



Building motivation to learn

Problem statement

Addressed problem: Motivation and engagement of young people

Once a learner at risk of early leaving or an early leaver is identified, it is important to assess his or her motivation to continue or return to education. Many of these young people have experienced continued underachievement at school which has undermined their trust in their own capacities and their interest in education and training.

Many support measures can contribute to building motivation. For instance, career counselling involves discussions with the young person about his/her future, and encourages him/her to take responsibility and act upon his/her aspirations.

However, such measures are often insufficient. In particular, they may not succeed at engaging young people with a long history of negative experiences at school, and who have internalised a vision of themselves as 'poor students'. These young people often need to strengthen their self-confidence and rediscover an interest in learning, before they actually engage in education and training.

Beneficiaries

- ▶ Early leavers from education and training
- ▶ Low-motivated learners
- ▶ Young people with complex needs (e.g. health issues, in poverty, with caring responsibilities)
- ▶ Secondary education students
- ▶ VET students (school based)
- ▶ VET students (in work based learning schemes)
- ▶ Vulnerable groups

Measures to build motivation can help all learners to build trust in their capabilities and interest in education and training. These activities are particularly useful to reengage those who are highly disengaged from education and training, and at-risk students showing signs of low motivation.

Addressing the problem

What makes measures to build motivation effective?

Motivational activities are most often used in the context of a comprehensive set of measures for young people who are highly disengaged from education and training, and who distrust the education and training 'system' and the people who work for the system (teachers, trainers, etc.). However, such activities can be used in other contexts, including general education schools, VET schools, and after-school activities.

The following tips are given as advice to policy-makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of VET measures, in particular those targeting learners at risk of early leaving or aimed at re-engaging early leavers. The information is based on Cedefop research into successful measures.

 **Tip 1: Activities that are outside the formal learning environment**

Re-engaging measures for young people with a long history of negative experiences at school tend to include activities that are not directly linked to a training programme or qualification. These activities promote interaction with peers, teachers, or other staff outside a formal learning environment. The main objective is to ensure that the young person can enjoy an activity in a group and feel valued for his/her contribution, promoting his or her sense of belonging.

Tip 2: Provide a variety of activities to engage and motivate learners

Motivational activities mainly include:

- Artistic activities, which can include the organisation of performances
- Sporting activities
- National and international youth exchanges and trips
- School-related nature activities (e.g. community gardens)
- School-related active citizenship activities (e.g. related to local environment)
- Other group activities (e.g. cooking together, organising an event)

These activities can be developed in cooperation with local services and organisations. For instance, sporting activities can be developed in cooperation with local sports clubs, and municipalities can promote nature and active citizenship activities.

Tip 3: Ensure activities promote personal and social development

Motivational activities provide a safe place for young people to spend their time in. Moreover, such activities can be a forum for young people to open up about their problems, and an opportunity for staff to offer support.

Even if provided outside a formal learning environment, motivational activities must establish concrete objectives and be guided by professionals (e.g. teachers and trainers, counsellors, etc.). Such activities aim at helping young people to get to know themselves better and to interact with others, and should for instance promote cooperation and conflict resolution. This will strengthen learners' ability to cope with difficulties or challenges.

Tip 4: Build trusting relationships between the young person and members of staff


A key factor in enabling young people to succeed in education and training is for the adults around them to show that they believe in their abilities and to support them towards achieving their goals. Motivational activities which bring together staff and young people in an informal activity can help young people form a positive relationship with a member of staff. This staff member could just turn out to be the one adult who they can 'connect with' and who motivates them to work towards achieving a qualification.

Expected outcomes

Motivational activities aim at strengthening self-esteem and self-confidence and contribute to the development of social skills. These activities can help stimulate young people's interests and curiosity and encourage a positive attitude towards learning.

These activities can also promote discipline and reduce aggression, they can help in dealing with conflicts, and also strengthen resilience or the ability to cope with difficulties or challenges.

The following outcomes can be expected at individual level:


INDIVIDUAL

- Development of interests and curiosity
- Development of a positive vision of oneself
- Improved social skills
- Improved relationship with the education and training system (reduced mistrust in the system)
- Development of a positive attitude towards learning
- Improved relationship with teaching / training staff
- Improved capacity to deal with barriers to learning (complex personal issues)
- Reduced risk of early leaving


Related protective factors




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

Related resources

Good practices

 Good practice

 Good practice

Carpo - Assistierte Ausbildung (assisted VET)

In Germany, assisted VET ('Carpo') incorporates intensive individual social-pedagogical coaching and guidance, offered by certified social-pedagogues.

 Germany

Guidance at School: Tutoring, support and study continuation

Guidance process in secondary education to accompany the student in his/her process of personal development and study continuation.

 Spain

 Good practice

SUCCESS: An educational accompaniment programme in Barcelona to reduce ELET

A reinforcement programme in Barcelona to reduce early leaving from education and training (ELET) by providing assistance to students from tutors and older student mentors.

 Spain

 Good practice

Early School Workers (ESW)

Erasmus+ project "Early School Workers" was designed and carried out to provide VET teachers and schools with guidelines and tools to support learners from becoming early school leavers and increase the employability of youngsters while fostering their active role in the society.

 Belgium  Germany  Italy

 Spain  United Kingdom

 Good practice

"FUORI SCUOLA" Pathways for the recovery of early school leaving

FUORI SCUOLA Percorsi di recupero dalla dispersione scolastica

FUORI SCUOLA is a project that aims to tackle early leaving from education and training at the local level of provinces.

Having a holistic approach aiming at the wellbeing of young early leavers, each organisation provides services in four areas:

a) development of professional

skills;

b) development of personal and social skills;

c) development of key competences;

d) reaching out, engagement, reception, listening and guidance.

 Germany  Italy  Portugal

 Spain  United Kingdom

Tools

✕ Tools

FEIGHT - The eight solutions for fighting early school leaving in VET (funded by the LLP)

The FEIGHT tool proposes eight solutions for fighting early leaving in VET - these include a combination of teaching and learning methods centred on outdoor activities, art, music, drama and learning by doing.

 Italy  Netherlands  Turkey

 United Kingdom

✕ 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

Theatre as empowerment methodology for iVET - Handbook

Leonardo da Vinci (LLP project) - Transfer of Innovation

As part of forum theatre, learners explore solutions to their problems by acting out difficulties encountered in daily life.

✕ Tools

Training programme for VET teachers developed within the framework of the STAY IN project

The STAY IN project proposes a training programme for VET teachers and youth workers. Its module 1 discusses indicators to identify learners at risk of early leaving

 Germany  Italy  Poland

 Turkey  United Kingdom

 Austria  Bulgaria  Finland

 Germany  Italy  Netherlands

 Portugal  Turkey

 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

Vocational pedagogies and benefits for learners: practices and challenges in Europe

Cedefop study on vocational pedagogies finds that good communication and high levels of trust between teacher or trainer and learner are important for retention.

Download the report  [here](#)

 EU level

 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 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

 Publications

Natives and immigrants enrolled in Spanish intermediate vocational education and training: a comparative study

Antoni Cerdà-Navarro, Francesca Salvà-Mut, Rubén Comas-Forgas & Mercè Morey-López

This article looks at the differences and similarities between Spanish-born and immigrant students enrolled in the first year of Intermediate Vocational Education (IVET) programmes in Spain.

 Spain

 Publications

Prevent early leaving from vocational education and training: guidelines and proposals

Prevenir el abandono de los estudios en la formación profesional: orientaciones y propuestas

Educational research is an increasingly important tool for educational governance and evidence-based decision making. This guide is an outcome of the excellent research project *Itinerarios de éxito y abandono en la formación profesional del sistema educativo (IEAFP)* (Success and dropout itineraries in vocational education and training of the education system) managed by Dr Francesca Salvà Mut and her team.

 Spain

 Publications

Recommendations on inclusive education

Based on the COFACE Disability S.H.I.F.T. guide for a meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and their families. COFACE Families Europe is a pluralistic network of civil society associations representing the interests of all families.

According to article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), signed and adopted by the European Union and all its Member States, and of its General Comment No. 4, State parties must ensure the realisation of the right of persons with disabilities to education through an inclusive education system at all levels, including pre-

schools, primary, secondary and tertiary education, vocational training and lifelong learning, extracurricular and social activities, and for all students, including persons with disabilities.

Quick wins

★ Quick win

Create opportunities for informal interactions between students and VET provider staff

Creating opportunities for informal interactions between learners and staff can help build trust and create positive relationships.

 **Poland**  **Portugal**

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