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ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
THE KEY TO SUCCESS

[2019-1-DK01-KA204-060180]

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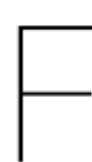
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## Executive Summary

The “*Entrepreneurship is the Key to Success*” (EKS) project aims to develop relevant and high-quality skills and support young adults in acquiring entrepreneurial competencies to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set with a special focus on acquiring skills needed for future entrepreneurs. The final product of the project will be a software game that can reproduce virtual, plausible, or hypothetical situations in which players can use and improve their entrepreneurial skills. The game’s environment will ensure that the player does not feel pressured or judged but will rather feel free to act and put into practice his / her abilities.

The main purpose of this report is to provide a collective picture of NEETs’ status in each of the participating countries by combining the information as it was provided by each partner in each “National Report”. Moreover, in order to standardise the presentation of the information collected, a uniform template was prepared for the national reports and that it was adhered to. The information pertaining to each partner country for each sub-section of the template was presented accordingly following the standardised format. It should be noted that the information presented in each country section has been taken from the national reports prepared by the project partners.

For the purposes of each national report, each responsible project partner was asked to conduct both desk-based research and field-based research based on a common report structure and questionnaire guide that were developed by CSI. The desk-based research involved reviews of national reports, national and international research reports, policy documents, and official statistical information, while field-based research involved the collection and analysis of data collected through online surveys completed by youth not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) in each of the partner countries. The purpose of the questionnaires was to collect information and gain knowledge and awareness on the existing situation and understand the needs and challenges faced by the target group. The questionnaires were structured and included both close-ended and open-ended questions. The questions focused on identifying possible gaps in skills, training needs, challenges, and support required by NEETs to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and advance their employability.

After the data was collected, it was analysed by each partner organisation through the use of demographic statistics for the close-ended items of the questionnaires and through content analysis for the open-ended items.

In Bulgaria, the Know and Can Association has collected 30 online questionnaires. Through the data analysis conducted and according to the latest available data from 2018, Bulgaria has scored above the EU average and is among the top three countries with the highest proportion of NEETs in the EU. The record-high employment and record-low unemployment rates, in combination with active policies to identify and activate young people, have led to some positive results in the past years. Nevertheless, data has shown that more needs to be done to ensure the sustainable inclusion of young people in the labour market and in the society in general. The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is one of the main EU financial resources that support NEETs and provides funds to ensure that young people receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeships or traineeships. More than 52.6 thousand young Bulgarian people aged 15-29 were involved under YEI with a total expenditure for more than 150 million leva until the end of 2018. The goals of the Human Resources Development Operational Program 2023 for Roma aged 15-29 have already been surpassed, meaning that labour market has been implemented successful policies and measures. However, in-depth analysis shows that the threshold of inclusion of Roma minorities was set too low. In terms of overall completion, the two target groups that registered the lowest performance are NEETs aged 15-24 (35.2%) and NEETs of Roma origin aged 25-29 (31.6%).

The second part of the project's research analyses the results from the conducted online questionnaire that assess the skills of NEETs in Bulgaria. Most of the respondents were representatives of 30-34 age group and 2/3 were women (20). Two of the participants have identified themselves as belonging to ethnic groups: 1 Roma and 1 Turkish. More than half of the participants possess tertiary education and consider the five skills (complex problem solving, critical thinking, coordination with other, people management and creativity) as quite important for today's entrepreneurship world. Almost 30% of the young people reported that they face economic obstacles in their daily lives. The main difficulties that young people face when searching for jobs are the lack of working experience, difficulties in finding a job that corresponds to their education, discrimination based on gender, age, low salary as well as geographical and social obstacles. 80% of participants expressed interest in entrepreneurship which

corresponds to 24 out of 30 respondents. The respondents considered communication, teamwork, creativity, problem solving, taking new initiatives and organizational skills as the most predominant characteristics which will contribute to their development as entrepreneurs.

In Cyprus, the Center for Social Innovation collected 39 online questionnaires from young NEETs. Through the data analysis conducted, Cyprus in 2018, as evidenced by the literature review, was ranked 9th out of the 28 member states of Europe in the proportion of young people not in education, employment, or training, reaching 17.4%. It is worth noting that Cyprus' labour market is growing positively, with youth unemployment falling significantly. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain unsolved with regard to this phenomenon, as the rates are significantly higher than the EU average. Significant steps have been taken in recent years though, initially with the creation of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment in Cyprus 2014-2017 by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and subsequently with the development and implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the years 2017-2022. The aim of the strategy is to empower young people in Cyprus and to inform them of relevant training opportunities for the development of their skills and integration/reintegration into the labour market. Legislation such as the Protection of Young Persons at Work, No. 48(I)/2001, the Act No 205(I) of 2002 to provide for equal treatment between men and women with regard to employment and vocational training and the Compulsory Education and Free Education Laws of 1993 and 2004 contribute positively for the elimination of this phenomenon.

Based on the responses collected, it has been presented that the prevailing age group of NEETs in Cyprus is 30-35 with a percentage of 33.3%, followed by 15.4% of people aged 26-27 and 28-29. In addition, the survey showed that this phenomenon affects more women (56.4%) than men (43.6%). Interestingly, more than 39 people who have participated in research and are out of education, employment, or training, have completed higher education and hold a degree, something that emphasises the gap between university and labour market. Most noted reason why NEETs cannot find a job is either because most jobs require extra skills (languages / master, etc.), years of experience as a basic selection criterion, and that there is a gap between the tasks and skills required of individuals and the salary that employers offer which is relatively low for the living standards of Cyprus. When asked if they have participated in any training opportunity in the last year, most people said that they haven't (61.5%). It also appeared that many of the people involved in the survey had faced obstacles

such as social, economic, geographical, cultural, and health issues. A small percentage appeared to be people from other European countries living in Cyprus or refugees who face employment problems such as recognition of their degrees / skills and language barrier. An additional goal of the quantitative research conducted was to show the extent to which people outside of education, work and training have developed their entrepreneurial skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, complex problem solving, coordination with others, and people management. It appeared that most people felt that they had sufficiently developed skills and would be interested in becoming entrepreneurs.

In Denmark, BrainLog collected 36 online questionnaires from young NEETs. Through the data analysis conducted, Denmark seems to be tackling the youth unemployment and NEET problem in a serious manner by protecting them with frequent career guidance, vocational schools, and income support. Though, there are plenty of risk factors that lead young people in becoming NEETs (early school dropout, migrant background), the Danish system continues to work on mitigating the factors and reduce the rate of NEETs and unemployment among young people. The rate of unemployment, among the young people, has declined to 5.7% in 2017 being the lowest level recorded since 2008. At the same time, there has been an increase in the rate of NEETs among the age group of 15-24, from 5.8% in 2016 to 7% in 2017. A drastic impact on the increased rate in NEETs was the rate of the school dropout in the same period, 7.2% to 8.8%.

Some of the risk factors that contribute to young people leaving the school in Denmark include socially disadvantaged background, disengagement from school, migrant background, parental income, and educational attainment. Other factors that affect the increase of the NEET rate are flexicurity and migrant background. Flexicurity (easily hired-easily fired) can lead to alienation and works against labour market inclusion for the vulnerable groups who are already on the margins. Regarding the migrant background, a very important fact was deduced from analysing both the obstacles participants face in their daily life and the obstacle that interferes with finding a job. From those who answered that they face an economical problem, 82% of them have a migrant background while the rest are native Danes. When asked to write down the obstacles towards finding a job, all 82% with a higher education stated that they are facing a language barrier while the Danes with the same level of education stated that they face a lack of experience. The youth in Denmark, nonetheless, is well protected by the system through frequent career guidance and income support. For the past years





Denmark had a significant growth in the entrepreneur field, a lot of information being accessible to the young entrepreneurs.

In Greece, Kainotomia collected 31 online questionnaires. Through the data analysis conducted, Greece deals with significant challenges which remain unsolved as the unemployment rates along with the NEET population are significantly higher in comparison with other European countries. An important challenge to be faced is the lack of specific legislation at a national level as well as a holistic and integrated youth policy accommodated to the need of this heterogeneous group (NEETs). In 2018, the highest rates of NEETs were recorded in Italy and Greece, where more than a quarter of all young people aged 20–34 were neither in employment nor in education and training (28.9 % and 26.8 % respectively). The findings of the quantitative (see GPO & KEADIK, 2012 and GPO & KEADIK, 2013) as well of the qualitative research (see KEADIK & KANEP, 2013) in the framework of the «Absents' Barometer», the economic crisis and the increase of youth unemployment rates are the main parameters for the increase of the NEETs in Greece. According to TRADING ECONOMICS forecast Youth Unemployment Rate in Greece, Youth Unemployment Rate increased to 36.10 percent in November from 36 percent in October of 2019 (TRADING ECONOMICS forecast Youth Unemployment Rate in Greece).

As resulted from the conducted questionnaire survey, the common characteristic of Greek NEETs is that in their majority, they are graduated of higher education institutes and hold degrees or even master's degrees. This fact points out the crucial need for connection of the skills and knowledge obtained from universities with the actual labour needs of the Greek field. The age gap of the Greek NEETs mostly ranges between 24 to 34 years old with the majority of the “affected” to be women. Greek NEETs state pessimistic and disappointed by the opportunities offered by the Greek educational system and seem to believe that the educational system in Greece is insufficient, ineffective, fails to equip students with the skills and competencies necessary to enter employment and does not offer guidance on their future professional lives. Further, they consider that there is a malfunction in the connection between the education and training systems and employment. The competitiveness of the labor market, the imbalance between supply and demand along with the previous working experience to be a prerequisite to enter the labor market make it difficult for young people to take the step. An additional major problem is the underpaid salaries, mainly taking into account the many hours of



work required by the private sector but also the general insecurity of payment in case of starting out as freelancers or new entrepreneurs. While the majority of them would be interested in entering the business world by starting their own businesses, they find the risk extremely high, given the problems mentioned above and their insecurity, stemming from the recent financial crisis that has been and continues to exist, to some extent, in the Greek labor market.

In Italy, LABC S.r.l. collected 35 online questionnaires. Through the data analysis conducted, Italy recorded the highest rate for the number of NEETs in Europe with its maximum peak recorded in 2016 (26.2% against 14.3% of the European average). LABC S.r.l. has found many difficulties in obtaining feedback from the NEET population in Italy. Hence, the sample of the survey is mostly composed of individuals engaged in NEETs supporting activities and in the care of adult education. The economic crisis of 2008 has generated a significant increase in unemployment in Italy. Most of the programs available for NEETs provide training, a traineeship period and temporary employment contracts, without an effective long-term integration in the labour market. Data provided by ANPAL in 2018 suggests that 24.1% of young people in Italy are NEETs. Most of NEETs are aged between 25-29 years old, following by those aged 20-24 years old with 38%. The distribution by age shows that more NEETs in Italy are female (52%) in comparison with men (48%). Most of NEETs in Italy have completed their secondary education, or primary education whereas less of NEETs have University degrees. A gap which was identified from the analysis of data is that Italy needs to develop an entrepreneurship mentality which is not limited only to those who are considered privileged. The young NEETs in Italy are in need of increasing their problem solving, creativity and people management skills.

In Poland, CWEP has collected 33 online questionnaires. Through the data analysis conducted, in Poland in 2018, 16.4% of young people (20-34 years old) were neither in employment, education nor training (NEET). According to Eurostat, in Poland, NEETs are generally more often women than men. Factors such as low education or parents who have experienced unemployment increase the probability of a young person being NEETs, for up to 17%. A gap identified with the development of initiatives and entrepreneurship competences among the Polish youth is that students at Polish schools have generally limited autonomy at school, hence the gap between the interests and life plans of students and most of the subjects they are taught in schools. However, there are many good

practices and programmes that support young people and those who want to find employment, such as the "Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)", which significantly improves young people's opportunities in the labour market, and the "Good start! - NEET youth activation programme", which improves the employability of young people up to 29 years old.

Most of the participants involved in the questionnaire research were aged 30-34 (30%) and over 35 (37%). 61% were women and 39% were men. Moreover, 82% of them have completed tertiary education (37% Bachelor's degree, 63% Master's degree) and 18% have completed secondary education. The participants admitted that the main obstacles they generally face are economic (38%), cultural (18%), social (18%) and education (17%). The main obstacles they face in finding employment are low payment job opportunities (46%), transportation issues (30%), lack of experience / education level (18%) and inaccessible labour market. The majority of participants (79%) have participated in trainings during the last year, which were mainly IT, financial, language and business-related courses. In one of the last questions, participants were asked to rate their skills - critical thinking, creativity, complex problem solving, people management and cooperation with others (from 0 = lacking the skill to 4 = meaning that the skill has been mastered). Most of the participants admitted that they have very well or well developed these skills and want to continue developing them because they are useful in today's entrepreneurial world.

In Portugal, E&D Knowledge Consulting collected 27 online questionnaires. Through the data analysis conducted, it has been shown that Portugal has a significant number of NEETs – young people, 15 to 29 years old, not in employment, education, or training. In line with the common European Union strategies, Portuguese strategy to tackle the problem covers support for NEETs education and training and programs to foster internships, employment, and business creation among NEETs. Entrepreneurship is indeed one of the career directions recommended and supported by the Portuguese labour market organizations trying to decrease NEETs levels. Moreover, educational, and social sector – especially VET organizations, NGOs, and academia, are sources of relevant educational and social innovation projects to support employability of NEETs and other vulnerable groups, i.e., low-skilled adults. Among others, initiatives in form of non-formal and informal education aiming at development of labour-market-relevant soft skills, were defined as of high relevance due to a serious gap in the formal training and education. Moreover, specific gamification tools have been tested in Portugal to support development of market relevant skills, showing that application of gamification

in young adults training and education significantly improves the users' motivation, engagement and learning autonomy (Silva et al. 2018). New education and training methodologies incorporating ICT solutions and distant learning are highly relevant for inclusion of NEETs into the labour market. It is not only for boosting their motivation, engagement and learning processes, but also due to existence of geographical obstacles to accessing labour market and quality learning opportunities encountered by Portuguese young adults.

Conducted in the scope of the study survey-based research suggests that majority of young adults in Portugal encounters obstacles to inclusion into the labour market, and that geographical barriers pose a highly relevant challenge faced by Portuguese young adults. Those are in most cases related with the lack of employment opportunities near their residence zone or mismatch of opportunities in their area with their professional profile. Moreover, the recognition for importance of entrepreneurial skills and characteristics is high. Especially creativity and persistence have been recognized as of key relevance among the survey respondents. Despite commonly having high perception of their selected entrepreneurial competencies, the majority of respondents have expressed a strong interest in developing their entrepreneurship-oriented soft skills, as for instance complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management and coordination with others. It suggested a high relevance and potential of new solutions in those areas not covered by existing educational offer, as well as the relevance recognition not only on the demand, but also on the supply side of the labour market. The obstacles faced by Portuguese young adults for effective integration into the labour market and the opportunities related with entrepreneurship as a way to avoid the group exclusion from it suggest that the offer of entrepreneurial education should be improved. Positive results of application of ICT-based gamification for developing market-oriented skills of Portuguese young adults suggest that it is a relevant methodology to improve chances of NEETs for inclusion into the labour market independently from their place of residence. Application of gamification can additionally improve the motivation, engagement, concentration, and attitude toward learning outcomes increasing chances for effectively preparing the target group to facing challenges of entrepreneurship, as well as realizing their entrepreneurial intension.

In Spain, Instalofi Levante SL collected 30 online questionnaires. Through the data analysis conducted, there is a 20.2% of NEETS's in Spain. Among this percentage, the majority is searching for a job and

just 8.2% is completely inactive. The current lack of opportunities in Spain is further evident through the fact that youngsters spend long periods of time without finding a job (28.2% of youngsters spend more than 12 months searching for a job) which leads to the creation of precarious job conditions as 98% of youngsters would accept any job regardless of the salary or location. The rate of school dropout in Spain in 2018 was 18%, which impacts the percentage of NEETs since there is a correlation between the level of education and the probability of finding a job. In Spain, 39.2% of youngsters whose education is equivalent to, maximum, the first stage of secondary education, have stopped receiving training and are unemployed or inactive. The lack of an entrepreneurial culture in Spain is also an issue as it seen from the data which places Spain 44<sup>th</sup> out of 54 countries in respect of entrepreneurial mentality and there are less than 10% of entrepreneurs in the whole country. According to the analysed data, NEETs usually face different obstacles. Most NEETs are socially excluded: 43.2% are precariously integrated, 22.9% are moderately excluded and 27.6% are severely excluded, and 20.2% of them are immigrants.

Although the Government has tried to implement practices to improve the situation of the labour market for youngsters with for example the European Youth Guarantee, the Programme for the promotion of employment with tax reductions to companies and a new programme to foster junior employment and motivation, the results have not been positive nor conclusive and more can be done if more efforts are concentrated in this cause. To the questionnaire question concerning what obstacles young NEETs face in finding employment, the answer that was mostly repeated was the lack of experience and the lack of opportunities. Participants answered that in many jobs they ask for minimum 2 years of experience and those who experience economic difficulties cannot accept trainee contracts with no remuneration. It is clear then, that Spain needs more innovative projects to foster the access to employment and entrepreneurship among NEETs.

Overall, the main conclusion that can be drawn based on the national reports completed by each partner country and the information provided and the data collected, is that the situation varies in each of the partner countries based on various factors such as economic, political, legislative, and social that affect NEETs. Even though in some countries the situation seems to be a bit more positive than in others, a common theme that emerged is that there is still a gap to bridge in terms of available support and schemes to enhance the employability of NEETs in each context. Another important

common finding was that better policy frameworks and holistic initiatives need to be applied, explicitly for this target group, in order to advance the skills needed by the entrepreneurial sector and for their effective integration into the labour market. Hence, the EKS project contributes directly to that by developing an online game as an educational tool for the personal and professional development of disadvantaged young people in all the participating countries.

## Introduction

The study discusses the current situation of young adults not in employment, in education nor in training (NEETs) in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain, as well as the measures in place to support their integration into the labour market or the gaps that exist in each context. The report is developed under the Erasmus+ Project – *“EKS - Entrepreneurships is the Key to Success”* which combines both a desk-based research and the results collected from a questionnaire research. Also, the report presents existing good practices in each national context that may prove crucial in conceptualizing new innovative solutions for creating an entrepreneurial mindset among disadvantaged youth.

The study has been developed in scope of EKS project which aims at building entrepreneurial competencies of young Europeans. The project will embed the entrepreneurial education in the framework of an online game in which young adults will develop entrepreneurship-oriented skills: complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management and coordination with others. The presented results are a part of a broader research across 8 European countries. The overall research will help the partnership to better understand NEETs’ environment and the challenges they face in finding employment across different European countries/regions. Its conclusions will allow the involved in the project partners to develop a solution responsive to the realistic needs of European NEETs, highlight the shortcoming in their integration system and the gaps in their access to quality upskilling opportunities in the scope of entrepreneurship education. The conclusions of this research will be used to find out the specific aspects of the skills that the game should focus on, at what level should the basic knowledge be established and how detailed should the scenarios of the game be and how advanced should the pieces of theoretical information provided be. Gamification can be a relevant methodology to support of development the required skills for entrepreneurship. Especially with its proven positive impact on motivation and



engagement it can play especially relevant role in education of the most vulnerable NEETs group – the long-term unemployed (Silva et al. 2018).

Resulting, the State-of-the-Art Analysis report is divided into three main sections; the desk-based research, divided into subsections based on the countries involved in the EKS project; the best practices collection, presenting the collected by the partners best practices of the employment of NEETs in each context; and the questionnaire research which included online surveys by each country with the target groups. Then, the general conclusions and recommendations/ gaps/ needs of each context are presented at the end of this report, following by the bibliography list with all the sources gathered by each partner for any further inquiry.

## Methodology

The current desk research includes the collection and analysis of data from existing resources such as literature, reports, policy documents, previous surveys, research studies, as well as existing practices and conditions regarding youth with fewer opportunities' (NEETs) entrepreneurial skills from all partner countries. Moreover, the questionnaire research is a collection of 261 responses in total to the project's online survey aiming to collect the skills that the target group already acquires and examine the extent to which they already have developed the five most prominent skills required for future jobs, according to the Global Challenge Insight Report: complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, management of people and coordination with others (ibid). More specifically, the questions of the questionnaire concerned the profile of the participants, their education and employment status, the gathering of data regarding the participants' participation in training activities, their interest in entrepreneurship and the skills they either possess or lack which are required for future jobs. The questionnaire was provided in an online form as well as translated in each partner's language (the option for an English survey was also provided to the public). The surveys were disseminated through each partner's network and social media channels and the analysis of data was the responsibility of each partner. We have made sure that the questionnaire was anonymous and confidential, and that the data used in the analysis below, concern only the purposes of our project. Lastly, we have made sure as a consortium that no response was discriminated or judged and was approached with professionalism and with the ethical responsibility that the project bears.

## Contribution to the existing literature

With this report, we hope to contribute to the existing literature, establishing a relationship between the causes and consequences that lead young, disadvantaged adults into a lack of employment as well as the gap between the target group's skills and the entrepreneurial skills required. Hence, the research implemented will offer new statistical data on the subject matter, as well as relevant recommendations and conclusions on the topic that could in turn be used for further research, policy making, or the creation of future innovative project to tackle the NEET phenomenon in Europe. Lastly, the general project contributes to the existing literature by providing evidence on the importance of gamification in enhancing the skills of youth and establishing the importance of games as educational tools for adult learning.

## Recruitment of resources

The external desk research technique was used in order to analyze the online research and literature data as well as government published data. Particular emphasis is given to the reliability of sources gathered, as only research published by recognized research institutes or entities were included. To add, research included are recent, published the last 5-year time period (2015-2020). Resources were included regarding the following subject-areas:

1. *Statistics: Statistical data and overviews of NEETs in all partner countries.*
2. *Legislation: Short overview on national legislation with a focus on NEETs and their integration in all partner countries.*
3. *Policy and practice: Review of existing state of policy and relevant schemes in all partner countries.*
4. *Best practices: Short overview of local initiatives and/or programs implemented on the topic in each partner country related to the objectives of our project.*
5. *Identifying NEETs needs: review of the EKS survey's data in all partner countries.*

## Procedure

The resources gathered were analysed and interpreted using the theories and models that were included in the theoretical framework of the desk research. After reviewing and analysing resources and literature, interpretations were made regarding the needs of NEETs and their entrepreneurial skills. Limitations of findings were also explored.



## Content of Responsibility

The information of each country provided below was the responsibility of the assigned partner of each country. Hence, the Center for Social Innovation (CSI) bears no responsibility for the validity of data and content provided. The role of CSI in IO/A1 was coordinating, hence providing the partners with guidelines to have a unified report structure and some provisional points on what kind of information should be included. Then, CSI has collected the national reports and compiled the information in this document for the purpose of providing a state-of-the-art analysis report about the challenges and needs of young NEETs in the partner countries involved in the EKS project. Hence, CSI support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and CSI cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## Desk-based Research

The data and information presented below are derived of the National Reports prepared by the project partners. If specific data are not presented in a section for a specific country, it is due to the fact that such data were not available.

## Bulgaria

### Key findings from the Desk Review

Firstly, the concept of NEETs is defined. Then, with the contribution of the latest data from the National Statistics Institute (NSI) of Bulgaria, LFS and SILC key characteristics and distribution of NEETs follow. Also, the EC assessment of the stations of NEETs in Bulgaria is briefly presented. Legislation, policies, initiatives and/or programs implemented are reviewed. In the last part of the chapter, the quality of resources and identified gaps in the literature are briefly discussed.

### Literature Review: defining NEETs

The concept of NEETs is relatively new, and it is part of joint efforts by Eurostat and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to identify subgroups in the labour market as targets for policy measures



and focus on those most in need of assistance. This measure combines policy focus on the transition from education to the labour market, however, there is not a single universal definition of the term. Elder (2015) distinguishes between “strict” and “broad” definitions of NEET youth, the first one covers only those who meet both requirements (not in education or training, and unemployed), whereas the broad includes only unemployed students. Based on her study, the difference between the two definitions is about 1.4%, which is significant, as those estimates are used for targeting social policies and the allocation of funds. In Europe, the “strict” definition is preferred as it narrows down the group. The ILO data focus on youth unemployment and inactivity between 15-24 years old, while Eurostat usually covers the 15-29, and more recently the 15-34 age group is widely used (IME, 2019). In Bulgaria, the NEETs group is young people aged 15-24, however, during the last years, the age group was modified to include people up to 34 years old. This is because according to the National Employment Agency on the age distribution of registered unemployed, those between the age of 30 and 34 make up a significant proportion of all NEETs at national level (NSI, 2019).

### Mapping NEETs: LFS and SILC

In 2018, there were about 15 million young people aged 20-34 who were neither in employment nor in education and training in Europe (Eurostat, 2019). Over the past ten years, the share of NEETs in the EU has reached a record number following the financial and economic crises, after that the rate has decreased and was back to its 2008 level in 2018, at 16.5 %. During the same period, there was an increase in the proportion of young people who were in some form of education and training and those who combined both. This could be explained by the growing desire of young people to obtain higher levels of qualification as a result of the increased competition on the labour market as well as could mean a lack of full-time employment during a period of economic decline. Among the age group 20-34, the highest NEETs rate was observed for those aged 30-34, at 17.1% in 2018.

The latest data available for 2018 shows that there was a wide variation in NEET rates across the EU Member States. For people aged 20-34, the highest rates were recorded in 10 Member States above the EU average of 16.5%. Bulgaria (20.9%) was among the top three countries that recorded the highest proportion of NEETs, where Italy (28.9%) and Greece (26.8%) were leading. On the other side, the lowest rates were below 10. 0% in Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Sweden.

In general, in 2018 young women were more likely to be NEETs (8.7% higher) compared to the young men. A wide gender gap existed in Bulgaria, where the difference between the sexes was

within the range 10-11% and even wider gaps were registered in Central Europe. It also became evident that from the three groups of young women (aged 20-24; aged 25-29; aged 30-34) the older women become, the more likely they fall under the EET group. Another identified gender difference is that a higher proportion of young female NEETs were economically inactive, while young male NEETs were predominantly unemployed. In Bulgaria, the number of economically inactive (not actively seeking work) young female NEETs is four times bigger than their male counterparts.

The level of education is another factor that determines the NEET rate among young people in the EU. In 2018, young people with less than primary, primary or lower secondary education were almost four times more likely to become NEETs than those with higher levels of educational attainment. A high rate of NEETs with a low level of education was observed in Bulgaria (58.4%), while the figures for half of the EU Member States ranged 20- 40% in 2018. More concretely, NEET rates among people with a low level of education are high, whereas a high level of education is associated with low NEET rates.

The degree of urbanization is an indicator that shows the pattern of lowest NEET rates in cities and highest in rural areas. Among the biggest differences in rates between cities and rural areas were found in Bulgaria, where the gap was 21.0%.

As the data have shown, inactivity among young people is rarely a single factor issue, it is driven by a variety of personal and socio-economic characteristics. It is evident in the case of Bulgaria, where the employment rate is high and the unemployment rate is record-low, the labour market and educational institutions have been struggling to provide inclusion opportunities for a significant share of young people.

Out of the six regions in Bulgaria, the SILC estimation classifies the South-Central Region as the region with the highest NEET rate of 31.8% in the 15-34 age group. Then, follows the Southeastern region with 27.9%. These two are the regions with the highest shares of ethnic minorities (Roma and Turkish). About one out of ten Bulgarians is in the group which neither studies, nor works, while for the Turkish ethnicity is one out of three and respectively two out of three people for the Roma ethnic group. This finding from SILC survey has a policy implication and can be seen in the share of NEETs in both poverty-stricken and wealthier households. More than half of the people in the 15-34 age group who live below or near the poverty threshold are estimated to be NEETs, and nearly half of those who live in severe material deprivation. It seems that the financially challenged young people are more likely to experience difficulties in finding work and education opportunities, which raises

the probability of living in poverty in the future. The level of higher education also significantly reduces the probability of having a NEET status. In particular, less than one out of ten young people with tertiary education are NEETs. Similarly, less populated areas with tighter markets and fewer opportunities for education have a larger share of NEETs, more than one-third of the population under review in rural areas.

### Review of current policies related to NEETs

At present, there is not a single dedicated system for registering, tracking and mapping NEETs in Bulgaria. Information on the number and share of NEETs is provided via regular official surveys conducted by NSI which constitutes LFS (Labour Force Survey), is the main source, as it tracks the number of NEETs as part of the EU2020 Strategy. The achievement of the goals of the European Youth Guarantee is embodied in: initiatives implemented under the Human Resources Development Operational Program; National programs and projects (funded by the state budget) and Measures under the Employment Promotion Act. When the Youth Guarantee Implementation plan was presented in Bulgaria at the end of 2013, the lack of an existing tool to evaluate the labour market outcomes for the main target group (NEETs) created problems. Due to this, the evaluation of different programs and measures effects, including the National Action Plan on Employment is usually conducted through national surveys. According to the latest evaluation of Young Employment Initiative (YEI) positive outcomes are observed among the participants of all four measures (young employment, active, ready for work and employment and education for young people) financed under the YEI with “young employment”, the highest share of 73%, “active” and “ready to work” registered 16 %. More than 52.6 thousand young Bulgarian people aged 15-29 were involved under YEI with a total expenditure for more than 150 million leva until the end of 2018. The goals of Human Resources Development Operational Program 2023 for Roma aged 15-29 have already been surpassed, meaning that labour market has been implemented successfully, however, in-depth analysis shows that inclusion of Roma inclusion was set too low. In terms of overall completion, the two target groups that registered the worst performance are NEETs aged 15-24 (35.2%) and NEETs of Roma origin aged 25-29 (31.6%) in 2017.

The policy measures that target NEETs are coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) and its subsidiary the Employment Agency (EA.) The institution is also responsible for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Employment (NAPE) which

contributes to the monitoring of the EU2020 Strategy and the National Reform Program (2017-2020), the Council Recommendation of 01/07/2017 and the Government Program till 2021.

Services provided by the EA are addressed both to unemployed young people and NEETs who have been identified by the data on school dropouts provided by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and then registered with the Employment Agency. The implementation of labour market policies and their distribution across the country are monitored by the Regional Employment Service Directorates.

**Table 1: Selected National Programs that target NEETs (National Action Plan on Employment for 2019)**

NAME	TARGET GROUP	AGE	2019
			BUDGET
Career Start	Unemployed young people registered	Up to 29 years	BGN 4.2 million
Description	Securing internships in the public sector (central, district and municipal administrations) for 760 young people with tertiary education that have no previous experience in their respective field of specialization		
Activating Inactive	Inactive, unemployed people,	No limits	BGN 3.8
Persons	NEETs, able-bodied people		million
	receiving social benefits		
Description	Individual work with identified inactive or discouraged people		
	Facilitation of general and specialized labour exchanges and motivating people to be active on the labour market		
	Case-managers and psychologists are appointed for unemployed people with “specific” needs		
Employment and			
Education of Long-term	Long-term unemployed	No limits	BGN 4.5 million
Unemployed			million



Description	Young people aged up to 29 years are a priority group,		
	together with recipients of social benefits and unemployed aged 50+		
	Employment in critical response teams		
	This program includes professional qualification courses, as		
	well as opportunities for 12-month subsidized employment in		
	the private or public sectors		
Regional Employment	NEETs, unemployed aged 15-29		BGN 8.8
	and other vulnerable groups	No limits	million
Programs			
Description	Securing 3-6 months of employment across all of the country's 28 districts		

In addition to the aforementioned programs, there are other programs which are not specifically targeted to NEETs, but instead provide opportunities for young people registered at the EA for employment and training. For example, “Assistants for People with Disabilities”, “Melpomena” and “Beautiful Bulgaria” projects. These programs provided employment for 278 unemployed aged 15-29 years in 2018.

Under the 2018 “Activating Inactive People” program, Roma constituted 50.2% of total number of 10 000 people involved. Also, Roma people accounted for only 7% of the 18 000 people involved in education and training programs (8.5% among young Roma). More than half of all activated people had completed a primary or lower education, which shows the negative effect of poor educational achievements and the struggle of the labour offices to provide them with adequate employment opportunities. The review of the current active policies shows that the Roma ethnicity has been recognized and is included in an economic activation program by the Employment Agency.

The institutions that are involved in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee are MES: the National Strategy to Reduce the Share of Early School Leavers (2013-2020) and the National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014-2020); the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Centre: European Youth Programs and Initiatives, the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues,



nationally representative organizations of the employers and employees, NGOs and others. Although the increased minimum wage increased from 240 leva in 2010 to 560 leva in 2019, the total expenditure dedicated to the implementation of the annual National Action Plan on Employment has remained unchanged since 2010 amounting to about 73 million leva.

The participation of young unemployed people in employment and training programs is higher than that of other demographic groups. In 2018, the registered unemployed aged 15-29 accounted for 11.1% of all registered unemployed individuals and they made 15.9% of all unemployed included in some kind of employment and training programs. According to the study of the Institute for Market Economics (IME), 16.7% of all expenditure under the national employment programs was targeted for the NEET group aged 15-29. The IME conducted six focus groups in places identified as the three regions with the highest concentration of NEETs. Findings of the study showed that the most common reasons for youth economic inactivity were unrealistic wage expectations, lack of jobs suitable for young people (especially in Northern western Bulgaria) and the unwillingness of local experts to recommend services of private labour intermediation agencies, particularly when it concerns employment opportunities in foreign countries.

Based on the review of national programs, it is evident that more needs to be done for making the public services more reachable to potential employers and employees. In 2018, 40.1% of the people that were actively searching for work used the services of labour bureaus or labour office directorates (territorial units of the Directorate General for Employment Services with the Employment agency which main activity is to register the individuals actively looking for a job and connect them with possible employers). The institutions need to reach out to more young people in vulnerable situations in order to provide them with more opportunities to benefit from the various programmes at a place. Still, there is little focus on education and training, only 16.7% of all expenditure under the national programs was targeted at unemployed people aged 15-29.

### Reliability of statistical data on NEETs

As there is no administrative system for registering NEETs at national level, and since the NSI's LFS is not represented at the district level, it is difficult for EA to efficiently deploy its resources. There is also no official data on how seasonal employment affects the overall economic activity

of young people. The representativeness of NSI's LFS data is in line with the general Eurostat requirements, but the sample sizes and their structure are based on a somewhat controversial 2011 census. The overall assessment is quite critical and one of the recommendations is to be carried out a micro-census prior to the next census in 2021, which has gone unheeded by subsequent governments. Bulgaria is among the three countries that rely only on paper questionnaires which could raise concerns about the reliability of the recorded responses, which could be limited by telephone interviews.

## Cyprus

### Statistics

In Europe, statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training, have shown that in 2018, 16.5% of young people (specifically 20-34 years old) in the EU-28 were NEETs ("Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training - Statistics Explained", 2019). More specifically, there were about 15 million young people aged 20-24 who were neither in employment nor in education and training (ibid).

According to Eurostat, in 2018 Cyprus was holding the 9th place in the EU-28 rank, with 17.4% NEETs, above the EU average (ibid). More specifically, the analysis by sex and age has shown that the percentage of young people aged 20-24 not in education, neither in employment or training, in 2018, was 18.4%, whereas 17.1% were NEETs 25-29 years old and 16.8% between young people 30-34 years old (ibid). Between those 20-24 years old, 20.4% were men whereas 16.7% were women. Between those 25-29 years old, 13.5% were men whereas 20.5% were women. Between those 30-34 years old, 11.3% were men whereas 21.9% were women. In conclusion then, the highest rates of NEETs in 2018 in Cyprus were found in young people aged 20-24 and young women were more likely to be neither in employment nor in education and training (with the general proportion being 20% for women and around 15% for men) (ibid). Furthermore, the analysis by activity status has shown that young females in Cyprus are more likely to be economically inactive (not actively seeking work) in comparison with young males in Cyprus who are more likely to be unemployed (ibid). For the former, 12.2% of women are inactive in contrast with 5.4% males and for the latter, 9.1% of males are unemployed in contrast with 7.8% females (ibid). Moreover, the analysis by degree of urbanisation, has indicated that for the case of Cyprus, the highest rates of young people neither in





employment nor in education or training come from towns and suburbs, with 20% rate (ibid). Last but not least, the analysis by educational attainment level has indicated that in Cyprus, those who are NEETs mostly come from a pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education, following by those who completed their tertiary education (ibid), showing hence the recent patterns of transition from education to work and the gap between low skilled and high skilled young adults, who both for different reasons, face obstacles in finding employment.

Furthermore, according to the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, in December 2019, there were 25.285 registered unemployed, a significant reduction since December 2018, when there were 29.800 registered unemployed and 35.771 registered unemployed in December 2017 (Cyprus Ministry of Finance, 2020). The number of registered unemployed refers to persons over 15 years of age who register every month to the District and Local Employment Offices of the Cyprus Department of Labor as unemployed. Self-employed people, part-time job seekers, as well as job seekers in a particular area or employer are excluded from the research (ibid). Moreover, based on the yearly statistics of the school year 2016/2017 by the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus on Education, the number of students in all levels of education has been raised to 188.311, a 3.7% increase in contrast to the year 2015/2016 (ibis). The number of educational institutions has also increased in 2016/2017 as well as the number of educators, to an increase of 1.6% in contrast with the previous years (Cyprus Ministry of Finance, 2019).

Based on the Youth Guarantee country by country, of May 2018, the European Commission and EMCO assessed the situation of NEETs in Cyprus (Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, European Commission, 2018). It is mentioned that overall, *“the labour market situation of young people in Cyprus is improving, with the youth unemployment rate falling notably. However, important challenges still remain, with youth unemployment and NEET rates significantly above the EU average. The inclusive approach to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, including vocational guidance services, should be praised, but deepening coordination will be crucial for its successful implementation. Outreach is still a challenge which requires a comprehensive strategy.”* (ibid, p. 5).

No national statistical survey has been conducted to offer an insight into the NEETs situation in Cyprus, the circumstances in which this phenomenon occurs, the consequences and the different variables that lead to it. The statistical service of the Republic of Cyprus as well as the Ministry of

Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, only offer the number of unemployed or those who are into education, in separate research. Hence, the only comprehensive statistical analysis of the national reality of Cyprus regarding NEETs comes from EU surveys and relevant EU projects on the topic.

## Legislation

This section primarily focuses on legislations and policies regarding NEETs in Cyprus. It is worth to mention that there is no unified legislation in Cyprus concerning NEETs. All the policies on a local level that deal with young people neither in employment nor education and training are designed and implemented in the frame of regulations against poverty and social exclusion and there are different legislations for the educational sector and the market/labour sector.

There is not a National Youth Law in Cyprus and according to the 2007 Council of Europe report (Menschaert et al., 2007) on youth policy in Cyprus, there is no fixed definition of youth in Cyprus. A national Youth Strategy (Οργανισμός Νεολαίας Κύπρου, 2017) is applicable in Cyprus and it consists of the government's plan for empowering young people. It has been firstly introduced in 2017 and covers the period 2017-2022. The scope of the Youth Strategy of Cyprus is to offer opportunities to young people to reach their full potential and be empowered. The most relevant to the topic objectives ("Cyprus - EACEA National Policies Platform - European Commission", 2020) are:

- (A) Education and Training with objective 1 being the assurance of quality education for all young people and objective 2 being the assurance of equal opportunities for education and training for young people.
- (B) Employment and Entrepreneurship with objective 1 being the development, support, and promotion of entrepreneurship among young people and objective 2 being the enhancement of the employability of young people and their integration into the labour market, while ensuring their labour rights.

Based on Article 25 of the Cypriot Constitution, everyone has the right to work. The main statutory instruments are the Termination of Employment Law 1967, the Annual Paid Leave Law 1967 and the Social Insurance Law 1980 and specific statutes concerning the employment relationship are the Protection of Maternity Law 1997, the Equal Treatment at Work and Employment Law 2004 and the Safety and Health at Work Law 1996.

### Protection of Young Persons at Work, No. 48(I)/2001

This Law covers the employment of young persons by any employer. This law covers adolescents defined as any young person aged 15-18, children defined as under 15 years old and young persons defined as people under 18 years of age. The law covers the working hours of adolescents and the protection of employed adolescents.

### Act No 205(I) of 2002 to provide for equal treatment between men and women with regard to employment and vocational training.

This Law seeks to apply the principle of equal treatment between men and women with regard to access to vocational guidance, vocational education and training and their terms and conditions of employment, access to employment and occupations, terms and conditions of employment, including career development, terms and conditions of dismissal, membership and membership of workers 'or employers' organizations.

Based on Article 20 of the Cypriot constitution, every person has the right to receive and every person or institution has the right to give instruction or education (provided that it will be in accordance with the Republic's laws).

### The Primary and Secondary Education (Compulsory Education and Free Education) Laws of 1993 and 2004 (Law 24 (I) / 1993 and Law 220 (I) / 2004).

Compulsory education in Cyprus lasts for ten years and covers pre-primary education until the end of lower secondary education (hence from 4 years and 8 months to 15 years old). Compulsory primary and secondary education in public schools is provided by the state free of charge.

### **Policy and practice: Review of relevant initiatives and/or programs implemented**

Most of the national schemes dealing with NEETs, are initiated by public and private bodies and are enforced by European recommendations and reports.



In Cyprus, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance has implemented for the period of 2014-2017 the National Action Plan for Youth Employment in Cyprus 2014-2017 (2014). It should be noted that the Plan has ended its life cycle. A more recent National Action Plan has not yet been introduced.

The National Action Plan for Youth Employment has analysed the main youth employment challenges in Cyprus (p. 27-28):

- Economic and fiscal policies
- Enterprise development
- Education and training
- Labour market policy

The Goal of the National Action Plan was *“to promote decent work for young women and men of Cyprus with the support of integrated policies and programmes and the implementation of a national youth guarantee”* (p. 34).

For the aforementioned goal to be achieved, the National Action Plan introduced seven policy specific objectives that the Republic of Cyprus had to meet (p. 34-36):

1. Timely intervention for early school leavers and easing the transition from school to work.
2. To reform the design and implementation of labour market policies targeting youth (15-29).
3. To introduce a national youth guarantee offering youth less than 25 years old, education, training and employment opportunities within four months from leaving school or becoming unemployed.
4. To promote entrepreneurship as a career path among young people.
5. To reduce youth labour market detachment through outreach strategies.
6. To enhance the capacity of the Public Employment Service (PES) for the provision of effective youth employment services.

7. To establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to verify the achievement of policy outcomes.

Cyprus presented its Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan at the end of December 2013, though it has not been made available online. A set of Youth Guarantee measures have been mentioned in the National Action Plan for Youth Employment (p. 44-52).

The National Youth Guarantee offers school leavers and newly unemployed youth, aged 15-24, opportunities to enhance their education, training, employment and work experience within the first 4 months of becoming unemployed and/or leave school. The implementation strategy of this scheme includes the following (p. 44):

- i) an integrated service delivery model (from low- to high-intensity services);
- ii) a range of employment services (labour market information, group counselling, individualized assistance, and individual employment planning); and
- iii) a portfolio of measures designed to ease the return to school, acquire the skills demanded by the labour market, gain the work experience prized by employers, get a subsidized job or enter self-employment.

The 2018 Cyprus National Reform Programme (Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development Cyprus, 2018) refers to the ongoing project that has been initiated and supported by the European Social Funds (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) seeking to expand the counselling services for people not in Employment nor Education or Training. It is mentioned that those in benefit of this project, will have the opportunity to reflect on their capabilities and be advised either for their employment and/or their further education and training (p. 39). Moreover, in 2017 the Intermediate Body of the Department of Labour promoted a scheme that provides incentives to hire young unemployed people 25-29 years old. (p. 46).



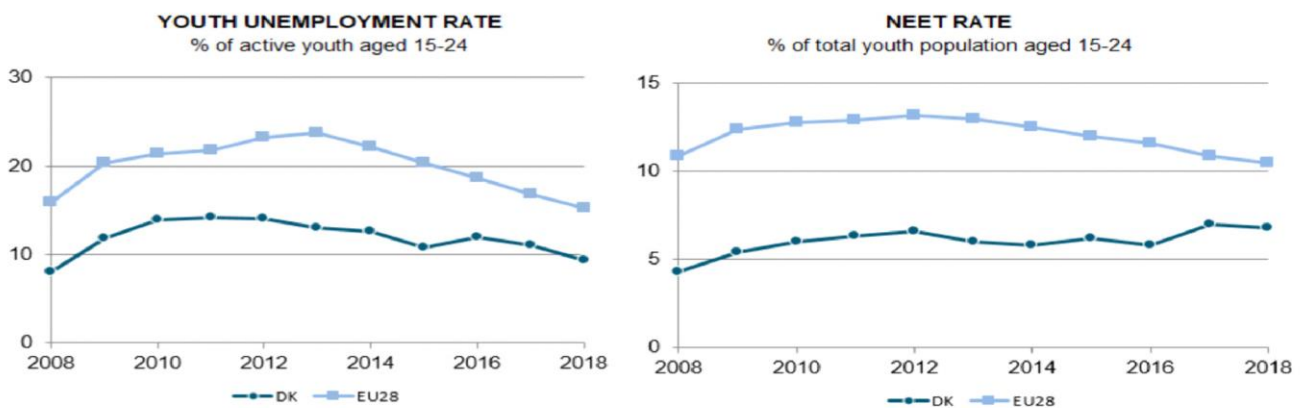
On a local level, apart from the above, you can find some available services/NGOs/associations who work with NEETs and their integration in the labour market and educational sector (both in a formal and informal setting), as part of their agenda:

- Youth Board of Cyprus (ONEK)
- Cyprus Youth Council
- Youth Information Centers (KEPLI)
- Eurodesk Cyprus
- Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus

## Denmark

### Youth Unemployment and NEET

According to the country report of Denmark from 2019, the rate of unemployment, including among the young people, has declined to 5.7% in 2017 being the lowest level recorded since 2008. At the same time, there has been an increase in the rate of NEET among the age group of 15-24, from 5.8% in 2016 to 7% in 2017. It is highly likely that it is due to the increasing rate of people dropping out of education or training from 7.2% to 8.8% in the same period. (Country Report Denmark, 2019)



**Population (16-24 years)**  
Region: All Denmark | Unit: number

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Men</b>									
Active	270 671	279 726	288 903	294 003	298 529	301 492	301 781	306 362	305 669
Not active (NEET)	37 964	36 847	35 591	36 513	36 551	36 961	40 044	37 963	37 397
<b>Women</b>									
Active	264 685	271 649	279 035	284 182	288 655	291 036	291 303	295 349	295 446
Not active (NEET)	30 570	31 601	31 921	32 463	32 574	32 739	35 428	33 700	32 959

Source: Statistics Denmark, 2019/



There is an undeniable link between the education level and employment. According to the data presented in Labour Force Surveys in 2013, 15.5 % of people between the ages of 25 - 29 and only with lower secondary education were unemployed, while medium educated people from the same age group have reported unemployment rate of 8.0%. Highly educated people had a slightly higher rate of unemployment that can be attributed to the crisis.

Some of the risk factors that contribute to young people leaving the school include socially disadvantaged background, disengagement from school, and migrant background. Besides, two important factors that have a great impact on early school-leaving are parental income and educational attainment. The figure below shows the educational attainment of Danes aged 18–25 according to parental income level. (Nordregio Report, 2019)

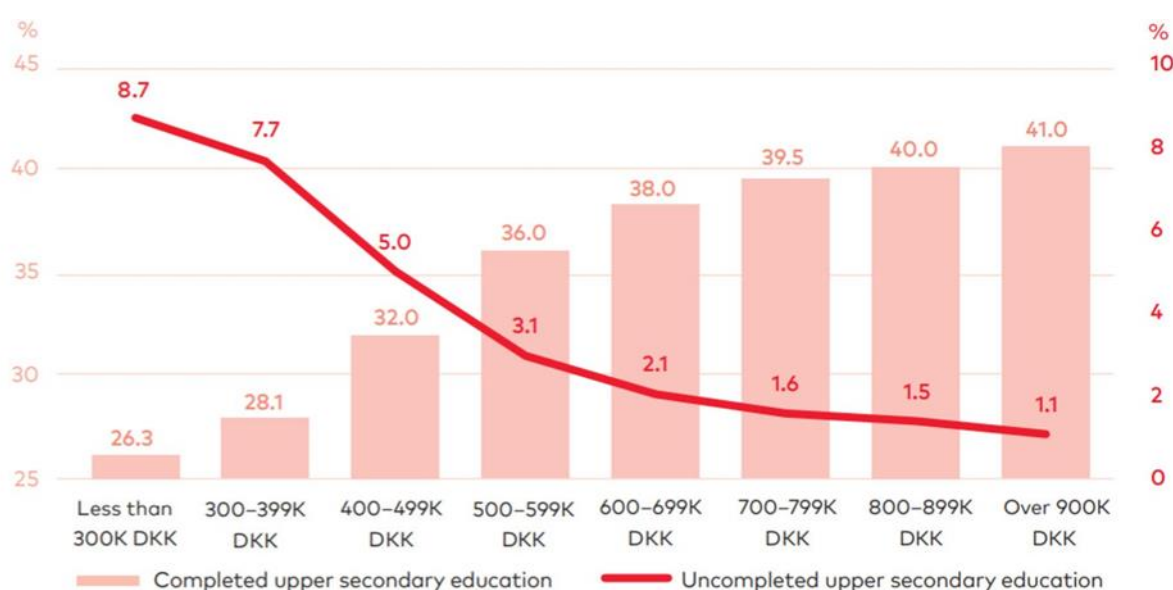


Figure 1. Educational attainment by parental income, Denmark 2017.  
Source: Statistics Denmark [STATUS14]

Two other characteristics of youth unemployment besides the educational level are the flexicurity and the migrant background. Flexicurity means that a young person can be easily hired but at the same time easily fired. This factor can lead to alienation and works against labour market inclusion for the vulnerable groups who are already on the margins. (Nordregio Report, 2019) The final characteristic, migrant background is a difficult situation among young people. Both young men and woman with an immigrant background from non-Western countries face a greatly lower rate of employment than the native Danes. (Country Report Denmark, 2019)

According to the country report, the national 2025 target was to increase the number of participants in vocational education programmes to 30% though, in 2018 the rate reached only 19.4% which is significantly below their objective. Also, the vocational education and training reform has strengthened the entry requirements in 2014 but there was no increase in the participation rate as intended.

Further in 2016, due to the lack of apprenticeship places and through the tripartite agreement, firms devote to establish an additional of 8000-10000 more places by 2025. Until 2019, around 2100 have been established. In 2018 a 2.3 billion DKK has been allocated by the government for the period 2019- 2023 to the investment of the vocational education and training system.

So far, 9% of Danish young people are in apprenticeship, a good percentage in comparison with an average of 4% in other countries. The youth in Denmark is well protected by the system through frequent career guidance and also income support. Approximately one year of work experience brings them an extra 2 years of unemployment benefit, the second-longest entitlement period in the OECD after Iceland. (Country Report Denmark, 2019)

The Danish active labour market policy (ALMP) has a great focus on integrating young people into the labour market and offering them a basic education. ALMP is by far the reason for relatively low levels of youth unemployment and NEET. The most important programs are the ones described below. (Thomas Bredgaard, 2018)

The following text is extracted from Youth employment policies in Denmark, June 2018.

“Ad 1. Reorientation courses: “Uddannelseshjælp” (2014). The program has implemented by local Jobcenter from 2014 to target NEET by reducing social assistance to a level equivalent to education support (SU) and by a new obligation to join ordinary education programs (quid pro quo). The young recipients of “education support” (uddannelsesyndelse) are classified in three groups depending on their prior educational background and personal characteristics: (1) Obviously education-ready (begin on ordinary education as soon as possible), (2) Education-ready (assistance to get ready for ordinary education, e.g. courses in basic reading, writing and math, mentor assistance (3) Activity-ready (participate in activation programs, i.e. “Nytteindsats”, see below). Bredgaard 9

Ad 2. Vocational guidance/Career counselling: “Ungdommens uddannelsesvejledning” (UU-Centers). Municipal centres for the guidance of young people concerning education and employment. The target group is both young people in public schools as well as NEETs (18-24/30 years).

Ad 3. Training with certificates: Vocational apprenticeships in a dual training system (“Lærlinge”)

Ad 4. Training without certificates: Municipal employment programs implemented “inhouse” (municipal guidance and training courses for vulnerable young unemployed) or “in-company” training (work experience programs and enterprise training programs in local workplaces).



Ad 5. Employment incentives, subsidies for employer: Wage subsidies in the public and private sector ("Løntilskud").

Ad 6. Direct job creation: Additional and "socially useful" job in municipal institutions ("Nyttejobs")."

Across Denmark there are 45 municipal Youth Guidance Centres with more than 100 counsellors. Their main target group are the young people, up to the age of 25, who are not involved in education, employment and training (NEET). YGC's obligation is to reach out to NEETs and help them get back to education and training or employment. The NEET's obligation is to co-operate closely with both educational institutions and the municipal job centre. Since the vocational schools have a mandatory work component the school-to-work transition is way quicker for young Danes than it is for young people in other OECD – around 6 months. In addition, through funding, a database is being developed that will ensure a full overview of each person's education and training and will enable a quicker identification of vulnerable youth. (OECD 2013)

### Entrepreneurship Education and Training

According to The Ministry of Higher Education and Science the Danish government views its education system as a central tool to "stimulate the ability of students to innovate, see opportunities and convert ideas into value, in other words to be entrepreneurial" (Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science 2015).

For the past two decades the Entrepreneurship education has been high on the policy agenda of Denmark. Due to the education system that has a traditionally student-cantered, the implementation of entrepreneurship in education was a smooth transition.

Young entrepreneurs have access to information from a large range of actors:

- Student incubators in connection with education institutions (Studentervæksthuse)
- Municipal business service: The municipal business service is the main entrance to the promotion of business. The service covers information and counselling of entrepreneurs and enterprises
- Regional incubators (Væksthus): Offers specialised counselling and feedback
- The website Begingrowth (startvækst) offers information regarding legal regulations when starting a new business
- Innovation Fund Denmark has launched an entrepreneurial guideline with information on funding, application process, etc.

- Innovation Fund Denmark, the Danish Growth Fund, and the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship offer guidance on programmes, funding, and applications.

## Greece

### Statistics

The concept of "NEETs", acronym for young people no Employment, Education, Training (aged 15-29) / young people without work education or training, was developed to better reflect the extent of the economic and educational inactivity of young people, whose number in the European Union today reaches 14 million from the total of 94 million Europeans of the same age group. The phenomenon was mainly shaped as a consequence of the global financial as well as social crisis. The NEETs group, according to Eurofound findings, is a highly heterogeneous population group, with the largest subgroup be comprised by the conventional unemployed (long-term or not), followed by other vulnerable subgroups, such as young people suffering from an illness or having some kind of disability. The group includes also those that are bound by family obligations, such as the care of their dependents, minors or not. Non-vulnerable subgroups include young people who, either by their own decision or by other external factors, are absent from employment, education or training (without however being subject to any other obligation or limitation). Another subgroup consists of young people who are solely seeking employment, education or training opportunities, training that reflects their educational status and the level at which they evaluate their knowledge, skills and skills. Finally, NEETs are also considered as those who are engaged in constructive activities such as arts, music and self-regulated learning. (Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training, Eurostat Statistics Explained)

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Greece dropped to 16.3 percent in December of 2019 from 16.5 in the prior month and compared to 18.5 percent in December of 2018. This was the lowest jobless rate since March of 2011, as the number of unemployed went down by 12.3 thousand from the prior month to 759 thousand while employed decreased by 6.34 thousand to 3.90 million. Considering the same month of 2018, young people in the 15-24 age group continued to be the most affected among the unemployed (34.7 percent vs 39.4 percent), despite the rate has been declining over the years. Across the country's regions, the lowest unemployment rates were registered in Crete (11.3 percent) and Aegean Islands (13.7 percent vs 16.1 percent), while Epirus-Western Macedonia



with a 19.8 percent to have recorded the highest rate. (TRADING ECONOMIC, Greece Unemployment Rate)

In Greece during the crisis, the proportion of these young people increased by 50%, reaching - according to Eurostat - 29.5% in 2014, the highest rate in the EU, with Italy (27.4%) following (Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training, Eurostat Statistics Explained). Our difference, compared to other countries, is that we have the highest percentage of NEETs holding university degrees, which partly explains the migration of skilled young people as a way out. (Who's The Greek Neet? Neets' Profile in Greece: Parameters, Trends and Common Characteristics of a Heterogeneous Group, article from International Journal of Humanities and Social Science)

We also have the highest percentage of NEETs living with their families, which acts as a protective institution against psychological and offending problems and at the same time encourages young people to continue their efforts. We have seen a slight drop in school attendance so far, although the crisis has been exacerbated by rising costs due to the rising cost of education and the increasing effort of more and more young people to earn a living.

A research conducted in the midst of crisis (2013) by the GSEE Educational Policy Development Center and the University of Crete's KADADIK, in collaboration with GPO, gives us a Greek map of the NEETs phenomenon. According to the survey the Greek generation of NEETs is made up of 54% of women and 46% of men. The 41% comes from families with incomes below 1,000 euros, while 11% comes from families with incomes up to 1,500 euros. NEET's parents seem to have a lower educational level, which brings forward the issue of correlation deficits between the educational level – cultural capital and socio-educational inequalities. The highest proportion is found in the southern Aegean islands, Central Greece and the Ionian islands. The survey indicated also that a 66.2% have previously worked mainly in the tertiary sector (service provision), while 26.2% are in long-term unemployment. Among NEETs a 75% have not attended any training program and a 42.9% have left school prematurely for financial reasons. (GPO & KEADIK, 2012 and GPO & KEADIK, 2013)

It is worth mentioning that difference of Greek NEETs compared to other countries, as it also is proven by the questionnaire survey results, is that while the majority of NEETs has a low educational level (a majority has graduated from a lower secondary education) or in most cases, moderate educational level (graduates of higher or secondary education graduates, Greece owns the highest

percentage of NEETs holding higher university degrees or even Master degrees, which partly explains the migration of skilled young people as a way out.

The percentage of those who were looking for work is the exorbitant of 83.3% with the majority of them to be afraid that the lack of social spending will not allow them to get out of this situation. The 96.6% believes that the role of the state is to protect all citizens at no cost while to a large extent, young NEETs were far from being politically involved due to their strong belief that there is no Greek welfare state and social equality. This fact increases the uncertainty and insecurity they feel but also points out the inefficacy and weakness of the Greek State to protect the NEETs and all socially vulnerable groups. The Greek NEET do not usually use public employment services, e.g. OAED. (Searching for absents: The State of things for the Neets (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) in Greece. An overview))

The main concern of the NEETs is to find a job, as the majority of them are self-characterized as unemployed. The job they had before their unemployment status was of semi-permanent, casual and seasonal nature. More specifically, the majority of NEETs has worked mainly in the tertiary sector, but their working experience does not exceed a six-month period. Consequently, the Greek NEET has previous working experience, which is however seasonal and casual for a period of one year or less. The economic crisis is considered the main parameter for the unemployment of those previously employed, as they lost their jobs due to staff cut-offs or left their job for personal reasons (conflict with superiors, lack of satisfaction, delay in payment, bad working conditions). The economic crisis and the working environment constitute the main inhibitors in NEETs quest for employment as well as in the formulation of the appropriate, permanent, and satisfactory working conditions. Most NEETs have health insurance (mainly provided by the healthcare carrier of their parents), however, there is a large percentage of uninsured. (Who's The Greek Neet? Neets' Profile in Greece: Parameters, Trends and Common Characteristics of a Heterogeneous Group, article from International Journal of Humanities and Social Science)

NEETs in Greece do not feel socially excluded because of their family and friends and they seem to be in a better socio-economic status compared to NEETs of other EU member states, as living with their family (and sharing the family income) prevents to some extent social exclusion and extreme poverty. The highest percentage of NEETs in Greece is living with their families, which seem to act as a protective nest against psychological and offending problems and at the same time encourages young people to continue their efforts and their research for employment or training opportunities. (Το φαινόμενο NEETS στην Ελλάδα, Dimitris Giannatos, 2020) Many of them are thinking about

emigrating or immigrating. The majority of the NEETs are not married, very few of them are married, and they do not have children. We have seen a slight drop in school attendance so far, although the crisis is exacerbating this rate, due to the rising cost of education and the increasing effort of more and more young people to earn a living. (Who's The Greek Neet? Neets' Profile in Greece: Parameters, Trends and Common Characteristics of a Heterogeneous Group, article from International Journal of Humanities and Social Science)

Young people at greater risk of being included in the NEET concept and therefore be excluded from employment, education, or training - are identified as those who have a lower level of education (these young people are three times more likely than others according to the aforementioned survey). Furthermore, those coming from immigrant families - second- and third-generation children of immigrants - (around 70%) as well as refugees that, during the last years, are massively arriving in Greece from many different countries as Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq and Eritrea, among others. To continue with, people with a disease or disability are 40% are more likely to become NEET as well as those people living in remoted areas without easy access to goods or services, young families and people facing financial problems and unemployment problems and also those who have experienced traumatic divorce of their parents. (Exploring the diversity of NEETs, Eurofound)

## Legislation

The Greek educational and training system is facing multiple challenges in terms of quality, efficiency and capacity in order to provide or ensure a smooth and successful transition of youth into further education or employment. The biggest of these challenges remains the relevance of vocational education and training to the labour market and by extension to the real demands of the employment sector. For the improvement of this relevance, it is crucial to ensure a wider access, address geographical disparities, improve equity as well as to enhance quality and attractiveness of the educational and training providers of our country. (Youth policy in Greece, Council of Europe international review).

For the enforcement and amelioration of the abovementioned key elements, an even more structured, targeted and unified legal framework needs to be enacted. The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) the operation of which is governed by the Statute of the Legal Entity of Public Law and is supervised by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, is providing - while the person interested satisfying some necessary requirements - a **400 euros individual income support** to

those that are in unemployment for a requisite period of time. The most important requirement is that the person applying for the income support was in employment before and had the amount of Stamps needed in order for his request to be accepted. OAED is also providing a great number of trainings and training courses free of charge, addressed to people who are interested in acquiring new or enriching their already existing skills and knowledge. (Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation)

The objective of OAED is mainly to implement the government policy regarding employment and combating unemployment, the enhancement and facilitation of the country's human resources integration into the labour market, unemployment insurance, the promotion and encouragement of vocational education and training services and their connection with the employment field. Objective of Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation is also the intellectual and social development of the country's human resources and their families, the provision of housing services and assistance as regards the collective organisation and action of the country's human resources with a view to ameliorating their living standards. Furthermore, OAED participates in the implementation of the National Reform Programs. Besides, in accordance with the directives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, OAED may launch and participate in projects and programmes deriving from the National Reform Programme. (Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation).

## Policy and practice: Review of relevant initiatives and/or programs Implemented

### EU level

EU Member States' policies to combat youth unemployment are twofold. On the one hand they mainly aim at facilitating the smooth and rapid transition of young people from education to work and, on the other, to limiting the factors that lead a young person into unemployment and thus, to be in an inactive situation, that is, the NEET state.

With regard to facilitating the transition of young people from education to work at European level, there was an extended policy planning with these policies being based on the following four main areas:



- a) The first is to improve public services by creating, for example, one-stop-shops where many services, related to youth issues, are interconnected, with the main focus being on re-integration. It also includes providing 'youth guarantees', thus, ensuring that every young person in a short term after not graduating from school will be able to find work or attend education / training (in line with the recommendation of the European Council and the Resolution of the Plenum of the European Parliament "initiative to offer opportunities to young people").
- b) The second pillar of European policies focusing on this area, mainly concerns the development of educational and vocational information-counseling services for young people in the process of seeking their career guidance, while
- c) The third pillar includes policies for the implementation of work experience acquisition programs for young people but also for developing their skills through internship programs, which take place in a cooperation with a respective school / educational unit or business and will last from 3 to 6 months.
- d) Lastly, the fourth pillar concerns the 'apprenticeship', which is applied in several European countries (including Greece, Cyprus, Spain etc.), and the promotion of self-employment which means the empowerment and encouragement of youth entrepreneurship either by providing grants to start a new business or by offering training programs in the field that a young person is interested in starting a business.

Aiming at the reinforcement of the youth employability, recommendations to EU Member States and more generally the policy measures taken in recent years are mainly concerned with providing opportunities for upgrading their professional and 'horizontal' skills in the media from vocational - and not only - training programs but also internships in real work environments. However, these measures are more "half-measures" than targeted political interventions that address the long-term, sustainable and realistic problem of NEETs and youth unemployment as well as the wider risks that are threatened by the daily social exclusion. In the wake of the deep socio-economic downturn of recent years, the labor sector has become even more "selective" than in the past. The need to develop active employment policies that will enhance access of young people to the workforce in the labor market coupled with the promotion of new and innovative forms of employment that will re-energize the 'decommissioned' productive capacity, is imperative, both at European level and even at national level. (EC EUROPA YOUTH, Employment and entrepreneurship)

Within the context of the Europe 2020 strategy, a set of integrated guidelines for economic and employment policies was launched in April 2010, calling on EU Member States and social partners to set up ‘schemes to help recent graduates find initial employment or further education and training opportunities, including apprenticeships, and intervene rapidly when young people become unemployed’. In 2012, a specific Youth employment package was launched, which led to an increased focus on providing quality traineeships and apprenticeships for young people and called for the introduction of a ‘Youth guarantee’, designed to ensure that all young people up to the age of 25 should receive a quality job offer, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. In 2013, the ‘Youth employment initiative’ was launched: it was designed to specifically support young people not in education, employment and training in regions where the youth unemployment rate was over 25 %. The new Skills Agenda for Europe, adopted by the Commission on 10 June 2016, launched 10 actions to make the right training, skills and support available to people in the EU. The goals and actions on the Agenda are set out in Communication: A New Skills Agenda for Europe. (Eurostat, Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training)

Apart from these initiatives taken at an EU level and which, Greece has already set in practice, it is imperative that more drastic measures are taken to tackle the NEET phenomenon at a national level. Information and dissemination actions in respect to this socially vulnerable group, and exchange of good practices at a national and European level must be introduced. In any case, since NEETs are characterized by heterogeneity successful interventions appear to be those which take into account the complexity and multiplicity of problems faced by individuals and offer appropriate level of support. OAED holds the reins in that kind of interventions.

### National level

As aforementioned, Manpower Employment Organization is the national supporting mechanism for Greek NEETs, mainly active on three basic pillars: Promotion to employment, unemployment insurance and social protection of maternity and family and vocational education and training.

OAED is the public authority and central structure managing:



-Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) for halting unemployment, promoting employment, and vocational training for both unemployed and employed citizens.

-Passive Labour Market Policies (PLMPs) concerning unemployment insurance measures (regular unemployment benefit) and other social security benefits and allowances (family allowance, maternity allowance etc.).

-ALMPs for initial vocational education combined with work practice/traineeship (Apprenticeship system).

Its main policy axes may be summarized as follows: Employment Promotion through programmes aiming to reduce wage labour costs, non-wage labour costs, by subsidizing social security contributions, facilitating transport from and to work, with special emphasis placed on the population groups most severely affected by unemployment, as well as vulnerable population groups. The Manpower Employment Organization cooperates with social and local bodies within the framework of local employment programmes, in which the local PES (KPA2) play a central role. It also provides counselling services and implements a great number of employment and training programmes. One of these programmes, Vocational Education Schools (EPAS)- Apprenticeship are addressed to young people aged from 16 to 23 who have at least completed the 1<sup>st</sup> grade of the Upper Secondary School (Lykeio). Apprenticeship may be described as an educational and training system combining in-class theoretical and laboratory education with on-the-job training in enterprises of both the private and the public sectors. It aims to help the students acquire professional experience in real work conditions so as to facilitate their subsequent integration into the labour market. Thus, students practice for 4-6 days per week in private and public sector enterprises. Their on-the-job training takes place in the morning, whilst afternoon hours are devoted to theoretical and laboratory classes at the Vocational Education Schools (EPAS). Apprenticeship - Vocational Education Schools (EPAS) are secondary education schools, in which studies last for two school years (4 semesters).

Apart from the Manpower Employment Organization there are plenty of other educational institutions including Lifelong Learning Centers providing counselling and integration services, training and employment opportunities and encouragement to actively participating in the social and economic life of their society. Lifelong learning centers also support young people by helping them to develop and upscale their skills and to improve their competitiveness in the labor market by fully meeting educational needs. Furthermore, other local private and public services, for example the municipality of Larisa, is providing employment opportunities for employment through practices

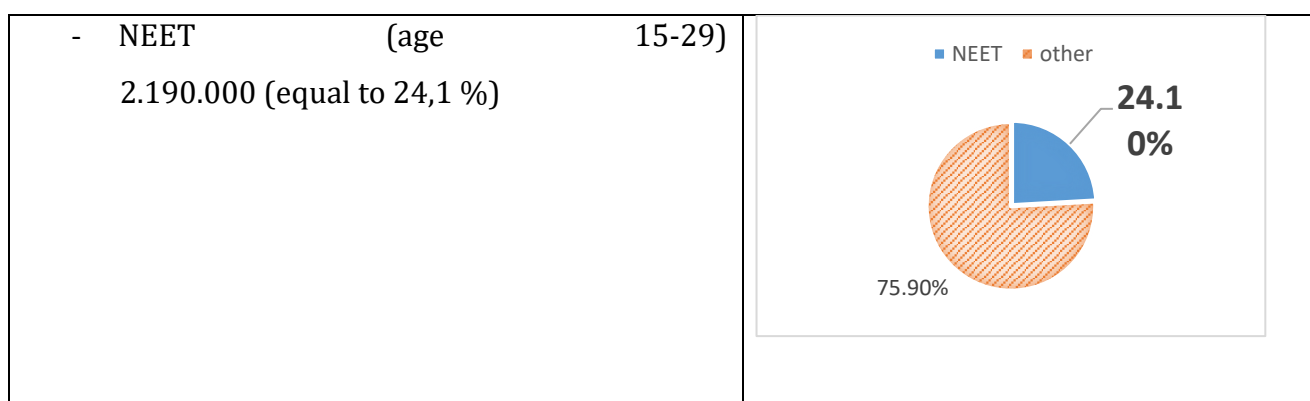


or short-time contacts addressed to young people with great care given to vulnerable and sensitive groups. There is also a great number of non-governmental organizations, NGOs and other EU funded initiatives that are offering the kind of support they are capable of in order to encourage and to activate young people. This support is focused on the provision of psycho-social counselling, group work, legal advice information, liaison with social services, support to deal with personal, social, housing or other problems and needs. Many of the institutional actors are concentrating their efforts to the preparation for employment, providing orientation, basic skills development, placements in vocational education programmes, support of work placements, productive workshops, and social enterprise initiatives.

The Lifelong learning Center KAINOTOMIA, is involved as a partner organization in the project IDEA: “Interactive toolset supporting Development of Educators of Adults’ skills in Boosting Entrepreneurship among NEETs”, which aims to extend and develop competencies of educators of adults and develop skills needed for boosting entrepreneurship among NEETs. Under the framework of this project, an interactive toolset will be developed which will propose customized learning paths and provide adapted training and, in effect, connect young adults and real-life entrepreneurs of small and micro businesses. Moreover, rooting around into the Erasmus project results platform, for projects with similar aims or targets group you can find many of them but the innovative element of EKS Project is that there hasn’t been till now any project aiming into teaching entrepreneurial skills throughout an online interactive game with hidden useful information that will be featured during the decision-making process according to customized learning needs of the player.

## Italy

Italy holds the highest record for the number of NEETs in Europe with a maximum peak recorded in 2016 (26.2% against 14.3% of the European average). Data by ANPAL survey 2018:





<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Distribution by age group<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ &lt;20 years 15 %</li><li>○ 20 &lt;&gt; 24 years 38%</li><li>○ 25 &lt;&gt; 29 years 47%</li></ul></li></ul>	<table><thead><tr><th>Age Group</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>&lt;20 years</td><td>15%</td></tr><tr><td>20 &lt;&gt; 24 years</td><td>38%</td></tr><tr><td>25 &lt;&gt; 29 years</td><td>47%</td></tr></tbody></table>	Age Group	Percentage	<20 years	15%	20 <> 24 years	38%	25 <> 29 years	47%
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Distribution by educational level<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Low 40%</li><li>○ Secondary school degree 46%</li><li>○ University graduation 11%</li></ul></li></ul>	<table><thead><tr><th>Educational Level</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Low</td><td>40%</td></tr><tr><td>Secondary school degree</td><td>46%</td></tr><tr><td>University graduation</td><td>11%</td></tr></tbody></table>	Educational Level	Percentage	Low	40%	Secondary school degree	46%	University graduation	11%
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In 2017, the research by ANPAL (National Agency for Active Labour Policies) “La distanza dal mercato del lavoro e il rapporto con i Servizi Pubblici per l’Impiego” splits out the NEET in the following four categories:

- **People looking for employment**

- 41% of NEETs
- 54,4 % male
- Age over 20 years

- Previous work experiences
- Medium-high education level
- They live with the family of origin
- **People looking for training opportunities**
  - 24,9% of NEETs
  - Age over 20 years
  - Need for training
  - None work experiences
  - Low education level
  - They live with the family of origin
- **Unavailable people**
  - 19,5 % of NEETs
  - Engaged in caring or maternity activities
  - 75 % female ((mostly foreigners)
  - Low education level
  - married or cohabiting people
- **Disengaged people**
  - 14,5 % of NEETs
  - 50 % female
  - Low education level
  - Includes NEETs affected by the Hikikomori phenomenon.

The economic crisis of 2008 generated a significant increase in unemployment. In this scenario, the number of NEETs has increased exponentially. Most of the programs for NEETs provide training, a traineeship period and temporary employment contracts, without an effective insertion in the

productive reality. The evaluation of the quality of the existing programs considers the hours of training provided and the periods of traineeship or work without a verification of the effectiveness of insertion in the world of work at one, three or five years.

The ANPAL (National Agency for Active Labour Policies) research identifies social, economic and family risk factors that can increase the chances of becoming NEET:

- Disability (40%)
- Maternity at a young age (60%)
- Immigration background (70%)
- Low level of education or early school leaving (60%)
- Low level of family income
- Parents who have been unemployed (17%)
- Low level of family education (50%)
- Divorced parents (30%)

Workshop and motivational training organized locally for European projects as “**ComNetNEET**– Community Networking for Integration of Young People in NEET Situation” Project by ActionAid *Lavoro di squadra*, sport and training for NEETs.

*#TipoHack* hackathon for NEETs.

Many institutions offer traditional training on entrepreneurial skills (leadership, problem solving, time management, etc.) to the NEETs.

These courses are free for participants due to European funding.

**Project and institutional support actually in place for the protection of young, disadvantaged adults’ rights:**

GARANZIA GIOVANI by the national program, organized in the following steps

- Hospitality
  - o Registration at the regional desk



- Orientation
  - individual interview
  - profiling and definition of the most suitable route
- Disadvantaged NEET interception
- Training
- Recruitment and training
- Accompaniment to work
- Apprenticeship
- Internships
- Extracurricular internship in geographic mobility
- Civil service
- National civil service in the European Union
- Support for self-entrepreneurship
- Professional mobility within the national territory or in EU countries
- Employment incentive NEET

And

**DUL** (Dote Unica Lavoro) organized in the following steps

- orientation advice
- tutoring
- training

The channels of communication are managed by information desk in the employment point that provides also for online information.

The initiatives by non-governmental are reachable in the companies' website:

Here follows some examples:



<https://www.neetwork.eu/> (*NEETWORK* by Fondazione Cariplo)

<https://www.fondazione scuola.it/laboratori-territoriali-loccupabilita/laboratori-territoriali-piemontesi> (*I Laboratori Territoriali per l'Occupabilità* by Compagnia di San Paolo)

ANPAL (National Agency for Active Labour Policies) provides incentives to companies for hiring young people and for NEETs with the project named “Garanzia giovani”.

The stakeholders on a national level are

- ANPAL (National Agency for Active Labour Policies),
- Employment centres, local administration,
- private foundations (Fondazione Cariplo, Compagnia di San Paolo)

There are initiatives to support entrepreneurship for NEETs (for example *SELFIEmployment* by ANPAL - National Agency for Active Labour Policies) and skills learning courses within the Youth Guarantee project. None of these projects has a specific focus on training entrepreneurial skills through an online game.

In the existing literature, the following topics are not covered:

- Effective comparison with market requirements;
- Simultaneous acquisition of hard and soft skills;
- Education in the effective management of a professional project;
- Acquiring awareness of individual talents and self-esteem.

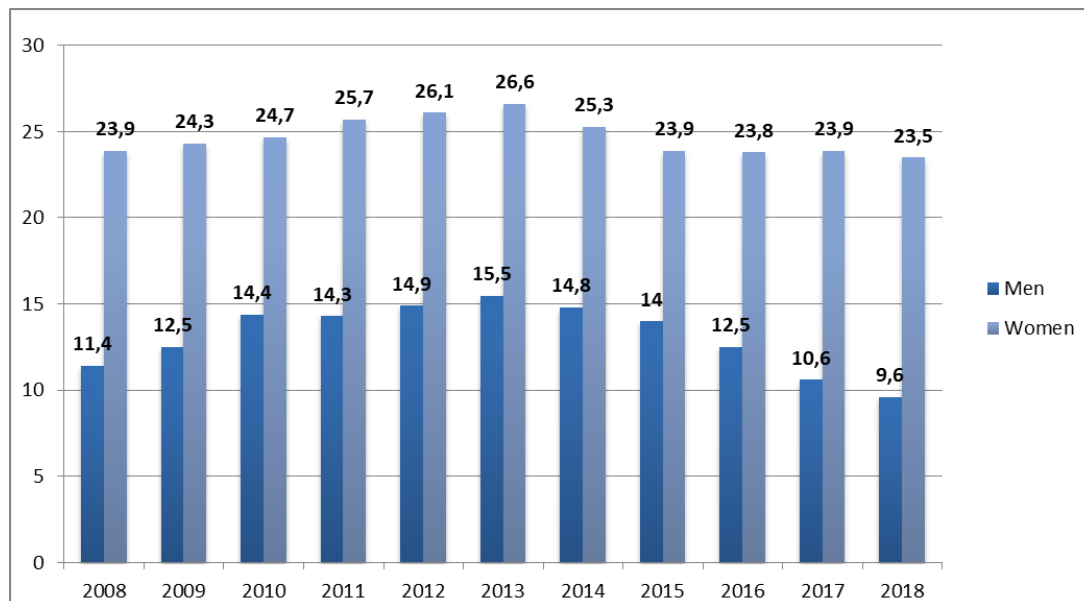
## Poland

According to the definition (Szczęśniak, 2011), a young person from the NEET category is a person aged 15-29 who fulfils three conditions altogether, i.e. is not working (i.e. unemployed or professionally inactive), is not in education (i.e. does not participate in formal stationary education)



or training (i.e. does not participate in extracurricular activities aimed at obtaining, supplementing or improving professional or general skills and qualifications necessary to perform work)

In July 2019 Eurostat (Eurostat, 2019) released a report with full data on NEETs in the European Union. In 2018, 16.5% of young people aged 20-34 were neither in employment nor in education across the EU. In Poland, in 2018 the rate was exactly 16.4%. The graph below presents the situation of NEETs in Poland in the last few years.



Source: Eurostat

The phenomenon of NEETs is nowadays one of the most crucial social issue that demands quick and decisive interventions on a governmental level in most countries and regions of the European Union. This problem concerns the situation of young people who are outside the sphere of employment and education (Domagała-Szymonek, 2019).

The problem with the development of the initiative and entrepreneurship competences of Polish youth is that students at Polish schools have generally limited autonomy at school. Young Poles - unlike their peers in more developed countries - have almost no influence on what they learn and at which level they do so. Therefore, there is a clear gap between the interests and life plans of a student and most of the subjects he or she is taught and learns at school.

According to numerous studies, young people with a low level of education are three times more vulnerable of belonging to the group of NEETs than those with tertiary education and twice as much as those with secondary education. It turns out that the family also has an influence on becoming a NEET. Having parents who have experienced unemployment increases the probability of being a

NEET by up to 17%. Children of people with a low level of education are up to 1.5 times more likely to join the group of inactive young people than those with secondary education, and up to twice as likely to join the group of inactive young people than those with a university degree (Łapińska-Pękała, 2015).

In Poland since 2013 there is Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which was initially open to young NEETs aged 15-24. In autumn 2015, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy extended the coverage to include young people up to 30 years of age. Note that NEET criterion is relaxed for young people registered as unemployed but participating in informal education/training and hence technically not NEET. There is also an entrepreneurship opportunity open to people up to the age of 29 who are unemployed or seeking work and still within 4 years of completing their education. It ensures that in parts of Europe where the challenges are most acute, young people can receive targeted support. Typically, the YEI funds the provision of apprenticeships, traineeships, job placements, further education leading to a qualification.

Persons registered in the poviát labour office may, in addition to defining the assistance profile and preparing an individual action plan, also obtain the status of a person in a special situation on the labour market. As a person who is in a special situation on the labour market, he or she is entitled to priority in the referral for participation in special programmes in accordance with the law. NEETs and the unemployed can find all relevant information about their rights on the <https://zielonalinia.gov.pl/prawa-i-obowiazki-osoby-bezrobotnej-32260>.

Career counselling is a labour market service which is offered by Poviát Labour Offices and Information and Career Planning Centres in the Voivodeship Labour Offices. Career counselling consists in providing assistance by the Labour Office employee related to solving vocational problems of people who come to the Office to receive such help.

Assistance can be provided in the form of individual contact of the Office employee with the person requiring help or over the phone or Internet.

Within the career counselling service, the Office employees carry out also group meetings in the form of workshops with those requiring help.

In addition, there are some social innovation projects in Poland that have similar objectives to EKS project like “Dobry start!!! – Program aktywizacji zawodowej młodzieży NEET”, or „Praca z pasją – program wsparcia młodzieży NEET na rynku pracy”; however, none of these projects has a specific focus on training entrepreneurial skills through an online game.

Although there are many practices and reports tackling entrepreneurship, they don't answer all the questions of an entrepreneurial mind-set in today's world. In the existing literature, the following topics are not covered:

- Education in the effective management of a professional project
- Negative long-term consequences for NEETs
- Determining the factors determining young people's membership of the economically inactive population

The research shows that the Poles undertake entrepreneurial activity resulting from necessity (and not from aspirations or personal ambitions) two times more often than people from the other European countries. Teaching current and future entrepreneurs is one of the most important modern issues of societies. Entrepreneurship education without a doubt is a challenge for the current education system in Poland. (Nowak, 2014).

## Portugal

### NEETs in Portugal and their recognition

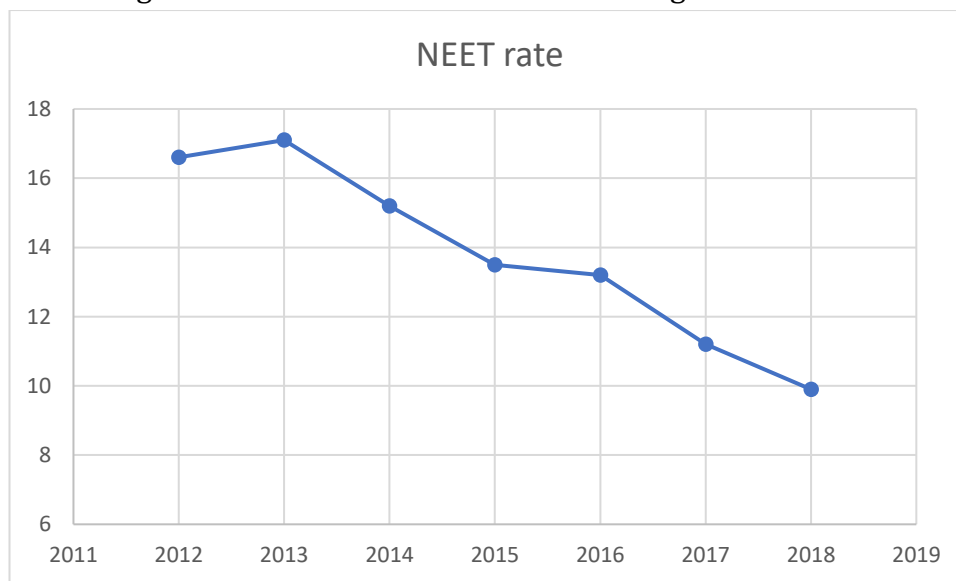
Aligned with the EU definition, the Portuguese definition of NEETs refers to young people, 15 to 29 years old, not in employment, education or training. Portugal has recognized the relevance of NEETs and its impact at an economic and social level. Following the European strategy, during the last years, a strategy to reduce the number of NEETs, has been implemented either by developing schemes to support access to education, either schemes and programmes to support internships, employment and new business creation. The main actor in the implementation of the strategy at a national level is IEFP – Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional (National Institute for Employment and VET). In that scope, it provides (IEFPa, n/a):

- Funding schemes to support creation of new businesses by NEETs,
- Supporting schemes for companies and entrepreneurship,
- Internships,
- Employment services for job seekers, including NEETs and,

- Supporting schemes and training programmes for skills development and access to better employment opportunities.

Aligned with the European Strategy, Portugal implemented specific programmes and strategies to reduce the number of NEETs, promote their employment, training and support to the creation of new businesses. As a result of the program and of the improved economic conditions in Portugal within the last few years, the rate of NEETs dropped from 17.1% in 2013 to 9.9% in 2018 (Eurostat 2019).

Figure 1. Trend in the NEET rate in Portugal 2012-2018



Data Source: Eurostat (2019) \*(data aggregated for the age group 15-34)

Specific Portuguese measures include, among others, the implementation of tools under the European Initiative Youth Guarantee (Programme Garantia Jovem). But the efforts to promote the inclusion of NEETs are also visible in the National funding priorities and domains. Under the domain “Social Inclusion and Employment” (Inclusão Social e Emprego), priorities include: better access to jobs for young adults and vulnerable groups, the promotion of skills development for integration in the job market and the promotion of active inclusion and equal opportunities. Under the domain “Human Capital” (Capital Humano), priorities include: the decrease of school drop-outs, the reinforcement of VET and its connection with the labour market; the reinforcement of education and training quality aiming at increase in employability (Portugal2020, n/a).

Among NEETs, some belong to disadvantaged groups (i.e. ethnic groups). Following the report *Jovens e NEET na Europa: Primeiras Conclusões* (Eurofund, 2017), in Portugal the main risk factors for falling into the NEET category are related with:

- Disabilities
- Immigrant communities
- Low level of education
- Young people living in remote locations
- Young people from low-income families
- Young people with parents with unemployment background

However, currently, in Portugal and after the 2008 economic crisis, the level of education has decreased its significance as the critical employment risk factor, as young people with high education degrees also face employment difficulties. Following the shortage of job offer and a gap between education and the needs of the labour market, young adults with high education degrees also became part of the NEET group (Eurofound, 2017). In that way, the NEET category in Portugal is no longer associated exclusively with low education level, but cover all educational levels, including university graduates.

The difficulty in tracking and supporting NEETs in Portugal is related with the existence of vulnerable groups without employment which are not considered active job seekers. NEET groups not actively engaged in job search, as well as those not willing to collaborate with the IEFP (i.e., due to association of IEFP requirements and procedures as unclear and lacking cultural flexibility) are covered by alternative measures, such as support for inclusion from local development associations. At a local level, the main organizations working with these groups are Local Development Associations that implement a set of activities, through national and/or European funded programmes, to support their inclusion and skills development (Tese, 2018).

### NEETs public support mechanisms

In Portugal, the main official points of access to support for employment, training and entrepreneurship of NEETs are three public entities:





- IEFP, the National Institute for Employment and VET – Both online and face-to-face access platforms.
- Social Security Institute – Online and face-to-face access platforms.
- Instituto Português da Juventude – the Portuguese Institute for Youth.

IEFP, the National Institute for Employment and VET is the main public organization working with unemployed people, including NEETs, regarding their integration into the labour market.

Within the Portuguese social system, in case of involuntary unemployment, young people until 30 years old have a right to unemployment benefits assuming that in the past 24 months they have been employed for at least 12 months (Segurança Social, 2020). Their rights to unemployment benefits correspond to the number of months of Social Security Payments since the last unemployment:

Less than 30 years	Less than 15 months	150 days
	Even or more than 15 and less than 24	210 days
	Equal or more than 24	330 days

The periods are however shorter than in case of 30+ unemployed, increasing urgency in the young adults group to reintegrate into the labour market. Some additional support is offered in case of specific disadvantaged groups. Special 10% increase in unemployment benefits is granted to unemployed single parents and couples where both partners are in situation of involuntary unemployment.

Within the period of unemployment, training and education activities are strongly encouraged. In case of adults without rights to unemployment benefits, 23 or more years old, for engaging in professional education offered by IEFP accredited educational organisations and curricula, participants can obtain 'bolsa de formação' with maximum value of 153,58EUR per month (IEFPb, n/a).

Moreover, in case of training activities of duration longer or even to 3 hours per day, the trainee has the right to food subsidy of 4,77EUR per day. Costs of public transportation related to commute between the place of residence and the place of formation are refundable. In case of lack of access to

public transportation the trainee may request transport subsidy up to the amount of 65,82 EUR per month.

In case of trainees with responsibility for daily care of others, i.e. young parents, additional support up to 219,41EUR may be requested for essential care over the dependant individual during the time of the programme (IEFPb n/a; CINEL 2019)

However, the monthly sum of food and transport supply cannot exceed 326,82EUR.

In terms of NEETs employment, IEFP also promotes programmes to support job opportunities for unemployed people, providing companies with favourable supporting schemes for paid internships and employment of young unemployed people, registered at IEFP (IEFPf, n/a).

Special conditions are also offered within the programme Youth Guarantee - “Garantia Jovem”, financed by the European Union for young NEETs up to 23 years old. Within this especially vulnerable group, the programme aims to support employment, longlife learning, learning and internships with specific focus on preventing early drop out from education and directing youth toward optimal development opportunities allowing their efficient integration into the labour market (Garantia Jovem, 2014).

Within the the Portuguese Youth Guarantee program, for overall NEET category, personalised support to NEETs includes support in completing documentation, access to ICT resources – computers, internet, support in area of job search techniques (CV creation, letters of motivation, preparation for interviews, spontaneous applications). Additionally, the program aims to network people in disadvantage situations with proper supporting organisations or means, i.e. referring immigrants and refugees to the program Português para Todos Programme [Portuguese for All Programme] for free of charge Portuguese learning opportunities, or youth facing poverty to Food Banks etc. Specific opportunities of VET and adult education are also offered within the program to close the gap between the young person education and market needs (Tese 2018).

Among others, a broad portfolio of training offered by the IEFP and accredited training organisations across the country<sup>1</sup> is incorporated into the Youth Guarantee support for NEETs (IEFPc, n/a; IEFPd,

<sup>1</sup> The professional training offer can be accessed at: <https://iefponline.iefp.pt/IEFP/pesquisas/search.do?cat=ofertaFormacao>

n/a). To support participation in the training activities, unemployed receive food and transportation financial supplements, together with additional financial support options as described above.

Among highly technical specific profession-oriented courses, the offer includes course 'Entrepreneurship competencies and techniques of job search' (25 hours) which focuses on introducing entrepreneurship in highly general form as a form of self-employment, next to traditional employment forms. Other, more specifically oriented on entrepreneurship, course offered by the IEFPe covers 8 areas of entrepreneurship education <sup>2</sup>(IEFPe, n/a):

- Investments and rentability (50 hours)
- Administration in organisations (25 hours)
- Organisational communication and structures (50 hours)
- Marketing plan (50 hours)
- Investment projects (25 hours)
- Business plan – creation of SMEs (50 hours)
- ICT management tools – sales area (25 hours)
- Basic principles of economy and accounting (25 hours)

All the encountered within the official channels training programs focus on very technical aspects of entrepreneurship, while no soft skills or mindset related entrepreneurship training is offered for NEETs.

In the field of entrepreneurship, IEFPe also provides the programme “Investe Jovem” aiming to support the creation of new business by unemployed between 18 and 29 years old. It covers 3 types of support (Portal dos Incentivos, 2020a):

- 1/ financial support to initial investment,
- 2/ financial support to employment of the young founders,
- 3/ technical support in improving competencies for building the business project and its implementation.

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<sup>2</sup> The currently available example of the entrepreneurship training program can be accessed at (accessed on 17.01.2020): <https://iefponline.iefp.pt/IEFP/pesquisas/IEFP/pesquisas/detalheOfertasFormacao.do?idFormacao=193900&posAbs=3&nav=true>

The financial support for initial investment takes form of interest free loan covering up to 75% of an investment. The loan is to be paid along the following 54 months. Moreover, up to 4 working positions, including the founder, can be subsidised by the program for up to 6 months without need for repayment. The program requires a continuation of the created posts for the sustainability period of 3 years.

Another entrepreneurship support offered to NEETS in Portugal is PAECE - Programa de Apoio ao Empreendedorismo e à Criação do Próprio Emprego – The program for entrepreneurship support and self-employment. It is a program of financial incentives for companies creation for long-term unemployed (more than 9 months). It however distinguishes young people between 18 and 35 years old without previous working experience as a special group included in the support measures without the need to fulfil the previously mentioned condition. In that scope, the program offers microloans up to 30% of the required investment (Portal dos Incentivos, 2020b).

Within the implementation period of the Youth Guarantee programme, at the European level, the number of NEETs has decreased to 14,2%. In Portugal, the objective of the National Strategy for NEETs Signaling (Estratégia Nacional para a Sinalização de Jovens) aims at decreasing the NEETs level to 30.000 by 2020 (from 67.500) within the cross-organisational efforts coordinated by IEFP (Acegis, 2017).

The list of organisations active in the area of NEETs employability and education covers altogether a broad range of stakeholders:

- IEFP – Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional, IP (National Institute for Employment and VET)
- Instituto da Segurança Social, IP (Social Security Institute)
- Direção-Geral de Educação (Directorate-General for Education)
- Direção-Geral do Ensino Superior (Directorate-General for Higher Education)
- Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional, IP
- Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude, IP
- INA – Direção-Geral da Qualificação dos Trabalhadores em Funções Públicas
- Direção-Geral de Políticas Externas
- AICEP Portugal Global, Agência para o Investimento e Comércio Externo de Portugal, EPE
- Direção-Geral das Autarquias Locais

- CASES – Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social

Beyond employment issues, the Social Security Institute is the umbrella organisation for vulnerable groups support<sup>3</sup>. On a local level, Local Development Associations are the key stakeholders working with disadvantaged groups. In Covilhã, Portugal, Beira Serra, Associação de Desenvolvimento (Local development association) is an example of local organizations working in areas such as inclusion and skills development of NEETs.

### Other initiatives supporting NEETs education and entrepreneurship

In addition to the existing within the social systems IEFP and Seguranca Social measures, under national and/or European programmes, several organizations across the country implement projects to support education and training for skills development among young, disadvantaged groups. Additionally, several VET organisations provide training programmes to support the access to jobs, addressed to low-skilled people.

Most of the implemented in Portugal social innovation projects directly targeted at decreasing NEETs levels has approached early school abandonment prevention, i.e. “EPIS – Empresários pela Inclusão Social” (“Employers for Social Inclusion”); Programa Escolhas (Choices Programme); PIEF – Programa Integrado de Educação e Formação (“The Integrated Program of Education and Training”). However, for the last years, the Portuguese Government has implemented a portfolio of programmes to support entrepreneurship. Some of these programmes are addressed to NEETs. Those programmes are commonly focused on funding schemes to support the creation of new businesses, while the required entrepreneurial skills of young adults remain poorly attended. Among rare more integrated approaches, RPGN – Rede de Perceção e Gestão de Negócios (Perception and Business Management Network) originating from the Youth Guarantee Programme, offers financial support for companies creation, as well as skills development workshops. These workshops tackle topics such as: creativity, business, finances, marketing and legal and tax regulations. The program is available in three Portuguese regions – Norte, Centro and Alentejo (Fundacao da Juventude, 2016).

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<sup>3</sup> A broad data base of specific support forms and specialised channels can be identified on <http://www.seg-social.pt/inicio> or by direct support in the Institute branches.

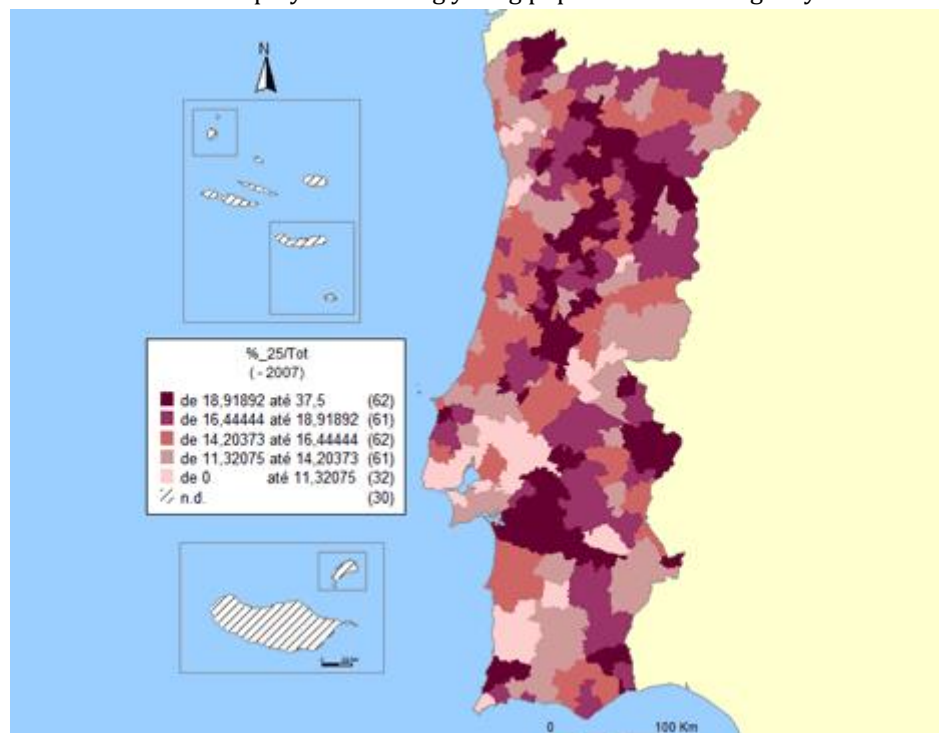
Despite availability of several support measures, governmental programs not fully respond to the real needs of the labour market and NEETs, and often fail to engage individuals into those schemes. In order to compensate the various existing gaps in the implemented governmental programs and official education schemes, other national stakeholders contribute by offering complementary support and actions for decreasing NEETs level in Portugal. Broad scope of educational and social organisations, especially VET organisations, NGOs and academia is especially responsible for educational and social innovation looking at supporting integration of NEETs and other vulnerable groups into the labour market. Those sectors are mainly responsible for development and test of new methodologies for support of employability, education and entrepreneurship within such target groups. Their interventions commonly take form of non-formal and informal education solutions, consulting services and career guidance.

Among others, in the scope of youth entrepreneurship, ANJE the National Association of Young Entrepreneurs (Associação Nacional de Jovens Empresários) aims to support youth in transferring their knowledge into enterprises by providing incubation, consulting and education in scope of management, financing and innovation for young entrepreneurs. While they are focused on incubation of technology-based companies, they provide information regarding entrepreneurship incentive systems and complementary support for entrepreneurs at all stages of business development.

A range of initiatives is being taken to support the integration of NEETs into the labour market. Those include a number of education and training-oriented initiatives. However, they focus commonly on technical skills designed for the general population and their responsiveness to the specific needs of the young people not in employment, education or training is limited. Despite increasing recognition for soft skills role for employability and entrepreneurship abilities, solutions in the area are lacking within official education and training opportunities for young people. Moreover, the typical support measures for NEETs upskilling are face-to-face. In general, the educational and training system in Portugal is highly traditional with limited application of ICT tools in the learning process. While the use of blended learning is increasing, the physical presence requirement is common to most of training opportunities available to NEETs. It however limits the access of Portuguese NEETs to the support offer due to their broad dispersion across the country and their residence often in regions facing geographical barriers.



Level of unemployment among young population in Portugal by location



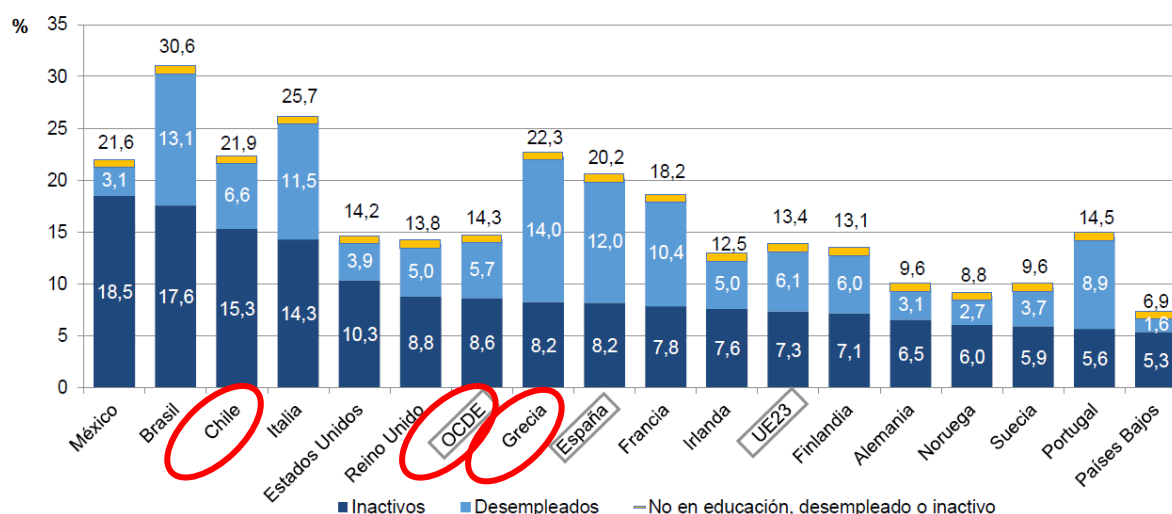
Source: Presidency of Portuguese Republic (Presidência da Republica Portuguesa)

## Spain

### Literature Review in a National Context.

According to the Spanish report “Education at a Glance, following the OECD indicators” (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019), 20.2% of young adults between the age of 18 and 24 years old are not studying nor working. In the European Union, some of the Member States with the highest rates of young adults in this situation are Greece, with 22% and Italy with a 25.7%. These percentages contrast with other Member States such as Germany and the Netherlands with percentages under 10%. In Spain, from the group of young adults aged between 18 and 24 years old, 60% are searching for a job and just 8.2% of youngsters who do not study are not actively seeking for a job.

**Gráfico 2.1b (extracto de la Tabla A2.1):**  
Porcentaje de la población entre 18 y 24 años joven no en formación según inactividad o desempleo (2018)



Nota: los datos de Chile están referidos a 2017. Los datos de Japón no están disponibles.

There is a correlation between the level of education and the risk of becoming a young adult who is not working nor studying. At the age of 25 years old, most adults have either reached a higher education title, continue studying or have abandoned the education system. Those who abandon the education system without a higher education title, have an increased risk of quitting education and becoming unemployed or inactive. In Spain, 39.2% of youngsters whose education is equivalent to, maximum, the first stage of secondary education, stop receiving training and are unemployed or inactive. As it happens in the rest of the countries of the European Union, the improvement of the employment rate depends on the level of education.

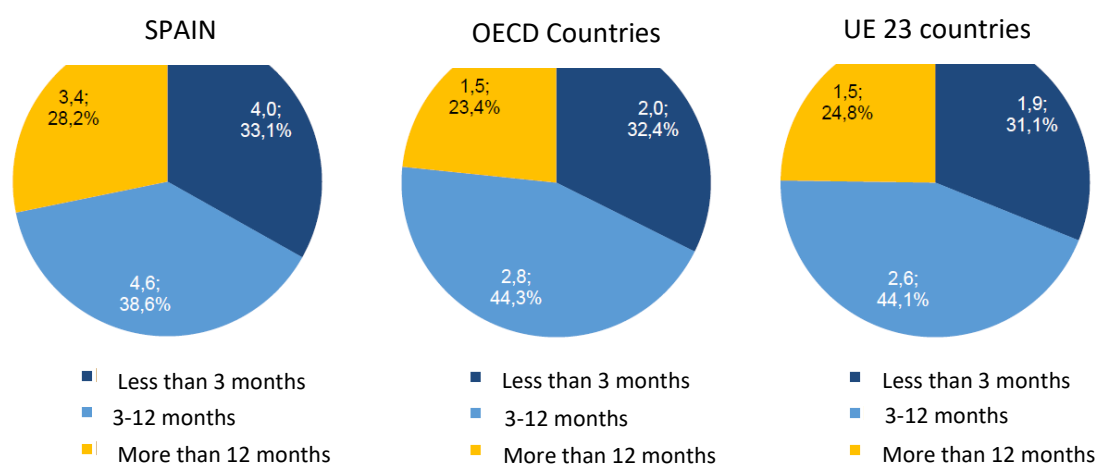
The duration and quality of the education that youngsters receive, has an important effect in their transition towards the workplace. But there are other factors such as the labour market, the socioeconomical context or the cultural characteristics of each country. In Spain, the economic recession has deeply affected young people, increasing the unemployment rate among them. The fact that there is a high rate of youngsters who are not working nor studying is more related to the situation of unemployment of the country and the difficulties to find a job rather than to a high level of inactivity. In other words, most youngsters that are not receiving any education nor have a job are searching for one, while those who are totally inactive represent a small percentage (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019).

The economic recession has also transformed the workplace into something precarious, often characterised by temporary contracts and underemployment. The surplus of an active workforce and the limited job offers, makes working conditions worse that can often be compared to labour exploitation (Lasheras Ruiz, 2014).

In Spain, 28.2% of youngsters between the ages of 18 and 24 years old are searching for a job but unemployed for more than 12 months. This represents a higher rate than the average rate of the countries that are part of the OECD (23.4%) and UE23 (6.1%). (Ministerio de Educación y Formación profesional, 2019).

**Gráfico 2.4b (extracto de la Tabla A2.3):**

Percentage of youngsters aged between 18 and 24 years old that are neither studying nor working, according to the duration of unemployment



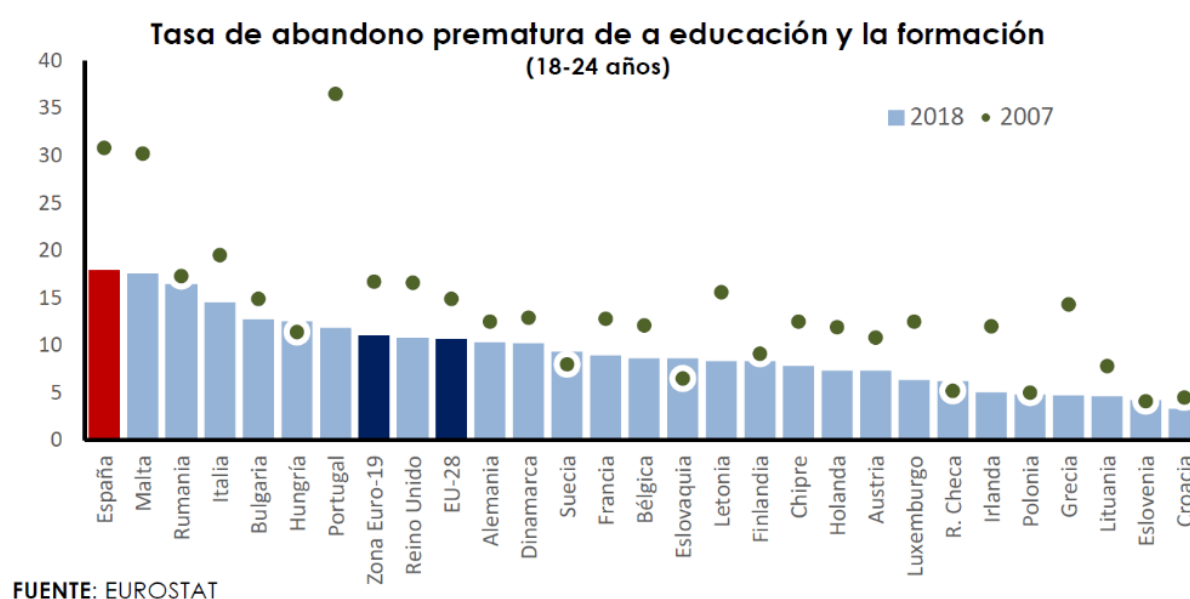
*Nota:* el porcentaje en paréntesis del título es el porcentaje total de jóvenes que no está en formación y es población activa desempleada.

This situation in which youngsters are long periods of time unemployed can force them to accept any job even if the conditions are precarious. In 2013, 98% of the youth Spanish population aged between 18 and 35 years old who were not studying nor working, declared that they would accept any job offer immediately regardless of the salary and location (Lasheras Ruiz, 2014).

According to the latest report of the General Sub direction for statistics and socio-labour analysis, which analyses the situation of youngsters in the labour market, the evolution of the indicator that measures the poverty level in Spain, is negative especially amongst the youth population between 16 and 29 years old. However, it has evolved in a less negative way for adults above 30 and it has even improved for those aged above 65 years old. This can be interpreted as one of the reasons for this high rate of NEETs in Spain (Ministerio de Trabajo, Migraciones y Seguridad Social, 2019).

One of the aims of the European Strategy 2020, is to reduce the percentage of school drop-out in Europe 27, and set it at a 10%. In Spain, the objective was to set a fixed percentage of 15%. In 2018, which is the latest data available, the school drop-out in Spain was of 18%. This situation is one of the biggest challenges that public education policies in Spain must face.

Compared to the rest of the countries in the European Union, Spain is one of the countries with the highest rates of school drop-out, followed by Malta and Romania.



Considering that in Spain, as we have explained before, the level of education is related to the success when it comes to obtaining a job, this data also explains the high rate of NEETs in Spain (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2019).

## Issues/Problems

In general, NEETs are a group of youngsters at risk of exclusion and mostly from vulnerable backgrounds. There are many ways of exclusion and some of them have already been analysed in the former section, as we reviewed the existing literature.

In short, the difficulties that NEETs have had to face due to the economic recession that can be viewed as ways of exclusion are:

- Unemployment
- Precarious jobs



- Increased poverty

The high rate of school drop-out is also an issue that worsens their probabilities to gain a job or to embark into new professional projects.

However, there are other issues that affect particularly the group of youngsters that conform Spanish NEETs. According to the 7<sup>th</sup> report of the FOESSA foundation about youngsters, inequalities and social exclusion, there is a slightly higher proportion of women aged between 16 and 24 years old that do not work, nor study (54%) compared to men (46%). This has an explanation as, some women traditionally choose family responsibilities and household chores which leads into an alienation from the workplace (Observatorio empresarial de la pobreza, 2017). Therefore, women are especially vulnerable in these situations.

Most NEETs are also socially excluded: 43.2% are precariously integrated, 22.9% are moderately excluded and 27.6% are severely excluded. This means that they lack social bonds, they can feel isolated, live in dysfunctional families or lack the possibility to access social circles in the same conditions as others. (FOESSA, 2013).

The presence of ethnic minorities is also significant although it continues to be a minority share (3 out of 10). In Spain, more than 1 out of 10 youngsters aged between 16 and 24 years old who do not work nor study, are of Roma ethnicity. According to a survey made by FOESSA foundation in 2013, 67.9% of NEETs aged between 16 and 24 years old where Spanish, 11.8% where Spanish but from Roma ethnicity and 20.2% immigrants (FOESSA, 2013).

Immigrants have generally lower rates of employment and earn a lower income than those born in Spain. As we explained, the possibility to be employed increases with the level of education received, and when it comes to those who are immigrants, the difference is more pronounced. If you are born in Spain and you have just completed the secondary level of education, you have 55% of possibilities of being employed while if you have a university degree you have 82%. An immigrant has 71% of possibilities of obtaining a job in the second case. Therefore, the advantage of having higher studies is higher for those born in the country than for those who are not. With regards to the salary, Spain and Italy stand out as the countries where those who are not born in the country receive a lower income compared to those who are born there (OECD, 2019).

## Collection of Best practices

### Bulgaria

In this section, three national good practices and initiatives that are in place to enhance NEETs entrepreneurial skills and offer jobs are exemplified. In particular, projects, training opportunities managed by social partners, expert organizations and educational centers are briefly presented below.

#### Social partners initiatives

The Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) is an independent, non- governmental organization for assistance, promotion, representation and protection of the business interests of its members which contributes to the development of international economic cooperation and provides assistance for the European and international integration of the Republic of Bulgaria. BCCI offers and promotes training opportunities, seminar discussions, competitions, participation in projects for young, disadvantaged NEETs aged 15-29 for improving/development of key competences needed for their future professional realisation. The main focus is put on the development of entrepreneurial skills and mindset for acquiring qualifications in social entrepreneurship. Online training opportunities and webinars are also included, as digital media literacy is among the future key competences. Similar initiatives are operated by different social partners such as the Bulgarian Industrial Association, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions and the Confederation of Labour “Podkrepa”.

These projects pay special attention to the development of soft skills and specific qualifications in a wide range of professions such as social workers, security officers, office managers and professions from almost all branches of the economy. In total, 985 NEETs took part in these projects in 2018. After the successful completion of the projects, the social partners secure a minimum of 3-month non-subsidised employment contracts for between 35% - 49% of young people who undertook the relevant training. Statistics show that 2 % - 10% of participants receive 3-month subsidised employment contracts.





## BCause Foundation

An expert organization, BCause contributes to the strengthening of civil society organisations and public institutions, promotes and supports donors and social entrepreneurs at national and international level. The foundation has a Center for Entrepreneurship and Training set up to promote education, lifelong learning and to support the entrepreneurship and business development in Bulgaria. The center offers a start-up entrepreneurship program, targeting also NEETs, that includes racing and modular training. The competition is once a year and winners receive a grant up to 20 thousand leva and one-year support from mentors. There are also programs for children and youth that encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills and culture.

## JA Bulgaria

Junior Achievement (JA) Bulgaria aims to educate and inspire young people to be active and realize their business ideas. One of the thematic areas features programs in entrepreneurship skills and offers courses in leadership, innovation, development of entrepreneurial spirit for young people. It organizes events and competitions like Manager for a Day, Youth Business Forum, and Global Entrepreneurship Week.

Entrepreneurship education is highly supported as young people with entrepreneurship background are at a lower risk of being unemployed and are more often in stable employment. Its impact is evident on individual, institutional, societal and economic levels.

## Cyprus

### Human Resource Development Agency of Cyprus (HRDA)

The HRDA is a public body in Cyprus which aims to create the prerequisites for a systemic training and development of the human potential of Cyprus at all levels and in all areas to meet the needs of the economy within the framework of the social and economic policy of the state. They conduct research on a national level regarding forecasts of Employment Needs in Occupations in Cyprus, forecasts in sector Employment Needs in Cyprus and Human Resource Trends in Cyprus and they offer various training schemes for both those out of employment, education and training



(employees) and employers with the collaboration with relevant local stakeholders such as the Ministry of Labour.

Some of the most relevant programs they do have in relation with combating unemployment and proving people (including NEETs) with lifelong training:

- *“Training Programs for Unemployed Persons”* (providing unemployed persons with training with the aim to advance their skills and provide them with specialisation and knowledge to foster their integration into the labour market).
- *“Training Scheme in Businesses / Organizations for long term unemployed persons”* (this scheme provides employment opportunities to long term unemployed persons, under 60 years old, who are registered as unemployed in the any of the Employment office of the Republic of Cyprus, for more than 6 months to be acquired with working experience and specialised competences required for their permanent job).
- *“Provision of Incentives for Hiring Recipients of Guaranteed Minimum Income Combined with a three-month Training Period”* (this scheme provides to long term unemployed, opportunities to advance their skills and offer them hand to hand experience in the workplace).
- *“Scheme for the Employment and Training of Tertiary Education Graduates”* (this scheme provides working opportunities to University Graduates under the age of 30, to advance their practical skills and have working experience in order to fill the gap between university skills and work skills).
- *“Vocational Qualifications System”* (aims to upgrade the human resources of people in Cyprus through the evaluation and certification of the candidates' professional qualifications. The project is co-financed by the EU's European Social Fund (ESF) under the Operational Program "Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion" during the 2014-2020 programming period).

More information about the above-mentioned schemes and other related training opportunities provided by the HRDA: <http://www.anad.org.cy/el/katartisi/ola-ta-sxedia>

### Adult Education Centers by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth.

The Adult Education Centres, established since 1952, is a significant programme which provides general adult education in Cyprus within the framework of providing lifelong learning opportunities and combats educational inequalities so that the citizens of Cyprus will be successfully integrated in

society. The main objective of the Adult Education Centres is the general development of each adult's personality as well as the social, financial and cultural development of citizens and society in general.

The Adult Education Centres offer a variety of interdisciplinary courses which focus mainly on the teaching of foreign languages, arts and crafts, cultural programmes, health and other issues of general interest, as well as on teaching professional and vocational skills to adults aged 15 and over. Moreover, they also implement free of charge learning activities for various target groups (people with literacy difficulties, people with special needs, mentally ill and elderly people, etc.) and language courses to political refugees, Turkish and Greek Cypriots, etc.

More information: <http://www.moec.gov.cy/epimorfotika/en/index.html>

### **“Youth Guarantee to ACTIVate and EmpowerYOUTH in Cyprus: an integrated communications campaign” (Project Acronym: “Active Youth”)**

The Youth Board of Cyprus is the public body responsible for youth in Cyprus. It is a semi-governmental organisation that aims to strive to promote the progress and prosperity in all young people in Cyprus. One of their actions concerns the education and training of young people through various of their projects. One of those projects, initiated under the Youth Guarantee Initiative, is the “Active Youth” one of the largest outreach strategies to disseminate information about job opportunities among young people in Cyprus. The project targets NEETs and aims to combat youth unemployment under the Youth Guarantee Initiative. This program is co-funded by the European Commission's Directorate- General for Employment, Social Affairs and Social Inclusion and it is in collaboration with the Department of Labour- The Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance, the Youth Council of Cyprus and the Cyprus Youth Organisation.

It is an 18-month communication strategy on a national level to guide NEET into the Public Employment Services and enable them to actively search for a job, training or an internship and at the same time promote synergies between key Youth Guarantee stakeholders in Cyprus, targeting to reach NEETs from diverse backgrounds (poor, disable, low educational attainment, ethnic minorities/migrants, etc). It will adapt on the Youth Guarantee Media toolkit and offer a list of complementary online and offline training and networking activities.



More Information: [www.youthguarantee.org.cy](http://www.youthguarantee.org.cy) and/or <https://onek.org.cy/en/home-page/programs-and-service/information/active-youth-youth-guarantee/> and or 77772757.

## Denmark

### SUME - Særlig ungeindsats med effect

SUME - 'Særlig ungeindsats med effect' (special youth emphasis with effect) is a project that aims to educate unemployed and marginalized young people so that they can start - and be kept in a vocational or other qualification course or of higher education. SUME came from the desire of Jobcenters to make a special effort for the group of young people who lack resources and are on the edge of the labour market. The project is run by the municipalities of Slagelse and Kalundborg in cooperation with EUC Nordvestsjælland (business development center).

Most participants in this program are young people struggling with poverty, young people with substance abuse or young people with mental illness. Considering the different problems of these young people, as well as the background from which they come, the municipalities have developed their own strategies to interact with them. A good example is the strategy approached by the municipality of Slagelse - their focus is not entirely on education but rather on the personal conditions of the participants, especially those with mental problems. In a sort of gym, the participants are engaged in physical exercises or relaxation. This strategy is an efficient means for those young, disadvantaged people because the conversation between them and the Employment Services is done in a less formal environment. The time allowed to the program may differ from 2 to 6 months, depending on how quickly the participants are willing to open, avoiding putting pressure on them.

SUME is highlighted by 3 important elements: the emphasis placed on the personal conditions of the participants, time and support and the individualized approach of each participant in the project.



## Educational track to work

The Sjælland region of Denmark was registered with the largest rate of unemployed young people, with the ages between 18 and 24 years old, the reason why the project “Educational track to work” was born in the first place.

The reason why the high number of unemployed among young people was registered is due to the competences that did not respond to the needs of companies in the region.

The strength of the project is the coordination of the partners from education or vocational training and on the labour market who must follow the scheme that the project supports - remuneration of companies by the municipalities that offer internships to young people and satisfies their incentives through remuneration during the training period. In order to ensure a secure and extended network, the coalition of trade unions deals with the mediation of contacts between programme managers.

## TAMU

Tamu is an independent organization, 75% financed by the state and 25% of the revenues that includes the sale of products and services in which the students are involved. Tamu’s main target group are young people between 18 and 30 years old who have a low or no education level. The main purpose of the organization is to find a link between the labour shortage and the unemployed.

Tamu offers a 1-year course consisting of practical learning and social learning through work. The course consists of 5 steps: the evaluation of the competence at the entrance, the trial period, the first industrial period, the second industrial period, and the placement in the workplace or education.

After finishing the course, the job or education is a guarantee. The training offers different branches including cleaning services, furniture production, catering, logistics, construction and servicing, etc.

## Greece

The Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) under the supervision of the Labour of employment and Social Affairs implements regularly programmes, mainly of short term employment, in order to reduce the unemployment rates. The following projects are co-funded by European Union. (Manpower Employment Organization (OAED))

1. The project “Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialization RIS3” the target group of which is 6.000 unemployed young people up to 39 years old and in particular university graduates with expertise in Smart Specialization or productive activities.

This project for the time it was running, gave the motivation to businesses with the same field of expertise, to employ people with the knowledge and qualifications described above, for a specific period of time. The great profit for the businesses is that the working staff is provided for free and relieves companies of the burden they would otherwise would have to bear. For the unemployed people is their chance to work in their expert field.

**Link to the programme:** <https://bit.ly/3e1jU8U>

2. The project «Providing self-employment in order to foster entrepreneurial initiatives for 10.000 unemployed people in age 18 to 66 years old. In this project, the Manpowered Employment Organization examines and assessing suggested business plans initiated by unemployed people, who wish to create their own business in order to approve their funding or not. Taking into consideration the hard times Greece is facing due to the multi-generic crisis that has affected all the levels of societal and economic life, the financial help in order for someone to take the difficult step of creating and running a business is crucially important. The project has a twofold benefit as it will serve the reduction of Greek unemployment rates and the revitalization of economy in general.

**Link to the programme:** <https://bit.ly/2wmSmdq>

3. A project also offered from the Greek Manpower Employment Organization and funded from the EU, aims to support 5.000 unemployed people, who had their own businesses some years ago and they bankrupted. The project promotes and encourages the self-employment through financial support of business initiatives, offering the beneficiaries a second chance by providing them -under

specific conditions- with the necessary funding and means to rebuild and resurrect their previous business or create a completely different one. The target age group of the beneficiaries varies among 18 to 66 years old.

**Link to the programme:** <https://bit.ly/3c0kqCw>

#### 4. Eurobank in cooperation with Corallia

The program egg –enter, grow, go- is a dynamite program of entrepreneurial incubation and acceleration initiated by “Eurobank” in cooperation with Corallia. It offers opportunities for a descent and congruous funding of startups, mentoring, commercial activity, networking and outreaching, with two platforms addressed to:

- Startups, new-entered groups or people with innovative ideas, seeking the right tools and resources to become successful entrepreneurs by running sustainable companies and businesses (START UP Platform)
- New businesses wishing to accelerate their growth or to take a step beyond either by launching a new product or by entering new markets in Greece and abroad. (SCALE UP Platform)

In a 12-month duration the beneficiaries gain knowledge and tools in order to run successfully their already existing business or create new ones. The development comes inevitably, through the guidance from an expertized mentor, whose role is to help the entrepreneurs or future entrepreneurs to find strategic partners or funding. The egg programme offers consulting services, offers business-oriented solutions as well as loans, micro-financing, equity funding or other options of funding of startups.

**Link to the programme:** <https://www.theegg.gr/el>





## Italy

### Initiative “GaranziaHack”

- *Creation of apps able to help young people in collaboration with Facebook.*
- *Apps as tool to enable search for a job.*
- *Hackathon by Ministero del lavoro e delle Politiche sociali for young developers.*

### GARANZIA Giovani

(<http://www.garanziagiovani.gov.it/>)

National program for young people.

- Orientation and Targets
- Individual training program
- Accompanying
- Internship, civil service
- Facilitations for recruitment or Entrepreneurship

## Poland

Non-formal education is a recognized and increasingly widespread way of acquiring and developing competence, also learning about the world, others, and yourself. New economy is based on knowledge, information, innovation, technological progress. Below is a selection of educational initiatives in the field of entrepreneurship, conducted by different types of organisations and with different knowledge and educational methods applied.

### JGT Training - Interpersonal communication – workshops

Training that will help to strengthen and improve communication skills, and thus to communicate with colleagues, superiors, subordinates, clients in such a way as to be well understood, to understand others, to improve the flow of information and facilitate cooperation, and to avoid

misunderstandings, which can often lead to conflict situations. During the training, participants will learn their own style of communication, learn how to act on the basis of individual and team goals and how to adapt their way of providing information to the style of their interlocutor. This will give participants a greater sense of clarity and understanding.

Participants will acquire the following skills:

- verifying their own strengths and weaknesses;
- eliminating communication errors;
- recognizing each other's style of communication and building an appropriate dialogue;
- communicating their opinions in an assertive manner and in a manner appropriate to their professional role;
- building clear and legible messages in everyday situations, but above all in conflict and stressful situations;
- listening actively.

## Regionalne Centrum Innowacji i Transferu Technologii

The subject of this training is to set up and run your own business. During the training you can learn what the official procedures accompanying the establishment of a company look like, how to choose the most advantageous form of taxation, how to settle accounts before the authorities and how to establish a company as a researcher, doctoral student or student. The areas of organized trainings also concern such topics as obtaining funding, cooperation on the science-business level, speeches in front of the investor or preparation of a business plan.

## NBP - Funding of projects in the field of economic education

The National Polish Bank (NBP) supports educational projects that fit in with the central bank's educational activities. In particular, the objectives of the educational activity are:

- popularization of knowledge about the principles of functioning of the financial market, shaping attitudes favouring its stability and development of the financial system,
- increasing knowledge of economic issues in the society
- fostering an entrepreneurial mindset

- promotion of modern attitudes influencing the formation of social capital related to economic development.

## Portugal

### Public measures

The Portuguese support system for NEETs suffers from common for majority of public systems issues (i.e. complex and often hard to understand by the NEETs procedures and inflexibility of the support measures), however examples of good practices with positive impact on decreasing the NEETs level can be identified. Among others, the financial incentives for engagement in training – ‘bolsa de formação’ has positive impact on engagement in upskilling activities, especially among long-term unemployed. Opinions regarding the curricula realistic responsiveness to the market needs and hence, their impact on employability, are mixed. However, the incentive realistically increases motivation of unemployed to participate in the training and educational activities. While the motivation to join the training activities is often purely financial, it allows activation of the unemployed, increases their skills and knowledge portfolio, but also in some cases encourages them to look for individual development paths to increase their employability (Pereira, 2018).

### Best practise II: Supporting employability and overcoming skills mismatches within the job market – The Engage Project

Although taking different approach and focussing on employability rather than entrepreneurship, the partner E&D Knowledge Consulting in a scope of Engage Strategic Partnership (funded under Erasmus+ Programme) implemented locally an online training programme aiming at the development of 8 future oriented soft skills (Creativity, Logical thinking, Observation and Perception, Empathy and Emotional Intelligence, Innovation Mindset, Open Minded Status, Teamwork/Valuing Ideas, Taking Initiative) among NEETs to support their employability<sup>4</sup>. Under the ENGAGE project, a platform linking training within those 8 areas with job offers requiring those skills, was developed. The project was recognised in Portugal, by both NEETs and employers, as a relevant tool. It was not only due to its supply-demand matching opportunity accounting for

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<sup>4</sup> <https://engage.erasmus.site/>

(commonly overlooked in the matching process) soft skills. But also, due to the customised to the needs of NEETs opportunity to improve their competencies in those rapidly gaining relevance on the labour market areas (but in which education is not easily accessible in Portugal, especially in the NEETs group).

The experience of Engage project shows that soft skills are not only highly relevant for the inclusion of NEETs into the labour market, but also that there is a significant lack of education in such relevant for the labour market integration area. That creates high importance of creating new curricula and learning methods to fill those gaps in NEETs education for their employability. But it also shows the relevance of such skills for future entrepreneurs – SMEs owners, as the testing within the matching system was conducted with SMEs managers. In scope of NEETs education, the learning interactivity and practical orientation has been underlined among the main success factors.

### The gamification-based learning – The Management Games

In the area of gamification in scope of adult education and training, a specific solution was developed by a researcher at University of Tras-os-Montes in Portugal which supports university students' education in the area of management. Currently, 2 games are available. The first focused on accounting education and the second focused on marketing education<sup>5</sup>. The first, developed as a PhD thesis project, accounting game, was tested with 2000 students across Portuguese universities. The initiative has shown that the gamification in the learning context significantly improved the users motivation, the amount of time that the students were willing to devote to the learning process, concentration, the attitude and learning outcomes, as well as the autonomy of the users in the learning process (Silva et al. 2018). Especially the learners increased interest in the curricular unit can have a high relevance in increasing motivation of young learners to engage in professional activity in the studied areas. However, the Portuguese experience suggests that the gamification method, while being relevant learning and encouragement tool, should be complemented in the scope of building professional capacities, by other educational techniques, in the particular test case traditional face-to-face teaching (Silva et al. 2019).

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<sup>5</sup> Both games are available online in Portuguese language versions at <http://www.jogosdegestao.pt/>



## Spain

### European Youth Guarantee

One of the activities that has been organised in Spain, which is specifically directed to this target group, is the European Youth Guarantee, an initiative from the European Union as a response to the situation of unemployment after the economic recession. This programme started in 2013 with a budget of 1800 million for Spain. It was designed for people under 30 years old and it intended to offer a job to those registered in the programme within 4 months. They designed actions that were supposed to adjust to the profile of the job seeker, considering his personal situation in order to offer the best attention. The system also offered training activities, internship offers and encouraged entrepreneurship as well as professional orientation, employment information and support when searching for a job. One of the main aims was to assure that every person in this situation where fully aware of this type of services, in other words, the European Union gave directions about the importance of disseminating the programme to the target group. A digital portal was created to upload every information there, and the programme coordinated with employment actions and offered mobility schemes (Ministerio de Educación y Seguridad Social, 2013).

However, 3 years after the implementation of the programme, the European Commission revised the Spanish case and the results where a disaster. The programme coverage reached just 10% of the target group due to the little dissemination of the project. Almost 50% of those that registered where waiting for an offer after 4 months, therefore, a lot of applications had delays and accumulated without being processed. According to data from the European Comission, 62% of youngsters that obtained a job, lost it after 6 months. Experts declared that the programme is interesting, but it was not being implemented as it should be in Spain. When starting with the process of asking again for funds to the European Commission, Spain delayed the process, which shows the little interest or the lack of skills of the Spanish authorities to implement the programme (Cortinas, 2016).

### Programme for the promotion of employment

This programme was designed in 2006 as a response to the situation of unemployment after the economic recession. Although it was not designed specifically for NEETs, the legislator recognises that those who are most affected by the situation of unemployment are women, youngsters and

people with disabilities. The main aim of this regulation is to establish a bonus system to reward companies that facilitate indefinite contracts to people that are in vulnerable situations, in order to solve the problem of the high rate of temporary employment (Ley 46/2006, 2006).

According to this regulation, employers who hire people with disabilities have the right to a reduction of their tax liability to social security, equivalent to 375 € per month, which is 4.500 € per year, all along the life of the contract.

If employers hire youngsters between the ages of 16 and 30 years old that are looking for a job, they receive a tax reduction of 1000€ during the first year of the contract, 1100€ during the second year and 1200€ during the third year. If the employer hires women in that age range, from occupations with less feminine representation, they can apply a tax reduction of 1100€ during the first year, 1200€ during the second year and 1300€ during the third year.

For those who are in a situation of social exclusion, the tax reduction that companies that hire them can apply is of 600€ per year for 4 years (Ministerio de Trabajo, migraciones y seguridad social).

### Action Plan for youth employment

The most recent good practice that has been designed is the Action Plan for youth employment, designed by the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Social Security for the period 2019- 2021. This plan has some main objectives which are:

- Create a top-quality framework for employment and dignified work.
- Be the main actors of their own qualification and labour market insertion process.
- Increasing their qualification and employability by acquiring more professional skills.
- Provide adequate and individualized assistance from the Public Employment Services.
- Avoid horizontal segregation and the gender wage gap.
- Fight despair among those who give up job search and hope of finding it.
- Provide specific assistance to specific vulnerable groups.

The action plan is going to invest 2000 million € to implement 50 measures or actions. From these 50 actions, we would like to highlight some of them such as the SIJ Injuve network programme of assistance for vulnerable young people at risk of social exclusion in rural and disadvantaged areas.

Support would be given to this programme with 110 youth mediators provided by the State Public Employment Service. There are also actions directed to young migrants, personalised assistance programmes will be developed, as well as key competence training programmes for young people who have dropped out of school, digital competences training programmes and programmes directed to women (Public Service of Employment, 2019).

The results of this programmes haven't been completely implemented or analysed yet, but the goals are to:

- Reduce youth unemployment rate to 23.5%
- Increase activity rate to 73.5%
- Reduce the gender gap by 20%
- Achieve 15% more permanent contracts each year.
- Train at least 43% unemployed registered young people with no compulsory Secondary Education qualification in key skills in Spanish and Mathematics.

## Associations

According to our investigation, there are a lot of associations and foundations in Spain that try to fight against unemployment and organise activities to promote labour insertion. Some of these associations are:

- Novafeina: Foundation based in Valencia that helps people from disadvantaged backgrounds to obtain a job, offering counselling and intermediation services. <https://novafeina.org/>
- ARCA empleo: Non-profit organisation based in Granada that works to improve the living conditions of people that risk social exclusion and intervenes in their socio-labour inclusion. <https://arcaempleo.org/>
- Association for the creation of youth employment: Designs programmes to facilitate the insertion of youngsters in the labour market.
- ALANNA Association: Association directed to help specially women from vulnerable backgrounds and helps them obtain a job. <http://www.alanna.org.es/>

These are some examples of associations but there are many more that dedicate their efforts to insert people into the job market.





## Questionnaire Research

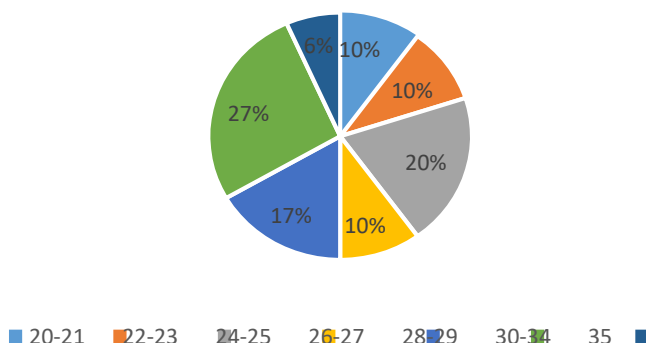
The Questionnaire was divided into 4 main sections; Profile which was meant to gather information on the age group, sex and obstacles faced by the participants; Education to collect data on their highest completed education level and highlight possible correlations between education and unemployment; unemployment which targeted in collecting data regarding the obstacles faced by young NEETs in finding employment and their interest in becoming entrepreneurs; and training which section aimed to collect information regarding their participation into training opportunities and the extent to which they possess the five skills required for their integration into the labour market and their entrepreneurial already developed capacity which are the complex problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, people management and coordination with others skills.

### Bulgaria

An online survey through the AdminProject platform was conducted on a national level among 30 young people. The focus of the questionnaire was to find out the current state of NEETs in Bulgaria, their skills and willingness to become entrepreneurs. The findings will be taken into account while developing a simulation game.

### Analysis of data

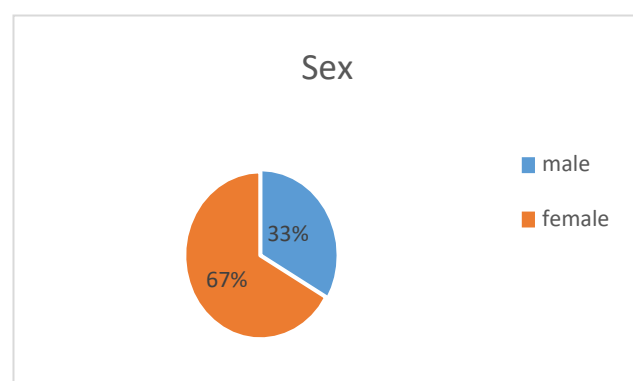
Age distribution



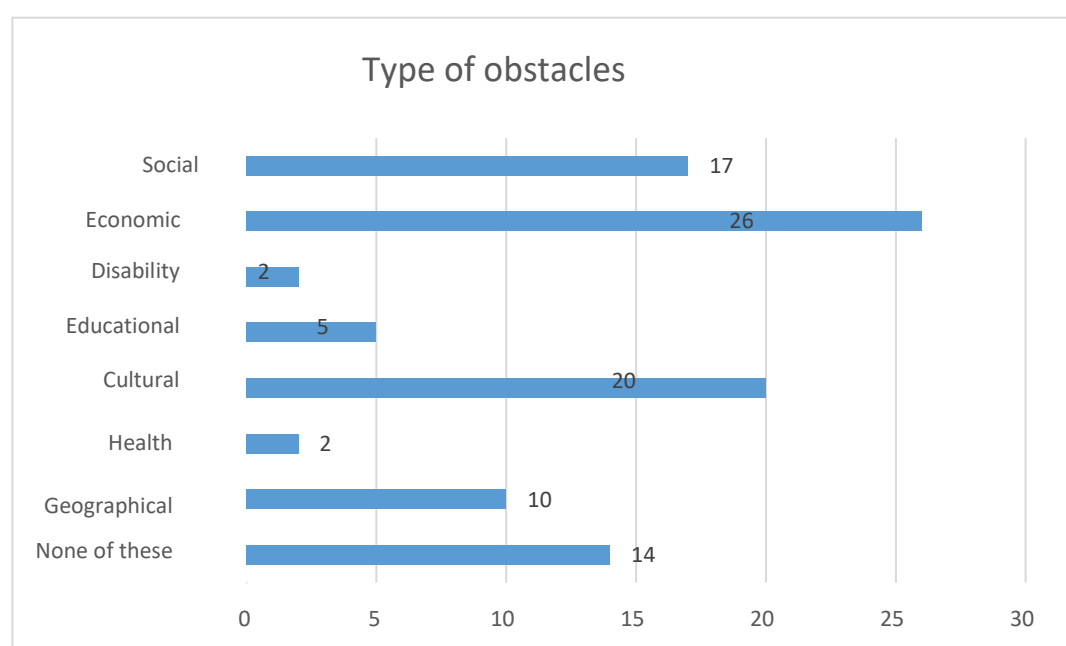
In relation to the age group of participants, 30-34 is leading with 27%, followed by 24-25 (20%), 28- 29 (17%), the age groups 20-21, 22-23, 26-27 represent 10% and the lowest percentages are for 35+ age group (6%).



More females participated in the survey accounting for 67% of the total 30 respondents. In other words, 10 are male participants (33%), whereas women are 20.



Two of the participants identified themselves as representatives of ethnic minorities: 1 Roma and 1 Turkish. The rest of the respondents reported Bulgarian as their mother tongue.

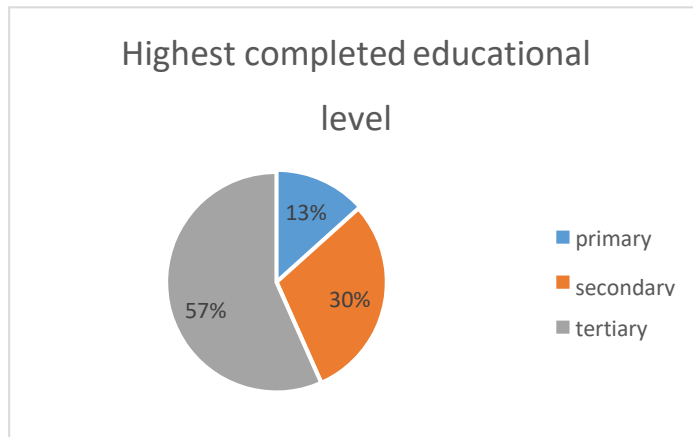


Regarding the obstacles that the young people who participated in the survey face, 18% face social, economic face 27%, disability 2%, educational 5%, cultural difference face 21%, health problems have 2%, geographical obstacles face 10% and none of these face 15% of participants.

More than half of the respondents (57%; 17 out of 30) reported tertiary education as the highest level of education they possess, 30% have secondary education and four participants



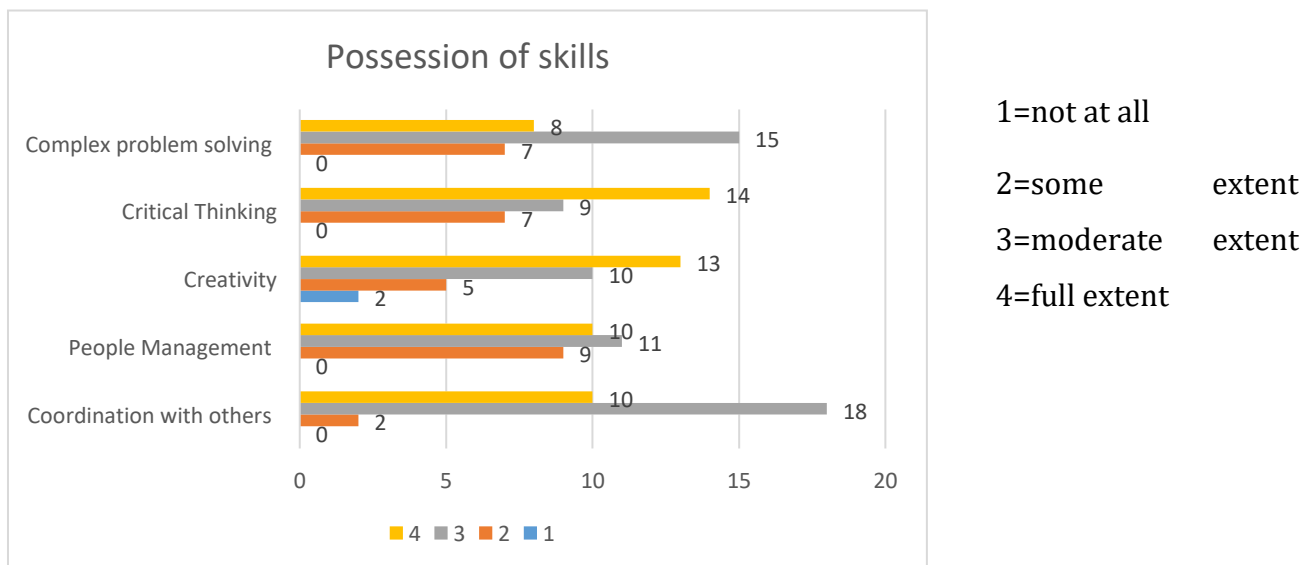
indicated primary education as the highest completed education level. From those who reported higher education, 4 out of 17 obtained a master's degree, the rest have bachelor's degrees.



The main obstacles that young people face when looking for a job are the lack of working experience, difficulties in finding a job that corresponds to their education, discrimination based on gender, age, low salary as well as geographical and social obstacles.

80% of participants expressed interest in entrepreneurship which corresponds to 24 out of 30 respondents. The respondents considered communication, teamwork, creativity, problem solving, taking new initiatives and organizational skills as the most predominant characteristics which will contribute to their successful development as entrepreneurs.

More than 70% of the respondents have not participated in any training or course during the past year. Eight of them have participated in trainings about management of EU projects, social entrepreneurship and other educational courses.



Half of the respondents have developed “problem solving” skills to a moderate extent, 8 have developed in full, and 7 to some extent.

For the “critical thinking” skill, 14 of the young people have developed it to a full extent, 9 to a moderate and 7 to some extent.

13 of the respondents have fully developed “creativity”, 10 to a moderate extent, 5 to some extent and 2 not at all.

“People management” skill is fully developed among 10 of the participants, 11 possess it to a moderate extent and 9 to some extent.

60% of the young people have developed “coordination with others” skill to a moderate extent, 10 fully and 2 to some extent.

The importance of these five skills is extremely important to 12 of the participants, the other 12 consider them as important and the rest rated them as adequately important.

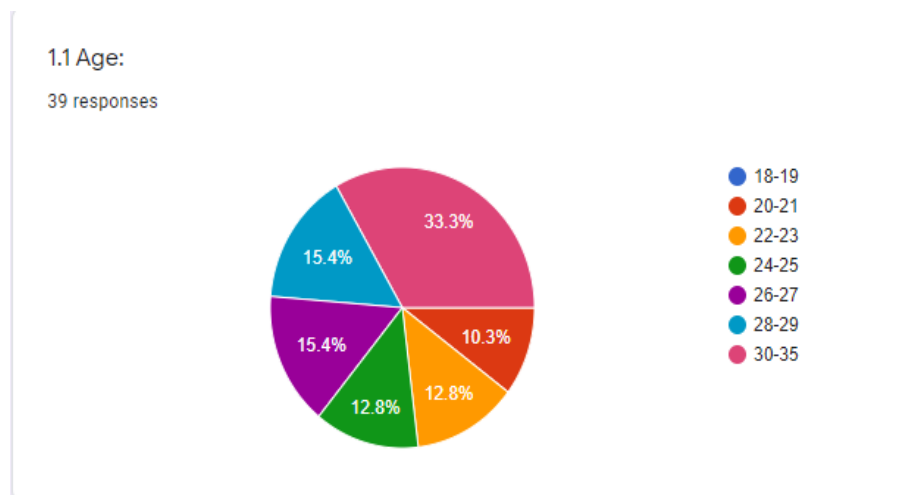
25 out of 30 respondents expressed their interest in enhancing these five competences by participating in training activities, whereas the other five have no interest in engaging in such activities.

## Cyprus

### Method

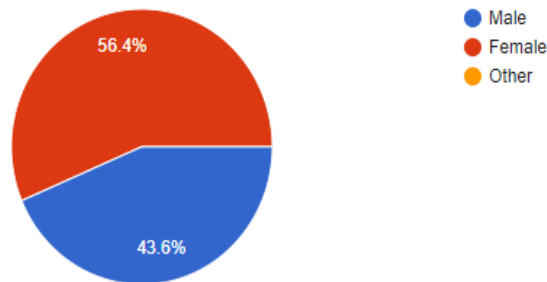
An online survey that was made in Google forms was administered nationally, to the target group living in Cyprus (39 persons). The aim was to find out the current state of skills that the target group (young people not in employment, education nor training) possess and capture the reality of NEETs in each national context so as to find out the particular aspects of the skills that the project’s online game should focus on.

### Profile



The highest percentage in relation to the age of the young people who have participated in the survey is 30-35 years old (33.3%) followed by the ages between 26-27 years old (15.4%), 28-29 years old (15.4%), 24-25 years old (12.8%), 22-23 years old (12.8%) and the lowest percentage is 20-21 years old (10.3%).

1.2 Sex  
39 responses

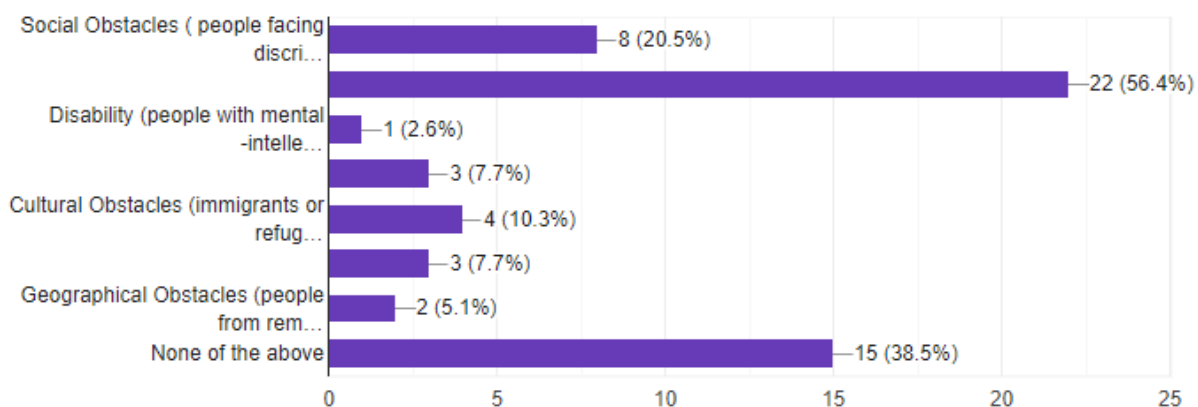


The highest percentage in relation to the sex of the young people who have participated in the survey is 56.4% for females, followed by the 43.6% for men.

Moreover, regarding the nationality of the young people who have participated in the survey, as it was estimated, 79.6% were Greek Cypriots whereas the rest were immigrants from EU and third country nationals.

#### 1.4 What kind of obstacles do you face? Please mark the ones that apply to you.

39 responses

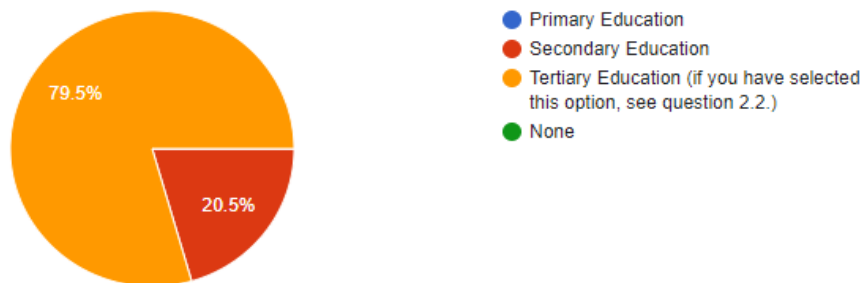


In relation to the obstacles that the young people who have participated the survey face, 56.4% face economic obstacles, following by 38.5% facing no obstacles, 20.5% facing social obstacles, 10.4% facing cultural obstacles, 7.7% facing educational obstacles, 7.7% having health issues, 5.1% facing geographical obstacles and 2.6% having a disability.

## Education

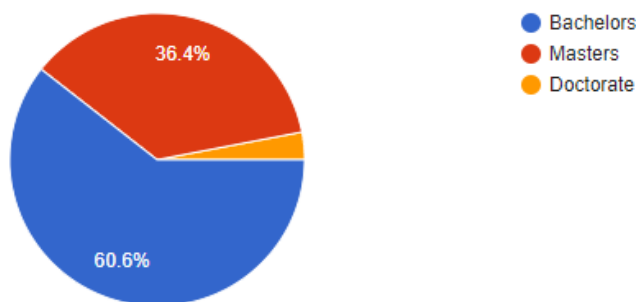
### 2.1 Highest completed education level:

39 responses



### 2.2 Please select the one that is applicable to you:

33 responses



The highest percentage in relation to the highest completed education level of the young people who participated in the survey indicates that 79.5% has completed tertiary education and 20.5% has completed secondary education. From those 79.5% who have completed their tertiary education, the survey indicates that the highest percentage has obtained a bachelor's degree (60.6%) whereas 36.4% has obtained a master's degree and 3% has obtained a doctorate.



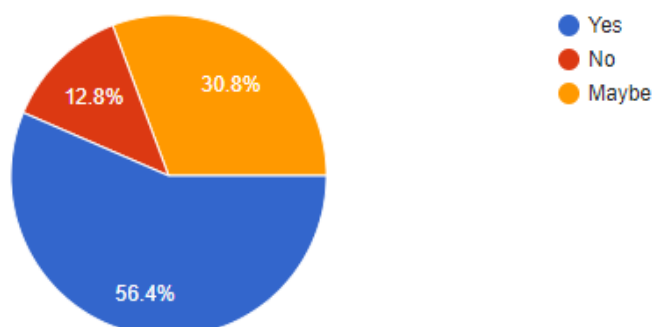
## Employment

In relation to question 3.1 regarding what obstacles do those young people who participated in the survey face in finding employment, the most prominent answers were:

- I have not graduated yet [from university] because of war in my country Syria. I was studying mechanical engineering. I need vocational training to improve my skills to help me find a job and start new life in Cyprus.
- There is a lot of competition in the job market at the moment. Also, employers offer very low pay for expertise and skills that deserve better pay.
- Not enough employment opportunities in my subject of study.
- As an asylum seeker there are specific jobs that they allow you to do and some employers don't want asylum seekers.
- I didn't find difficulty to find employment. I work one full-time and 2 part time jobs. This is the problem of a lot of young people. Especially now that the economic crisis is supposed to have passed. However, salaries in Cyprus do not match the living conditions and especially for women there is a gap and a misconception as to what they can achieve as entrepreneurs. At work they push as to the limit of working too much, working overtimes and we do not feel comfortable to do trainings and to even take our annual leave.
- No job opportunities are given to people without working experience, even for some administrative jobs. Also, the salaries are very underpaid and low regarding what skills and what tasks they require and want you to do. They require a lot of skills and qualifications for low paid jobs.
- Language barrier, Employers asking for bachelor's degree.
- Few opportunities available in a very competitive environment.
- I go to interviews, but they always select people with more working experience than me or someone that they know.
- Not so many opportunities in some fields in Cyprus and low salaries.

### 3.2 Are you interested in becoming an entrepreneur?

39 responses



In relation to the question whether the young people who participated in the survey would have been interested in becoming entrepreneurs, 56.4% answered with yes, 30.8% answered with maybe and 12.8% answered with no.

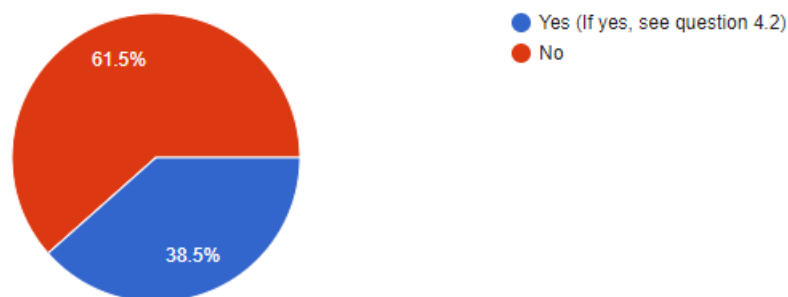
In relation to the question 3.3 regarding which of the skills that the young people who have participated in our research have and believe that will contribute to become entrepreneurs, the following were the most prominent answers:

- None.
- Organisational skills, time-management, project management.
- Creativity, innovative, leadership, time management skills.
- Organisation, teamwork, responsibility and innovation.
- Good communication skills, critical thinking and creativity.
- Creativity, curiosity, thirst for learning, social skills.
- I don't know.
- Creativity, Thinking out of the box, people skills.

## Training

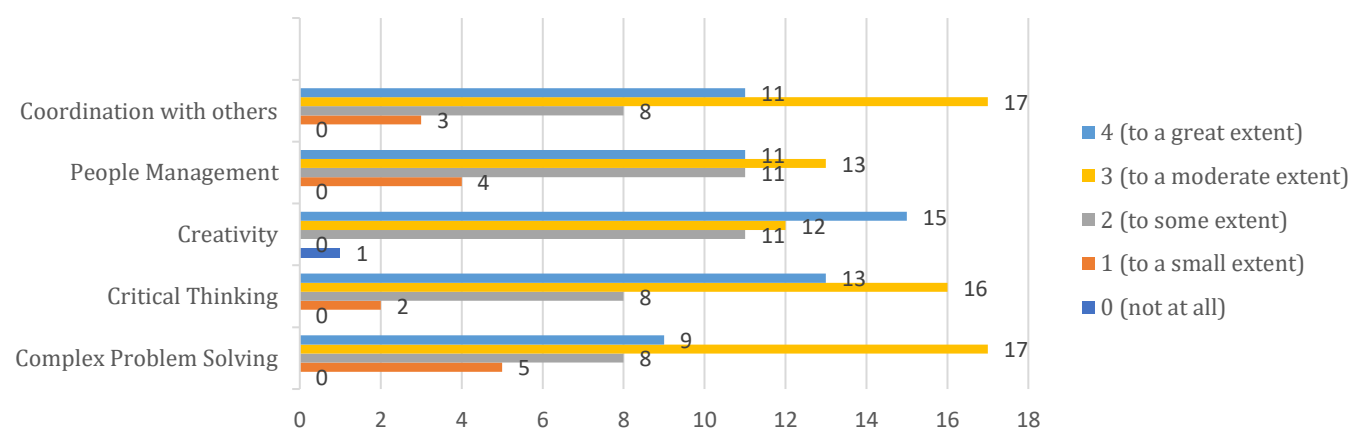
### 4.1. Have you participated in any training activity the past 1 year?

39 responses



In relation to the whether the young people who have participated in the survey, have participated in any training activity in the past 1 year, 61.5% of the participants answered no whereas 38.5% have answered yes.

### 4.3. Please rate the extent to which you possess any of the following skills (with 0 meaning not at all and 4 being fully equipped):



As seen from the above-mentioned chart, out of the 39 young people who have participated in our research, 17 have the coordination with others skill developed to a moderate extent, 11 developed at a great extent, 8 developed to some extent and 3 developed to a small extent.

Regarding the people management skill, 13 young people have the skill moderately developed, 11 greatly developed and 11 developed to some extent and 4 developed to a small extent.

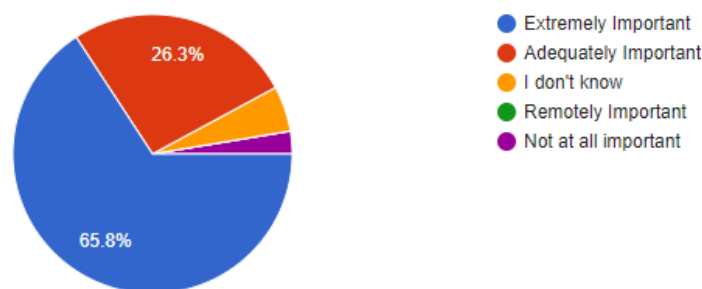
Regarding the creativity skill, 15 have it developed to a great extent, 12 to a moderate extent, 11 developed to some extent and 1 not at all developed.

In contrast, for the critical thinking skill, 16 young people have moderately developed it, 13 have it developed to a great extent, 8 to some extent and 2 developed to a small extent.

Finally, for the complex problem-solving skill, 17 out of the 39 young people have developed it to a moderate extent, 9 to a great extent, 8 to some extent and 5 to a small extent.

#### 4.4. How important do you believe are the above-mentioned skills in today's entrepreneurial world?

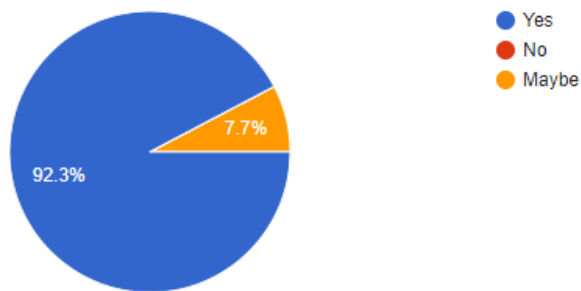
38 responses



In relation to the importance of the 5 skills mentioned above in today's entrepreneurial world, the highest percentage of the participants of the survey have rated them to be extremely important (65.8%), following by the 26.3% who have rated them to be adequately important, 5.3% who have answered that they don't know and 2.6% who believe that they are not at all important.

#### 4.5. Would you be interested in enhancing those skills by participating in training activities?

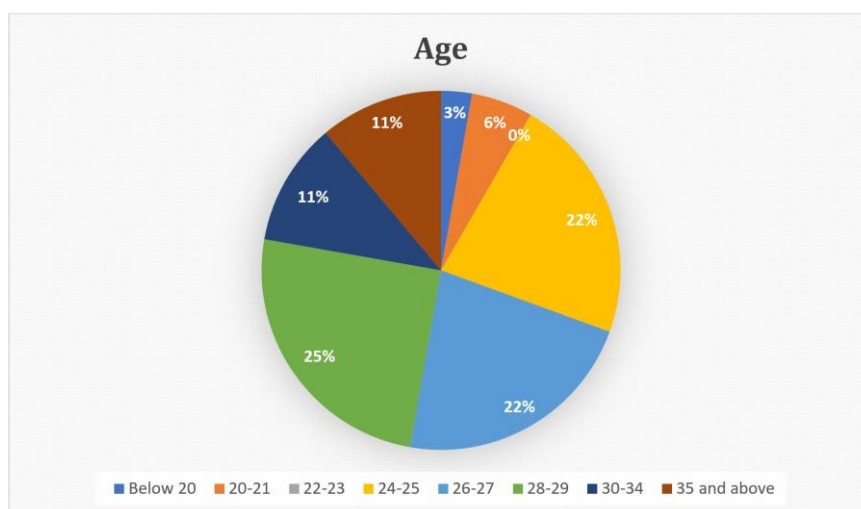
39 responses



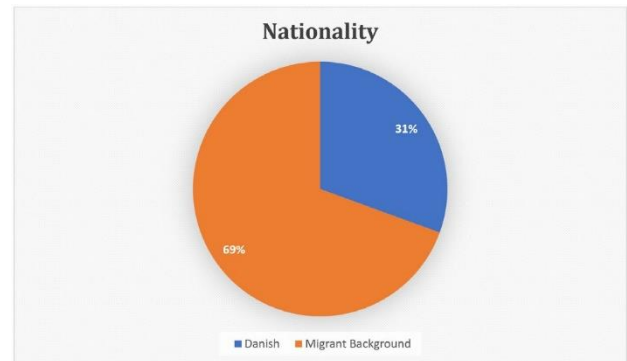
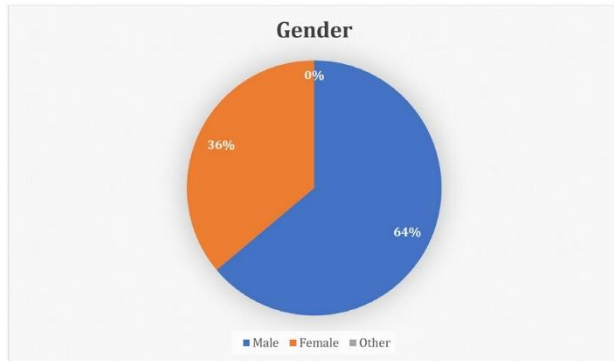
Finally, 92.3% of the young people who have participated in the survey are interested in enhancing those skills by participating in training activities, whereas the 7.7% have answered maybe.

### Denmark

The field-based research consists of online questionnaires conducted with 36 participants who represent the target group of the project. The questionnaire was made to get a deeper understanding towards the participants competences, the problems they face in finding a job, the obstacles encountered in their daily lives, their interest in entrepreneurship and so on. The results of the questionnaire are meant to further help with the development of the game within the EKS project.

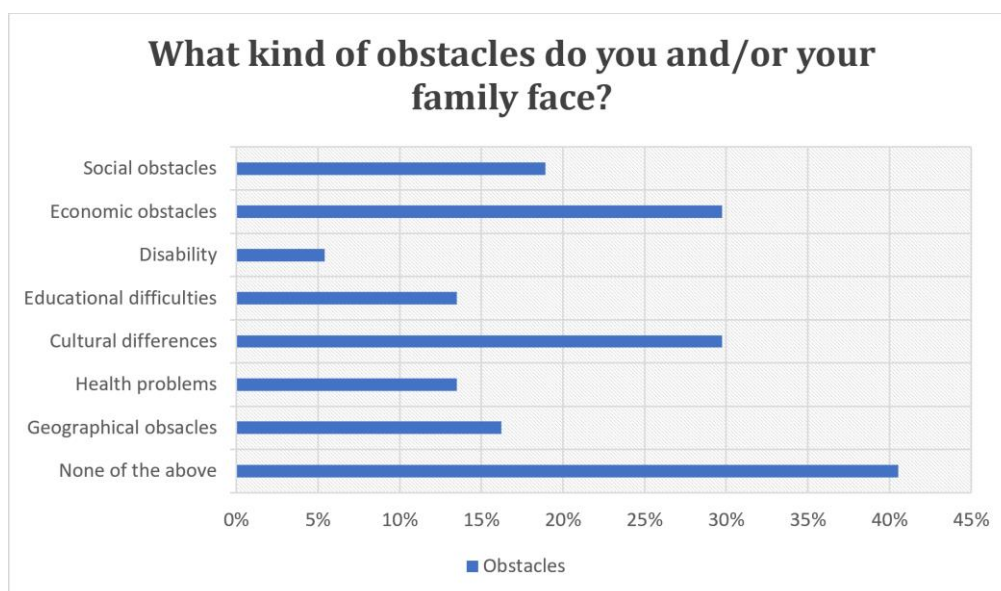


The predominant ages who answered the questionnaire are those between 24 and 29, that makes a total of 69% of all the participants. 22% represent the participants with the age of 30 and above and the rest of 9% are those under the age of 21.



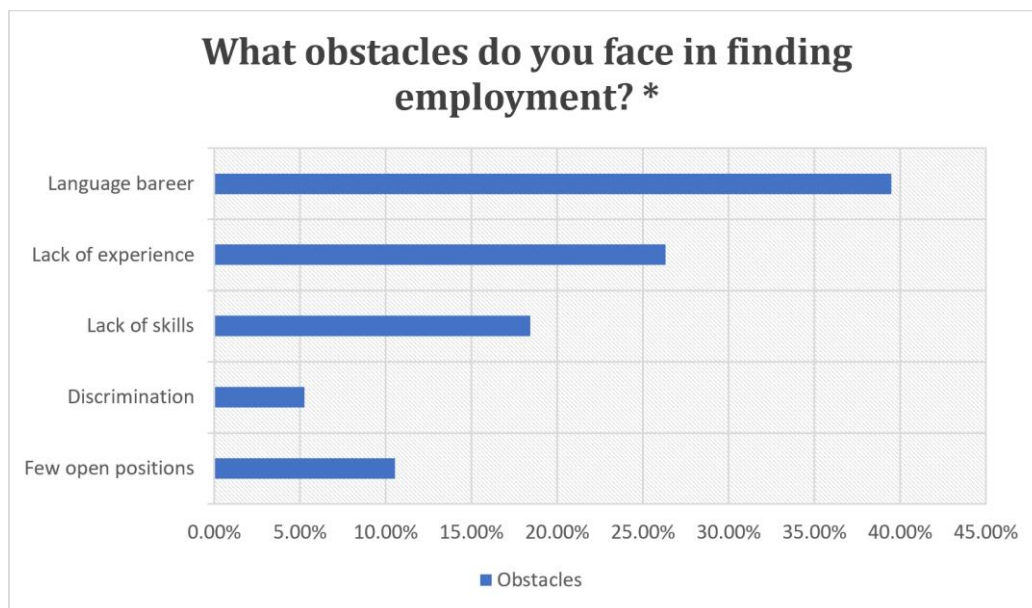
The predominant gender is the male with almost a double percentage than the one for the female.

According to Denmark statistics around 11% of the total population of Denmark is represented by the immigrants from western and non-western countries (without their descendants). As seen above 64% of the answers were given by participants living in Denmark but with a migrant background while 36% were given by the native Danes.



The highest number of participants - 41% has answered that they or/and their families don't face any of the obstacles listed above. Among the participants who face obstacles, economic and cultural differences are the most popular both with 29.73%.

The following graph represents the most common obstacles the person faces while searching for a job.



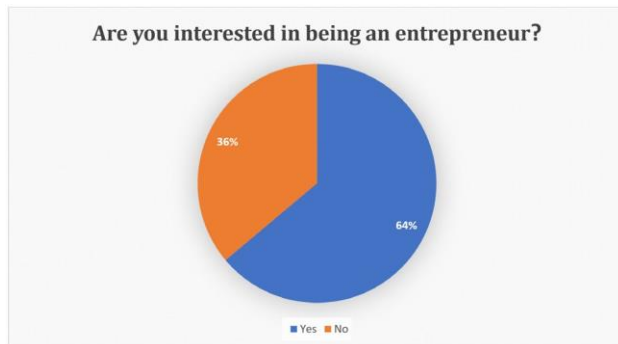
A very important fact can be seen from analysing both the obstacles participants and/or their family face in daily life and the obstacle that interferes with finding a job. From those who answered that they face an economical problem 82% of the participants have a migrant background while the rest are native Danes. When asked to write down the obstacles towards finding a job, all 82% with a higher education stated that they are facing a language barrier while the Danes with the same level of education stated that they face a lack of experience.

Further, the question related to the interest of becoming an entrepreneur, 64% of the answers were affirmative. Looking at the group age, the affirmative answer was 100% for the participants with the age of 30 and above, around 64% for those with the age of 25 and below and around 53% of those with the age between 26 and 29.

Regarding the training activity, 62% of the participants have taken a course or were part of an event in the past 1 year. Some of the topics were: product development, webinar, leadership event, entrepreneurship event, sales and drivers' licence.



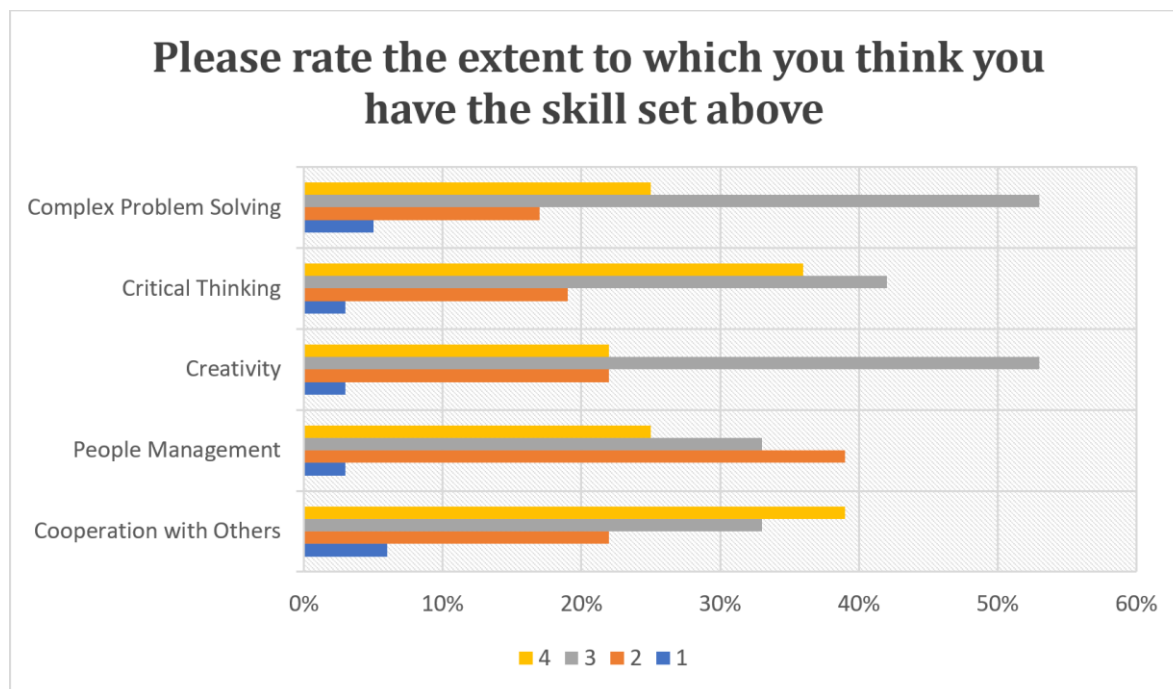




The average of participants beliefs towards their skills was around 3 ((from 0 = lacking the skill to 4 = meaning that the skill has been mastered)

The percentages below are the highest recorded:

- 39% rated the cooperation skills to 4
- 33% rated the people management to 3
- 53% rated creativity to 3
- 42% rated critical thinking to 3
- 53% rated complex problem solving to 3



Regarding the importance of the mentioned skills, 89 of the participants believe that they are adequately to extremely important, 8% were hesitant while 3% did not find them important at all.

Finally, 70% of the participants were affirmative to the questions regarding their interest in enhancing those skills while the others were negative or hesitant.

## Greece

### Profile:

#### Age

The vast majority of the participants belongs to the age range of 24 to 27 years old. In particular, almost 40% of them belongs to the age range from 24 to 25 years old and the 26% to the age range from 26 to 27 years old.

## Sex and Mother Language

The 2/3 of them are women while the 1/3 of participant NEETs are men with all of them coming from Greece with a Greek mother tongue.

## Obstacles they face

Half of the NEETs refer to economic and obstacles as the limiting factor on getting in the employment or educational field. Their lifestyle is characterized by lower standard of living because of the low outcomes or the long-term unemployment situation the face. Few of them are facing geographical obstacles, living in remoted areas or villages on peripheral regions with fewer opportunities both in the education and the employment sector. A minority mentions social obstacles like gender, phyletic discrimination or discrimination based on their sexual orientation. Only 4 of the requested sample of the 31 participants make a reference to educational and cultural differences, number that proves that the participants didn't come from a refugee or migrant background.

## Education:

Examining their educational level, the majority (28/31) are graduates of Tertiary Education which means that they have obtained a study title of a higher or technical educational Institute. From this 90%, the 37% has already received their Master Degree in a more specialized educational direction.

## Employment:

### Obstacles in finding employment

When it comes to the problems they are mainly facing in finding employment the most common response is the limited number of work positions related to their educational studies or their field of expertise in compilation with the underpaid works with salaries that cannot provide any independency or security. Most of the participants state that it is easier to find a job in the customer service sector as a waitress or barista rather than any other work field. Another factor that consists an obstacle for entering the employment sector is that the majority of the job position announcements or advertisements set as a



“sine qua non”, of an, at least, 3-5 years of work experience obtained from the applicants on the job. The participants on the survey find this situation completely unfair, as it doesn't provide them any opportunity to even start a proper work. It's like they are excluded from the system without even entering into it. A great number of answers referred to the increased competition rates in the Greek national market, characterized by high demand but few positions available for the unemployed. The Greek employability context is also facing the vast matter of the saturation of certain professions as philologists, lawyers, accountants, which in combination with the saturation of our public sector, diminishes dramatically the opportunities and changes offered in the job seeking state condition.

### Interest in becoming entrepreneurs

When it comes to the interest on the field of entrepreneurship, 23 out of 31 respondents answered that they are interested in entering this world and follow a career path oriented to entrepreneurship.

### Skills for an entrepreneur

Regarding the skills that has someone to gain in order to become active and operate in the business field the majority of the participants agreed that a mix and combination of skills is needed. Among those soft skills, the most answered ones were:

- Communications skills
- Organizing skills
- Creativity
- Capability of taking initiatives
- Innovative thinking
- Commitment and Dedication
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Leadership skills



- Team management and team work
- Decision making

Some of them referred to some hard skills that have obtained or concurred through courses or studies such as knowledge on foreign languages, knowledge in global or national trading as well as specialized economic knowledge or financial literacy.

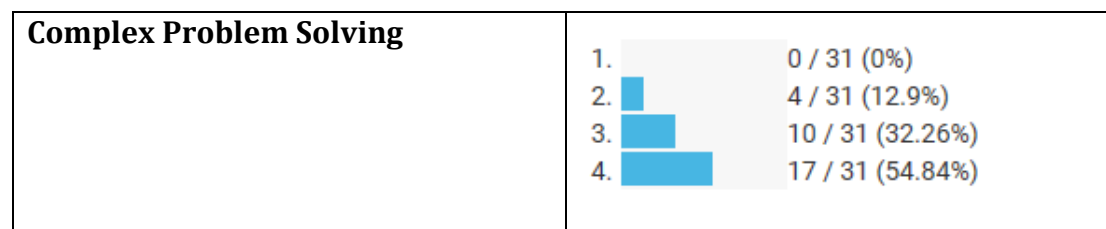
## Training:

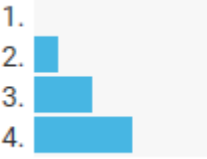



### Participation in training activities

More than a half of the responders (55%) stated that they have participated in some short of educational or training activity during the last year mostly related to their field of expertise or studies. The majority of this percentage is having their Master courses to get a postgraduate university degree in a relevant area in order to deepen their knowledge in the field or other scientific areas for more job alternatives. Some of them have also participated in educational or training seminars or workshops organized with a variety of thematic fields. Some of them pertain to entrepreneurship, to IT tools and educational systems as well as to digital technologies and logistics.

### Extent to which they possess any of the following skills

The participants were asked to assess and rate the extent to which they claim to possess the skill set above (from 0 = lacking the skill to 4 = meaning that the skill has been mastered). Here are the results:



<b>Critical Thinking</b>	
<b>Creativity</b>	
<b>People Management</b>	
<b>Cooperation with Others</b>	

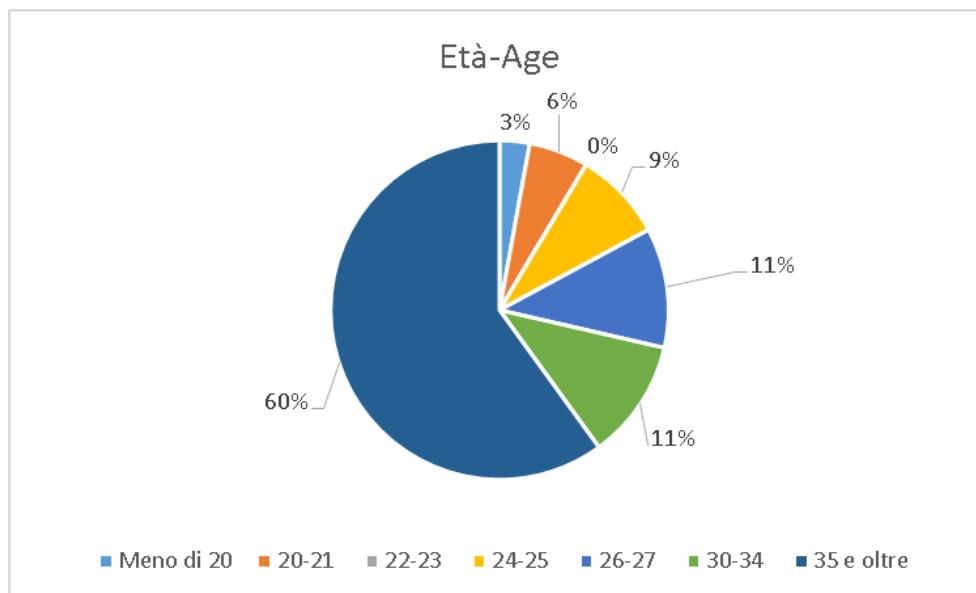
As indicated from the above-presented results, the majority of the participants in the questionnaire survey seem to obtain in a dignified rate the soft skills examined. This is also connected to the fact that a significant percentage of Greek NEETs or as a matter of fact the overwhelming majority of them, as it was pointed out from the desk research, are higher education graduates and sometimes overqualified but still unable to enter the employment field or just unwilling to compromise with a job position not fitting their standards.

### Importance of these skills and interest in participating in training activities

The 78% of the respondents find those skills to be absolutely needed in order to build entrepreneurial mind-set and enter the modern business world while the 94% of them are interested in enhancing those skills by participating in more training activities.

## Italy

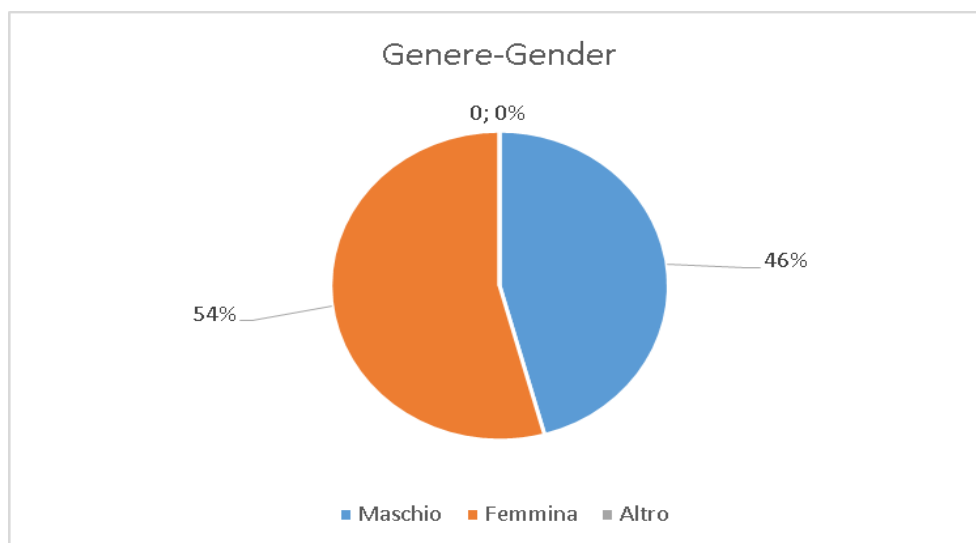
We collected 35 survey responses. The images below show the profiles' distribution by age and gender. All the responder were Italian native speakers.



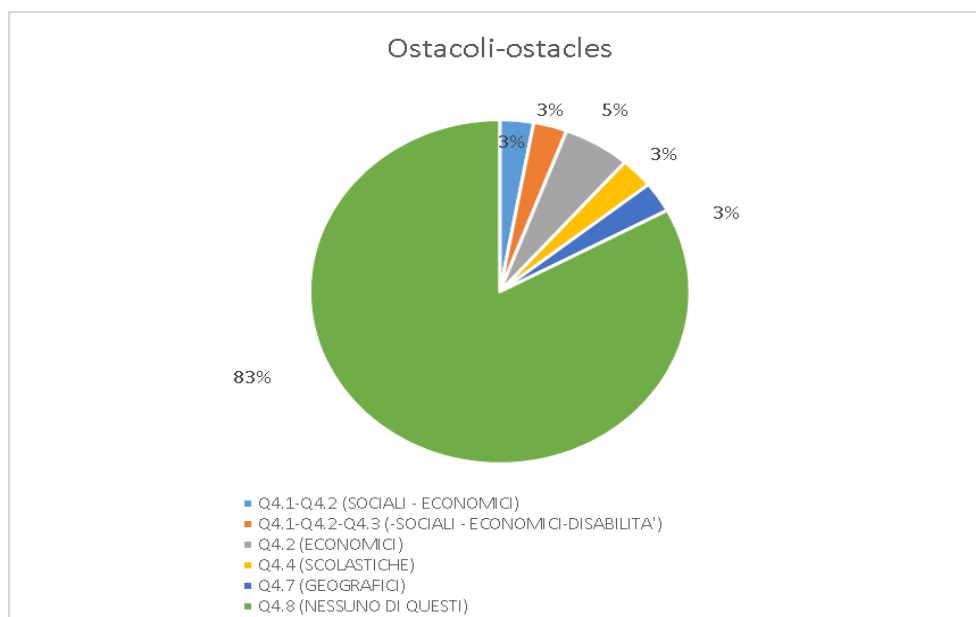
The age distribution of our sample is unbalanced. We have found many difficulties in obtaining feedback from the Neet population. The sample of the survey is mostly composed of individuals engaged in Neet support activities and in the care of adult education. Nevertheless we consider the answers interesting because the development of entrepreneurial skills is often the main theme of the work of the trainers, coaches and counselors who have at their disposal a privileged observatory.







The following image highlights the perception of obstacles for the statistical sample.

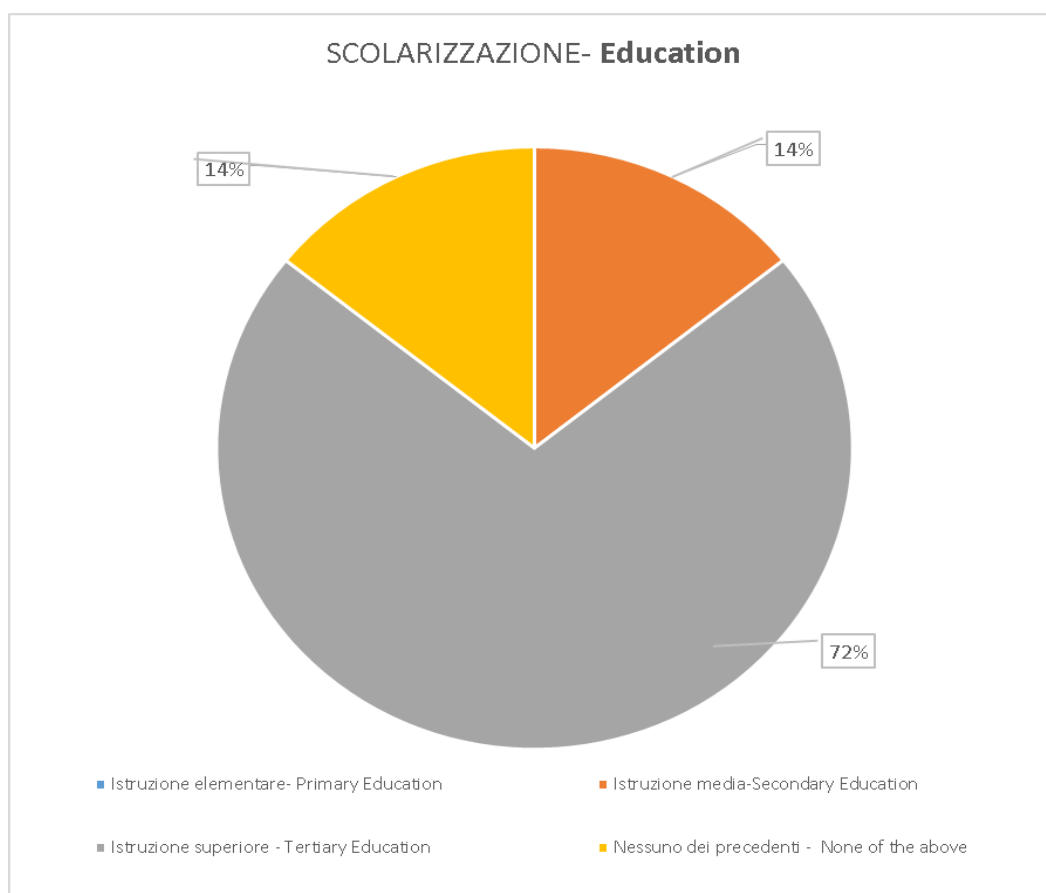


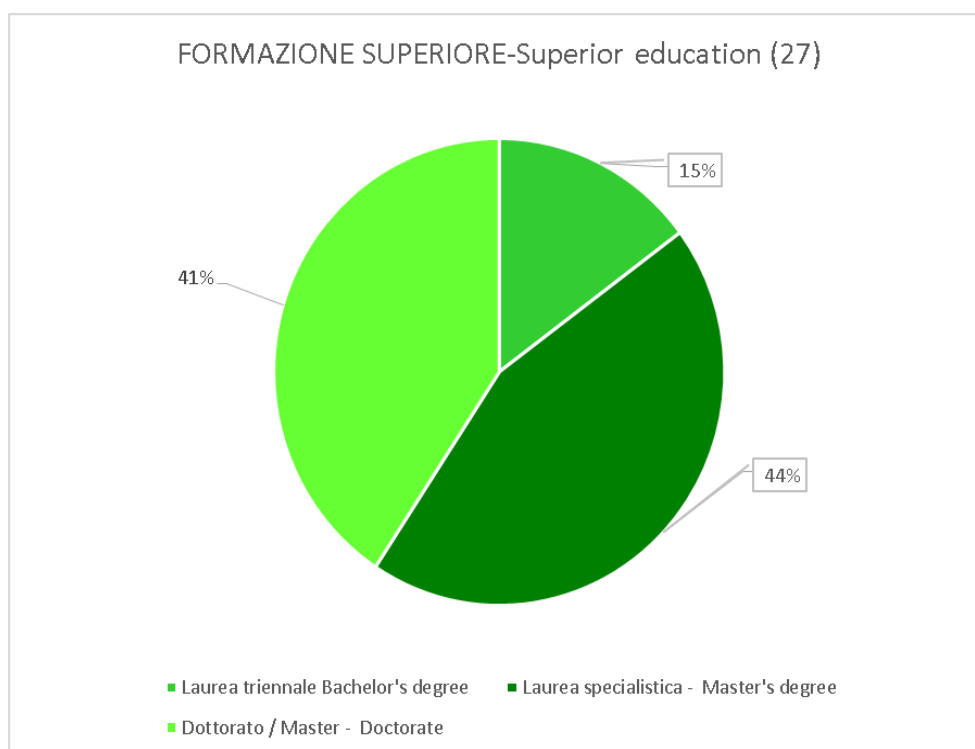
Note:

- 1- The social and the economic obstacles are associated, the feeling is that the way for entrepreneurship is more difficult than a job research

- 2- Disability is considered as antithetical to the world of work. This generates psychological and social problems.
- 3- The low social permeability in Italy makes it difficult to believe in the success of an entrepreneurial enterprise and sometimes entrepreneurship is considered as the only alternative to the impossibility of finding an employee.
- 4- The big part of survey sample didn't declare obstacles (it depends from the quality of sample).

### Education level for the survey sample.





## Employment

The answers referred to the difficulties in finding job highlights:

- gender discrimination for women
- economic crisis
- misalignment between school and job requirements
- entrepreneurship really difficult if you don't start with solid economic foundations

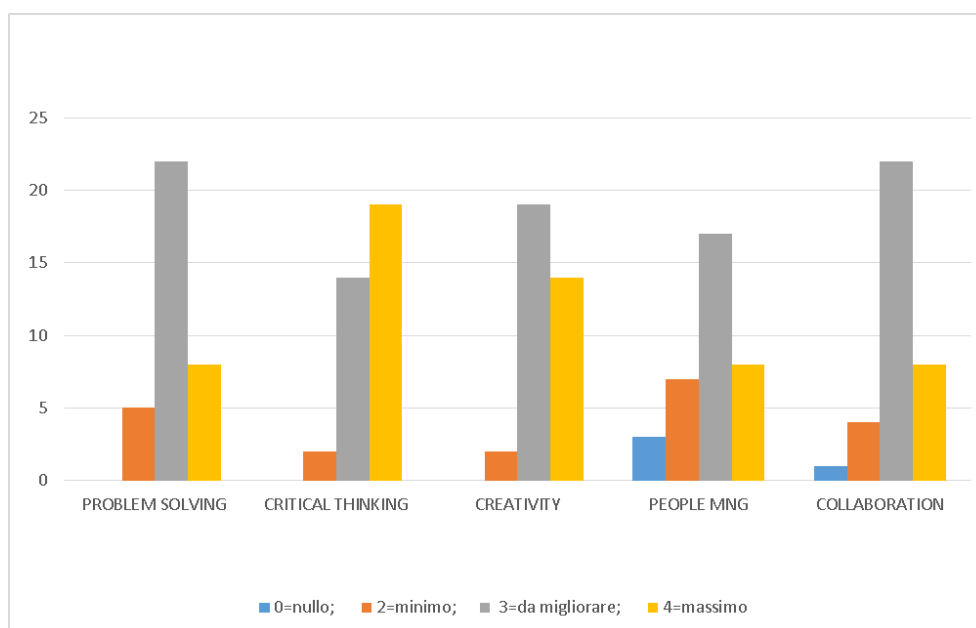
The 71% of the survey sample would be to become an entrepreneur and the gaps are identified in the following list

- problem solving
- language skills (english)
- negotiation
- business

- digital skills
- networking

The 80% of the survey sample participated in training activities during the last year (English and master). The most of them chose masters and technical lessons.

## SELF EVALUATION FOR ENTREPRENEUR SKILLS



The 66% of the survey sample declares that the skills above-mentioned are extremely important in today's entrepreneurial world and the 38% indicate them as adequately important.

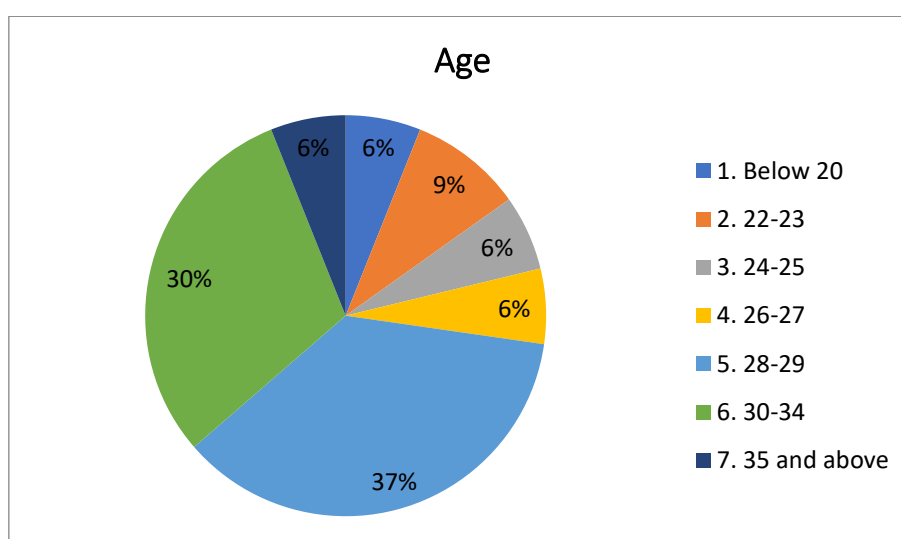
The 57% of the survey sample declares that is interested in activities for entrepreneurial skill development.

## Poland

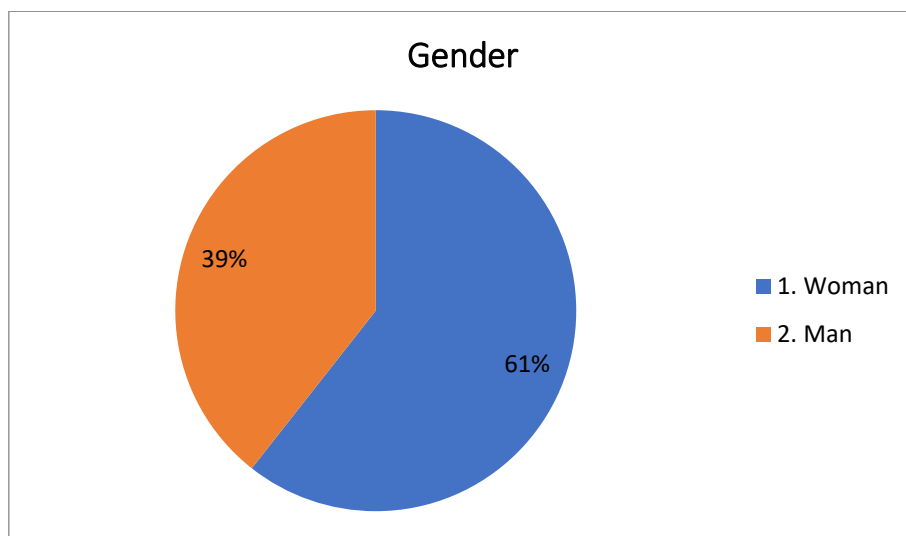
The target group was asked to complete the questionnaire, which was anonymous and confidential. Questionnaire results will contribute to the development of the final product

of the project. The questions were related to their: Profile, Education, Employment, Training and Participation in future events of the project. The questionnaire was completed by 33 people and obtained results provided us with the following information about the respondents.

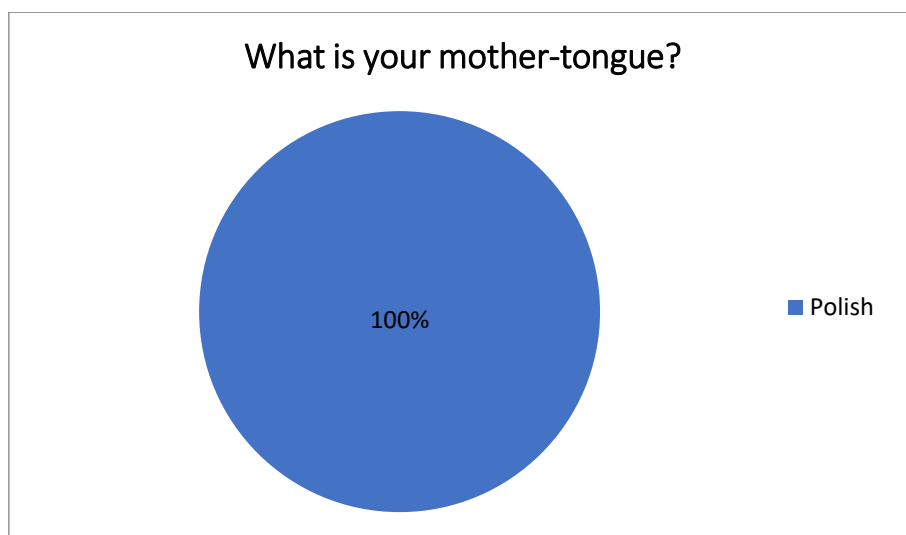
## Profile



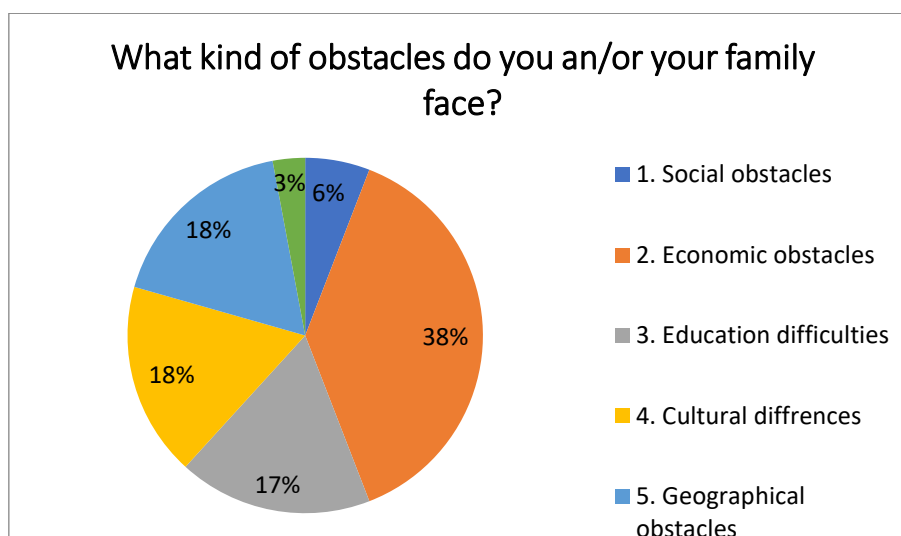
The most respondents of the survey were in age 28-29 (37%). The next largest group were people in age 30-34 (30%), then 22-23 (9%) while the groups 24-25, 30-34, below 20 and above 35 years old were represented equally by 6%.



Among the respondents, majority of them were women (61%).

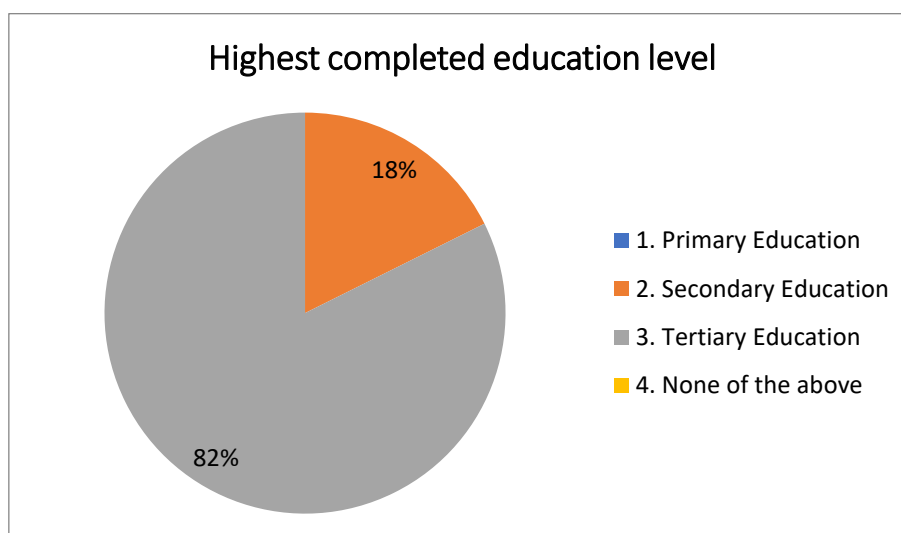


As 100% of respondents were Poles, Polish was their mother-tongue. All of them are Poles.



The participants admitted that the main obstacles for them are: economic (38%), cultural (18%), social (18%) and education (17%) problems. Small group (3%) of the respondents felt that they are not facing any obstacles.

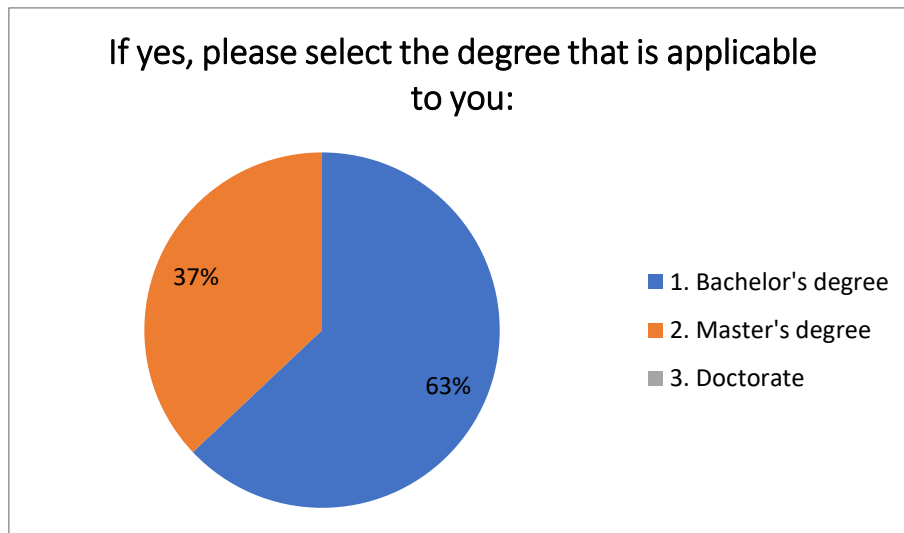
## Education



82% of the respondents completed tertiary education and 18% secondary education.

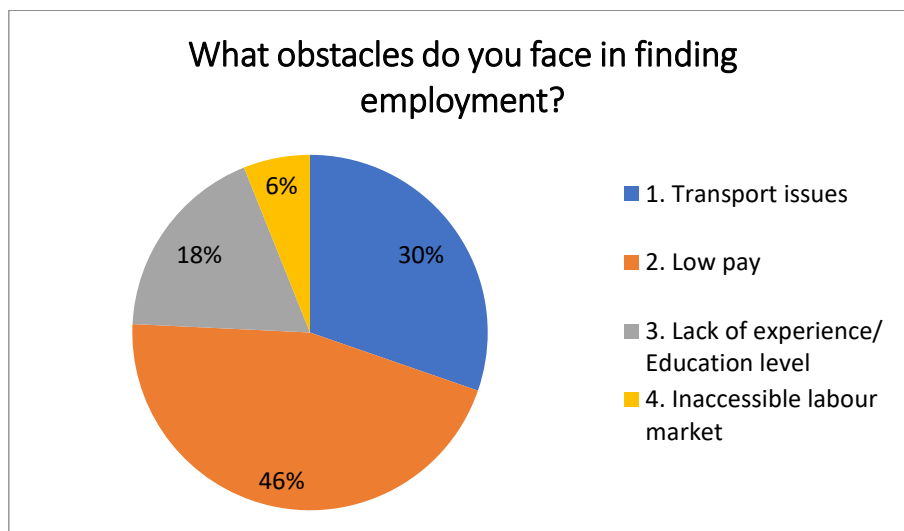




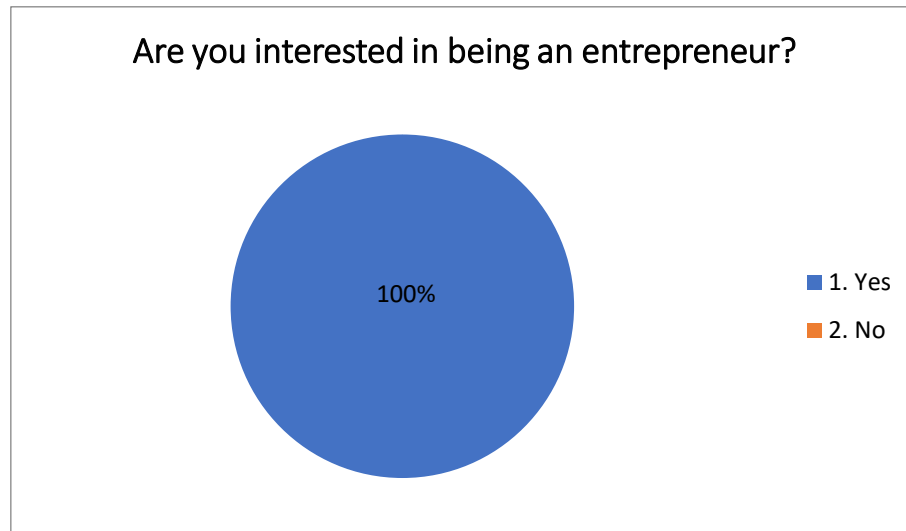


All respondents have obtained a higher education degree. The biggest group of the respondents (63%) has obtained Bachelor's degree while the rest of them (33%), Master's degree.

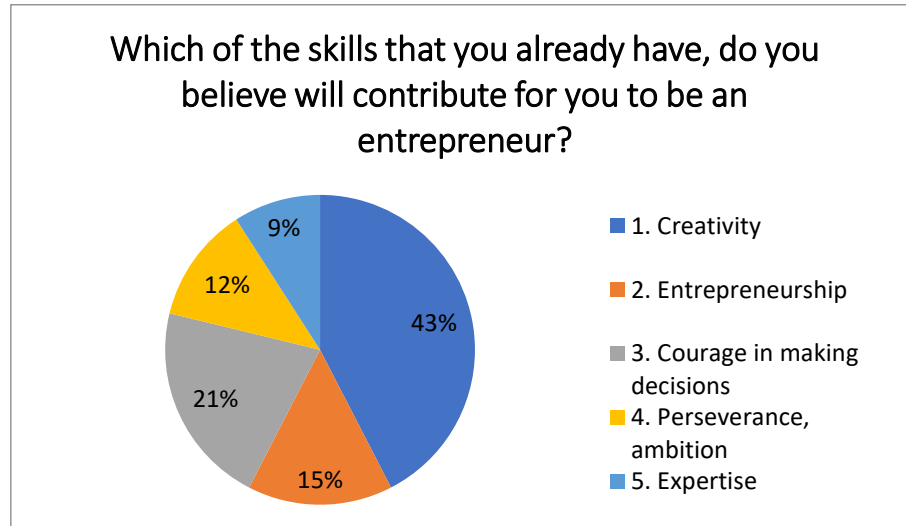
## Employment



The main obstacles in finding employment are: low pay (46%), transport issues (30%), lack of experience / education level (18%) and inaccessible labour market (6%).



All stated that they are interested in being an entrepreneur.



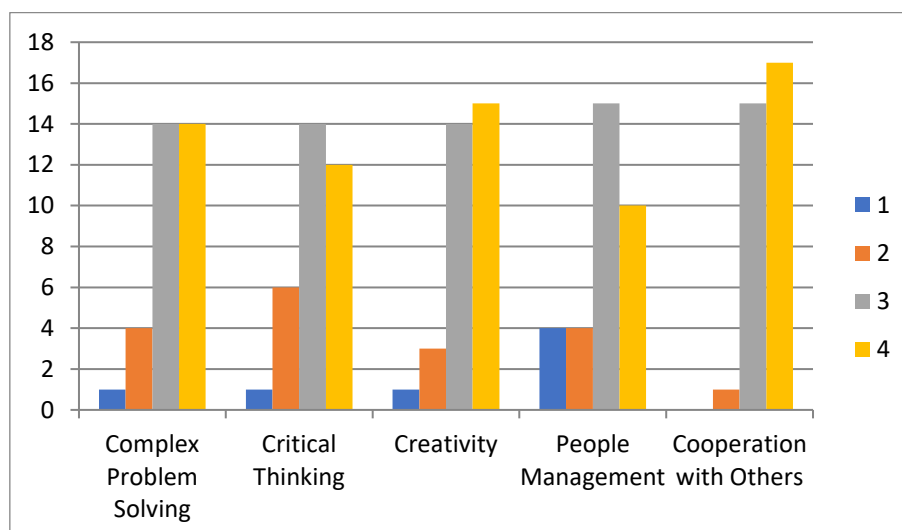
All respondents believe that certain skills that they already possess can contribute to their entrepreneurial position. When it comes to particular skills, the following were

pointed: creativity (43%), entrepreneurship (15%), courage in making decisions (21%), perseverance and ambition (12%) and expertise (9%).

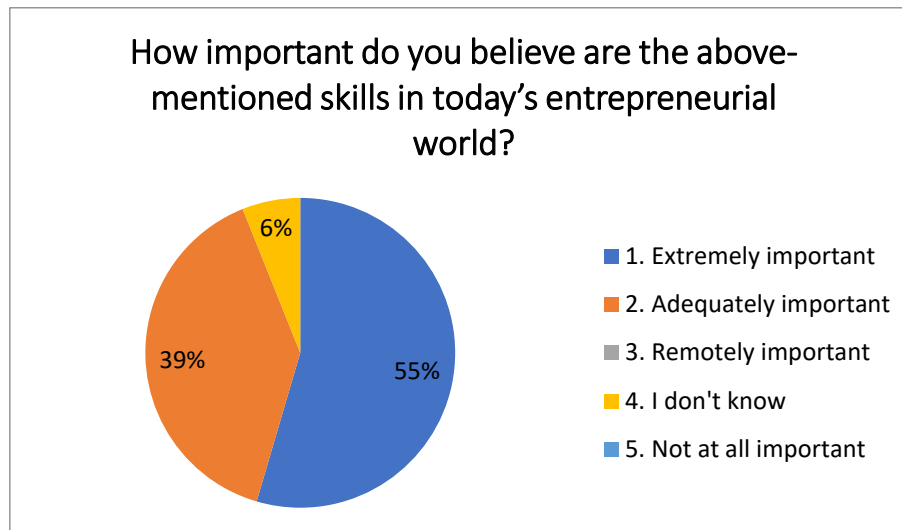
## Training



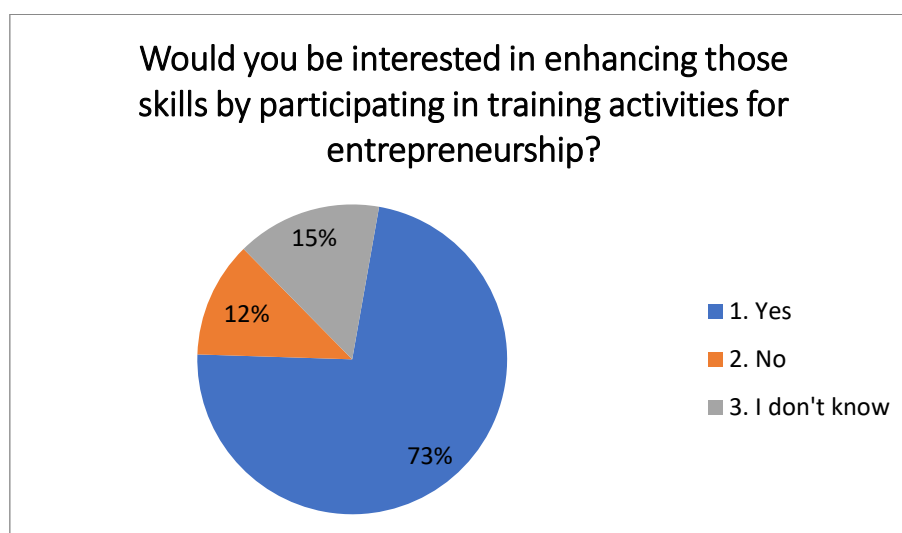
The majority of the respondents (79%) have participated in trainings during the last year. These concerned training in the fields of IT and finance, language courses and business management.



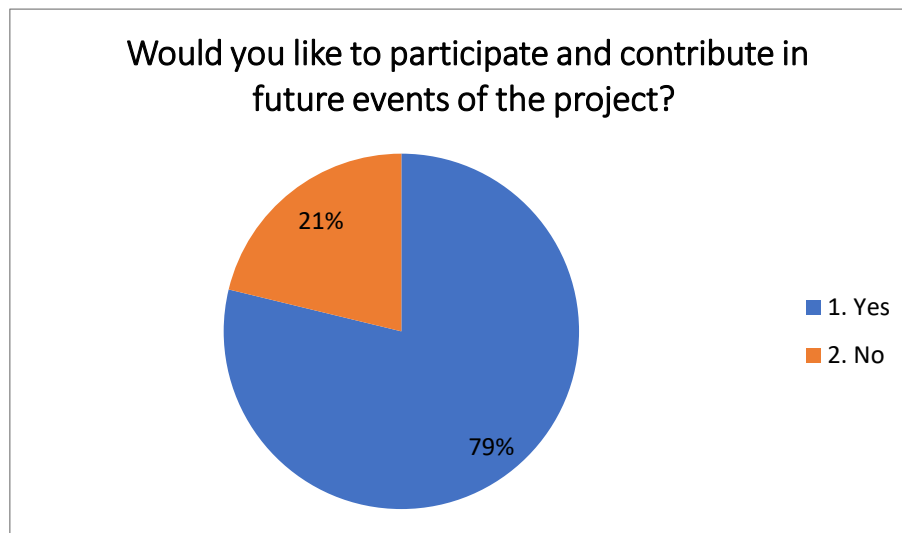
In one of the last questions, participants were asked to rate their skills - critical thinking, creativity, complex problem solving, people management and cooperation with others (from 0 = lacking the skill to 4 = meaning that the skill has been mastered). The above graph presents the answers.



Most of the participants admitted that they have very well or well developed these skills and want to continue developing them because they are useful in today's entrepreneurial world.



The participants were asked if they would be interested in enhancing the previously mentioned skills and the majority of respondents were positive in participating in a relevant training.



Respondents will stay informed about the project development and results, as most of them indicated such interest.

At the end of the questionnaire the respondents were asked to give feedback or their comment/concern/clarification regarding the questionnaire or the topic of entrepreneurship in Poland. Their answers were divided, some of them mentioned that there are no good opportunities to become entrepreneurs in Poland and the courses available on the market are too general.

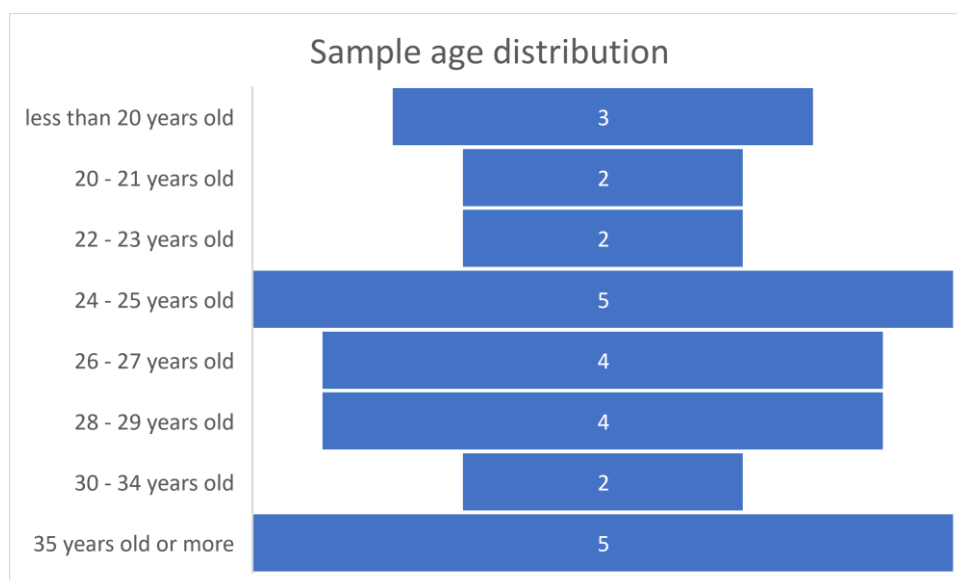
## Portugal

To complement the results of the desk research and define the needs of the target group in Portugal, online survey has been distributed. It focused on the challenges faced by the

target group in scope of integration into the labour market and their perceived upskilling needs.

## Respondents profile and job market opportunities

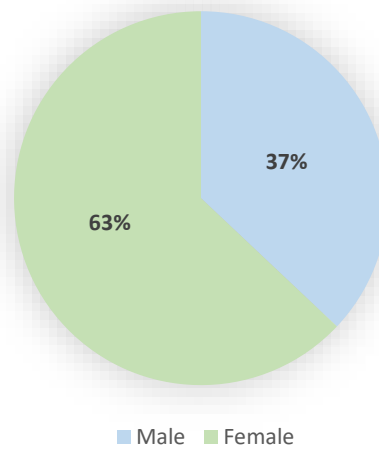
The survey has been completed by 27 respondents, all Portuguese nationals. The majority of the sample represented the youth group up to 29 years old (20) with concentration of respondents between 24 and 29 years. Meanwhile, the age groups of 30-34 and above 35 were represented by 2 and 5 respondents, respectively.



Within the sample, 63% of respondents were females, while male respondents covered 37% of the sample.

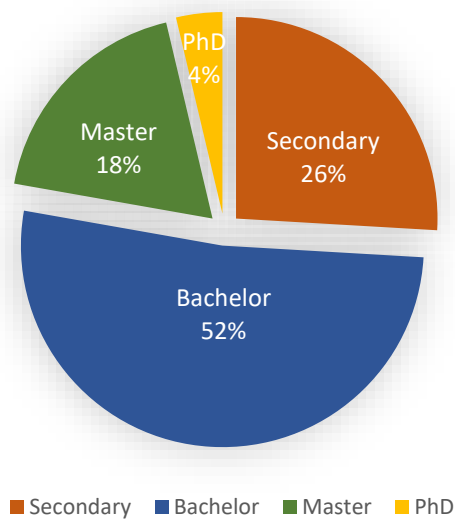


## Gender distribution



While 26% has obtained only secondary education level, 74% of the respondents obtained a higher education degree (52% bachelor's degree, 19% Masters and 4% PhD).

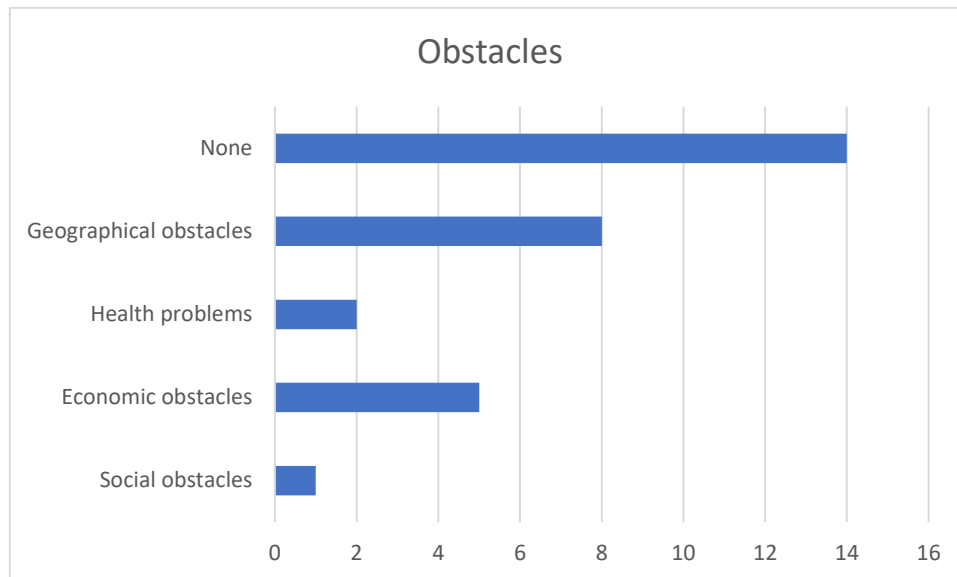
## Education level



In majority, the respondents did not feel as they are facing any specific obstacles. About 52% of them do not consider that their, or their family's, opportunities are obstructed by



any external barriers. However, a significant group of the Portuguese respondents struggle with geographical barriers (30%), followed by economic obstacles (19%). Moreover, in case of economic difficulties, 60% of the respondents in such situation encountered an additional barrier, social, health or geographical one.



While the majority of the respondents did not perceive their situation as related with specific obstacles, a following open question ('which type of obstacles do you face in the job search?') has shown that 85% of the respondents face job search related difficulties. The respondents mentioned difficulties related with 1/ lack of opportunities, 2/ mismatch between the human resources available and the job offer, and 3/ obstacles related with selection procedures.

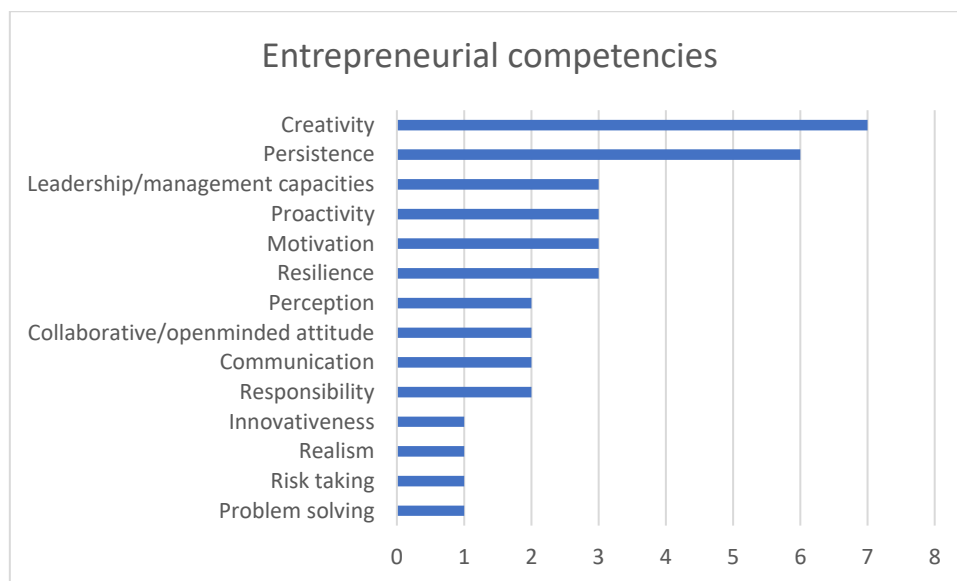
59% of the respondents reported lack of employment opportunities as the encountered obstacle. In this category, 3 characteristics were underlined. The biggest group found lack of, or limited, opportunities in their specific area of residence – 41%. In this group, 11% detailed that there is lack of opportunities in their specific professional area in their zone. Meanwhile, 7% pointed out that there is lack of quality employment opportunities, either due to low quality of the positions, either due to salary levels not corresponding to the knowledge requirements.

19% of the respondents have mentioned a complementary issue related with mismatch between the profile of job searchers and the job offers on the market. In this scope, some young people were struggling to meet the minimum experience requirements (11%) and others identified job opportunities, but out of their region of residence or profile (11%).

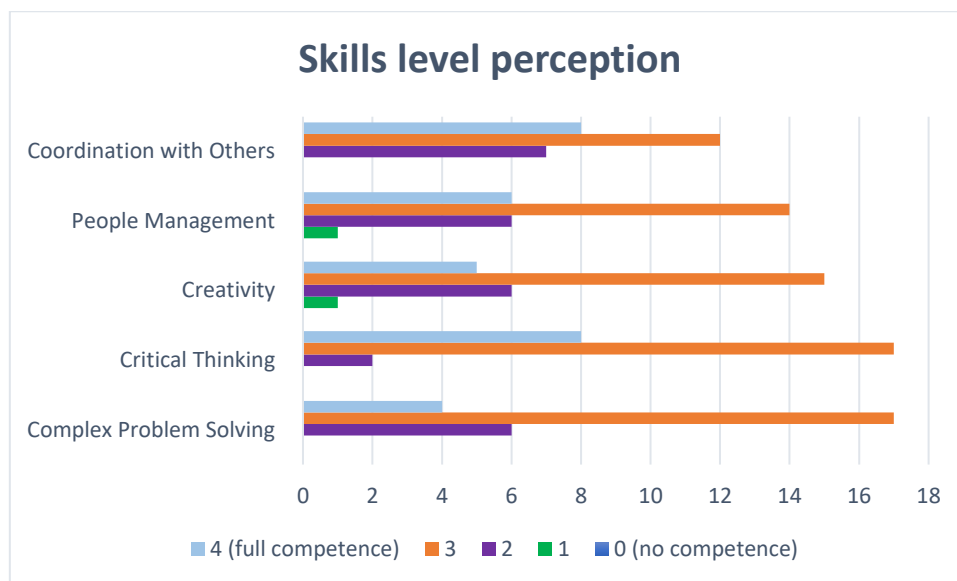
The last category of the reported obstacles is related with the selection process. The list of reported issues includes a lack of clarity regarding job offers and selection procedures, bureaucratic procedures, but also lack of recognition for competencies of young people. One of the respondents also pointed out that she/he faced personal obstacles related with the lack of capacity to present well his/her candidacy within the selection process.

### Entrepreneurial capacities and orientation

Portuguese respondents presented a high level of interest in entrepreneurship as a possible career. 70% of respondents shown an interest in becoming an entrepreneur, while 30% was not considering this career option. They recognised a broad range of competencies needed in the scope of entrepreneurship and that they do possess some of the relevant for entrepreneurs' characteristics. In that scope, out of 24 respondents recognising that they possess some relevant entrepreneurial skills, within an open-end question, 29% considered creativity as their strong entrepreneurial capacity and 25% persistence. Several respondents considered also that they possess leadership and/or management capacities, proactivity, motivation and resilience – 13% each.



When asked to assess their competencies in 5 pre-defined areas – 1. Complex problem solving, 2. Critical thinking, 3. Creativity, 4. People management, 5. Coordination with others; Portuguese respondents in majority perceived themselves as skilful in those areas. As high as 93% perceived to have high (3) or full competency (4) in the area of critical thinking. 78% assessed their complex problem-solving skills as on high or full competency level. While the majority of respondents had evaluated their capacities in remaining categories on high or full competence level (75% in each of the remaining categories), in this scope it was people management skills and creativity that had been evaluated at the lowest level.



All listed competencies were considered by the Portuguese respondents as very important (63%) or important (37%) and despite highly evaluating their competences level, 67% of participants was interested in further developing their competencies in those areas, while the remaining 26% was open to such possibility.

Within the group, 63% participated last year in training activities. While the specific topics were highly diverse, next to technically oriented programmes, 2 areas – marketing and communication, and educational competencies, where the ones more prominent.

## Spain

The questionnaire has been directed to people from different backgrounds that have something in common which is that they are all unemployed and not enrolled in any training activity for the moment. From the 30 people that answered, 9 (30%) are 24 or 25 years old, 6 (20%) are 22 or 23 years old, 5 (16,7%) are 20 or 21 years old, another 6 (20%) are under 20 years old, 2 (6,7%) are 26 or 27 years old and 2 (6,7%) are over 28 years old.

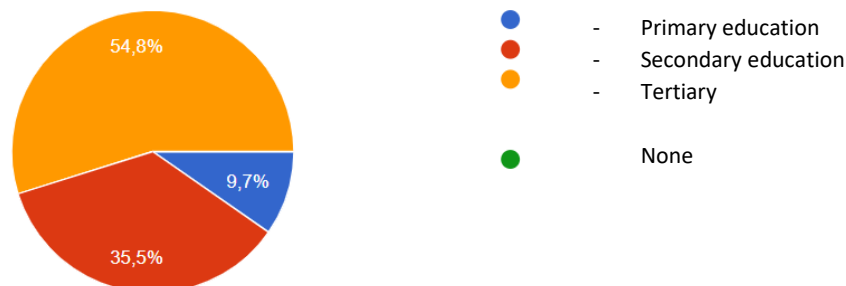
From the 30 people that answered the questionnaire, 56,7% are women and 43,3% men. About the language in which they communicate, 86,7% of participants have Spanish as their mother tongue, 2,7% speak Latino Spanish as their mother tongue and 3,3% Italian.

To the question, *what kind of obstacles do you and your family face?* 36,6% of participants answered that they face economic obstacles, 30% face educational difficulties, 10% face geographical obstacles, 10% face social obstacles and 3,3% face obstacles related to their disability. The rest did not experience any of the obstacles described in the questionnaire and opted for the answer “none of the above”.

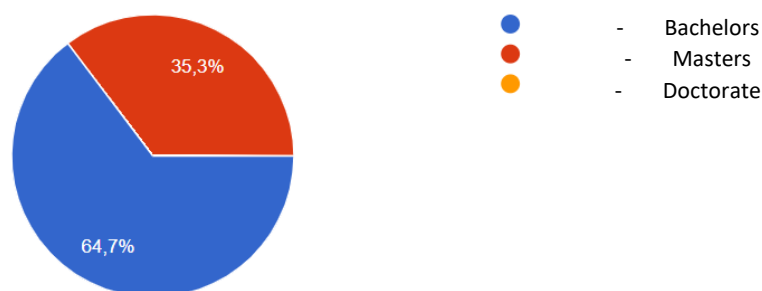
To the option, *highest completed education level*, 53,3% selected the option “tertiary education”, 36,7 selected the option “secondary education” and 10% “primary education”. From those who selected the option “tertiary education”, 62,5% hold a bachelor’s degree and 37,5% hold a master’s degree.



### Highest completed education level



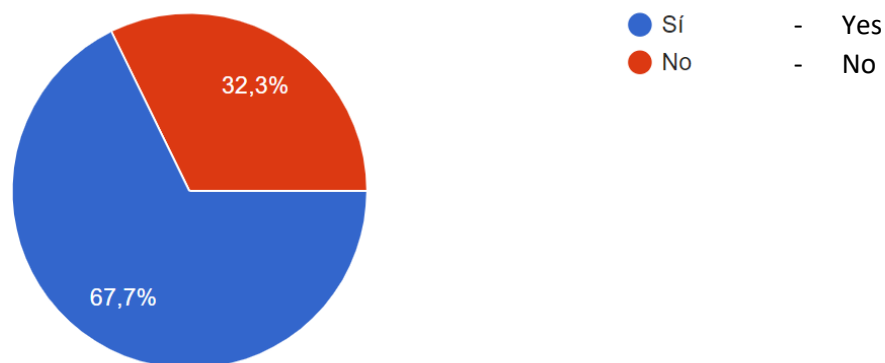
### Type of tertiary education



To the question *what obstacles do you face in finding employment?* The answer that repeats the most is the **lack of experience** and the lack of opportunities. Participants answered that in many jobs they ask for minimum 2 years of experience and those who experience economic difficulties cannot accept trainee contracts with no remuneration. There were other answers to that question such as the lack of training compared to what the market demands, poor working conditions and geographical difficulties.

To the question *are you interested in being an entrepreneur?* 67,7% were affirmative answers and 32,3% were negative answers.

Are you interested in being an entrepreneur?



The next question was: *which of the skills that you already have, do you believe will contribute to be an entrepreneur?* In short, most of the answers were related to the fact that the participants had little or none experience in this field but that they would be interested in learning to someday become an entrepreneur.

More than half of the participants (61,3%) had not participated in any training activity for the last year but 38,7% did. The topic of the training activity varies considerably. For example, some of the participants did courses related to beauty, others to marketing, language courses, secondary education courses and business courses.

About the skills they possess, 21 of the 30 people that answered the questionnaire think that their complex solving skills is of 3 out of 4. Critical thinking received 13 votes for 3 out of 4, while creativity, people management and coordination with others were the skills less voted.

To the question *how important do you believe are the above-mentioned skills in today's entrepreneurial world?* 58,1% consider them very important, 35,5% consider them extremely important and 6,5% do not know how important they are. To the question, *would you be interested in enhancing those skills by participating in training activities?* 67,7% were affirmative answers while 22,6% were hesitant and 9,7% were negative.



## Key results of research

From the data analysed in the investigation of national practices together with the results of the questionnaire directed to people in a situation of unemployment, we can extract some conclusions:

There are particular groups of young disadvantaged adults or marginalised youth that are more at risk of being NEETs. Specifically, in Spain, those who face economic obstacles are a very vulnerable group. This is the main obstacle that our survey respondents answered, followed by educational difficulties, social obstacles and difficulties related to a disability.

Although there are some mechanisms to integrate them into the labour market, they are not enough. The European youth guarantee did not show positive results after its implementation as it has been explained. The programme for the promotion of employment is a good initiative that has been implemented since 2006, however it is too general, and it is not directed specifically to youngsters and the same happens with the associations: their work is fantastic yet not directed to NEETs, more directed to promote labour insertion in general. About the action plan for youth employment, it is a new initiative that directs to this specific target group and it seems very interesting, however, as it is very recent and newly made, the results have not been analysed yet.

Our investigation also showed gaps related to the importance of the entrepreneurial mind-set in Spain. The thing is that there is no culture of entrepreneurship in Spain. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), Spain was nº 44 out of 54 countries in respect of entrepreneurial spirit and there are less than 10% of entrepreneurs in the country. Among the causes that the survey respondents reported, there are: high tax charges, excessive bureaucracy and of course, a lack of training for entrepreneurs (Global Entrepreneurship report, 2019).



## Conclusions and Recommendations

To sum up, numerous studies show that entrepreneurship not only can, but must be taught. Success in business requires the proper preparation of an entrepreneur, including the field of financial knowledge. This requires the development of appropriate curricula and their implementation at all levels of education, by each EU member state. In order to reach the entrepreneurial capacity of young people in Europe, the labour market at each context, should develop and implement attractive and good-quality training on enhancing the competencies required in today's world and finance on a national and EU level, educational programmes tailored to specific age groups, including NEETs.

In Bulgaria, the conducted research has shown that the issue of NEETs is driven by personal and socio-economic factors like gender, age group, educational level, ethnicity, region, urbanization, etc. Bulgaria's economy is characterized by deteriorating demographic conditions and record-high labour shortages, so that the country has to try to make the most of its available human resources. This further underlines the need for development and maintenance for a system that identifies numbers of inactive young people. The findings of this report highlight the need for further policy and operational efforts by responsible institutions to provide successful responses to youth economical inactivity in Bulgaria. Improving the quality of data on NEETs would be the main precondition to formulate successful policy responses to the issues faced by young people in terms of their professional realization.

In Cyprus, according to the desk and questionnaire research, CSI suggests the following policy recommendations:

- The development of a national definition of youth.



- Unified legal framework regarding youth (articles to cover their rights to access the labour market, rights in payment, social insurances, recognition of competences, access to lifelong training and free education); taking also into consideration the gender gap in unemployment and the obstacles that NEET face in Cyprus in order to protect the vulnerable groups of society (young migrants, refugees, people with disabilities and mental health issues as well as geographical obstacles in finding employment.).
- Centralized action by the government to tackle the phenomenon of young people being neither in education nor employment and training (inclusion and integration policies, funding for youth initiatives, etc.).
- Implementation of a national research specifically on NEETs so as to capture the reality of young people not in education nor employment or training in Cyprus to better design any public instrument to support them.

In Denmark, based on the data collected, Denmark seems to be tackling the youth unemployment and NEET problem in a serious manner by protecting them with frequent career guidance, vocational schools, and income support. Entrepreneurship is offered as an educational topic, meaning that the students have already had an interest into this field. There are a large range of actors (student incubators, municipal business service, regional incubators) that offer information to the young entrepreneurs but they are mostly meant to help them with counselling and feedback, offer them information regarding legal regulations when starting a new business as well as information on funding and application process. So far though, there are no projects in the field of entrepreneurship that target the NEETs only, projects that help them build an entrepreneurial mind and lead them onto the entrepreneurial path. With that said, the objectives of the EKS project might have a great impact on the NEETs in Denmark.

In Greece, according to the research findings, KAINOTOMIA Lifelong Learning Center suggests the following recommendations:

- The creation of links between the education and training systems and employability, to the labour market and the combat of unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion.
- The amelioration of the attractiveness of education and training in our country (EKS project).
- The encouragement of strategic actions, youth policies and initiatives aiming at integration and reintegration.
- The provision of placements and internships targeting exclusively at NEETs and especially those coming from a vulnerable background.
- The organisation of communication groups in between NEETs that will allow them to communicate their concerns and share same problems and fears.
- The creation of a targeted and unified legal framework for youth with great focus on salary rights, social security rights, rights of vulnerable groups and protective measure for them.
- The enforcement of a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

In Italy, the need which emerged from the survey is to change the understanding of youth that entrepreneurship is a career choice of privileged people with existing solid economic foundations and build an entrepreneurial mentality among NEETs youth. The skills which have to be improved among youth mostly, as seen from the research, are problem solving, creativity and people management. Nonetheless, we cannot forget the skills related to business and networking that in Italy could be a key for success.

In Poland, it has been concluded that the actions taken by the European Union and Polish institutions for the benefit of entrepreneurship education are still insufficient. Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility among Polish entrepreneurs, training of entrepreneurship teachers, introduction of entrepreneurship to the set of matriculation subjects, wide implementation of project tasks on entrepreneurship and economics classes and general ethics teaching in schools, can help citizens build, develop and update their entrepreneurial skills, and thus better prepare them for profound socio-economic changes.

In Portugal, the abovementioned research has shown that there is a relevant gap in the entrepreneurship support within official channels in Portugal. Moreover, the relevant geographical barriers in Portugal increase the importance of entrepreneurship to create self-employment and new job opportunities especially in peripheral and rural areas. In that scope, upskilling opportunities for entrepreneurship should be provided in a highly inclusive and accessible way, as well as communicated and disseminated efficiently to eliminate issues with inclusion of NEETs in such locations. Distant learning opportunities can be of high relevance in that scope and should play a significant role in inclusion in the labour market of young adults struggling with geographical obstacles. Meanwhile, among others, entrepreneurship training and education offer within the Portuguese labour market environment rarely address the need for development of soft skills. Hence, gamification can be a relevant methodology to support of development the required skills for entrepreneurship and address the abovementioned issues.

In Spain, it has been concluded that more innovative projects are needed to foster the access of young NEETs to employment and entrepreneurship. It has been proved that most NEETs in Spain end up demoralized by the current lack of opportunities and the work conditions. That is why there are some abilities that need to be encouraged from



school, such as creativity and problem-solving techniques. Currently in Spain there is no project like EKS. With regards to the entrepreneurial mind-set, Spain's recommendations for future action are to try to change the culture of entrepreneurship in the country. There is no entrepreneurial education at school and the entrepreneurial framework conditions are weak in general. It is also very important to design channels of communication that work efficiently among youth and promote the tools available in a more long-lasting manner.

Concluding then, a gap that can be identified among all the EU partner countries involved is the lack of an adequate entrepreneurial mindset and a cultivated entrepreneurial education among young NEETs. All the already existing schemes, although some sufficient more than others, fail to an extent to provide a long-lasting solution to the integration of NEETs into the educational sector and/or labour market. More inclusive policy schemes specifically targeted to young NEETs need to be developed on each national context with guidelines from the European Union which should support its member states in successfully implementing those plans and address the current needs of the target group. The *"Entrepreneurship is the Key to Success"* (EKS) project aims to bridge that gap by developing an online game based on the needs identified through the desk and questionnaire research and use gamification as an innovative tool to foster young NEETs' employability and enhance the skills required in today's entrepreneurial world. Best practises are key to design suitable and efficient tools and frameworks on an EU level. Each state in turn, should embrace those frameworks and apply them inclusively, strategically securing the rights of young people to education and employment. More research on a national and EU level on the phenomenon offers new insights of the needs that should be addressed for the integration of NEETs. Lastly, including entrepreneurship into the school curricula of each member state, is seemed to be one of the best practice examples that could change youth's mentality regarding entrepreneurship as a future career path and thus, enhance their relevant skills required



from a very young age. Only by using the full capacity of our youth in developing innovative entrepreneurial ideas, we will successfully build the competitive and sustainable cities and communities of our future global society.





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NEEDS4NEETS project

GARANZIA Giovani (<http://www.garanziaiovani.gov.it/>)

#GaranziaHack hackathon





Programma AMVA, Progetto Giovani Laureati Neet

SELFIEmployment by ANPAL - National Agency for Active Labour Policies

FONDAZIONE CARIPLO

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