CEDEFOP

Second chance measures

Problem statement

Addressed problem: Re-engaging young people in education and training

The cumulative process leading a young person to leave education early is complex. Yet it is not – or should not be - a one-way street. Some early leavers wish to return to education. Second chance measures provide a means to return to education and potentially acquire a qualification.

There are many reasons for leaving education early. Second chance measures are often delivered in a way that overcomes these. For example, some young people need to work due to their (family's) economic situation. Others have caring responsibilities. To take account of this, second chance education opportunities may be delivered outside normal study hours, through distance or blended learning (combination of online learning and traditional face-to-face instruction).

Another factor which can lead to drop-out is that the traditional, classroom-based approach to learning is not appropriate for all young people. Second chance opportunities tend to use a different methodology, often inspired by VET pedagogies (e.g. more hands-on, more tailored to the interests of the learner) which can be more appealing.

For young people with complex barriers to learning (e.g. health issues, housing, etc.), some second chance measures take a holistic approach and provide support to tackle these barriers, alongside formal learning, through a multi-professional case management approach.

SECOND CHANCE MEASURES

CLASSROOM-BASED APPROACH TO LEARNING IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

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SECOND CHANCE MEASURES CAN ALSO TAKE A HOLISTIC APPROACH AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO TACKLE LEARNING BARRIERS THROUGH A MULTI-PROFESSIONAL CASE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

REACH OUT TO YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH LOCAL SUPPORT

START WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF THE LEARNERS' EXISTING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND INTERESTS

ENGAGE AND DEVELOP THE 'WHOLE PERSON'

CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE TO MAINSTREAM EDUCATION WHICH IS FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTS SCHOOL TO STUDENT'S ABILITIES AND NEEDS

INCLUDE MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITIES

USE APPROPRIATE TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

- **SECOND CHANCE MEASURES PROVIDE LEARNERS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN A FORMAL QUALIFICATION THEY DID NOT OBTAIN WHILST IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOL**
- **THESE SOFT OUTCOMES CAN HELP TO PREPARE THEM FOR A RETURN TO FORMAL LEARNING OR TO ENTER EMPLOYMENT. SECOND CHANCE OPPORTUNITIES MIGHT ALSO LEAD TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE FACING COMPLEX BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

LINK SECOND CHANCE MEASURES WITH FORMAL EDUCATION

Beneficiaries

🏷 **Early leavers from education and training**   🏷 **Migrants / refugees**

Second chance measures can be helpful for people who have already dropped out of education. Some measures may be appropriate for young people who are at (high) risk of leaving education.

Addressing the problem

What makes second chance measures effective?

Second chance measures can take different forms. Some provide another chance to acquire a formal qualification. These formal programmes tend to involve individualised provision, using an alternative methodology to initial education, and may be delivered through a flexible format, e.g. part-time.

Other second chance measures do not lead directly to a formal qualification; these aim to support young people in the process towards returning to formal learning or moving into employment. These comprehensive measures start from the 'basics', helping young people to find an interest in learning again and developing the skills and behaviours they need to access formal learning or employment. Alongside this, they provide support to tackle a wide range of barriers and issues (e.g. related to health, poverty, etc.).

Second chance measures may also be offered as part of activation efforts of the public employment services.

The following tips are given as advice to policy-makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of both vocational second chance programmes and comprehensive second chance programmes (those tackling a wide range of barriers to learning). The information is based on Cedefop research into successful measures as well as other relevant evidence.

💡 Tip 1: Reach out to young people through local support

Successful second chance provision is embedded in the local community. This makes it possible to reach out to and engage young people from the local area.

Engagement may start with a very 'light touch' approach and build up a relationship of trust with the young person, leading to more formal enrolment in a programme and regular attendance. Second chance measures tend to involve a range of staff going beyond teaching staff, who conduct outreach and engagement work.

They also tend to work closely with other professionals who may come into contact with young people, e.g. social and healthcare workers. It is important to empower professionals at local services to identify and refer at-risk young people to second chance measures.

💡 Tip 2: Create an alternative to mainstream education

Most second chance measures provide an alternative to mainstream education. This might relate to the size of the group (groups may be smaller than in mainstream education), the organisation of timetables (e.g. classes offered in the evenings or at weekends), access requirements (e.g. removing barriers to entry such as requirements to hold a certain level of prior education), the teaching methods used, or the content of the learning. Curriculum and educational practices are designed in a flexible way with the aim of adapting the school to student's abilities and needs rather than the contrary.

A key difference is the learning environment. Second chance measures often aim to create a friendly, open environment based on mutual respect. This helps young people feel that they are treated as 'equals' and can confide in the staff. This is particularly important for young people who have previously struggled in an institutional setting, such as early leavers, or are coming from non-supportive family environments. Second chance learning environments address training needs while providing also other types of support such as legal, financial, housing and therapeutic assistance.

💡 Tip 3: Engage and develop the 'whole person'

Second chance measures tend to take a broad approach and consider the

Second chance measures tend to take a broad approach and consider the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of the learner - though the extent varies depending on the nature of the measure in question.

Comprehensive measures usually employ multi-professional teams who can first reach out to young people and engage them to join. They can then identify and help to address the full range of barriers to learning faced by the young person. For instance, social and healthcare workers may work alongside the teaching staff, and there may be opportunities to access counselling or other support services. A case management approach may be used to enable this multi-faceted support to be tailored to the young person.

In addition, teaching staff in second chance measures tend to see their role as going beyond teaching to also include social and emotional support to help young people work through their personal issues.

Coaching or mentoring programmes are common amongst second chance measures.

These different activities are a core element of the support offered by second chance measures, in parallel to, or in preparation for, the education and training aspects. They enable participants to re-discover an interest in learning and help them to develop the behaviours and competences they need to participate in a formal learning or working environment.

💡 Tip 4: Start with an assessment of the learners' existing knowledge, skills and interests

Learners accessing second chance measures come from different starting points and face varying barriers to learning. The knowledge and skills 'gaps' young people need to fill will depend on when they dropped out of school and their attendance and achievements prior to dropping out.

Second chance measures tend to be individualised and take account of prior learning and work experience. This is important for young people who may have partially completed studies or have acquired skills and competences at work, or through non-formal or informal learning.

An individualised approach to provision is therefore important and this should start with an assessment of the learners' existing knowledge, skills and interests. This assessment process should have the aim of boosting the young person's confidence and working with him/her to identify learning objectives and an overall pathway. This individual assessment should also cover the learners' additional support needs and identify how these will be addressed.

For a more in-depth discussion of this tip, see the intervention approach on flexible education and training systems.

💡 Tip 5: Link second chance measures with formal education

Second chance measures need to provide an alternative route towards achieving

a formal, recognised qualification, or towards employment. This might be by providing that qualification through the second chance offer, or by providing a second chance opportunity that prepares a learner to return to mainstream provision. Second chance measures need to fit into a flexible system that enables young people to move forward with their learning or to move 'across' to a different choice at the same level.

Links with the mainstream education system are important. These links might lead to referrals from the mainstream to second chance measures, or vice versa. The links might also be important to enable formal qualifications, or parts of qualifications (units, modules) to be awarded as a result of the second chance provision. Some second chance measures may even be based at the same location as a mainstream school.

Employer engagement is also important. Working with local employers to organise on-the-job training periods in companies is another way to ensure that the second chance leads to successful career pathways. This cooperation also ensures that the advice and training provided gives young people the knowledge and skills relevant to the local labour market.

Other ways of allowing flexibility include offering opportunities to recognise prior learning and providing modular courses, which enable learners to take a tailored learning path. For a more in-depth discussion of this tip, see the intervention approach on flexible education and training systems.

💡 Tip 6: Offer flexible provision

Many young people who are returning to second chance education have other commitments and demands on their daily life. Flexibility in provision is therefore important. This flexibility might relate to the way in which the learning is delivered, or to opportunities for enrolment and registration.

Flexibility may also relate to the attendance requirements. Young people returning for a second chance opportunity may have complex personal circumstances which might impact on their attendance. Avoiding sanctions for non-attendance and working with the young person to try to address the issues which are causing their absence are more likely to be effective in a second chance environment. A requirement to attend eight hours a day, five days a week, might not be realistic. Alternative, achievable, part-time attendance patterns might help to retain learners and ensure their completion of a programme.

💡 Tip 7: Promote positive attitudes

Teachers and other professionals, parents and other young people, may have negative perceptions around second chance measures and their participants. These misconceptions need to change. They can create barriers to participation by stigmatising second chance provision. They can also make it difficult for learners who have completed a second chance opportunity to then return to and progress within mainstream education.

Maintaining links with the mainstream system, by for example ensuring that the outcomes of second chance education can be formally accredited, that they

provide a clear route towards a formal qualification or other positive pathways, can help to tackle this issue. Positive links with employers can also help to reinforce the image of second chance education as a credible pathway towards educational achievement and/or employment.

It is particularly important to promote a positive image amongst 'mainstream' teachers and trainers. It may be their role to refer young people to second chance measures, meaning they can have an influence on young people's attitudes towards second chance provision and its learners. They need to have a good understanding of the pathways offered by second chance measures as well as the types of learners who might benefit from taking part. One way of addressing this issue might be for second chance schools to provide training to mainstream teachers on working with young people who are at risk.

💡 Tip 8: Use appropriate teaching and learning methods

Second chance measures often incorporate pedagogies from VET, such as in-company learning, company visits and practical learning in workshops. Theoretical learning is often closely integrated with practical content to ensure its relevance to learners. Often young people who have dropped out of education appreciate a hands-on approach, which enables them to see how their learning can be applied in practice.

Strong links with employers are important to enable these kinds of learning opportunities to form part of the second chance provision.

Young adult returners have different motivations to those in mainstream education. An adult education approach may also be adopted within second chance measures, to take account of the different motivations and learning styles of young adult returners. This means offering a broad curriculum with scope for critical reflection, personal development, and for the development of meaningful and useful knowledge and skills.

💡 Tip 9: Include motivational activities

Motivational activities can be an important part of second chance provision as they provide participants with a chance to improve their confidence, gain valuable team-working and social skills, and to interact with their peers and staff. These opportunities in particular may provide an informal setting for staff to provide social and emotional support, of particular benefit to those second chance learners facing external barriers to learning. They can also be used as a means to help young people understand and seek solutions to the problems they may be facing.

Expected outcomes

For some learners, second chance measures provide them with an opportunity to gain a formal qualification they did not obtain whilst in mainstream school. For others, more 'soft' outcomes might be important, such as an increase in self-awareness, a better plan for the future, or improved social or emotional skills.

These soft outcomes can help to prepare them for a return to formal learning or to enter employment. Second chance opportunities might also lead to positive outcomes for young people facing complex barriers to learning, who can receive support to overcome issues, such as substance abuse, housing or health issues.

The following outcomes can be expected at different levels:

INDIVIDUAL	INSTITUTIONAL	SYSTEM
• Positive attitude to learning and education and training • Improved well-being • Social / economic / psychological challenges being tackled • Improved education outcomes • Improved basic skills • Improved work habits / social skills • Defined learning career goals	• Referral systems from schools to other services are being used • Reduced drop-out from second chance measures	• Interconnected services are being used • Increased rates of young people returning to mainstream education after being involved in a second chance measure • Increased rates of young people attaining an upper secondary qualification after being involved in a second chance measure

Related protective factors

Positive self-perception linked to learning ability

Related resources

Statistics and data

Policies and measures to help early leavers re-enter the education and training system

Most countries in Europe have developed policies and measures to help early leavers re-enter the education and training system such as second chance education, guidance and youth guarantees.

🇦🇹 **Austria**   🇧🇪 **Belgium**   🇧🇬 **Bulgaria**   🇭🇷 **Croatia**   🇨🇾 **Cyprus**   🇨🇿 **Czechia**   🇩🇰 **Denmark**

🇪🇪 **Estonia**   🇪🇺 **EU level**   🇫🇮 **Finland**   🇫🇷 **France**   🇩🇪 **Germany**   🇬🇷 **Greece**   🇭🇺 **Hungary**

🇮🇪 **Ireland**   🇮🇹 **Italy**   🇱🇻 **Latvia**   🇱🇹 **Lithuania**   🇱🇺 **Luxembourg**   🇲🇹 **Malta**

🇳🇱 **Netherlands**   🇳🇴 **Norway**   🇵🇱 **Poland**   🇵🇹 **Portugal**   🇷🇴 **Romania**   🇸🇰 **Slovakia**

🇸🇮 **Slovenia**   🇪🇸 **Spain**   🇸🇪 **Sweden**   🇲🇰 **The Republic of North Macedonia**   🇹🇷 **Türkiye**

🇬🇧 **United Kingdom**

Good practices

Second Chance School of Matosinhos

The Second Chance School of Matosinhos in Portugal offers a unique education and training programme. Learners design their own training plan which includes vocational training, artistic training, personal and social development and educational support.

🇵🇹 **Portugal**

Crafts Square

Piazza dei Mestieri

In Italy, 'Crafts Square' offers young people, unemployed young people and adults with an alternative educational offer with a good balance between practical and theoretical courses. The environment created by the 'Craft Square' aims to ensure learners feel understood, supported and valued.

🇮🇹 **Italy**

Second Chance School - Luxembourg

L'école de la deuxième chance - E2C

The Second Chance School in

Second chance schools - France

Écoles de la deuxième chance

French second chance schools (E2Cs)

Luxembourg (E2C) aims to re-engage early leavers back into education. The education/personal well-being and development of the learner is at the heart of the E2C pedagogy.

🇱🇺 **Luxembourg**

offer training programmes which incorporate individualised learning paths tailored to the needs of each participant.

🇫🇷 **France**

🧩 Good practice

Voluntary Labour Corps (VLC)

Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy (OHP)

In Poland, the Voluntary Labour Corps initiative offers support to young people at risk of early leaving, unemployment or those who are already unemployed. Personalised support, mentoring, vocational counselling, guidance and job matching activities aim to ensure young people find their place in labour market.

🇵🇱 **Poland**

🧩 Good practice

Road Map: Education and career guidance for second chances

Personalised education guidance for new opportunities in municipal schools of adult education.

🇪🇸 **Spain**

🧩 Good practice

Comprehensive pathways for the integration of young people

Programme for young people implemented by the cooperative "Jovent" offering comprehensive pathways of guidance, training, social inclusion and labour market insertion.

🇪🇸 **Spain**

🧩 Good practice

Back-to-school structures (SRE) (also known as New Chance Schools)

Compensation structures for early school leavers wanting to come back to school to get general or technical high school diploma ('*baccalauréat*', '*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle*').

🇫🇷 **France**

🧩 Good practice

Spanish Association of Second Chance Schools (E2O España)

Asociación Española de Escuelas de

🧩 Good practice

Orienta4YEL

Supporting educational and social inclusion of young early leavers and

Segunda Oportunidad (E2O España)

The Second Chance School offer practical and effective solutions to all young people in Spain without a job or qualification, through the development of an innovative model of Second Chance School (E2O).

🇪🇸 **Spain**

those at risk of early leaving through mechanisms of orientation and tutorial action.

🇩🇪 **Germany**   🇵🇹 **Portugal**   🇷🇴 **Romania**

🇪🇸 **Spain**   🇬🇧 **United Kingdom**

🧩 Good practice

Second Chance Schools - Spain

Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad (E2O)

The project offers practical and effective solutions to young people in Spain without a job or qualification, through the development of an innovative model of Second Chance School (E2O).

🇪🇸 **Spain**

Tools

🛠 Tools

PES practices for the outreach and activation of NEETs

The PES handbook offers national examples of how the public employment services work in partnership with youth outreach workers and other key services to engage and support young people at risk of early leaving.

🇪🇺 **EU level**

🛠 Tools

Need for all Youngsters

Brug for alle Unge, (BFAU)

The Danish initiative 'Need for all Youngsters' included national initiatives to raise awareness of the educational system, in particular VET, amongst parents from ethnic minorities.

🇩🇰 **Denmark**

🛠 Tools

🛠 Tools

Reaching out to all learners: a resource pack for supporting inclusive education

From the IBE-UNESCO series 'Training tools for curriculum development'

The 'Training tools for curriculum development' resource pack provides a framework to support the development of inclusive schools and classrooms. It provides guidance to support teachers on how to engage all learners.

International

Second Chance – build your Future

This Second Chance – Build your Future toolkit contains practical tools for initial assessment and 'train the trainer' materials. It is especially helpful for practitioners working with low qualified and low skilled people.

Germany   **Italy**   **Netherlands**

Poland   **Switzerland**

🛠 Tools

MyE2O

Second Chance Schools in Spain, Portugal and France

MyE2O (www.mye2o.org) shares the educational good practices of the Second Chance Schools in Spain, Portugal and France.

France   **Portugal**   **Spain**

🛠 Tools

DIDO - Dropping-in the dropouts toolkit

The DIDO toolkit contains practical tools aimed at preventing dropout in adult education.

Belgium   **Denmark**   **Finland**

Netherlands   **Portugal**

Switzerland

Publications

📖 Publications

Preventing early school leaving in Europe: Lessons learned from second chance education

The overall purpose of the study was to undertake research to identify good practices in second chance education, their success factors, and their transferability into initial education and training. The work was commissioned against a backdrop of growing recognition of the scale of the challenge presented by Early School Leaving (ESL) in

📖 Publications

Digital education policies and practices on teaching and learning on migration issues in schools

Transnational research and needs assessment report based on the Odisseu Project

The basis of this research is the Erasmus+ ODISSEU project, which develops online gaming and digital tools to integrate asylum seekers and raise

Europe, as enshrined in the target to reduce ESL by 10% Europe-wide within the EU 2020 strategy, and reinforced by the 2011 Communication on ESL.

Download the report here.

🇪🇺 **EU level**

awareness about the refugee crisis in Europe through intercultural education and civic engagement.

🇨🇾 **Cyprus** 🇩🇪 **Germany** 🇮🇪 **Ireland**

🇮🇹 **Italy** 🇲🇹 **Malta** 🇷🇴 **Romania**

📖 Publications

Personal, vocational and occupational guidance in second chance schools

A comprehensive approach to support early leavers

The article emphasises the critical role of personalised, vocational, and professional guidance in second-chance schools.

🇪🇸 **Spain**

📖 Publications

Organisational analysis of accredited second chance schools

Insights into structure and effectiveness

The article explores the organisational dimensions of accredited second chance schools in Spain, emphasising their flexibility due to the absence of specific regulations.

🇪🇸 **Spain**

📖 Publications

Second chance schools and their impact on youth

Analysis of the profile of youth in second chance programmes and their impact on educational and labour transitions

The article analyses the profile of youth participating in second chance programmes in Spain.

🇪🇸 **Spain**

📖 Publications

Second chance schools as socio-educational organisations

Characterisation, offering, functions and mission

The article examines the characteristics and processes of the second chance schools, their educational, labour, and social functions, and their mission and institutional identity.

🇪🇸 **Spain**

Quick wins

★ Quick win

★ Quick win

Keeping in touch with young drop-outs

Keep in touch: create a platform to coordinate the activities of the main stakeholders working in the field of early leaving in your area.

🇫🇷 **France**   🇱🇺 **Luxembourg**

Promote the development of individual learning plans

Developing individual learning plans with students helps to secure their ownership and commitment to participating in their chosen learning pathway. They can also be a way of encouraging learners to work towards achieving their goals.

🇩🇰 **Denmark**   🇮🇪 **Ireland**

★ Quick win

Quick and easy referral to support measures

Formal protocols for the referral of young people to specialist support services saves time for the VET provider, and facilitate a quicker response to the learners' needs.

🇦🇹 **Austria**   🇳🇱 **Netherlands**

Source URL: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/en/tools/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/intervention-approaches/second-chance-measures