

DARE

Day One Alliance for Employment

Date of creation

2019

Description

The DARE – Day One Alliance for Employment project is a transnational initiative aimed at reducing youth unemployment and addressing social exclusion among NEETs (young people not in employment, education, or training).

The project provides tailored interventions through Job Labs and Entrepreneurship Labs, supporting over 1,620 NEETs. These labs focus on developing soft and technical skills, career planning, and fostering entrepreneurial mindsets. A key innovation is the validation of learning through microcredentials, a system that allows participants to document and demonstrate their acquired competences.

The DARE project emphasises inclusivity, targeting marginalised groups such as long-term unemployed individuals, ethnic minorities, women returning to the workforce, asylum-seekers, and people with disabilities. By engaging diverse stakeholders, including local businesses, educational institutions, and NGOs, DARE creates sustainable support networks to bridge gaps between education and the labour market.

Additionally, the project promotes the transfer and standardisation of 15 good practices from Lithuania, Poland, and Austria, enhancing its replicability and sustainability. These practices address areas like career planning, entrepreneurship education, and validation of learning.

Ultimately, DARE aims to empower NEETs with the skills, confidence, and opportunities needed for meaningful employment, fostering social inclusion and reducing youth unemployment across Europe.

Beneficiaries

 **NEETs in long-term search**

Young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) aged 18–29.

Discouraged individuals who had stopped seeking work.

Inactive women (e.g. caring for children or incapacitated adults), people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, including Roma and asylum-seekers, low-skilled individuals.

Countries

 Austria

 Cyprus

 Greece

 Italy

 Lithuania

 Poland

 Portugal

Education level and sector

 **Adult education**

Non formal education

Level of implementation / Scope

 **Local level**  **Regional level**

The DARE project was implemented at local and regional levels, and across several European countries (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Spain). Launched in 2019, it was a multi-year initiative aiming to create sustainable support networks for youth employment.

With its collaborative framework, DARE aims to impact the broader European community by providing replicable models of youth empowerment and employability.

Aims of policy/initiative

The DARE project's core aim is to reduce youth unemployment and promote social inclusion by enhancing the employability of young adults who were NEET. The initiative seeks to empower these individuals by providing tailored training, mentorship, and validation of learning, ultimately helping them to overcome barriers to employment.

DARE also aims to create a sustainable support network through partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, and educational institutions, fostering a sense of belonging and resilience among participants. By bridging the gap between education and employment, the project contributes to a more inclusive labour market and addresses key issues related to social and economic inequality.

Features and types of activities implemented

DARE employs a multifaceted approach to youth empowerment, combining education, mentorship, and validation of learning. Key activities include:

1. Job Labs (Career Planning Interventions);
2. Entrepreneurship Labs;
3. Validation of Learning with open badges.

Target group

The DARE project targets organisations and professionals involved in youth support, such as youth workers, mentors, NGOs, local businesses, and training providers. These stakeholders gain valuable insights and resources to efficiently support NEET youth and thereby contributing to inclusive employment practices. Community members, families, and peers also benefit indirectly, as the project promotes social cohesion and inclusion, which positively impacts local environments and encouraged community resilience. By fostering a collaborative support network, the DARE project enhances both individual and community well-being, ensuring a sustainable impact on multiple levels.

Employers and stakeholders:

- Professionals wishing to adopt the open badges system for validating non-formal learning.
- Organisations (e.g. businesses, NGOs, educational institutions) benefiting from a more skilled and confident workforce.
- Employers who seek to gain access to job-ready individuals equipped with relevant skills and validated learning credentials.

Resources

Financial Resources:

Total Budget: EUR 1,178,000.

EEA & Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment with Contribution: 85%.

Project Partners with Contribution: 15%.

Project Consortium:

SEAL CYPRUS (leading partner) coordinated the project in collaboration with eight partner organizations from seven countries.

Beneficiary partners:

Craftsmanship & SMEs Association (IT), Lithuanian Association of Non-formal Education (LT), Lodz Chamber of Industry and Commerce (PL), PAR - Respostas Sociais (PT), Stratis Consulting INFORMATION SOCIETY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS LTD (GR), Youth Career and Advising Center (LT), Expertise partners:

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (AT), IFTE Initiative for Teaching Entrepreneurship (AT).

Evaluation of the measure

The DARE project includes a comprehensive evaluation framework to ensure continuous improvement and measured the impact of its activities. Evaluation methods include pre- and post-training assessments, participant feedback surveys, mentor and employer evaluations, and tracking employment outcomes of participants.

Additionally, external evaluators are engaged periodically to provide an objective assessment of project effectiveness, helping to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The evaluation findings are used to refine programme components, ensuring that activities remained relevant and impactful for participants. Regular progress reports are also shared with stakeholders and funders, enhancing transparency and accountability.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

The DARE project demonstrates positive outcomes, evidenced by increased employability and job placement rated among participants. Many young adults who completed the training had successfully transitioned to employment, re-entered formal education, or pursued further vocational training.

Key indicators of success include improved skill levels, greater self-confidence, and higher engagement in the workforce. The project also contributes to reducing the social exclusion of marginalised youth, fostering a more inclusive labour market. Participant testimonials and

quantitative data on job placements support the effectiveness of DARE in achieving its goals, while feedback from employers highlights the programme's impact on youth employability.

Success factors

Several factors contribute to the success of the DARE project. One major factor is the collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including NGOs, educational institutions, businesses, and chambers of commerce, which enhanced the programme's reach and effectiveness.

Other success factors of the DARE project stemmed from its holistic approach, combining career planning, entrepreneurship education, and the innovative use of Open Badges for validating non-formal learning. By tailoring interventions to the specific needs of NEETs, fostering inclusivity, and engaging stakeholders such as NGOs, businesses, and educational institutions, the project created a robust support network. It standardised 15 good practices from Lithuania, Poland, and Austria, ensuring replicability and sustainability. Long-term platforms like Regions of Learning further ensured lasting impact.

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Related intervention approaches



**Offering mentorship
programmes to NEETs**



**Validation of non-formal and
informal learning**



**Lifelong guidance:
supporting NEETs to
manage their careers**



Skills development



**Validation of non-formal and
informal learning**

Related protective factors



Inclusive environment



Health and well-being



**Positive self-perception
linked to learning ability**



Work readiness

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