

Thinking Space No.20

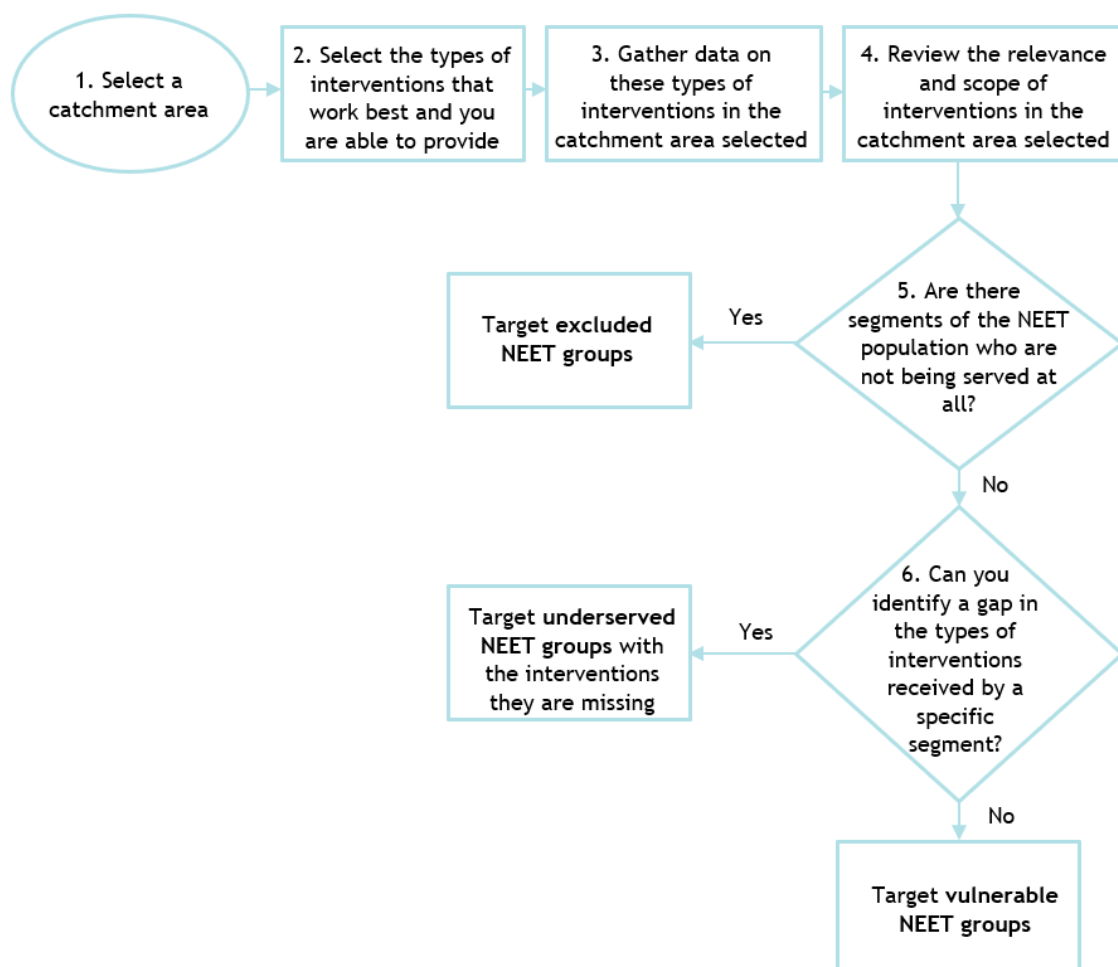
Selection of NEET youth target groups

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An in-depth analysis of the local context should be conducted and robust targeting criteria established when recruitment is based on self-selection. In fact, programs may fail to attract the people most in need in a context of very unfavorable job market conditions. To help this process, we have developed a tool that can help identify potential target groups among NEET youth and establish a sensible program's participation criteria.

Partly drawing on the work by Bruce (2003), the flowchart below (see Figure 1) shows sequential steps to select target groups and prioritizes the inclusion of excluded NEET groups, underserved NEET groups, and vulnerable NEETs in the program.

Figure 1. Flowchart describing the target group selection process.
Source: Author.



First of all, program designers and implementers should be clear about the catchment area they intend to operate in. Of course, this decision could be based on the secondary data collected by researchers. However, frequently the catchment area is determined by the capacities and networks of the organizations leading the implementation phase. Following this step, field partners should also agree on the types of services that could be successfully delivered (depending on their budget, experience, capabilities, etc.). In the next stage, partners should have a clear overview of the types and characteristics of interventions targeting NEETs in the catchment area selected.

Once the data collection takes place, the information should be critically evaluated to understand the relevance and scope of the interventions in the catchment area of interest. At this point, program designers should be able to spot **excluded groups of NEETs**, who are left out of existing interventions for various reasons. If this is not the case, the selection should instead move to **underserved groups of NEETs**, who are excluded only by more specific types of interventions and program designers might find useful to increase the range of support services available to them.

Targeting vulnerable NEET groups

When, however, gaps in service provision are not easily identifiable, a second-best option would be to focus on vulnerable groups of NEETs or, alternatively, to increase the scope of a successful exiting intervention (this option is explored at the end of this paper). According to Mascherini & Ledermaier (2016), NEETs are subject to diverse degrees of vulnerability depending on their labor market participation and risk of social exclusion. The following categories of NEETs are considered highly vulnerable:

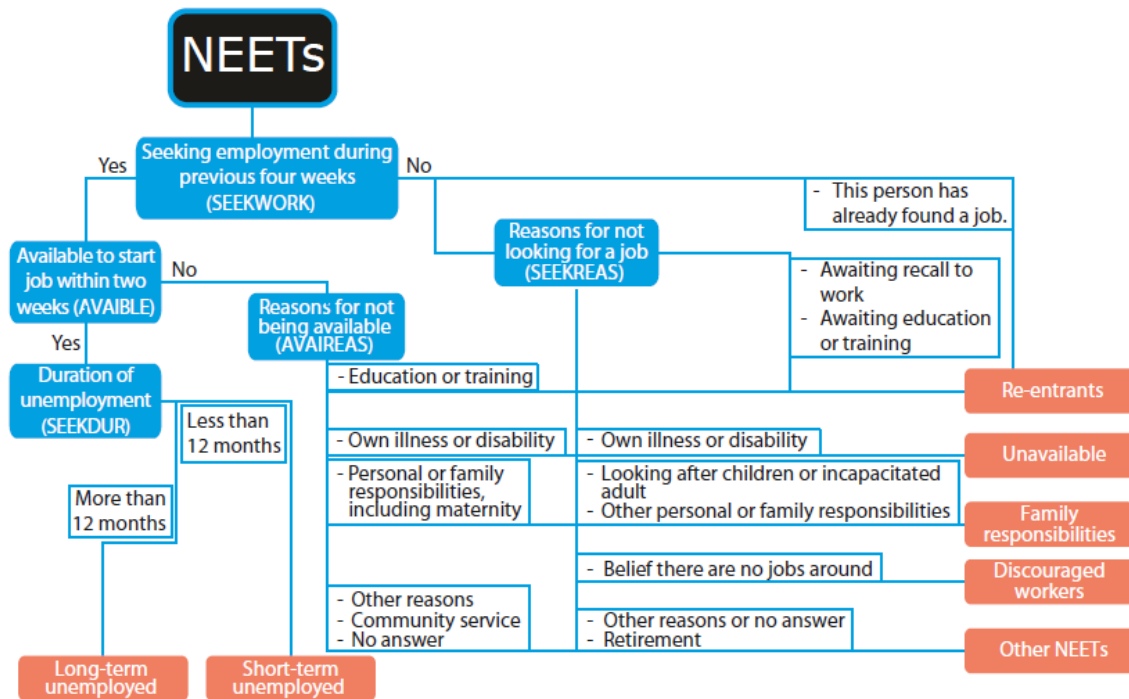
- Long-term unemployed
- Discouraged workers
- Unavailable due to illness or disability
- Unavailable due to family responsibilities, especially if forced into it
- Other inactive, depending on an individual assessment

The following categories of NEETs are characterized by a lower degree of vulnerability:

- Re-entrants
- Short-term unemployed

To systematically categorize NEETs into the aforementioned subgroups, one can interview NEETs individually using the EU Labour Force Survey (see Figure 2 below) or integrate vulnerability criteria (for instance, duration of unemployment) in the selection process of the program.

Figure 2. EU Labour Force Survey
Source: Mascherini & Ledermaier, 2016.



Increasing the scope of a successful intervention

Finally, an option, that program designers could consider as an alternative to targeting vulnerable groups, is the identification of a specific intervention among the ones listed at point 3 of the flowchart in Figure 1 that has proven to be particularly successful in the catchment area. In this case, practitioners should conduct an in-depth analysis of the selected intervention to identify the strengths (and weaknesses), and then target additional NEETs in the same segment with similar services. The analysis should include information with regards to the intervention's timeline, budget and scale, geographical reach, target groups, aims and objectives, activities, impact and results, formal evidence of success, success factors, stakeholders involved, and opportunities for improvement.

References

Bruce, J. (2003). Steps in building evidence-based programs for adolescents in transitions to adulthood: Adolescent and Youth Sexual and reproductive health: Charting directions for a second generation of programming. Background document for the UNFPA/Population Council workshop on Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health: Charting Directions for a Second Generation of Adolescent Programming, New York, 13 May 2002.

Mascherini, M., & Ledermaier, S. (2016). Exploring the diversity of NEETs. Report for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.