Supporting the economic mobility of NEETs through targeted training, mentorship, and job placement

Date of creation
2015

Description

Through a multi-faceted model combining targeted mobilisation and selection, mentoring, training, and job placement, Generation addresses the barriers to employment faced by NEETs, empowering them with the skills and support needed to build meaningful careers. This initiative ultimately helps to foster economic mobility for disadvantaged youth, contributing to a more inclusive workforce. Generation works in a number of countries across the globe (i.e. Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, the UK). Within the EU, Generation works in France, Italy, Ireland, and Spain.

When it comes to engaging NEETs, the project focuses on four main aspects:

1. **Outreach and Marketing:** The mobilisation strategy adapts to each target demographic. For NEETs, the initiative employs diverse channels, including social media campaigns (sometimes in partnership with media agencies specialising in targeted demographics, such as young women), local events, public and private referral partners, and peer-based promotion. These methods ensure that the project's outreach resonates with NEET communities, encouraging broader participation and trust within the demographic.

2. **Screening and Selection Process:** The practice uses a structured approach that includes basic skills assessments, interviews, and demographic profiling to identify youth with the highest potential and commitment to succeed. This process involves the use of selection matrices, which enable fair assessment and prioritisation of NEETs and underrepresented youth. Through a combination of eligibility assessments, hands-on profession-specific tasks, and individual interviews, the initiative evaluates motivation and alignment with programme goals. There is a high emphasis on candidates' intrinsic motivation and capacity for growth, rather than traditional qualifications (e.g. diplomas) or prior experience that could disadvantage them further. All programmes are free for enrolled participants.

3. **Mentorship:** Mentorship is fundamental to this methodology, encompassing mentor onboarding and training that is carefully informed by learner research and mentorship best practices. The mentorship design is intentional, matching learners with mentors who can provide targeted social support and employability coaching, tailored to the unique needs of NEETs. This approach helps foster resilience, career readiness, and continuity, as mentorship continues through both the training period and the initial stages of employment.

4. **Employer Engagement:** The project partners with employers to establish direct connections for job placement, emphasising the value of hiring NEETs who are work-ready upon completing the programme. This engagement strengthens pathways from training to employment, addressing employer needs while promoting inclusive or skills-based hiring practices.

Beneficiaries

🏷 **Discouraged and disengaged young people**

NEETs that can benefit from the project:

- Non-tech background prior to Generation tech training
- Learners with physical disabilities
- LGBTQIA2+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, asexual and two-spirited)
- Migratory learners
- Neurodivergent individuals
- Refugees and migrants

Countries

🇫🇷 France　　　🇮🇪 Ireland　　　🇮🇹 Italy　　　🇪🇸 Spain

Education level and sector

🏷 **Adult education**

Level of implementation / Scope

🏷 **Provider level**　　🏷 **Local level**

Aims of policy/initiative

Generation's practice for NEETs is rooted in the belief that economic mobility is achievable when employment barriers are systematically addressed. Targeted outreach, inclusive selection processes, robust mentorship, and employer engagement can empower NEET youth and bridge the gap between education and meaningful employment.

Objectives:

Marketing and outreach: The primary goal is to reach NEET youth who would otherwise be unaware of the free programmes Generation offers. To mobilise them to apply, the project employs an adaptable, multi-channel outreach strategy that resonates with NEET communities. By connecting with NEET youth through accessible and relatable channels, including through social media, the initiative aims to build trust and encourage broad participation. In some instances, Generation also cooperated with Public Employment Services (PES) for outreach activities.

Screening and selection: The practice strives to create a fair and inclusive screening process that provides underserved youth, especially NEETs, with equal access to training and job opportunities. Using tools like application portals, selection matrices, and performance assessments, priority is given to candidates who meet the envisaged learner profiles while minimising bias. The selection process emphasises candidates' intrinsic motivation and commitment over traditional qualifications, aligning with the mission to support underserved groups and ensure that those most aligned with Generation's goals are

chosen.

Mentorship: The mentorship programme is designed to provide NEET youth with targeted support tailored to their unique needs. The project invests in mentor onboarding and training to equip mentors with the skills necessary to support NEETs effectively. This learner-first approach ensures that mentorship is responsive and adaptable, offering differentiated support throughout training and the initial phases of employment. By fostering resilience, confidence, and career readiness, the practice aims to increase both job placement and retention rates.

Employer engagement: Generation actively engages employers to demonstrate the added value of hiring NEET youth who are well-prepared to enter the workforce immediately upon completing the programme. Through partnerships and employer involvement in curriculum design, there is an alignment of training with market needs and secure job vacancies for graduates in advance. This proactive approach not only supports high placement rates but also assures employers that Generation's graduates possess the specific skills, motivation, and resilience needed to succeed. The initiative actively promotes skills-based hiring practices.

Features and types of activities implemented

Generation's initiative for NEET youth is structured around a series of targeted activities that support young people through outreach, inclusive selection, mentorship, and strong employer engagement. Each of these areas is essential to achieving sustainable employment outcomes and supporting underserved youth in overcoming barriers to the workforce.

Marketing and outreach

The outreach efforts are crafted to connect with NEET youth on platforms and through channels they actively use and trust. Key activities include:

- **Social media campaigns**: A strong presence on social media is prioritised, as focus groups confirm its importance for engaging NEET youth. Campaigns are designed to be relatable and informative, encouraging applications from this target demographic.

- **Media partnerships:** Partnership with media outlets that specialise in reaching NEET youth and specific demographics within that group, such as young women, enhancing the visibility of the programme.

- **Alumni community activities:** Leveraging Generation's alumni community to share success stories and encourage new applicants is an integral part. Alumni often serve as role models and peer ambassadors, strengthening trust within the NEET community.

- **Job search portals and employer collaborations**: Collaborating with job search platforms and potential employers, increases awareness of the programme and build pathways to employment.

- **Partner and sponsor activities:** Outreach includes joint initiatives with public employment services, Generation sponsors, nonprofit referral partners, and other organisations that support the mission, amplifying the message to a broader audience.

Screening and selection

To ensure fairness and inclusivity, Generation's selection process uses standardised tools and criteria that align with the mission of supporting underserved NEET youth. Key elements include:

- **Application portal and selection matrices:** Using in-house tools, including an application portal and localised selection matrices, to systematically evaluate and select candidates. These tools prioritise NEET youth across Generation's network, promoting consistency in identifying potential.

- **Bias reduction:** Implementing structured assessments and clear criteria, the selection process minimises bias and provides a fair opportunity for all applicants, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds.

Mentorship
Mentorship plays a critical role in supporting NEET youth throughout their training journey and into employment. The mentorship activities include:

- **Social support and employability coaching:** Mentors provide ongoing social support, helping learners build resilience and confidence. They also offer employability coaching, preparing NEETs with skills such as interviewing practices and workplace readiness.

- **Placement support:** Mentorship extends beyond the classroom, with mentors offering guidance as learners transition into the workplace, helping them overcome initial challenges and encouraging job retention.

Employer engagement

Employer partnerships are essential to the success of this programme, helping to bridge the gap between training and employment. Employer engagement activities focus on:

- **Promoting NEET youth as a valuable talent pool:** Through strategic engagement with companies, Generation showcases the skills and readiness of its graduates, encouraging employers to consider NEET youth as an asset to their workforce.

- **Collaboration on curriculum development:** Employers are involved in shaping the training curriculum, ensuring it aligns with current labour market needs and equipping graduates with relevant, in-demand skills.

Target group

- **VET providers:** Institutions interested in offering short, targeted programmes to re-engage NEETs, particularly those who face barriers such as low income, lack of education, or lack of previous work experience.

- **Nonprofits and NGOs:** Groups working to reduce youth unemployment and aiming to provide tailored, supportive pathways for NEETs into employment, with a focus on social inclusion and economic mobility.

- **Government and public employment services:** Agencies that aim to create accessible, skills-based employment programmes for young NEETs, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **Employers and industry associations:** Companies and industry groups that seek to expand workforce diversity by recruiting NEETs, with a willingness to engage in partnerships for tailored training programmes and direct hiring.

- **Community-based organisations and youth outreach programmes:** Local organisations focused on mobilising NEETs who are often disconnected from mainstream employment and education channels, particularly those in rural or underserved communities.

Resources

Human resources:

Data Analysis: Utilisation of tools like Power BI for tracking applicant performance and optimising selection processes.

Learner Mobiliser: Dedicated staff to outreach to potential learners as well as to engage and guide NEETs through the application and selection journey.

Mentors (pre-programme): Skilled mentors support NEET applicants by providing social and emotional guidance, fostering a supportive and inclusive application environment.

Mentors (in- and post-programme): Skilled mentors to support young NEET learners throughout the training bootcamp and in the placement phase, including first days/weeks on the job.

Financial resources:

- Costs associated with Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff and contractors, which vary across regions and countries.
- Operational costs for data and selection tools, including the Staff Portal and Power BI subscriptions.
- Sub-contracting costs for media companies when such services are outsourced (varying across countries).

Funding sources

In Europe, specific programme cohorts have been financed through ESF+ in Spain and France and via RRF (Recovery and Resilience Facility) funding administered by national agencies.

Evaluation of the measure

Generation's impact is being thoroughly evaluated, data being at the core of their methodology. Generation measures impact across three dimensions:

1. **Breadth** – Tracking the annual and total number of graduates.

2. **Depth** – Monitoring employment and income outcomes for graduates 3-6 months post-programme, along with repeat hiring by employer partners.

3. **Durability** – Evaluating long-term outcomes, including employment, income, and well-being, up to five years after graduation.

This data-driven approach uses quantitative metrics like employment rates (tracked at 3, 6, and 9 months post-programme), job retention, wage gains, and programme relevance to market needs. Qualitative data, including feedback from learners, employers, and other stakeholders, further enriches the understanding of programme impact.

Data is collected rigorously across four stages of the learner journey:

- **Pre-programme:** Baseline data on demographics, financial situation, education, and job expectations.

- **In-class:** Attendance, assessments, and feedback on instruction and mentorship.

- **Post-programme:** Surveys at 90, 180, and 360 days to track employment and

well-being.

- **Alumni data:** Annual surveys 2-5 years post-graduation to assess long-term career progression and financial security.

Among 107,500+ learners/graduates under 29 years old (89% of the global total learner volume), 52% are women, and 92% were unemployed at the time of joining.

Additionally, 37% of learners/graduates reported being unable to cover their daily needs, and 15% were receiving financial assistance. Key findings from the evaluation include:

- **Job placement:** 84% of graduates secured employment within six months post-graduation.

- **Income multiplier:** Graduates experienced an average income increase of 2.87 times their pre-programme earnings.

- **Job retention:** 68% of graduates retained their job one year since the start of their position.

- **Programme relevance:** 90% of graduates who are working find their job aligned to their Generation programme.

Each country where Generation operates maintains KPIs aligned with organisational values and funder requirements. Processes are regularly evaluated, and affiliate countries engage in ad-hoc consulting to assess and enhance programme effectiveness.

The data is available in PowerBI. For more general information on the impact, please see the 2023 Impact Report, the Global Alumni Survey and the Impact in Europe report.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

Generation's initiative has had a significant positive impact on re-engaging NEETs aged 18-29, both in the short and long term.

Short-term outcomes:

- **Increased enrolment:** A high number of NEETs enrolled in the programmes, 89% of the global volume being learners under 29 years old.

- **Enhanced learner engagement and completion rates:** Customised mentorship programmes, tailored to the unique needs of NEETs, have led to higher completion rates and improved employability. This mentorship model focuses on employability coaching, social support, and placement support, ensuring participants stay engaged and motivated.

Long-term Impact:

- **Reduced inequality:** By integrating NEETs into the workforce, Generation's initiative helps bridge gaps in the labour market, enabling long-term career stability for marginalised groups.

- **Transformative change in skills development:** Through evidence-based advocacy, Generation influences policy frameworks and advocates for inclusive recruitment and training practices. The success is encouraging replication of these strategies at local, regional, and national level.

Mechanisms of change:

- **Targeted mobilisation and engagement:** Through tailored outreach campaigns, Generation attracts NEETs from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, in Italy,

through the DigitHer project, a focused mobilisation process in partnership with Freeda, a media company dedicated to women, led to the launch of dedicated tech cohorts for young females. More than 150 women were trained and 100 were placed into jobs, with the remaining being in the placement process. Also in Italy, in the framework of the "Tech Your Future" project, NEETs aged 18-29 were mobilised mostly through targeted social media campaigns and media partnerships (a total of 25 communication campaigns). This resulted in 333 learners trained, with a job placement rate of 78%, while the placement process is still on-going.

- **Tailored mentorship support:** Customised mentorship has been instrumental in empowering NEETs to succeed. The mentorship diagnostic shows a strong correlation between a learner-based mentorship model and positive outcomes, underscoring the importance of continuous, supportive engagement throughout the programme.

Success factors

Generation's initiative to support NEETs follows a structured, evidence-based 7-step methodology designed to address employment barriers comprehensively and provide sustainable career outcomes.

1. **Jobs and employer engagement:** Establishing partnerships with employers to identify high-demand jobs, ensuring programme graduates have a clear path to employment.

2. **Recruitment:** Targeting individuals most impacted by unemployment, selecting candidates based on their potential and commitment.

3. **Work-readiness training:** Conducting bootcamps to integrate technical, behavioural, and mindset skills, delivered through practical, intensive training.

4. **Employer interviews:** Graduates are connected directly to employers, streamlining the path from training to job placement.

5. **Mentorship and community:** Learners receive ongoing mentorship during and after training, enhancing job retention and resilience.

6. **Return on Investment tracking:** Measuring programme's impact on learners' well-being and employers' business outcomes, such as productivity and retention.

7. **Data-driven approach**: Collecting data on learner performance and job outcomes, continuously refining the model to support success.

- Specific to NEETs, the innovative elements are centred around:
  Outreach and marketing: Targeted mobilisation and marketing campaigns, especially on social media, where NEET presence is high.

- **Screening and selection:** A critical innovation is the use of the Applicant Prioritisation Table, which enables to identify and prioritise applicants from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds, such as NEETs. This tool helps to target candidates who demonstrate potential and alignment with the programme, ensuring fair and inclusive selection that meets the mission of supporting underserved youth. By reflecting patterns identified during screening, Generation further increases the effectiveness in reaching and supporting NEETs.

- **Mentorship Model:** Generation's mentorship approach is uniquely data-driven. With adequate funding and time allocated for mentor training, it ensures that mentors are equipped to address the specific needs of NEETs. By analysing mentorship data, the project continually refines the model to maximise impact, enabling mentors to provide tailored social and employability support that boosts

job retention and long-term career resilience.

Contact details for further information

Contact name
Daniel Soldan
Contact telephone
+4367764603771
Contact website
https://www.generation.org/
Contact email
daniel.soldan [at] generation.org

Related intervention approaches

Offering mentorship programmes to NEETs