-27: engage, connect, empower.

## Objectives

The transnational project NEETs in action developed an innovative methodology, based on building community networks, aiming to promote the employability and social inclusion of NEETs by upgrading their skills, increasing their work experiences and addressing skills mismatches.

## Description

The project started in September 2017 and was completed in October 2020. It was coordinated in Portugal by the Vocational Training Centre for the Commerce and Services Sectors (CECOA), in cooperation with partners from Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK.

According to the intervention model report, the project promoted direct interaction among NEETs, employers and various local stakeholders (including local and regional authorities, SMEs, education and training providers, employment services, social security services). Local social capital was perceived as a key factor for the social and professional (re)integration of NEETs.

The NEETs in ACTION model of intervention was developed based on good practices already implemented in participating countries. It focused on:

- (a) building community networks, engaging local stakeholders that can support NEETs social integration and help them to gain access to the labour market;
- (b) supporting NEETs (aged 18 to 29) through group learning sessions, tailored individual

action plans and job-experiences aiming at developing links with the labour market.

Support to NEETs took place in three stages:

- (a) engaging, for instance through initial individual contact, family involvement, and alternative activities such as sports, arts, culture;
- (b) orienting/stabilising, for instance through guidance, counselling, mentoring, individual coaching-based sessions to design each beneficiary's action plan, group sessions for soft skills development;
- (c) inserting, for instance, through job-experiences (e.g. job-shadowing, informative interviews, short internships, on-the-job training), and building and expanding apprenticeship-type training opportunities.

Innovative VET business partnerships through work-based interventions were an important feature. Improving NEET's skills and competences will increase their chances in finding and sustaining employment.

The project included three levels of intervention: micro (young NEETs); meso (professionals/counsellors working with NEETs); and macro level (the overall local, regional or national ecosystem, including the education and training system and labour market).

There are more projects focusing on NEETs, for instance NEETs at risk, which was also implemented by CECO.A.

## 2017 Approved/Agreed

### 2018 Design

According to the impact evaluation report, the preparation phase mainly included the development of an intervention model, selection of young NEETs and the identification of local stakeholders who formed the networks.

In this phase, the project also produced the synthesis report Community networking for NEETs integration: towards a common European model, offering guidelines for practice and policy recommendations and a series of national reports presenting good practices promoting social inclusion.

### 2019 Pilot

In early 2019, the intervention model of the action was published.

Between April and November 2019, the model was implemented and tested in the following areas: the Veneto region in Italy, Ajuda and Marvila in Lisbon, Portugal, and Coruña and Ferrol in Spain. Pilots mostly focused on building the community networks and supporting NEETs, for instance through collaborative approaches sharing expertise/knowledge and tailored activities. A total of 53 young NEETs were involved. Individual action plans were designed including individual coaching sessions, group sessions and job experiences developing links with the labour market (for example job shadowing and job tours).

### 2020 Implementation

In October 2020, a final conference was held, while the impact evaluation report of the project was published. The evaluation showed 'a successful application of the model in three different levels with promising outcomes'. Participants had a 'significant improvement in their employability skills and their awareness of, and preparedness for, employment or training options', but they did not experience a significant improvement in their quality of life and self-confidence. After completing the programme, 40 participants were in employment, education, or training. 'More than half of the stakeholders had expanded their network and increased cooperation with others'. The impact evaluation confirms that the intervention model can address the needs of different target groups and communities.

The project also produced a guide for developing community networks promoting social inclusion and employability, a training standard to carry out the intervention model, and a dissemination report.

### **2021 Implementation**

In 2021, CECOIA is evaluating the results to plan further actions expanding the implementation of the intervention model.

### **2022 Implementation**

The different materials developed and needed to implement the methodology are available for public use in other languages: Portuguese, English, Spanish and Italian. During 2022, the project website had 640 active users, 792 sessions and 716 page views; 33% of page views were on the section outputs, where materials are available.

### **2023 Completed**

All the planned activities have been accomplished.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Vocational Training Centre for the Commerce and Services Sectors (CECOIA)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Young people (15-29 years old)

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

## **Thematic categories**

### **Governance of VET and lifelong learning**

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

### **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Lifelong guidance

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## **Further reading**

## Related policy developments

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2025 Implementation

### National anti-poverty strategy

The approach underlying the National anti-poverty strategy goes far beyond the definition of poverty as the deprivation of monetary resources, avoiding approaches focused solely on the analysis from a monetary point of view and seeking to make poverty reduction dependent only on economic growth.

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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2025 Implementation

### Combating youth unemployment

The government promoted a set of active employment measures, including vocational training, associated with the creation of self-employment and youth entrepreneurship, which stand out for their impact on this target group:

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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#### Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/39079>