

Toolkit for youth workers

A2.4 Development of toolkit

Partners: CESIE ETS, Migrafrica, RESET & IRC Hellas

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MIGRAFRICA



cesie
the world is only one creature



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Summary of the project

PROCEED is a 2-years long Erasmus+ program, which includes the contributions of four different organizations from four different countries: Migrafrica (coordinator) from Germany, RESET from Cyprus, IRC Hellas from Greece and CESIE from Italy. The main aim of this project is to enhance the knowledge and competence of educators and professionals in the socio-educational sector regarding civic engagement and job placement of young people in a NEET (Not [engaged] in Education, Employment or Training) situation. This will be achieved through training, support, monitoring, international peer exchanges, and communities of practice. PROCEED also seeks to improve the employability of young people who have dropped out of school and are not currently employed, providing them with the opportunity to acquire soft skills and prepare for entry into the workforce. Lastly, this project aims to encourage cooperation between countries and organizations to promote socio-economic inclusion models for young people who are currently unemployed and not in education.

Introduction to the deliverable

This toolkit within A2.4 has been developed within the framework of the PROCEED project to support youth workers and practitioners in promoting the social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged NEET youth. It offers a set of practical and accessible resources designed to enhance their capacity to engage young people through a structured educational model focused on Employability, Self-Advocacy, and Civic Engagement. Alongside guidance on the program structure, the Toolkit includes an overview of selected best practices, tools, and approaches that can be adapted to different local and national contexts.

The development of the toolkit followed a two-phase process:

1. Initial development (Pre-Piloting – WP3 & WP4): In the first phase, the PROCEED partnership designed the core framework and the three educational modules based on research, expert consultations, and analysis of best practices. This initial version of the Toolkit provided youth workers with foundational materials and strategies to engage NEET youth in meaningful, empowering ways.
2. Adaptation and enrichment (Post-Piloting – WP3 and WP4): The second phase came after piloting activities were carried out in the partner countries—Greece, Cyprus, Germany, and Italy. During this phase, youth workers, trainers, and NEET participants tested the modules in real settings. Their feedback, reflections, and experiences led to the creation of this additional section, which enriches the Toolkit with practical insights, challenges, opportunities, and good practices identified during the piloting phase.

As a result, this updated version represents an adapted and co-created toolkit, shaped by the contributions of all those involved in the field implementation. It reflects not only the tested PROCEED framework but also the lived realities of the young people and professionals who engaged with it directly.

Moreover, through cross-country collaboration, including online exchanges and bilateral study visits, partners identified key takeaways and potential recommendations for extending the use of this model to reach a broader and more diverse group of NEET youth, including young people with disabilities.

Working with young people in NEET situations calls for an intersectional perspective. Each young person brings a unique combination of circumstances shaped by their identity, background, and lived experience. For instance, a young migrant woman with a disability may face multiple, overlapping barriers, yet these vulnerabilities should not be seen as obstacles to inclusion or growth. Rather, they call for more nuanced, empathetic, and tailored approaches.

Youth workers, therefore, play a critical role, not only by acknowledging the complexity of these experiences, but by creating safe, inclusive, and empowering learning environments. This means moving beyond one-size-fits-all approaches and offering flexible, holistic support that respects the individual potential of every young person.

Authors

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Section 1. Civic Engagement

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| <p><i>General information and topics</i></p> | <p>Civic engagement is often defined as “working to make a difference in the civic life of one’s community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes” (Ehrlich, 2000). Civic engagement includes a variety of activities and actions the individual can do in order to contribute to positive changes in their community, for instance through volunteering.</p> <p>Being involved in community life has proven to be highly beneficial for young people. Contributing to their community allows them to develop a sense of identity, self-esteem, self-confidence, and critical thinking. Moreover, actively participating in community activities provides young people with a sense of belonging and satisfaction from making a meaningful contribution.(Cull et al., 2015).</p> <p>Through focus groups conducted in the PROCEED project, civic engagement was found as a powerful tool. Participants discussed civic engagement as a way to engage in networking, finding a job and creating/entering a community, but also fostering soft skills, and add more experiences in young people’s resume, fundamental for employability.</p> |
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| | <p>According to previous studies (Eurofound, 2016) young people in NEET conditions tend to be less involved in civic activities compared to other groups of young people. In fact, young people in a NEET situation face different obstacles in their participation in civic life. Sometimes attending community events and participating in volunteering activities can be an issue for those who have limited finances. Additionally, social isolation is common among NEETs, which can lead to a lack of awareness and connection to community issues and opportunities for engagement.</p> <p>Not attending school or university and not having access to the workplace impedes NEETs from benefiting from institutional support networks that facilitate civic engagement, since they often provide structured opportunities for young people to get involved in their communities. This exclusion perpetuates a cycle where NEETs remain disengaged, exacerbating their social isolation and economic difficulties.</p> <p>The community as a whole is also impacted by NEETs' disengagement from civic life since it loses out on their potential contributions and viewpoints, which can be vital for tackling regional problems and promoting a lively, inclusive society. Therefore, removing the obstacles to civic engagement that NEETs encounter is crucial for their personal growth as well as the community's overall well-being.</p> |
| <p><i>Related competences, skills, abilities</i></p> | <p>Completing the activities included in this section will help participants developing several related skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills; • Teamwork; • Problem-Solving; • Critical Thinking; • Self-Efficacy and Confidence <p>Furthermore, participants will achieve the following learning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming more aware of local issues and understanding the impact of individual and collective actions on the community; • Being able to advocate for causes, and engage in constructive dialogue; • Further developing empathy and cultural competence, by engaging with diverse community members. • Gaining the ability to understand and respect different perspectives and contribute to inclusive community efforts. • Establishing support networks that could provide mentorship and a sense of community. |

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| <p>Activities</p> | <p><u>Activity 1: No reason to be out</u></p> <p><i>Themes:</i> Citizenship, Participation, and Democracy <i>Group Size:</i> 16-20 participants <i>Duration:</i> 60-90 minutes <i>Overview:</i> This activity involves a reframing exercise designed to encourage civic engagement.</p> <p><i>Objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To recognize the importance of civic engagement. - To ignite interest and enthusiasm for democratic involvement. - To assist participants in overcoming internal barriers, fear, and uncertainty related to active citizenship. <p><i>Materials Needed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flipchart papers - Colored marker pens - Scissors - Sticky tape <p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pairing: Divide the group into pairs. 2. Discussion (10 minutes): In each pair, participants should share information about themselves, focusing on any negative traits or habits they believe hinder their active civic participation. 3. Reframing (20 minutes): Each pair will then spend 20 minutes reframing these negative traits or habits in a positive light, using any additional materials to boost creativity. 4. Creative Presentation: The redefined traits or habits should be presented to the rest of the group in a creative manner, such as a song, drawing, poster, or another creative form. 5. Empathy: The success of the exercise depends on the level of empathy shown by the partners toward each other. <p><i>Debriefing and Evaluation:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start by asking participants how they felt about the exercise and what they learned. 2. Further questions to deepen the discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was it challenging to identify the most significant traits or habits that led them to relinquish their rights? - Were they surprised to view their traits or habits as potential motivators for civic engagement? - Did any traits or habits of others surprise them? - Did they learn anything new about the issue? - Were there any fundamental disagreements about the concept of participation in decision-making? <p><i>Suggestions for Follow-up:</i></p> |
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To enhance the impact of the exercise, you can encourage participants to create posters that, through reframing, will inspire young people to engage in citizenship and participation activities.

Activity 2: Youth as Policy Makers

Themes: Citizenship, Participation, and Democracy

Group size: Adjustable to the activity; more participants make the activity more interesting

Duration: 2-3 Hours

Venue: Offline (A large enough place for participants to gather for various activities of the parliament simulation)

Objectives:

- Introduce NEETs to daily political work.
- Equip NEETs with democratic tools to feel like active participants in the democratic system.
- Increase NEETs' participation in democratic life, beyond just voting in elections.
- Educate participants on the steps a law must go through before implementation.

Materials:

- Flipchart papers
- Marker pens of different colors
- A pair of scissors
- Sticky tape
- Printed materials on parliamentary rules and procedures
- Printed agenda topics and relevant policy issues
- Tables and chairs arranged to mimic a parliamentary setting
- Name tags for participants to identify their roles
- Timer or stopwatch to manage debate times
- Notepads and pens for participants to take notes during research and debates
- Audio-visual equipment (optional) for presentations or further explanations

Instructions:

- Divide participants into two or more political groups based on the number of participants.
- Provide a topic for debate, related to the employability or empowerment of NEETs.
- Each party prepares their platform, policies, and arguments on the proposed agenda topics.

- Participants learn about parliamentary rules and procedures, including the order of business, the role of the speaker, introducing bills, and rules for speeches and questions.
- Research: Participants research the agenda topics and relevant policy issues.
- They study the current political landscape, gather information, and develop arguments and proposals to support their party's positions.
- Debate Phase: Participants engage in structured debates, presenting their party's viewpoints, making speeches, and engaging in questioning and rebuttals.
- Debates follow established parliamentary procedures, with participants taking turns to speak.
- Legislative Decision-Making: Participants engage in voting and decision-making processes, voting on proposed bills, resolutions, or amendments.
- The outcomes of these votes determine the decisions made by the simulated parliament.
- Opposition and Coalition-Building: Participants can form opposition parties and challenge the proposals of other parties.

Debriefing and Evaluations:

Do you know the process of creating new legislation?

What opposing interests did you encounter while trying to implement this law?

Facilitators should provide feedback and evaluations focusing on participants' public speaking skills, knowledge of parliamentary procedures, ability to articulate arguments, and overall performance as members of parliament.

This feedback will help participants improve their skills and understanding of democratic governance.

Follow-up Activities:

Encourage participants to create posters or presentations that illustrate the democratic process and the steps involved in policy-making.

Facilitate a discussion on how participants can get involved in real-life democratic processes and civic engagement activities.

Tips for Facilitators:

Provide participants with the topics well in advance to allow ample time for research and preparation.

Ensure that all participants understand the rules and procedures of parliamentary debates.

Give constructive feedback on participants' public speaking skills, knowledge of parliamentary procedures, and their ability to articulate arguments.

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| | Create an inclusive and supportive environment to foster active participation and engagement from all participants. |
| <i>Events that worked in the past (fairs, festivals etc)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in local volunteering activities. • Workshops on soft skills. • Career Days and other types, such as cultural festivals and others. • The European Voluntary Service (EVS): program offering youth between 18 and 30 years old volunteering experiences with the goal of enhancing their soft skills. • European Solidarity Corps: program offering volunteering activities, solidarity projects, and humanitarian aid volunteering. |
| <i>Good practice(s)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For instance, the Italian National Agency for Youth is committed to preparing a specific multi-year National Plan for 2021-2027 focused on the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programs. This plan will facilitate the development of strategic objectives, indicators, and measures for monitoring and evaluation in terms of inclusion and diversity within the national context (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Giovanili, 2022). • Erasmus + youth exchanges: exchange experiences up to 21 days • AMUNEET: a project managed by CESIE with the aim of supporting young NEETs and offering them internship opportunities abroad. • CITIZENS XELERATOR: a project aiming to foster social inclusion and civic participation of adults and people in a NEET situation. • ODE TO JOY: a project targeting young NEETs and their connection to their emotions and abilities, through non-formal education and creative activities. |
| <i>Digital media resources</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voices of Youth: UNICEF's platform for Youth, where young people can share their opinion about a variety of topics. • Resources from the Civic Engagement Research Group (CERG), including videos and online toolkits. • Civic Engagement courses on Coursera, a platform offering online learning on different topics. • Khan Academy: an e-learning platform with different courses, targeting a large variety of topics and skills. • On TEDx Talks's YouTube channel there are several videos about youth and civic engagement. • The Council of Europe videos and podcasts on Democracy and Youth Action Week. |

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| <p><i>References</i></p> | <p>E., Brown, D., Mallett, S. & James, S. (2015). Education First Youth Foyer Civic Participation Offer Conceptual Framework, Launch Housing and Brotherhood of St Laurence, Melbourne.</p> <p>Ehrlich, Thomas (2000). Civic Responsibility and Higher Education. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.</p> <p>Eurofond (2016), Exploring the diversity of NEETs, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.</p> <p>Ministero del lavoro e delle Politiche Giovanili (2022). NEET Working.</p> |
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Section 2. Employability

General information and topics

Preparing disadvantaged NEETs to enter the job market requires a multifaceted approach that includes developing both technical and soft skills. As PROCEED project's comparative report highlights, young NEETs often lack soft skills such as emotional intelligence, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving and hard skills such as specific job-related skills and certifications, as well as digital competencies. These research results are supported by findings from other studies (Goldman-Mellor et al., 2016), (Cunningham & Villaseñor, 2014).

To foster and sustain interest among NEETs, it is important to address obstacles such as mental health challenges and socio-economic barriers while promoting positive factors like aspiration and inclusion. Effective strategies include career guidance programs that provide personalized counseling and mentorship (Bynner & Parsons, 2002) and offer mental health support alongside skills training. These approaches are likely to help NEETs align their skills and aspirations with labor market demands (Goldman-Mellor et al., 2016).

Employability Part 1: Preparation to enter the job market

Preparing disadvantaged NEETs to enter the job market requires a multifaceted approach that includes developing both technical and soft skills. As PROCEED project's comparative report highlights, young NEETs often lack soft skills such as emotional intelligence, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving and hard skills such as specific job-related skills and certifications, as well as digital competencies. These research results are supported by findings from other studies (Goldman-Mellor et al., 2016) (Cunningham & Villaseñor, 2014).

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| <p><i>General information</i></p> | <p><i>Skills & interests:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop technical and soft skills for NEETs: free online courses can be found on Microsoft Learn, Coursera, EdX , Google Digital Garage, Alison , LinkedIn Learning , Skillshare and other platforms. The same platforms help NEETs to earn free certificates assessing existing skills. • Provide childcare during in-person trainings • Provide NEETs with personalized counseling and mentorship – if not possible online mentoring tools like ADPlist are available. • Offer mental health support, show case-studies and success stories, create channels for job search support groups where NEETs can share progress, get advice, and stay accountable. <p><i>CV & Cover Letter creation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills inventory: Use templates / group activities to help NEETs list their skills / encourage NEETs to engage with ChatGPT for generating questions that can help identify and articulate skills to be highlighted on their CVs • CV should be recognizable for ATS (there are programs like Jobscan that check readability) and have keywords relevant for the position: use right format and spelling, chat gpt can help in identifying key words. • Provide NEETs with CV templates, Europass CV is widely recognized; but there are others like Canva or Zety • Tailor CV for each position, there are online tools available for it, like Huntr • Train storytelling skills. Apart from the free courses, exercises, activities, there is plenty of literature available on the topic. • Proofread: Grammarly, chat gpt <p><i>Job search & job application</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEETs should have sufficient knowledge of the job market. Analyzing labor shortages and surpluses in Europe helps identify which positions are in demand. • Provide career orientation tools. Personality assessment tests, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Holland Code (RIASEC) Test, are widely recognized and helpful for individuals in understanding their preferences and strengths. • Provide activities that help in estimating personal experience. It is proven that NEETs often exhibit less ambition and more |
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| | <p>conservative job application behavior compared to those who are currently employed (Banfi, Choi, & Villena-Roldán, 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage NEETs to create and use LinkedIn profile. The study compared the effectiveness of online job portals and social media platforms concluded that social media profiles provide a more personal view of candidates, which is crucial for job searches (Joshi, 2018). There are helpful step/bz/step guides for creation and improvement of profile available. • Diversify effort using multiple job search platforms: EURES (European Employment Services), Indeed, LinkedIn, EuroJobs, JobsinNetwork, Monster, Glassdoor, StepStone, XING. Introduce NEETs to Online career days, like European Job Days. • Advise NEETs to translate their CV into the language of the country where they are applying, even for positions that do not explicitly require language proficiency. <p><i>Interview preparation</i></p> <p>Explain importance of key activities in interview preparation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company Research: understanding the company's history, culture, products, and values. • Understanding the Job Description, Identifying required skills and qualifications. Candidates should prepare to discuss how their experience matches these requirements. • Mock Interviews. Explain how to use STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result). Some examples can be found here. • Preparing thoughtful questions for the interviewer about the role and company shows engagement and interest. • Appropriate clothing, interview etiquette: being punctual, maintaining eye contact, and exhibiting good body language. • Follow-Up: sending a thank-you email after the interview expresses appreciation for the opportunity and reinforces the candidate's interest in the position. |
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| <p><i>Related competences, skills, abilities</i></p> | <p>Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set SMART goals. • Reflect work experience, skills, and training in a CV. • Search for jobs effectively. • Develop good self-presentation skills. <p>Related competences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness and self-knowledge • Awareness of essential employment skills and competencies • Flexibility and adaptability • Communication skills • Resilience • Critical thinking |
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| <p><i>Activities</i></p> | <p>Activity “My skills & interests” Topic: skills and interests’ identification Duration: 30' Venue: Offline & Online Number of participants: 4-12 Objectives: To identify skills and interests and to understand their connection to job positions Tips for facilitators: Make sure participants understand what skills & interests mean before they start discussing. Give examples. Check groups to make sure that the conversation is going in the right direction Materials Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart or whiteboard • Colored marker pens <p>Instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask participants to split into pairs and discuss the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) What they are good at (b) What they like to do (c) What they think they need to improve on 2. Each participant should make a list for their partner based on the discussion. At the end, invite them to share what they wrote with the rest of the group. Look for overlaps between what they feel strong in and what they enjoy doing. <p>Discussion Explain to the participants: "When considering an educational or career path, it is important to think about your skills (what you are good at) and your interests (what you enjoy doing). Work is a way to earn money, but it can also be a source of satisfaction and personal growth. Knowing what you need to improve on is crucial if you want to pursue what you enjoy." Show the participants a table where you have noted all the skills and interests mentioned by the group. Remind them that everyone has skills and experiences from which others can learn and benefit. Emphasize that the project is an opportunity to learn from each other.</p> <p>Activity “My smart goal” Topic: Goal setting Duration: 10' Venue: Offline & Online Number of participants: any</p> |
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Objectives: To set smart goals and to create and action plan to achieve them

Tips for facilitators: Support participants in the activity by checking their progress and giving advice and tips as they move on

Materials Needed:

- Hand outs (suggested table after instructions)

Instructions

1. Ask participants to think of a goal they would like to achieve. The goal should be something they may be able to achieve in the next 6 months.
2. Ask them to consider the SMART rules the learned about and to try to apply them when filling the below questions:

- My short-term goal (within the next 6 months) is...
- What good things will happen if I reach my goal?
- What do I need to learn or do to achieve it?
- What is my action plan?

Completion date:

Suggested table

Name:

Date:

| What do I like to do? | What an I good at? | What do I want to improve and how? |
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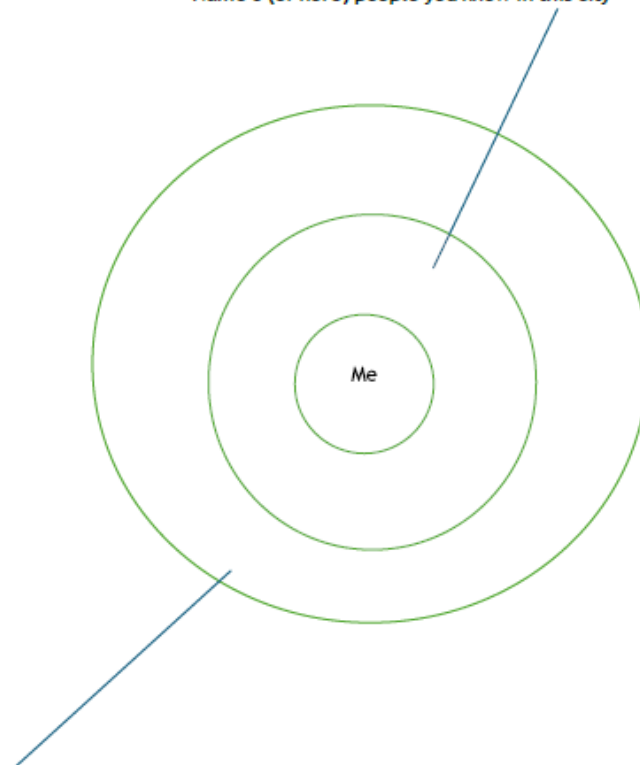
Discussion

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| | <p>Discuss if and how challenging it was to make their goals smart. Ask them to elaborate on the process and why it is useful to set smart goals as opposed to goals in general.</p> <p>Handout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of a goal you want to achieve... • My short-term goal is... • What good things will happen if I achieve it? • What do I need to learn or do to achieve it? • What is my action plan? • What is the completion date? <p>Activity “My CV story” Topic: CV creation Duration: 10' Venue: Offline & Online Number of participants: 4-12 Objectives: To understand the content and use of a CV Tips for facilitators: Be prepared to address comments such as “I do not have anything to put in a CV”. <i>Materials Needed:</i> - Flipchart or whiteboard - Colored marker pens</p> <p>Instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide participants into pairs and ask them to recall the jobs or activities they have done in the past. For each job or activity, they should discuss the responsibilities they had and what they learned. 2. Ask each pair to then share their information with the group. <p>Discussion At the end of the activity, explain what they should consider and record when creating their own CV. Emphasize the following: The resume is our professional identity. It is a document that outlines our educational background, professional experience, and skills. It is crucial in our job applications and is the first impression an employer receives before meeting us. If our CV is complete and well-written, we have a good chance of being invited for an interview.</p> <p>Activity “My personal network” Topic: Job search - Personal network Duration: 10' Venue: Offline</p> |
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| | <p>Number of participants: 4-12 Objectives: To understand the importance of developing a personal network for finding a job Tips for facilitators: Assist participants that cannot think of people to add to their network, giving examples.</p> <p>Materials Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart or whiteboard <p>Colored marker pens White A4 papers</p> <p>Instructions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create three concentric circles on the board or flip chart. 2. Ask participants to create similar circles on their paper and write their name in the center. 3. Assist them in writing at least five names of friends or relatives in the second circle, and five names known to those in the second circle in the third circle. If participants have difficulty finding names, they can include reference persons (e.g., in the hostel) or even those attending the seminar. <p>Discussion: Ask participants to count the total number of names they have collected. Record the number of names for each participant and the group total in a table. Explain that this total represents their network for potential job searches. Discuss how this network can assist in finding a job. For example, someone interested in the restaurant industry can reach out to contacts in the second or third circle who may work in or know someone in a restaurant. Explore ways to expand their network. Mark these places on the board and encourage participants to share additional ideas with the group.</p> <p>Handout</p> |
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Who do I know?

Name 5 (or more) people you know in this city



Name 5 (or more) people your friends or relatives know in this city

Activity: “The case of Samuel”

Topic: Interview preparation

Duration: 10'

Venue: Offline & Online

Number of participants: any

Objectives: To be able to respond to interview questions in an appropriate and timely manner

Tips for facilitators: Give the participants the scenario in written form, in their own language if possible

Materials Needed:

- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Colored marker pens

Instructions

1. Present participants with the following scenario:

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| | <p><i>“Samuel has been looking for a job regularly for the last few months, making daily applications to job advertisements. Today, while walking in the center of Athens, his mobile phone rings. He sees an unknown number calling. When he answers, he is informed that a company he applied to is interested in seeing him for an interview. However, the street noise is loud, and the signal is weak, making it difficult for him to hear the caller clearly.”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invite one of the participants to read the story aloud and then ask the group the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What should Samuel do? What information should he ask the company representative for? How can he prepare for this interview <p>Discussion: Encourage participants to share their answers and opinions. Provide additional information and correct any misunderstandings as needed.</p> <p>Activity “My appearance when I go to an interview” Topic: Interview preparation Duration: 10' Venue: Offline Number of participants: 4-12 Objectives: To understand what is appropriate to wear for a job interview Tips for facilitators: make the activity fun with lots of photos from different styles and cultures Materials Needed: - Flipchart or whiteboard - Colored marker pens - Cutouts from magazines of clothes and accessories - Glue - Large cardboard papers</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Divide the participants into two groups. Distribute old magazines, scissors, glue, and a large piece of cardboard to each group. Instruct the groups to create an outfit using the materials provided. One group will create an appropriate outfit for an interview, and the other will create an inappropriate |
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| | <p>outfit. Remind them to also include items that should be brought or should not be brought to an interview.</p> <p>Discussion: Present both creations to the entire group. Discuss the dos and don'ts of appearance for interviews, using the outfits and items created by each group as examples.</p> <p>Alternative Activity (Suitable for Online Trainings)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a Word file with photos of people, focusing on their clothing and accessories. 2. Share your screen with participants. 3. For each photo, discuss with the participants whether the person's attire is appropriate for a job interview and why. <p>Activity: "My job interview" Topic: Job interview Duration: 10' Venue: Offline Number of participants: 6-12 Objectives: To prepare to answer common interview questions with confidence Tips for facilitators: If participants are insecure about what job positions to choose, have some job ads ready to use as scenarios <i>Materials Needed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flipchart or whiteboard - Colored marker pens - Examples of job ads on paper cards <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide participants into small groups of three: an interviewer, an interviewee, and an observer. 2. Each group decides on a job position for the interview. 3. Distribute sample questions to the interviewer. 4. The interviewee answers the questions, while the observer takes notes on the entire process. <p>Discussion:</p> <p>After the role-play, the entire group discusses their impressions of the process. The trainer moderates the discussion: Start by asking the interviewers about their impressions. Then, ask the</p> |
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interviewees to share their thoughts. Finally, have the observers provide their feedback.

Employability Part 2: Support in the job market

Young people in NEET situations often lack awareness of their legal rights and face issues such as job discrimination and refusal of labor contracts by employers. This is compounded by low levels of legal knowledge and contract consciousness among young job seekers (Hao, 2010).

The complexity of legal and labor market systems can further alienate NEETs, making it difficult for them to navigate their rights and benefits effectively. This indicates a need for support mechanisms to empower NEETs in defending their rights.

General information and topics

Labor rights & work culture

- [Your Europe - Work & Retirement](#) : Share materials about minimum wage, working hours, and anti-discrimination laws.
- Provide self-Advocacy training: empower NEETs to advocate for themselves in the workplace, including how to negotiate salaries and working conditions, use role-playing scenarios. Explain actions when violation of rights occurs.
- Use free [business-skills training program](#)

Job vetting

- Introduce to NEETs the opportunity of using platforms like Glassdoor to see anonymous reviews about the company, interview questions, and past interview experiences shared by candidates.
- Practise communication skills: Use [AI chatbot](#) for practicing active listening and conversation skills.

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| <p><i>Related competences, skills, abilities</i></p> | <p><i>Learning outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate adaptability in a new workplace. • Recognize when rights are satisfied or violated and know where to seek help. • Distinguish between real and fake job ads. • Communicate effectively and appropriately in the workplace. <p><i>Related competences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness and self-knowledge • Awareness of essential employment skills and competencies • Flexibility and adaptability • Communication skills • Resilience • Critical thinking |
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Activities

Activity: “Protecting my labor rights”

Topic: labor rights

Duration: 15'

Venue: Offline & Online

Number of participants: any

Objectives: To understand what labor rights are and be able to identify violations

Tips for facilitators: Be prepared, participants often bring in their own stories and challenges regarding their rights.

Materials Needed:

- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Colored marker pens
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- Different scenarios on paper cards

Instructions

1. Invite participants to read and think about what has happened in each of the following scenarios.

Muhammad's Situation: Muhammad has been working in a garment factory for six months. Despite being forced to work overtime, he receives less than the basic monthly wage. When he asked his boss if something was wrong, his boss replied that everything was done according to legal procedures and warned him to stop complaining or he would be fired. Muhammad had signed a contract.

Khalid's Situation: Khalid works in a garage. One day, while repairing a car, a very heavy tool fell on his foot, causing a serious accident and severe pain. He could not walk on his own, and a colleague accompanied him to the hospital. When the boss found out about the accident, he told Khalid not to return to work. Additionally, Khalid needed surgery to recover, but he had no social security because he had not signed a contract.

Miriam's Situation: Miriam has a valid asylum seeker card, Health insurance id, VAT, and a bank account. She started working for 500 euros in a small clothing business, as instructed by her employer. Is Miriam working legally?

Discussion

For each of these scenarios ask them to consider if they would have done something differently and whether the work described is legal.

Activity “we are different/we are the same”

Topic: Diversity in the workplace

Duration: 10'

Venue: Offline

Number of participants: 6-12

Objectives: To reflect on diversity, to facilitate the development of empathy and to understand legal complications

Tips for facilitators: Make sure there is room enough for people to move around and that everyone understands the instructions and the statements.

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to stand up and come forward.
2. For each statement they hear, participants should move to a predetermined point in the room if they agree, another point if they disagree, or stay in place if they are undecided.

Discussion:

After the activity, moderate an open discussion to gather impressions and opinions from the participants. Emphasize the importance of equality and respect for diversity within workplaces as essential elements. Stress that everyone should respect one another, even if they are different. Explain that there are legal sanctions for employers who discriminate in the recruitment process based on gender. Highlight that employers are obliged to select employees without any discrimination based on gender, race, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation of candidates.

Statements (indicative):

- Men are better at their jobs and therefore earn more money.
- Women are better suited for jobs related to childcare.
- It is a man's responsibility to financially support his family.
- Women are not good managers because they are more emotional than men.
- More men work in transportation because they are better drivers than women.
- There are some jobs that women just can't do.
- Women are better at teaching children due to their maternal instinct.

- Men find it hard to take orders from women, which is why there are fewer female managers.
- Men are better craftsmen than women because they are stronger.
- A man in a wheelchair cannot be good at his job because he cannot walk.
- Homosexuals are inferior to heterosexuals, and therefore we can insult them for that choice.

Alternative Activity (Suitable for Online Trainings)

Use the same statements and ask participants to "react" via the platform (positively or negatively or not at all if they are undecided). After each statement, pause and let participants express themselves and state why they made that particular choice.

Events that worked in the past (fairs, festivals etc)

- Career days

Job readiness trainings that are linked to a job fair or career day and function as preparation for interviews

[ACCMR Job fair in Athens](#)

- Field visits to prospective employers

Organized visits to workplaces enhance engagement, clear misperceptions and support expectations management

- info sessions

Informative meetings on specific topics, especially when they are delivered by prospect employers or experts

- Networking events

Workshops to connect NEETs with each other and create a supportive community

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| <p><i>Good practice(s)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations with specific employers to prepare individuals to enter job positions and to prepare preexisting staff to welcome them <p><u>Unconscious Bias in Recruitment Guide International Rescue Committee (IRC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job shadowing • Follow up meetings after employment with both employers and employees • Short trainings that focus on preparation needs for specific sectors • Collaboration with vocational training providers • Invitations and reminders before trainings • Pre-Post tests to assess knowledge during trainings • Satisfaction questionnaires after trainings |
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*Digital media
resources*

<https://greece.refugee.info/en-us/sections/4768116680855>

- <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/competence-based-approach-improve-social-inclusion-migrant-women-toolbox>
- <https://curingthelimbo.gr/job-readiness-handbook>
- <https://www.ctl-humanrights.ecd.uoa.gr/en/>
- [Resource: Working in Greece | International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)
- [EURopean Employment Services Portal Useful Links](#)
- [Prosvasis Job readiness handbook](#)
- [Curing the limbo Handbook](#)
- [Eurita Job readiness handbook](#)
- [IRC professional networking training](#)
- [Developing group facilitation skills](#)
- [Interview preparation](#)

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| <p><i>References</i></p> | <p>Banfi, S., Choi, S., & Villena-Roldán, B. (2019). Deconstructing Job Search Behavior. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3323545</p> <p>Bynner, J., & Parsons, S. (2002). Social exclusion and the transition from school to work: The case of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET). <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>, 60, 289-309. https://doi.org/10.1006/JVBE.2001.1868</p> <p>Cunningham, W., & Villaseñor, P. (2014). Employer Voices, Employer Demands, and Implications for Public Skills Development Policy. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series. https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-6853</p> <p>Hao, F. (2010). The analysis and exploration of legal issues for college students in job hunting. <i>Journal of Agricultural University of Hebei</i>.</p> <p>Goldman-Mellor, S., Caspi, A., Arseneault, L., Ajala, N., Ambler, A., Danese, A., Fisher, H., Hucker, A., Odgers, C., Williams, T., Wong, C., & Moffitt, T. (2016). Committed to work but vulnerable: self-perceptions and mental health in NEET 18-year olds from a contemporary British cohort. <i>Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines</i>, 57(2), 196-203. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12459</p> <p>Joshi, S. (2018). Comparative Study of Effectiveness of Social Media Platforms and Online Job Portals for Job-Seekers. <i>International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP)</i>. https://doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.8.6.2018.P7867</p> |
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Section 3. Leadership skill

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| <p><i>General information and topics</i></p> | <p>Leadership is a fundamental skill that empowers individuals to guide, influence, and inspire others towards achieving common goals. Effective leadership plays a pivotal role in various aspects of life, from personal development to professional success. Moreover, studies (see Wreder et al. 2002, Rodić and Slobodan 2021) have shown positive gains in identity development through leadership skills enhancement, further emphasizing the importance of effective interventions in fostering positive change among disadvantaged young individuals. In this section, we will explore the essential qualities and abilities of effective</p> |
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| | <p>leaders, highlighting the significance of leadership skills in fostering teamwork, enhancing employability, and promoting civic engagement. Leadership skills are not innate traits but a set of capabilities that can be developed through training and experience.</p> <p>Participants in focus groups emphasized the importance of these skills, noting that activities promoting leadership could have a positive impact on their communities. Through these activities, individuals will be able to develop teamwork and leadership abilities, which can be proved beneficial both personally and professionally. Empowerment serves as the initial step towards effective self-advocacy, according to insights from youth workers. Leadership training should aim to empower individuals to act independently while receiving the necessary support and supervision. Self-advocacy involves understanding and articulating personal strengths and areas for growth, crucial for career advancement and personal development. Workshops and activities focused on self-advocacy are essential components of leadership development programs. Additionally, civic engagement and community impact are closely intertwined with leadership skills. Effective leaders are often actively involved in their communities, working towards societal betterment. Participants in focus groups reported that activities promoting civic engagement helped them develop a deeper understanding of societal issues and civic responsibility, expanding their social networks and enhancing their leadership capabilities.</p> <p>Practical exercises, such as role-playing scenarios and interactive workshops, are indispensable for leadership development. These activities allow participants to practice leadership in realistic settings, receive feedback, and refine their abilities. A comprehensive leadership workshop should cover key areas such as communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, team management, and self-advocacy, providing participants with hands-on experience and practical tips. To facilitate learning and skill development in leadership, several activities and resources are recommended. These include leadership development workshops, role-playing exercises, and leadership skills quizzes. Additionally, supplementary resources such as training videos, podcasts featuring insights from influential leaders, online courses, and animated educational videos can further enhance participants' understanding and proficiency in leadership.</p> <p>In conclusion, leadership skills are indispensable for personal growth, professional success, and societal impact. By providing opportunities for leadership development and access to resources, individuals can cultivate these skills, empowering themselves to become effective leaders in their communities and workplaces.</p> |
| <p><i>Related competences, skills, abilities</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management: Upon completion of this section, learners will be able to: demonstrate effective leadership skills by guiding and motivating team members towards achieving common goals. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and interpersonal skills: Upon completion of this section, learners will be able to: communicate clearly and effectively, utilize active listening techniques to understand and respond to team members and stakeholders, and develop strong interpersonal relations • Decision-making and problem solving: Upon completion of this section, learners will be able to: analyze complex situations and identify key issues and possible solutions, and apply critical thinking to evaluate options. • Teamwork: Upon completion of this section, learners will be able to: collaborate effectively with team members to achieve shared objectives, and foster a cooperative and inclusive team environment that values diverse perspectives. • Self advocacy: Upon completion of this section, learners will be able to: identify and articulate personal strengths and areas of growth, advocate for oneself in professional settings by expressing needs and seeking opportunities. |
| <p><i>Activities</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 1: Leadership Development Workshop Description: Participants will engage in a comprehensive workshop focused on key leadership skills such as communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, team management, and self-advocacy. The workshop includes interactive lectures, group discussions, and hands-on exercises. Duration: 3 hours Venue: online or on-site No of Participants: 15-20 Objectives: to develop effective leadership and management skills, enhance communication and interpersonal skills, and to promote self-advocacy and personal growth. Materials: presentation slides, flipcharts, markers, handouts on leadership theories* and practical tips, notepads and pens. *Handouts on leadership theories: 1) leadership skills overview: a comprehensive summary of the essential qualities and abilities of an effective leader. It can cover various leadership styles, the role of a leader in different contexts, and practical tips for developing leadership skills. 2) Communication techniques: outline key strategies for effective communication in a leadership context. It includes tips on active listening, non-verbal communication, and constructive feedback. 3) Decision making frameworks: introduce participants to |

various decision-making models and frameworks. (for example, the '6 thinking hats')

4) Teamwork strategies: provide practical advice on fostering effective teamwork and collaboration. It covers the stages of team development, techniques for building trust and cohesion, and strategies for managing team dynamics.

5) self-advocacy guide: empower participants with the skills and confidence to advocate for themselves in professional settings. It includes tips on identifying and articulating personal strengths, setting career goals, and negotiating for opportunities and resources.

Tips for facilitator:

- Select relevant leadership topics (such as communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, team management, self-advocacy)
- Encourage active participation and ensure all voices are heard
- Provide real life examples
- be flexible and adapt the workshop flow based on the participants engagement

• **Activity 2: Role-playing exercises**

Description: Participants will engage in role-playing exercises to practice leadership scenarios such as leading a team meeting, resolving conflicts, and advocating for oneself in a professional setting. Each participant will have the opportunity to play different roles and receive feedback.

Duration: 1 hour

Venue: offsite

No of participants: 10

Objectives: to practice and refine and redefine leadership skills in realistic scenarios, to develop problem-solving skills, and to build confidence in communication and self-advocacy.

Materials needed: scenario cards* (choose realistic/relevant scenarios such as leading a team meeting, resolving a conflict), role descriptions, notepads and pens

*Scenario card Example: Resolving a team conflict

Roles: team leader, team members, observer

Scenario descriptions: you are the team leader of a marketing department responsible for launching a new product. The launch date is approaching, and the team is divided over the direction of the marketing campaign. Two team members have conflicting ideas (one prefers a traditional advertising approach

and the second a social media strategy). As team leader, your goal is to mediate the conflict between them and get the team back on track to meet the launch deadline.

Tips for facilitators:

- clearly explain each scenario and role before starting
- rotate roles
- encourage participants to reflect on their experiences

- **Activity 3: Leadership Skills Quiz:** that is designed to help disadvantaged youth evaluate their understanding of essential leadership qualities and abilities. (printed or digital format)

Objective: Assess and enhance understanding of leadership skills.

1. Which of the following is NOT a key quality of a good leader?

- A. Effective communication
- B. Empathy
- C. Inflexibility**
- D. Decisiveness

0. When leading a team, how should you handle conflict between team members?

- A. Ignore it and hope it resolves itself
- B. Address it directly and mediate a resolution**
- C. Blame one member and side with the other
- D. Remove the person who started the conflict

0. Why is self-advocacy important for a leader?

- A. It helps leaders understand and communicate their needs and rights**
- B. It allows leaders to avoid making tough decisions
- C. It lets leaders dominate conversations
- D. It encourages leaders to work alone

0. What is the best approach to making decisions as a leader?

- A. Making decisions without consulting the team
- B. Collecting input from team members and considering various perspectives**
- C. Relying solely on gut feelings
- D. Waiting for someone else to make the decision

0. Which skill is most important for resolving conflicts?

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| | <p>A. Ignoring the issue B. Active listening and empathy C. Yelling louder than the other person D. Avoiding confrontation at all costs</p> <p>0. A good leader should: A. Share credit with the team and acknowledge everyone's B. Take all the credit for successes contributions C. Blame others for failures D. Keep all information to themselves</p> <p>0. What is critical thinking? A. Accepting information at face value B. Avoiding new ideas and perspectives C. Following others' opinions without question D. Analyzing and evaluating information to make informed decisions</p> <p>0. How can a leader effectively communicate their vision to the team? A. By writing it down and not discussing it B. By clearly articulating the vision and explaining how each team member contributes to it C. By keeping the vision a secret until it's achieved D. By letting the team figure it out on their own</p> |
| <i>Events that worked in the past</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the ongoing <u>YouthEco project</u>, which aims to provide new career paths for NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), three training workshops have been successfully completed. These workshops, focusing on green entrepreneurship among other topics, have effectively supported participants in enhancing their interpersonal and leadership skills and competences. The <u>Diversity Fair</u>, is an annual event in Cyprus organized by <u>Center for Social Innovation</u>. This event celebrates and empowers people by respecting and appreciating their unique differences. It is held within the framework of several EU projects that promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Events like the Diversity Fair empower disadvantaged youth by providing networking opportunities and enhancing their experiences in the job market, thereby boosting their confidence, communication skills and career prospects. |
| <i>Good practice(s)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Volume</u>: This is an ongoing Erasmus+ project, that aims to face risks of marginalization and social exclusion, by providing to |

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| | <p>young people volunteering opportunities for civic participation. It is using a user-led approach to develop a capacity building program and free <u>educational material</u>, to equip young people and professionals with key personal, professional and technical competences. Among other EU countries, it also took place in Limassol, Cyprus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>YouthEco</u>: Erasmus+ project that aims to provide new career paths to NEETs and young women, by equipping them with needed skills for the growing green economy. For this project, <u>educational material</u> was created that was used for the provision of numerous capacity building workshops for marginalized young people, who later on were offered internship positions in green organizations to allow gain hands-on experience before entering the job market. Among other EU countries, it also took place in Limasol, Cyprus. <p>These project's activities, such as the creation of educational material, up-skilling workshops and trainings, and volunteering/internship placements as good practices, have showcased that they can allow marginalized groups to successfully enter the job market by enhancing their knowledge and developing their leadership and interpersonal skills.</p> |
| Digital media resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This 30-minute <u>training video</u>, aims to enhance your understanding on decision making and problem solving processes. • In this free <u>podcast series</u>, an expert in teamwork, leadership and emotional intelligence, shares his insights and interviews interesting and influential leaders. Episodes of the show authentically address important topics and challenges and offer specific tips about leadership, teamwork, and life and they are designed to give you practical ideas, insights, and techniques to enhance your success and impact. • A free <u>online course</u> that is designed to help you <u>build</u> strong interpersonal skills, enhance your communication strategies and build confidence. You can find numerous free similar courses in this <u>link</u>. • Here you can find an animated <u>video</u> explaining in detail the steps to solve everyday issues and being your own best advocate. • This <u>video</u> presents the importance of self-advocacy and explains how to be a self advocate. It refers to people with disabilities, but it offers self-advocacy tips for everyone, especially for marginalized groups. |
| References | <p>Ferrer-Wreder, Laura, Carolyn Cass Lorente, William Kurtines, Ervin Briones, Janene Bussell, Steven Berman, and Ondina Arrufat. 2002. "Promoting Identity Development in Marginalized Youth." <i>Journal of Adolescent Research</i> 17 (2): 168–87. doi:10.1177/0743558402172004.</p> |

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| | <p>saki, Yoshitaka, Tristan Hopper, and Patricia Whelan. 2016. "Insights on Inspirational Education for 'High-Risk' Youth Informed by Participatory Action Research (PAR) on Youth Engagement: Short Communication." <i>Journal of Education and Training Studies</i> 5 (1): 152. doi:10.11114/jets.v5i1.2096.</p> <p>ortensen, Jennifer, Lauren Lichty, Pennie Foster-Fishman, Sarah Harfst, Sara Hockin, Kelly Warsinske, and Kareemah Abdullah. 2014. "Leadership through a Youth Lens: Understanding Youth Conceptualizations of Leadership." <i>Journal of Community Psychology</i> 42 (4): 447–62. doi:10.1002/jcop.21620.</p> <p>Rodić, Marijana, and Slobodan Marić. 2021. "Leadership Style and Employee Readiness: Basic Factors of Leadership Efficiency." <i>Strategic Management</i> 26 (1): 53–65. doi:10.5937/straman2101053r.</p> |
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This section has been added to the A2.4 Development of the Toolkit following the piloting of the three core modules outlined in the manual: Employability, Self-Advocacy, and Civic Engagement. It enriches the previously developed toolkit by incorporating challenges, opportunities, reflections, and good practices that emerged during the activities proposed by the PROCEED project partners, youth workers, trainers, and young people in NEET situations. As such, this is an adapted toolkit, shaped by the lived experiences and feedback shared by participants and partners involved in the training sessions of WP3 and WP4. It reflects a process of co-creation, where the entire educational community played a key role in adapting and enhancing the original model. Beyond testing the PROCEED framework and its three core modules, the adaptation process and the exchanges among partners through online meetings and bilateral study visits sparked further reflections and potential recommendations for extending this type of training to a broader and more diverse group of NEET youth, including, for instance, young people with disabilities in NEET situations. As a matter of fact, when working with young people in NEET situations, it is essential to adopt an intersectional lens, recognizing that no individual's experience exists in isolation. Each young person brings with them a unique set of circumstances shaped by their background, identity, and lived experience. Whether they are people with migrant background, women, young people with disabilities, or a combination of these, their vulnerabilities often intersect in ways that compound the barriers they face. For instance, a young migrant woman with a disability may encounter layered discrimination, exclusion, and structural challenges. However, these intersecting vulnerabilities should never be seen as limitations to their growth, autonomy, or career development. Instead, they call for a deeper understanding and a more nuanced, responsive approach. As youth workers, our role is not only to acknowledge the complexity of these realities, but to actively create safe, inclusive, and empowering spaces. This means moving beyond 'one-size-fits-all' solutions and providing tailored, flexible and holistic support that respects each individual's potential.

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| <p>Challenges</p> | <p>Young people in NEET situations with a migrant background</p> <p>IRC HELLAS & CESIE ETS (we experienced the same when engaging with young people in NEET situations with migrant background):</p> <p>Limited Understanding of the Labor Market and Workplace Culture Young NEETs with migrant or refugee backgrounds often have little or no understanding of the local labor market or workplace expectations. They may be unfamiliar with employment norms, behavioral expectations, and cultural practices specific to the Greek and Italian workplace environments. This lack of awareness creates a significant disconnect between their experiences and the realities of the job market, making engagement with career development programs more difficult.</p> <p>Language Barriers Language remains one of the most persistent obstacles. Many of these young individuals have limited or no proficiency in the local language, which affects not only their ability to communicate effectively but also their comprehension of training materials, legal documents, and everyday tasks. The Greek, Italian and German languages for example require sustained effort and time to learn, which is often at odds with the immediate need to find work and earn income. Language challenges also created psychological distance, contributing to reduced confidence and self-advocacy.</p> <p>Physical and Mental Health Impacts Some of the young NEETs might have experienced hidden mental health burdens (trauma, stress, uncertainty) and physical strain due to precarious jobs or long periods of unemployment. These factors negatively affected engagement levels, motivation, and long-term employment sustainability.</p> <p>Low Motivation and Participation Dropout Motivational challenges are common. Many participants disengage quickly or attend sporadically, often withdrawing from programs with minimal explanation. The added pressures of precarious living conditions, mental health struggles, or</p> |
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social isolation can further reduce their ability to commit to long-term participation. The instability in their daily lives frequently leads to inconsistent attendance and limited program completion rates.

Inadequate Preparation for Adult Responsibilities

There are often significant gaps in basic education and life skills. Some NEETs may be functionally illiterate or have never received formal education. Others may lack knowledge of essential adult responsibilities, such as understanding what a bank account or an employment contract is. This lack of foundational knowledge presents a major barrier to both learning and independent living.

Administrative and Legal Barriers

Many young migrants and refugees face bureaucratic hurdles such as unresolved residency status, missing identification documents, or unclear legal standing. These issues not only delay or prevent access to services and employment but also contribute to a sense of instability and exclusion, reinforcing other barriers to engagement.

Difficulties in identifying their own skills

One of the key challenges that emerged during employability training sessions with young people in NEET situations living in Italy is their difficulty in identifying their own soft skills, which are potentially applicable to the job market. This often leads to an inability to fill essential documents such as the CV and cover letter, and also undermines their ability to promote themselves effectively during job interviews, where their vulnerabilities reach their peak. Many young people in NEET situations may have had previous work experiences, but struggle to describe them convincingly or translate them into professional language suitable for CVs, cover letters, or interviews. Furthermore, while most participants were familiar with the Europass CV format, the majority, particularly during training sessions held in Palermo, Italy, were unaware of the existence and importance of the cover letter. This lack of awareness of required documents in Italy in the job search process is often linked to the fact that in many countries of origin, especially for participants with a migrant background, the cover letter is not commonly required in job application processes.

Short-Term Intervention Limitations

While the toolkit provided a strong foundational framework, a key challenge encountered during the training with NEET youth is the **limited impact of short-term interventions**.

While initial engagement, such as volunteering or brief training programs, can spark interest and motivation, they are not enough to ensure lasting job readiness or social integration. Many young migrants and refugees, especially those from African backgrounds, face complex structural barriers that require sustained, long-term support. Without continuity, efforts risk becoming fragmented, and participants may struggle to build stable career paths or fully participate in their local communities. This toolkit should be therefore considered as a starting point for youth workers to facilitate young NEET's insertion process to labour-market.

Volunteering: A misunderstood path.

Volunteering is often seen as a waste of time, especially by those who are urgently seeking stable, paid employment. Because it doesn't offer immediate financial rewards or job security, it is frequently dismissed as a luxury rather than a meaningful investment. Many young people, particularly those who are new to the Western world but not only, are unfamiliar with the concept of volunteerism. While they may be eager to help others and give back to their communities, practical realities get in the way. Survival takes priority: rent must be paid, food must be bought. For those trying to build a life from scratch, unpaid work can feel frustrating or even pointless. As a result, opportunities to participate in local community life are missed, not due to lack of willingness, but due to lack of time and understanding of possible benefits coming from active participation.

Lack of Accessible Community Spaces

One of the main barriers during implementation was the shortage of available, affordable, and appropriate spaces, around Europe.. Hands-on workshops (e.g. bike repair, sewing, and cooking) require specific materials, storage, and technical setups that are difficult to access or finance, limiting scalability.

Young women in NEET situations

Care responsibilities and time constraints

Many young women in NEET situations have unpaid caregiving duties (looking after younger siblings, children, or elderly relatives). These responsibilities significantly limit their availability and flexibility, making participation in regular training or employment-related activities more difficult. Scheduling and duration of activities need to be highly adaptable to their realities.

Gender-based stereotypes and low self-confidence

Persistent gender norms can affect young women's self-perception and ambition. Many participants express a lack of confidence in their own abilities and often internalize messages that certain roles or career paths are not for them. This impacts their engagement, willingness to take initiative, and openness to non-traditional opportunities.

Exposure to gender based violence and/or harassment

Some young women NEETs have experienced GBV including domestic violence, bullying, or harassment. These experiences can impact mental health, trust in institutions and their ability to participate actively in group-based or public-facing programs. Trauma informed approaches are essential.

Young people in NEET situations with disabilities

Accessibility barriers (physical, digital, communication)

Young NEETs with disabilities often encounter multiple accessibility issues. Training venues may lack ramps, elevators, or accessible restrooms. Similarly, digital platforms used for learning may not comply with accessibility standards (subtitles, screen reader incompatibility, etc). These barriers can immediately exclude participants or severely limit their engagement.

Low self esteem and social isolation

Due to a lifetime of exclusion, bullying, or negative stereotyping, many young people with disabilities experience low confidence and a strong fear of judgment. They may hesitate to participate in group activities or feel their contribution is undervalued, particularly in mainstream settings. This makes it important for youth workers to adopt empowerment-focused methodologies and inclusive facilitation styles.

Limited awareness of rights and available support services

Young people with disabilities may not be aware of their legal rights related to education, employment or accommodations (such as supported employment disability allowances, or mentorship programs). This lack of knowledge can limit their self-advocacy and hinder their participation in available opportunities.

Lack of tailored vocational training

Mainstream employment readiness programs often fail to account for the specific capacities and limitations of youth with disabilities. Training content, pace and expectations,

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| | <p>often need to be adapted (yet this isn't always anticipated by program providers).</p> |
| <p><i>Good practice(s)</i></p> | <p>Young people in NEET situations with a migrant background</p> <p>Create a Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment</p> <p>A foundational step is to establish a supportive and non-judgmental space where participants feel safe asking questions and expressing confusion. Early sessions should focus on trust-building and encouraging open dialogue. Participants may feel embarrassed about their lack of knowledge, especially in group settings, so fostering a sense of collective learning is critical.</p> <p>This approach can lay the groundwork for effectively handling the critical moment of job interviews role-plays, where the safety of the environment you worked hard to build can ensure the success of the activity.</p> <p>In this regard, Icebreaking activities play a crucial role in ensuring the success of a training course, especially with NEET youth. They help establish a safe and welcoming environment where participants can begin to feel comfortable, engaged, and open to learning. These activities are not just a warm-up—they represent a playful and creative opportunity for participants to get to know one another and to recognize their own strengths in a low-pressure setting.</p> <p>Through icebreakers, individuals can start building trust within the group and become more aware of their interpersonal and communication skills. Moreover, by listening to others, participants often gain unexpected insights about themselves, which fosters reflection, connection, and a sense of belonging—essential foundations for meaningful participation throughout the course. It is also worth highlighting the vital role of workshops such as bike repair, cooking, sewing, and cultural exchange events, that during the pilotings with young people in NEET situations were particularly well-received. The</p> |

addition of free meals, music, and a welcoming atmosphere played a key role in building trust and attracting young people.

Don't take anything for granted

When introducing young NEETs with a person with migrant or refugee background to the concept of labor rights and protections in the workplace, it is essential not to assume prior knowledge. Many participants may be unfamiliar with even the most basic employment-related terms and systems—such as VAT number (AFM), Social Security Number (AMKA), income tax (PAYE), or the concept of an employment contract. These concepts should be explained clearly and gradually, using simple language and practical examples. Another significant example regards volunteering, that for many young people, particularly those who are new to the Western world, are unfamiliar with. While they may be eager to help others and give back to their communities, volunteering options and benefits offered in Europe might be different from what they have experienced until then.

Awareness of different types of employment contracts

It is also essential to raise awareness among NEET youth about the different types of employment contracts to ensure they are informed and empowered as they enter the workforce. Understanding the various forms of contracts, which are temporary, permanent, part-time, freelance, internships, and more, not only helps them make informed decisions but also clarifies their rights and responsibilities as workers. This knowledge is a key tool in protecting them from potential exploitation and unfair working conditions, while fostering a sense of agency and confidence in navigating the job market.

Practice active and Experiential Learning

Traditional lecture-style delivery is rarely effective with this audience. Instead, prioritize active learning methods that engage participants directly and encourage interaction. Participants should feel comfortable asking questions and expressing uncertainties. For example, young people are encouraged to share what they know—or think they know—about employment-related procedures and rights. These sessions could be combined with hands-on activities, role-playing exercises as well as given scenarios. In addition, "volunteer for a day" activities may further support knowledge

and understanding of the concept and even open doors to networking and acquiring self-awareness.

Gamification & Identification of skills-realistic goals

To effectively support NEET youth in identifying their skills and personal added value, it is highly recommended to begin with interactive games—such as “job cards”—which assist trainers in guiding participants through career orientation. These tools, developed within the [In Gioco project](#), offer a wide variety of professions, presented in multiple languages or illustrated with images that depict the corresponding job roles, making them accessible and engaging for participants with diverse backgrounds and language levels.

Young people are invited to select between 2 and 5 professions that interest them. Based on their choices, the trainer initiates a conversation around each selected job, exploring related information such as application procedures, required qualifications, possible exams or studies, and job market opportunities. Gamification encourages self-reflection and helps the NEET participants become more aware of their preferences, potential career paths, and the steps needed to pursue those roles. It also marks the beginning of a personalized journey toward identifying realistic employment goals.

Invite Guest Experts

Bringing in guest speakers can increase engagement and lend credibility to the training. Legal professionals, social workers, or representatives from labor unions can provide practical, real-world insights. Representatives from businesses in sectors with high absorption are key for hand on information and initiative for forward-thinking planning. Encourage participants to prepare questions in advance—this can be done in pairs or small groups to boost confidence.

When possible, it is recommended to bring credible guest speakers, who might resonate with young people in NEET situations you are delivering training to. For instance, in Palermo we reached out a Moroccan young woman, who was herself in NEET situations years ago and was struggling to learn Italian and to adjust to the new country also in terms of job search process, and we noticed that participants in NEET situations really enjoyed her session on “Leadership and the power of Communication”, as she started by sharing her own

difficulties when she was in NEET situations, and the process that led her to study and find a job. It is therefore recommendable that guest speakers should also have intercultural sensitivity, rather than merely rely on their professional experiences and expertise.

Utilize handouts:

Distribute updated lists of information, whether they are job search websites, interview preparation scenarios or basic vocational vocabulary. Use pre and post-training tests to assess improvement in knowledge.

Intercultural mediation or peer-to-peer approach

It is recommended, when possible, to divide young people in NEET situations with a migrant background into small groups based on a common spoken language and to involve linguistic mediators for support. Alternatively, if there is someone within the group who speaks both the participants' language and the local language, this person can be entrusted with the responsibility of translating and facilitating the trainer's content. In such cases, the recommended best practice is the peer-to-peer approach. In pilot activities with young people in NEET situations, for example, it was often observed during training sessions that participants had varying levels of national language proficiency. As a result, one participant in NEET situations, who was fluent in the host-country main language, was identified and given the role of intermediary to help bridge communication gaps within the group.

Long-Term Job Coaching

In Germany participants received ongoing, personalized coaching beyond the initial training phase. This included follow-up mentoring, emotional support, and assistance navigating Germany's bureaucratic and job systems. Long-term relationships with trusted advisors helped build resilience and increased the likelihood of successful job placement.

Short-Term Skills Certification

Providing short vocational training modules (e.g., in hospitality, care work, logistics) allowed youth to quickly access better-paying, more secure jobs. Fast-track certification programs offered in collaboration with local institutions significantly

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| | <p>improved employability, especially when tailored to sectors with high demand.</p> <p>Integrated Language Support Embedding language learning within the job-readiness process (rather than treating it as a separate requirement) proved essential. For example, integrating the technical vocabulary, specific to the target industry (e.g., care work or construction) made learning more practical and relevant.</p> <p>Youth-Led and Culturally Responsive Programming Activities are most successful when co-designed with the participants and led, where possible, by youth themselves. This approach aligns with Hart's Ladder of Participation, encouraging progression from passive attendance to shared leadership and youth-driven initiatives. Participants reported higher motivation and ownership when they were actively involved in the planning, implementation, and facilitation of activities.</p> <p>Structured, Regular Activities in Trusted Spaces Drop-in activities became more effective when delivered on a predictable schedule with clear structure, such as weekly workshops or seasonal events. Consistency helped young people integrate these events into their routines and build long-term relationships with peers and staff.</p> <p>Young women in NEET situations Safe spaces and women-only groups Provide the option of women-only learning environments to foster a sense of security, especially for those who've experienced harassment or gender-based violence (GBV). This can improve comfort, openness, and retention.</p> <p>1.On-site childcare provision during trainings Provide free, safe and professional childcare services during the training sessions to accommodate young mothers or caregivers. This can reduce dropout rates and improve engagement.</p> <p>2.Flexible modular scheduling Design activities and sessions in modular format, allowing participants to engage in smaller, standalone units instead of committing to long-term or full day programs. This helps accommodate unstable schedules and caregiving demands.</p> <p>Young people in NEET situations with disabilities Ensure physical and digital accessibility Why it works: barriers in the physical environment or in online materials can immediately exclude participants with mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments. Therefore, you can choose</p> |
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| | <p>venues that are wheelchair accessible and have accessible toilets, ensure websites/learning platforms and necessary material meet accessibility standards (e.g. WCAG).</p> <p>1. Use inclusive communication strategies:</p> <p>Many young people with disabilities may need adapted communication styles. You should use plain language and visual aids, speak clearly and face the group when talking, provide sign language interpretation or easy-read versions if needed, and give extra time for responses.</p> |
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