

Thinking Space Paper No. 1

Outreach to NEETs

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Young people neither in employments or training (NEETs) are a heterogeneous group in terms of age, gender, level of education, migration background and regions and often not easy to reach. This Thinking Space paper therefore proposes a step-by-step approach a successful outreach to the target group. It draws on KIZ's experience and discussion with the project's implementation partner's outreach plans. It aims to be a concise guideline for organisation targeting NEETs.

The table below shows NEETs differentiated by status and gender in the four target countries of the YES project and the EU average for comparison. While unemployed NEETs can be reached via unemployment agencies/services, inactive NEETs are much harder to reach, though 10,5% of all NEETs in the EU fall into this category, in Italy even more than 17% and in Poland more than 12%. Inactivity can be due to family obligations, discouragement, sickness, disability or other reasons.¹

Education and training

Young people neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs)

Table 2: Young people (aged 20–34) neither in employment nor in education and training, by sex and activity status, 2018 (%)

| | Unemployed | | | Inactive | | |
|---------------|------------|------|--------|----------|------|--------|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| EU | 6,0 | 6,4 | 5,6 | 10,5 | 5,9 | 15,3 |
| Greece | 18,0 | 15,7 | 20,4 | 8,8 | 4,4 | 13,3 |
| Spain | 11,9 | 12,2 | 11,6 | 7,7 | 4,9 | 10,5 |
| Italy | 11,1 | 11,6 | 10,5 | 17,8 | 12,2 | 23,7 |
| Poland | 3,9 | 4,1 | 3,6 | 12,5 | 5,5 | 19,9 |

Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_lfse_20)

Outreach activities are to address the inactive and moreover target particularly affected groups in the country such as unemployed female NEETs in Greece, inactive female NEETs in Italy or Poland or unemployed young men in Spain. Further rural versus urban differences, educational level or a migration background need to be taken into account in the outreach strategy.²

The following six steps approach to reach out to young people between 18-35 years with the motivation to start a business has been tested in Germany successfully. This outreach strategy has been generalised to apply to overall NEETs communities as well as subgroups of them. The approach works for NEETs that are easy to reach (e.g. those which are registered with employment agencies) as well as for those that are remote from the labour market and difficult to reach. The latter group requires a more elaborate outreach using streetworkers, youth clubs, and grassroots organisations.

Step 1- Customer definition: The first step is to address the respective NEET as a “customer” rather than a “target group”. Therefore, an avatar of the client (NEET) is created: Who is the specific NEET

¹ European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2012, NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe, Luxembourg, p.33 , https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1254en.pdf.

² European Commission. 2018. “Effective outreach to NEETs: Experience from the ground”, written by Ruth Santos-Brien, online at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pubId=8136&langId=en&catId=738&furtherPubs=yes&>, p.2.

group targeted? What is he/she interested in? Where can he/she be found (online and off-line)?
What language should be used?

Step 2 Stakeholder analysis: After defining the target group and its size, a catchment area needs to be determined to then identify which organisations, institutions as well as events are suitable to reach the avatar. The stakeholder analysis needs to look at three groups:

1. NEET channel partners: This includes employment services, municipalities, youth councils, the church, support organisations for specific groups such as women or ethnic groups. If hard-to-reach NEETs are targeted, a street worker approach might be appropriate. Street workers are often required to reach the most vulnerable of NEETs, visiting public spaces and places that are popular among local youth with the aim of building trusting relationships with them. Their work involves listening to their concerns and offering practical and emotional support and later inviting them to participate in youth services.³
2. Exit partners: The stakeholder analysis also includes organisations of sectors, associations and companies where NEETs could find employment or which support self-employment. Ideally these should include sectors with future potential in the concerned region and consider various types of work for different educational levels. In more rural areas this could comprise cooperatives, agricultural or farmer associations (e.g. beekeeping, winemakers etc.) or regional development agencies or the church. In more urban areas, enterprise and start-up networks, chambers of commerce and chambers of crafts, migrant support organisations or cooperative banks, etc should be included in the network.
3. Delivery partners: It might also be necessary to engage other delivery partners that are able that provide specific training or mentoring required by the NEETs to change their status.

The objective is the creation of a regional support structure that functions as a permanent instrument to channel NEETs to the support/delivery structures, and to provide access to potential employers and exit partners that can contribute to the successful status change of NEETs.

Step 3 Contact and partnerships: Get in contact with the identified public and private organisations, institutions, NGOs, grass root organisations, churches, etc and establish a formal or informal cooperation with them to get in touch with NEETs. Workshops with potential partners could be used to identify areas that are promising for the NEETs group targeted and qualifications needed to realise the NEETs potential and possibilities.

Step 4 – Addressing NEETs directly: Participate in the identified events (step 2) to directly approach NEETs to obtain first-hand feedback on the concerns, hopes, expectations and interests regarding support. Step 4 is frequently missing in NEET supporting activities. Most NEET initiatives jump from “Outreach” activities into “Interventions” without asking the target groups about their specific needs and wishes.

Step 3 and 4 should take place in parallel and feedback obtained from NEETs should lead to a fine-tuning of the programme and adjustment of the network.

Step 5 – Feedback analysis and response: Analyse the feedback collected from the NEETs and discuss the results with the partner organisations to adjust, extend or finetune the outreach to the NEETs and the planned interventions. If required, identify missing partner organisations and include them in the project.

³ Idem, p.19.

Step 6 - Interventions: Determine and implement interventions raising the employability as well as business creation of NEETs (career guidance and counselling, skill training, mentoring, etc). The NEETs should be asked for feedback in regular intervals to continuously improve and finetune the implemented interventions (e.g. monthly surveys) and to benefit from a word to mouth promotion among young people. Potentially the avatar need adaptation, to respond to a shift in potential the young customer group.

We hope that this short guideline proved to be inspiring and helpful for your outreach activities.