



Skills development

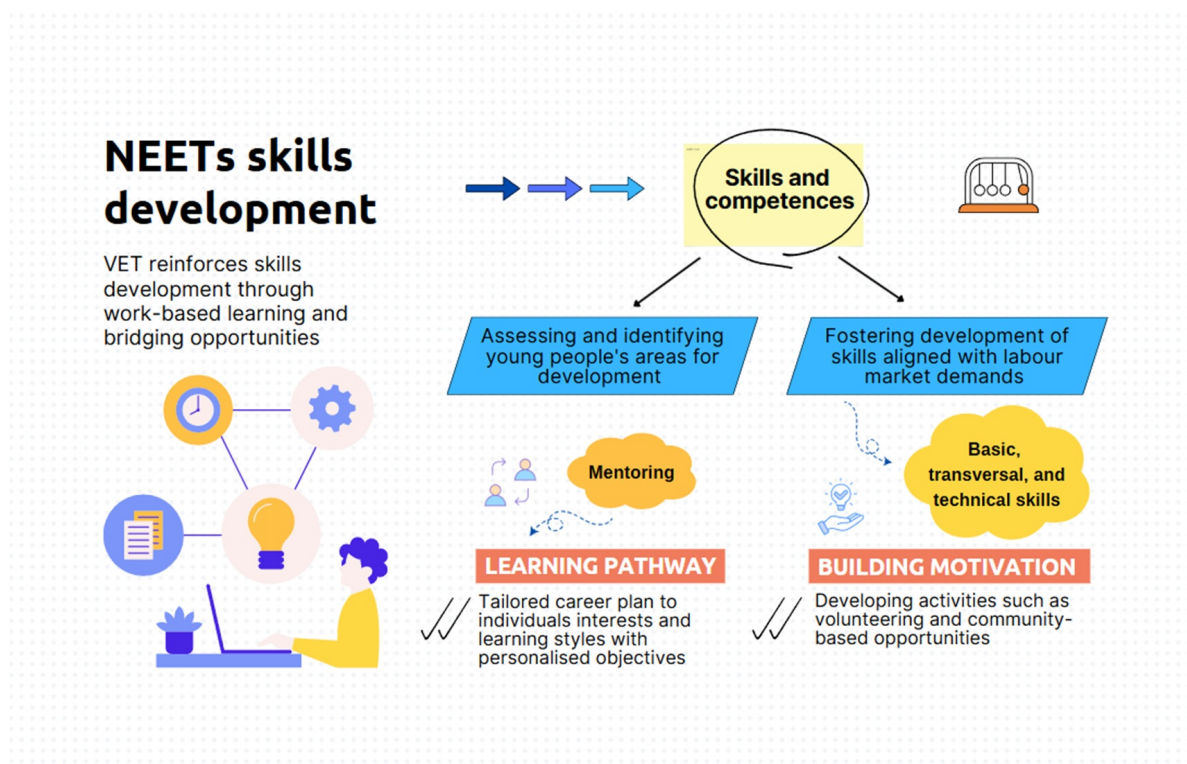
Problem statement

The first Cedefop VET opinion survey found that 87% of VET graduates are happy with the work-related skills they acquired, compared to 62% of general education graduates. The survey also showed that 60% of VET participants found a long-term job within one month of finishing their studies.

VET courses reinforce skills development through the provision of work-based learning and bridging opportunities. This approach means that young people are then well positioned to enter either the labour market or tertiary education.

The demands of the labour market require a workforce with a broad range of skills and competences. VET programmes should be continuously updated and aligned with the skill needs of employers, ensuring a valuable pathway for young people into employment.

The continued success and development of VET lies in the tailoring of individualised pathways. Encompassing both low and high-skilled individuals and the long and short-term unemployed, NEETs are a heterogeneous group with different characteristics and needs. Where some NEETs have little work experience, others have had several periods of unemployment or worked in unskilled jobs, which can lead to a deterioration of skills. A key first step is to assess the skills that individuals already have. Measures to develop skills are most relevant to those who left education and training with little or no formal qualifications.



Beneficiaries



Re-entrants



NEETs in long-term search

Skills development is particularly relevant for the following NEET subgroups defined by Eurofound:

- Long-term unemployed
- Discouraged

For more information, please see the section Who are NEETs.

Addressing the problem

Policy makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of interventions to help NEETs developing their skills may find useful the following tips.

Tip 1: Assess young people's existing skills and competences

Assessing the skills and competences of young people can identify the skills they already have to offer, as well as those they need to develop. This includes basic, digital, transversal and technical skills. Young people acquire a range of skills through various experiences, only some of which are work and education-related. In-depth analysis of their skills and competences can lead to specific learning pathways. For example, an individual may apply for a specific course or training opportunity which could then be tailored through the addition of a job placement.

Assessment will help to validate (identify, document, assess and certify) current skills, select appropriate pedagogies to pursue and avoid repeating curriculum material that the young person has already covered. Further information on validation of non-formal and informal learning can be found [here](#).

Tip 2: Tailor learning pathways to interests and learning styles

Initial skills assessments should inform the development of person-centred learning pathways. These should be set out in individual learning or career plans, outlining personalised learning objectives. These objectives should be realistic and measurable, include short-term and long-term goals, and allow for a certain degree of flexibility.

Quality guidance is crucial to support the definition of learning objectives. It puts NEETs in control of their own decisions and supports them to align their learning or career plans with their learning styles, interests and aspirations.

Career plans may cover: hands-on activities to support work experience and

career progression; academic support to obtain relevant qualifications to progress into tertiary education; sourcing alternatives to mainstream education to acquire formal qualifications; informal learning opportunities to develop competences sought by employers (i.e. communication, team work, problem-solving skills). It is important for trainers/teachers and other support staff to conduct regular reviews to assess progress and, if necessary, to make appropriate revisions. This includes providing guidance, additional support and resources (e.g. counselling services, mentoring) to individuals with complex needs. Possible barriers to achieving both short and long-term goals should be identified early in the planning stages.

Further information and tips of tailored learning pathways can be found [here](#).

Tip 3: Develop activities to build motivation

Young people who are NEET often suffer from low self-esteem and lack confidence in their capacity to learn, discouraging them from participating in education or training. This is detrimental to their integration into education and employment. Building up their motivation can contribute to increased confidence and encourage them to take responsibility for their aspirations.

Activities outside the formal environment - volunteering, sport clubs and other community-based opportunities - promote personal and social development. Key to the success of such activities is building trust between young people and members of staff, which in turn fosters their motivation to engage in formal learning.

Engaging in stimulating activities outside formal environments can build knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to entrepreneurship. Such activities are most effective where they have concrete objectives and are guided by professionals.

Further information on effective measures to build motivation can be found [here](#).

Tip 4: Foster development of the right skills

Skills development should be aligned with the demands of the labour market and address potential skill mismatches. Basic and transversal skills are valued in the job market and will support the integration of young people into employment. A range of preparation measures (work placements, taster sessions, business/enterprise studies curriculum) will enable learners to be 'work-ready' when making the transition into employment. Such measures will help to develop their employability skills, such as CV preparation, interview techniques and leadership.

[Second chance measures](#) may allow some young people to acquire skills and behaviours such as time management, self-motivation, problem-solving, communication and interpersonal skills. These are all examples of [key competences](#) required within the workplace.

VET providers can develop a highly skilled workforce by fostering entrepreneurship and digital skills. Such skills should be part of the curricula and

educational activities. For instance, VET schools can use hands-on experience to promote entrepreneurship in a practical way (e.g. project work in cooperation with local enterprises or communities, student mini-companies). In encouraging entrepreneurship, the focus is best placed on the individual's personality, creativity, problem-solving and experience-oriented education.

Related risk factors



Low education level



Migratory background



Skills mismatch

Related resources

Good practices

 Good practice

400+Future

400+Zukunft

400+Future is a low threshold programme that targets young NEETs to support them to re-engage in education

 Good practice

Project CLICK-Activate Skills for Employability

Projeto CLICK-Ativar Competências para a Empregabilidade

CLICK functions as a mediation project

and training activities. The programme offers individualised support and practical experience in a variety of vocational fields as well as the opportunity to attain a lower secondary education certificate.

 **Germany**

between job supply and demand, working as a complementary tool to public employment services. The scope of this project is twofold including the development of soft skills among vulnerable or unemployed people and actions for raising awareness about social responsibility among potential employers. By joining efforts with multiple stakeholders and working closely with the actual beneficiaries, the project aims to make the “click” in their lives.

 **Portugal**

 **Good practice**

PLAY YOUR SKILLS

Mobile Gaming App for Identification and documentation of Skills and Competences for disadvantaged young NEETs

Getting NEETs back on track by the "VET-ification" of gaming to encourage them to take part in Vocational Education and Training (VET) or at least get in touch with VET.

 **Austria**  **Germany**  **Ireland**

 **Italy**  **Portugal**  **Spain**

 **Good practice**

Transnational Employment YOUTHShare Centre- Greek Branch

Διακρατικό Κέντρο Απασχόλησης YOUTHShare, Ελληνικό Παράρτημα

The Transnational Employment Branch of YOUTHShare in Greece adopts, adapts and elaborates on the new practices for work inclusion based on Ripples in the Water Methodology from Norway -NHO- Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises). Based on this methodology, the YOUTHShare employment Centre and its staff aims through a person-centred and empower-focused approach at matching effectively the jobseeker with a potential employer.

 **Cyprus**  **Greece**  **Italy**

 **Spain**

 **Good practice**

Guidance and professional initiation courses and professional initiation

 **Good practice**

Comprehensive pathways for the integration of young people

courses to diverse professions

Cours d'orientation et d'initiation professionnelles (COIP) et cours d'initiation professionnelle à divers métiers (IPDM)

COIP/IPDM aim to equip young people with the necessary skills and competences they need to integrate into a VET programme or the labour market.

 **Luxembourg**

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

 **Spain**

 **Good practice**

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**

 **Good practice**

EPIDE (Etablissement Public d'Insertion dans l'emploi)

Young people aged 18-25 who are early leavers, unemployed and/or at risk of exclusion. Young people from disadvantaged urban areas are a priority target group.

 **France**

 **Good practice**

Lisbon City of Learning (LCL)

Lisboa Cidade da Aprendizagem (LCA)

A platform that includes all available learning opportunities within Lisbon, providing participants with access to a comprehensive range of educational experiences. Each opportunity is linked to corresponding microcredentials, which are awarded upon completion. Participants can store and manage these microcredentials in a badge wallet, showcasing their achievements and skills.

 **Good practice**

RAISE Youth

Rural Action for Innovative and Sustainable Entrepreneurship for Youth

The RAISE Youth initiative contributes to providing decent and productive work for youth through social innovation in rural areas of 4 EU countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Spain.

Main objective is to pilot and promote an innovative RAISE Model of (self) employment, for youth based on sustainable agri-business in 4 rural regions of EU with high unemployment

 **Portugal**

rates and depopulation.

 **Bulgaria**  **Croatia**  **Romania**

 **Spain**

 **Good practice**

DigitHer

DigitHer

DigitHer empowers young women to launch digital careers by addressing barriers to employment and boosting confidence through targeted training and mentorship. By creating a supportive, female-focused learning environment, the initiative helps bridge the gender gap in tech.

 **Italy**

 **Good practice**

Tech Your Future

Dalla formazione al lavoro, crea il tuo futuro

Tech Your Future equips NEETs across Italy with the skills and support to launch careers in high-demand digital professions, offering inclusive training and personalised job placement. By connecting talent with opportunity, the project opens pathways for youth to thrive in the ever-evolving tech sector.

 **Italy**

 **Good practice**

DARE

Day One Alliance for Employment

The DARE (Day One Alliance for Employment) project is a dynamic and innovative initiative that supports young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET). By focusing on both skill development and social integration, DARE enhances the employability of marginalised youth across Europe.

 **Austria**  **Cyprus**  **Greece**

 **Italy**  **Lithuania**  **Poland**

 **Portugal**

 **Good practice**

Go Remote

Unlocking the potential of remote job opportunities

Go Remote is an initiative designed to reduce youth unemployment by offering training, mentoring, and employment opportunities in remote and hybrid jobs.

 **Bulgaria**  **Croatia**  **Cyprus**

 **Finland**  **Iceland**  **Latvia**

 **Good practice**

Social Innovators

 **Good practice**

BEYOND NEET(D)s

Socialni inovatorji

Social Innovators is a programme aimed at developing skills for young people in social innovation fields, enhancing their employability, and encouraging impactful projects within local communities.

 **Bulgaria**  **Croatia**  **Norway**

 **Slovenia**

Integrated guidance and support for vocational education pathways for highly disadvantaged youth beyond the status of NEET

The aim of the practice is to change the status of young people from NEETs (not in employment, education or training) to SEEDs ([searching for education, employment and development](#)).

 **Austria**  **Cyprus**  **Czechia**

 **Ireland**  **Italy**  **Portugal**

Good practice

Avenir' Pro

Favoriser l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes sortants de lycées professionnels

Avenir' Pro aims to give vocational high school students key competences to easing their access to the labour market. The initiative is the result of a collaborative effort between France Travail, the Missions locales and the Directorate-General for School Education (DGSCO – Ministry of National Education) based on feedback from pilot projects carried out since the 2020-2021 school year.

 **France**

Good practice

Trans Green Inspiration

Trans Green Inspiration

The practice develops and implements an innovative and sustainable training model in green social entrepreneurship for NEETs (young people not in employment, education, or training) and other young people. Based on a 'learning by doing' approach, the trainings take place in eco-hubs – a natural environment for experiential learning. Partner organisations increase their capacity to deliver effective programmes specifically designed for NEETs, supporting the development of entrepreneurial, practical, personal, and social skills of participants.

 **Bulgaria**

 **The Republic of North Macedonia**

Good practice

Educational eco-communities - inspiration for eco-activists

Образователните еко-общности-вдъхновение за еко-активисти

During this initiative, 100 young people

Good practice

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

Generation empowers NEET youth

were trained, mainly NEETs, in newly established eco-hubs of four educational eco-communities in Bulgaria, promoting their initiatives and interaction with local communities and authorities. Through practical activities, non-formal and informal training methods, the participants developed essential personal competences, practical skills, and social engagement, e.g., increased self-confidence, teamwork, competences in sustainable practices, improved mental and physical health.

 **Bulgaria**

through targeted mobilisation, skill-based assessment and selection, and tailored mentorship, equipping them with skills to build meaningful careers and foster economic mobility. Generation creates pathways to an inclusive workforce, ensuring resilient, career-ready young professionals.

 **France**  **Ireland**  **Italy**

 **Spain**

 **Good practice**

INTERCEPT (motivating mobilizing supporting neets green Career Pathway)

Connecting young NEETs with job opportunities in the green sector

INTERCEPT empowered NEETs (individuals not in employment, education, or training) aged 25-29 by offering tailored training and paid work placements with green companies, assisting them in re-entering the labour market. Through research and a pilot programme in Italy, Malta, and Lithuania, the project provides with valuable insights to shape future EU policy on youth employment in the green sector.

 **Italy**  **Lithuania**  **Luxembourg**

 **Malta**  **Poland**  **Slovakia**

 **Good practice**

Back on Track - Support for young NEETs in rural areas

Fostering the (re)integration of NEETs in rural areas into education, training, and the labour market by increasing their basic skills, resilience, and digital inclusion.

Back on Track aims to (re)integrate young NEETs (not in employment, education, or training) in rural areas into general and vocational education as well as the labour market. The goal is to improve their basic skills and resilience, while strengthening their digital competences, to enable sustainable employment and personal development.

 **Austria**  **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

 **Bulgaria**  **Czechia**  **Germany**

 **Hungary**  **Romania**  **Serbia**

 **Slovakia**  **Slovenia**

 **Good practice**


Polish Outdoor Learning -

 **Good practice**

PreseNEETi se

POL

A programme specifically targeting women aged 18-35 who are not in employment or engaged in education, apprenticeships, or traineeships, aiming to keep them motivated and equip them with the necessary skills to (re-) enter the labour market.

 Norway  Poland

Empowerment and integration of NEETs into the labour market and development of a comprehensive programme support services for NEETs, including the solutions on systemic level

The project focused on empowerment and social activation of NEETs, contributed to the establishment of support services for NEETs through improved education and supporting social environment. It empowered 30 unemployed and inactive young people to all take a big step towards active inclusion in the society, by getting a job, becoming a volunteer or an active jobseeker. Each of the 30 NEETs was continuously supported by two trained youth mentors.

 Norway  Slovenia

Tools

 Tools

YOUTHShare e-learning platform

The YOUTHShare e-learning platform offers skills on resilient sectors of the Mediterranean economy, specially designed for NEETs.

 Cyprus  Greece  Italy

 Norway  Spain

 Tools

Aim-Learn-Master-Achieve (ALMA) tool - European Commission's active inclusion initiative for integrating disadvantaged young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) through mobility

ALMA (Aim-Learn-Master-Achieve) is an active inclusion initiative to empower the most vulnerable young people (18- to 29-year-olds) who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

 EU level

 Tools

Encouraging preventive approaches to support young people not in employment, education or training: A checklist

This 15-page checklist offers a practical guide considering key questions when designing and implementing prevention projects for young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

 EU level

Publications

 Publications

Eurofound on NEETs

Eurofound's thematic area on NEETs

The website summarizes Eurofound's extensive research on NEETs

 EU level

 Publications

European Commission: Sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Practitioner's toolkit

This toolkit is intended to assist you in designing and implementing your approach to activate people not in employment, education and training (NEETs). The toolkit provides concrete guidance and tools for PES to assess the NEET challenge and set priorities; draft and implement an Action Plan; and develop new tools, measures and competences from scratch.

 EU level

 Publications

Erasmus+ project: Training Materials for NEET Teachers

Work Pack of training materials,

 Publications

Learning from experience - Integrating disadvantaged young people through

methodologies, course plans and class schedules to help deliver Effective Training for NEETs

This comprehensive document consists of training methods, schedules, core modules and effective element combinations in a toolkit style. There are themes and overviews of current training best practice, and specific case studies and examples outlining effective training. This training material pack is a 'ready to go' template for NEET teachers and training organisations. This template is made up of teaching materials which are broken down into individual modules to be completed in a 5-day course.

 **EU level**

mobility schemes

2022 report from the European Commission on trans-European mobility for NEETs

Mobility programmes have shown to enhance learners' skills, autonomy, confidence, and open-mindedness. They also help learners define their future careers and life choices, with participants experiencing shorter transitions from education to employment.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

NEETs in European rural areas

Individual features, support systems and policy measures

This publication focuses on the topics of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in a rural setting, this edition brings together a number of articles dealing with this complex social challenge. Next to the economic dimension of the NEET issue, the authors investigate regional and partly bottom-up approaches involving local actors and their target populations.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) 2024 report

Highlighting key EU labour market trends including recent developments including the issue of NEETs

The European Commission's 2024 Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) report provides a complete picture on EU labour market trends over the last year. Focusing on key topics such as boosting employment, social inclusion, competitiveness and economic growth, the report also sheds light on the topic of NEETs and early leaving from VET.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan

Commission proposes EU headline

 **Publications**

Mapping of interventions targeting 25-29 old NEETs

Synthesis report in the framework of the

targets to be reached by 2030

In the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the Commission proposes three EU headline targets to be achieved by the end of 2030 in the areas of employment, skills, and social protection.

 **EU level**

project “Lost Millennials - transnational research network”

This synthesis report provides an overview of interventions targeting young people aged 25 to 29 who are neither in employment, education, or training (NEET).

 **Bulgaria**  **Czechia**  **Greece**

 **Hungary**  **Malta**  **Poland**

 **Romania**  **Slovakia**  **Spain**

 **Publications**

European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan

Commission proposes EU headline targets to be reached by 2030

In the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the Commission proposes three EU headline targets to be achieved by the end of 2030 in the areas of employment, skills, and social protection.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

In-depth overview of the EU cohesion funds' investments in skills in the context of the European Year of Skills

European Commission diving into how the EU's cohesion funds invest in skills development

This European Commission report reveals how the EU's cohesion funds, namely the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as well as the Just Transition Fund (JTF) are investing in skills development. This overview report breaks down the share of planned funding for education, training, and skills, across relevant investment priorities, programmes, and Member States.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

How digital inclusion increases opportunities for young people

The case of NEETs from Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey

This study explores the challenges

 **Publications**

In what way a ‘Guarantee for youth’?

Critical assessment of whether EU labour market policies leave NEETs entrapped

In the aftermath of the Great Recession

faced by young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) in rural areas of Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey. It examines the relationship between digital skills, digital inclusion, and virtual mobility, and how these factors impact the lives of rural NEETs.

 **Bulgaria**  **Romania**  **Türkiye**

of 2009 and its negative effects on youth unemployment, the European Union developed and put in place the European Youth Guarantee. This study employs a Geographical Political Economy approach to analyse the Youth Guarantees underpinnings and conditions which have an impact on its application on a regional level.

 **Italy**  **Spain**

 Publications

A conceptual framework for researching the risks to early leaving

Overview of different theoretical concepts underpinning research on ESL

Early School Leaving (ESL) remains a significant concern in Europe, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, society, and the economy. A conceptual framework has been developed to research the risks associated with ESL, combining ecological systems theory and the concept of educational "binds" of poverty.

 **Spain**  **United Kingdom**

 Publications

A multi-stakeholder analysis of the risks to early school leaving

Comparing young peoples' and educators' perspectives on five categories of risk

This study reveals the different perspectives of young people and educators on the key risk factors for early school leaving (ESL). While educators tend to focus on structural issues and personal challenges, young people emphasise the importance of social relationships and school environment.

 **United Kingdom**

 Publications

Education at a Glance 2024

OECDs overview report of the state of education around the world

The report reveals that while educational attainment and labour market outcomes have improved since 2016 for NEETs, this progress does not necessarily translate to better learning outcomes.

International

 Publications

Determinants of Regional Youth Employment

Report on employment potential for young people through alternative sectors

This transnational report relates to the Cowork4YOUTH project which aims to enhance knowledge on youth employment policies in less developed regions of the European Union. The project's key findings reveal that youth employment trends have fluctuated due

to the Great Recession and COVID-19 pandemic.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

Conceiving of and politically responding to NEETs in Europe

Scoping review

The article discusses the concept of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Europe, focusing on how they are defined, the factors that contribute to being NEET, and policy responses to address this policy issue.

 **Germany**  **Romania**

 **Publications**

Interventions targeting young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) for increased likelihood of return to school or employment

A systematic review

The review aimed to assess the effectiveness of interventions on primary outcomes such as participation in education and employment, and training status, as well as secondary outcomes including changes in financial stability, well-being, and social functioning.

 **Norway**

 **Publications**

The profile of NEETs teachers in Greece

From European policies and practices to empirical findings

This Cedefop working paper provides fresh insights into the effectiveness of VET in addressing the complex challenges faced by NEETs and their teachers.

 **Greece**

 **Publications**

The Union of Skills

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

The European Commission's communication on "The Union of Skills" emphasises the critical role of human capital in ensuring the EU's prosperity, economic resilience, and competitiveness.

 **EU level**

 **Publications**

 **Publications**

The role of NGOs in up- and reskilling

Exploring ESF+ supported initiatives in Austria, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain

This report explores the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in up- and reskilling, particularly in vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning for socially disadvantaged groups across Austria, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain.

 EU level

Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2022-2024)

European Commission's report

The report describes the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) focused on engaging, connecting, and empowering young people by promoting their participation in democratic life and supporting their social and civic engagement.

 EU level

 Publications

Effective practices for literacy teaching

Analytical report from the European expert network on economics of education (EENEE)

The report highlights the significant impact of COVID-19 on literacy levels in Europe, particularly among disadvantaged students. It emphasises the importance of early language development, family literacy activities, and high-quality early childhood education.

 EU level

 Publications

The situation of young people in the EU

Insights from the 2024 EU youth report

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by young people in the European Union. It covers key areas such as demographics, political participation, employment, education, social inclusion, health, and environmental activism.

 EU level

 Publications

Partnerships and collaborations for success

Europe impact report 2024-2025 from Generation

The report highlights significant achievements in transforming education to employment systems, with over 5,100 graduates trained and placed in high-demand sectors such as healthcare, tech, and the green

economy.

 **EU level**

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