

Thinking Space No.36

Selected local interventions for NEETs in Poland

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There are different pathways for interventions in the work with NEETs. Research shows the need for comprehensive action but also the space for a certain division of labour. Within this thinking paper, three projects in Poland will be described which can help to illustrate the range of projects and approaches.

There are different pathways for interventions in the work with NEETs. For example, Saczyńska-Sokół (2018) suggests the following areas for interventions:

- *counteracting the entry into the NEET group by young people at risk of premature end of formal education, including people with disabilities;*
- *comprehensive identification of the NEET population at the level of communities and counties;*
- *reaching out to young people in the NEET group in order to reintegrate them into the labour market and education;*
- *developing the most effective solutions for supporting NEETs, both at the level of existing instruments used by labour market institutions and at the level of proposed modifications or implementation of new solutions, often of a systemic nature, to support young people;*
- *creating a culture of cooperation for the benefit of young people, based on local partnerships of labour market institutions and other actors with the task of solving young people's problems.*

This shows the need for comprehensive action but also the space for a certain division of labour. Within this thinking paper, three projects will be described which can help to illustrate the range of projects and approaches.

Reaching Lost Generation

The Reaching Lost Generation (RLG) project was co-financed by the EU under the Erasmus+ program and was implemented between 2014 and 2017.¹ The main goal was to target low-skilled young people in four European countries. The target group were students in upper secondary schools.

They identified ten categories of entrepreneurial competencies. The main element was described by the researchers as follows:

The innovation of the developed training program also involved the selection of compelling, differentiated tasks, developing specific competencies using a variety of methods and techniques of work, which counteracted the possible lack of interest of the participants and increased their involvement in the exercises.

The ten competencies included (1) willingness to learn, (2) interpersonal skills, (3) strong initiative, (4) problem solving, (5) taking responsibility, (6) planning and organizing, (7) adaptability and flexibility, (8)

¹ The description is based on Kilar et al. (2017).

business thinking and awareness, (9) willingness to take risks and (10) decision making. The following figure shows the development of competencies as a result of the workshops.

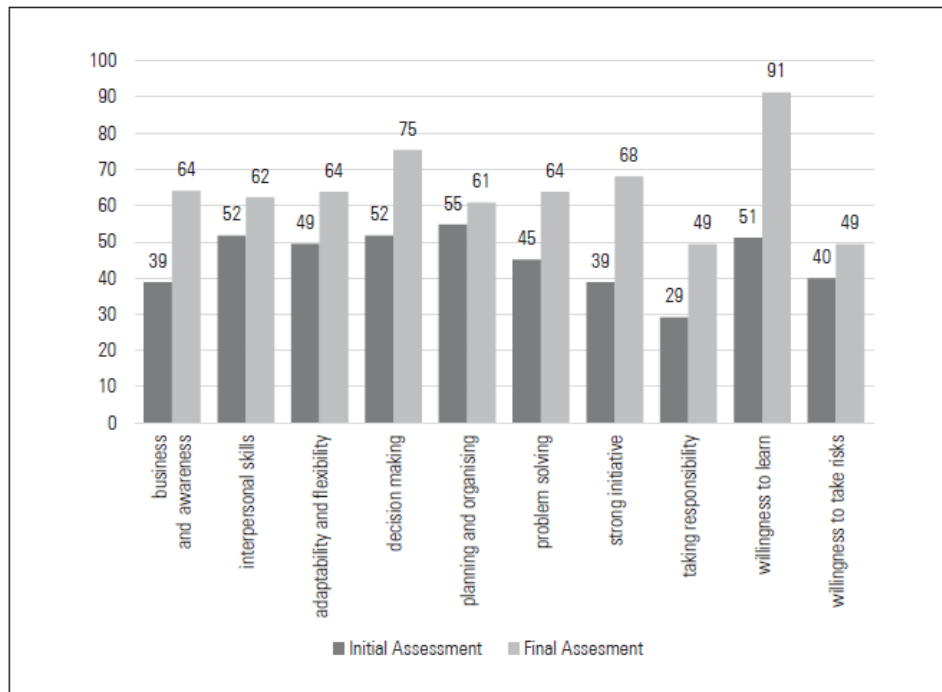


Figure 1: Development of competencies of the workshop participants

Source: Kilar et al. (2017)

Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe

The RESL.eu is a FP7 funded project entitled “Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe”.² Its objective was to find measures that reduce early school leaving, especially for vocational school students.

It was a research program which resulted in recommendations on how to improve the situation and reduce the number of early school leavers. The measures included actions such as the creation of policies involving ministries but also steps to increase the perceived value of this educational form and career counseling for the students.

Social Wolves

Social Wolves (launched in 2014), run the educational platform: <https://zwolnienizteorii.pl/>, for which they have received the prestigious MIT ‘Innovators Under 35’ award for “best social innovator in Poland” and feature on Forbes ‘30 Under 30’ list.

The platform is based on a cutting-edge approach to learning – the Social Project Method™ – which encourages the users to run their own original social action project, giving them a means to gain practical competencies that are usually impossible to learn in a standard classroom context. These concepts help students to understand the steps and the approaches to start their own business simultaneously educating social leaders and managers.

² The description is based on Tomaszewska-Pekala, Marchlik, and Wrona (2015)

Building on a concept pioneered by Harvard Business School, they are giving high school students an unusual mission. Instead of a business project which they have to prepare and launch, they offer young people a cost-free opportunity to develop skills of the future such as teamwork, communication and leadership.³ Previous projects include producing modified videos which show Warsaw without large-format advertising, linking restaurants tax-efficiently with food banks or promoting the availability of first-aid kits in cars.

References

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³ More information can be found here: <https://innpoland.pl/128193,robia-polski-harvard-za-grosze-social-wolves-rzucili-wyzwanie-przestarzalej-polskiej-edukacji>.