



IO2 MODEL OF INTERVENTION TARGETED AT NEETs O2-A1 – Intervention Model - conceptual development



Title

IO2 MODEL OF INTERVENTION TARGETED AT NEETS
O2-A1 – Intervention Model - conceptual development

Edition

Portuguese Catholic University
CEPCEP - Research Centre on People and Cultures

Authors

José Sousa Fialho
Cândida Soares
Maria Ana Carneiro

Place of Edition

Lisbon, PT

Date of Edition

January 2019

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Main Objectives.....	5
3. Model of Intervention targeted at NEETs	7
A. Preparation for the Intervention Model Application	10
B. NEETs Intervention (measures targeted towards individuals).....	16
C. Local Community Intervention (measures targeted towards system building).....	22
D. Ongoing Support Structure and Follow Up	25
E. Expected Outcomes	25
F. Overall Coordination and Cooperation	26
G. Social Integration	26
4. Conclusion	28



1. Introduction

The “ComNetNEET - Community Networking for Integration of Young People in NEET Situation” project presents here the IO2 MODEL OF INTERVENTION TARGETED AT NEETs, through its Activity 1, presenting the conceptual development of the intervention model.

The structure of the document includes an introduction and a chapter dedicated to the main project objectives. The chapter dedicated to the explanation of the Model of Intervention targeted at NEETs includes the following sections:

- Section A: Preparation for the Intervention Model Application
- Section B: NEETs Intervention
- Section C: Local Community Intervention
- Section D: Ongoing Support Structure and Follow Up
- Section E: Expected Outcomes
- Section F: Overall Coordination and Cooperation
- Section G: Social Integration

It is important to clarify that this model of intervention operates on two levels: as a conceptual model and as a model which will be tested.

Firstly, on the conceptual level, policies and practices were studied, policy recommendations have been provided after an analysis of good practices coming from the partner countries.¹ This is then followed by the development of a model of intervention, which include multiple stakeholders and multiple activities which must be well coordinated (here the municipal bodies may take up a major role). This model proposes recommendations that are holistic and conceptual in its approach, aiming at social integration as a system (operating at the three levels – macro, meso and micro), which has to be considered as a complex and long process for the young NEET, that requires the cooperation of multiple agents from the education and employment systems, as well as other services and informal chains, such as social work providers, health system, housing, etc.

Secondly, on the operational level, not all recommendations and model proposals will be tested during the project considering limited project resources as well as time limitations (6 months are foreseen for the testing). Also, when testing the model, making sure that prior

¹ For in-depth information, please read “Community Networking for NEET Integration: Towards a Common European Model: Guidelines for Practice and Recommendations for Policy”, ISOB GmbH, “ComNetNEET” project, November 2018



NEETS*in*ACTION

initiatives are recognised and taken into account as well as that cooperation among actors is organised in a logical and articulated manner, are important factors to consider. The testing should also guarantee a contribution to the main dimensions identified: social integration and work-based learning. Finally, it should actively involve local stakeholders and community networks for multiple purposes (advice, referrals, mobilisation of resources, awareness) in taking responsibility and participating in achieving social integration of young NEETs.



Project

ComNetNEET "Community Networking for Integration of Young People in NEET Situation"

2. Main Objectives

The project priority is to develop actions to promote NEETs social inclusion – through an innovative intervention and integrated approaches. The intervention for inclusion is three folded: i. Young people in a NEET situation; ii. Technical staff; and iii. Community (e.g. relevant actors working for the benefit of social inclusion and employability of NEETs). Diversity, equality access, gender-balance and non-discrimination in education, training and work experiences are “key stones” of the project intervention.

The main objectives of the project are:

1. To identify the state of the art and good practices of social inclusion (using work-based learning strategies) targeted at young people in partners’ countries
2. To design, conceive and develop a model of intervention in the countries of the partnership
3. To conduct a pilot application of the methodology at local level in PT, ES and IT
4. To promote awareness meetings in the context of the project to exchange experiences and identify best practices already in place
5. To test the model through a multi-stakeholder approach and to evaluate the impact of this experience/model
6. To reinforce and match the role of different stakeholders to find the best means of optimization, and increase the networking capacity, with a view to enhance NEETs social inclusion and employability
7. To disseminate and explore the project results among relevant beneficiaries and ensure their sustainability at a practice level through the training of professionals and at the institutional level, influencing policies and changing the culture of services provided

Our project is innovative and sustainable as it will provide policy solutions and a **model of intervention** to address several systemic problems by:

1. Re-engaging young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are in a NEET situation
2. Focussing support on areas with particularly low levels of educational achievement and unemployment creating a vicious cycle for local citizens, the community and the local economy. This is particularly an issue considering the recent economic crisis which in many countries has largely wiped out the shielding effect of education from unemployment



3. Preparing young people for the world of work in a way that is responsive to recent changes in the labour market and changing skills needs; this project would do this by involving local and regional authorities, employers and other social partners in career guidance and in the provision of work experience opportunities
4. Training of staff to apply the model



Project

ComNetNEET "Community Networking for Integration of Young People in NEET Situation"

3. Model of Intervention targeted at NEETs

The project will, therefore, develop integrated but individualized and group interventions for the inclusion of NEETs, taking into consideration their diversity. Drawing on resources of the local community, the project will facilitate direct interaction between the NEETs and (potential) employers in various entities (companies, NGOs, etc), E&T providers and supporting agencies at local level. This “social capital” of the community is a key factor for the integration of NEETs: the networking capacity of the project will be used to foster the development of partnerships between key community stakeholders aiming to contribute to provide NEETs with the skills needed to find and sustain employment or (re)enter into the E&T system.

The project approach will be focused on mobilizing the whole community to enable young people at risk of being long-term NEETs to develop relevant skills and competences to find and succeed in employment or (re)enter into the E&T system. Identifying and reaching “hard to reach” and socially excluded NEETs can be challenging.

Targeting at young people who are in a NEET situation, our intervention includes a variety of possible approaches aimed at increasing their chances of finding/staying in work or returning to the education and training system. This includes upgrading their skills for employability, addressing skills mismatches, and increasing their work experiences and opportunities in their local community, when they are ready.

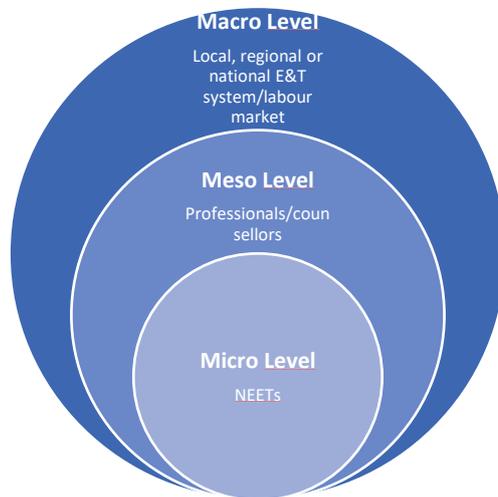
In summary, the project target group is young people in a NEET situation with the following characteristics:

- 18-29 years old
- Not in education, not in employment, not in training. Namely:
 - With reduce employment experience and in situation of undeclared unemployment
 - Without interest in training actions
 - Integrating problematic informal groups of young people
 - In a situation of drop-out

Innovative VET business partnerships through work-based interventions are, therefore, an important feature to be developed through this intervention. By improving NEET’s skills and competences it will contribute to better align their possibilities in finding and sustaining employment.



The methodology foresees 3 levels of intervention: micro (young people who are in a NEET situation); meso (professionals/counsellors); and macro level (the overall local, regional or national E&T system/labour market).



In terms of **Micro Level**:

The issue of NEETs who are disadvantaged or disengaged from the E&T system will be addressed at micro level, with direct intervention during the project (at local level).

In terms of **Meso Level**:

The issue will also be addressed at meso level, since professionals working for and with young people in a NEET situation will be involved directly during the intervention and in the networking and dissemination activities, but also those not directly involved during the project, as the project will create conditions to allow them to reproduce the model and the intervention at national level, making available material tested, evaluated in terms of impact, improved and spread out.

In terms of **Macro Level**:

The issue will also be addressed at a macro level, since the ecosystem of organisations that are part of the NEET issue such as employment services/counsellors, local, regional and national authorities with E&T and employment responsibilities, enterprises and social partners will be involved directly in the model of intervention testing but also in the project networking and dissemination activities, during the project, and also with an indirect intervention after the project, since it is expected that from project results namely impact evaluation, we can create conditions to influence and make those stakeholders take wiser decisions regarding the best measures to fight the NEETs phenomenon, using the potential of community networking.

The ComNetNEET project presents the following design of the intervention model:



NEETS*in*ACTION

PREPARATION	NEETS INTERVENTION	LOCAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
TERRITORY DIAGNOSIS NEETS - Local Stakeholders - Communication Plan to mobilize NEETs and stakeholders: "what's in it" and as a "great opportunity" for young people	ENGAGING - Initial individual contact and communication actions with young NEETs to clarify expectations - Family involvement - Youth leaders - Alternative activities such as sports, arts, culture, communication, etc.		Stakeholders are aware of the need for better coordination of local approaches
	- Communication actions targeting local stakeholders (Plan for Community Facilitation) - Build and maintain a good network of partners to provide opportunities for work-based learning and further referrals - Involve the relevant community stakeholders in developing and implementing the la plan		Stakeholders have improved collaboration with other entities (e.g., range of organisations they work with)
NEETS SELECTION - Good knowledge of target group preferences and habits - Identifying and preparing (informal training) youth leaders	ORIENTING/STABILIZING - Referral to local stakeholders according to different support needs - Individual coach-based sessions (define and monitor individual action plan) - Group sessions (train soft and employability skills – key competences) - Mentoring sessions (guidance by a professional) - Inform about different pathways to the education and training system return (School and VET tours/fairs)		Sustainable local partnership networks
	AWARENESS - Increase contacts making use of Plan for Community Facilitation, build trust, enhance image of NEETs - Use national and international volunteering schemes, non-education and training activities like sports and arts - Build and maintain a good network of partners for referrals and for work-based learning, particularly		YP have a clearer vision and pathway for their future
LOCAL COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDERS NETWORK - Contacts with local stakeholders to identify common goals and synergies - Good knowledge of labour market trends, dynamics and needs - Communication activities to introduce the project to local community	INSERTING - On-job experiences (e.g. job-shadowing; informative interviews; job tours; internships; on the job training; workshops) - Build and expand apprenticeship-type training opportunities (dual system) - Prepare for national and European mobility - Empower for self-organisation, embed entrepreneurial thinking		YP have started to implement their action plans to achieve their goals
	Build and expand apprenticeship-type training opportunities Job Tours and Job Shadowing Prepare for national and European mobility Reintegrate in the E&T or employment system		YP have increased employability skills, motivation and self confidence
Data Collection/Good Practices	ONGOING SUPPORT STRUCTURE AND FOLLOW UP - Overarching coordination which looks at the individual needs and making sure that all measures, approaches, steps are logical and reinforce the autonomy of the young NEET - This ongoing support structure is phased out gradually once the assistance is no longer needed Awareness campaigns among employees to promote young people integration, after the internships		YP have better links with employers and increased awareness of routes into work
	TOOLS DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF TRAINING		YP have moved onto and remain in education/training/work after the end of the programme
OVERALL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION closer cooperation of youth support services, schools, universities, employment agencies, employers, NGOs, voluntary schemes, legal			
SOCIAL INTEGRATION mental and physical health, housing, social capital, diversity of contacts, job/training			

A. Preparation for the Intervention Model Application

The intervention model requires a preparation phase before its implementation. This preparation includes the following stages:

- a. **Territory Diagnosis**
- b. **NEETs Selection**
- c. **Local Community and Stakeholders Network**
- d. **Data Collection/ Good Practices**
- e. **Tools Development and Staff Training**

a. **Territory Diagnosis**

Considering that the main horizontal priority of the project is achieving NEETs social integration, the diagnosis of the territory as an object of intervention in this preparation phase should include mapping the following characteristics of the territory:

- A significant number of young people in an exclusion situation
- NEETs with skills gaps and skills mismatches
- NEETs not integrating any active employment programme
- Inactive NEETs

Moreover, for the identification and selection of the territory, the following indicators should be considered:

- Poverty rate
- NEETs by sex and status
- Youth inactivity rate
- Deprivation of excluded young people
- The rate of youth violence and causes



On the other hand, and considering the need for the NEETs to interact with the local community, in particular in terms of employability, the territory diagnosis should also include a mapping of:

- Employers in small business
- Other employers
- E&T providers
- Supporting agencies at local/municipal level
- Social entities

The intervention in a certain territory must include a Communication Plan which should be based on the mapping and characteristics drawn from the territory diagnosis. Understanding the “social capital” of the community as a key factor for the integration of NEETs can be largely achieved through making evident the networking capacity of the relevant actors.

b. NEETs Selection

Following the territory diagnosis, the NEETs selection aims at collecting a **good knowledge base of the target group preferences and habits**. Also considered as having a very important role are the **youth leaders**, which will be identified and prepared through informal training, in this intervention preparation phase.

i. Good knowledge of the target group preferences and habits

The identification and selection of young people in a NEET situation can be done with support from the parishes and local communities involved already in the territory diagnosis, for instance, but also with the support of the “networks of community stakeholders” that will be activated through several activities and approaches of the project.

As described above, the target group must integrate young people in a NEET situation that comply with the following criteria:

- 18-29 years old
- Not in education, not in employment, not in training. Namely:
 - With reduce employment experience and in situation of undeclared unemployment
 - Without interest in training actions



- Integrating problematic informal groups of young people
- In a situation of drop-out

Following the mapping of the NEETs characteristics in a certain territory diagnosis, as mentioned above, learning the preferences and habits of the young NEETs will be achieved through a **focus group** methodology, aiming at characterizing NEETs and assess their perspectives in a group interview. The focus group topics for discussion should include:

- Key issues that affect NEET young people's lives
- Main problems they think need fixing
- The most difficult issues and problems/challenges young people face nowadays
- Things that make youth most happy and motivated about life
- Main difficulties young people may be facing, how they think these problems identified can be fixed
- The most difficult issues and problems young people face nowadays concerning barriers to employment/education
- Obstacles to continuing study and obstacles to find a job
- Reasons not to be in a school/VET provider
- Reasons not to be employed
- Courses and skills youth should have to better access to employment
- Additional support to access employment, education or training that young people would like to have
- What do they want to get out from this potential support and how should the support be delivered in the community or outside the community

ii. Identifying and preparing (informal training) youth leaders

The use of youth community leaders to select and attract young NEET is an important element of the strategy. These young leaders coming from the local community are supposed to work as peers and should be a major support not only for the collection of data focusing on the views, experiences and characteristics of NEETs, but also to reach out and engage young NEETs.

Youth leaders can work as a positive influence over the young NEETs. Usually the youth leader has the following traits:

- Decisiveness - The ability to make up one's mind



- Enthusiasm - To be excited
- Initiative - The ability to set into action
- Integrity - To have sound moral character
- Judgment - To make the right decision

An informal training to youth leaders should address the following objectives:

- To empower youth leaders with practical skills on communication, group dynamics, negotiation and decision-making
- To provide youth leaders with relevant tools for problem-solving, crisis management and conflict resolution
- To build with the youth leaders a Communication Plan adjusting the way of communicating the project (formats, language, focus, among others) in a way that will be more attractive and purposeful for the young NEETs

c. Local Community and Stakeholders Network

i. Contacts with local stakeholders to identify common goals and synergies

The selection of the territory must take into account the existence of a group of companies and entities, meaning a **local community and a stakeholders' network**, many of them already collaborating in several projects and measures and constituting networks aimed at the social inclusion of young people in disadvantaged situation, namely NEETs. The knowledge of these entities and the **identification of common goals and synergies** should be developed in individual and common contacts through meetings or focus groups.

It is important to have contacts with a variety of entities, such as:

- Small business companies
- Other companies namely in community nuclear activities
- E&T providers
- Employment Services
- Social Security Services
- Agencies at local/municipal level
- Social entities namely NGOs
- Other Central Public organizations



ii. Good knowledge of labour market trends dynamics and needs and communication activities to introduce the project to local community

This model of intervention as well as all the strategies and means foreseen in the project with involvement of local stakeholders and community entities are designed with the goal of supporting participation of these target groups in project activities and of engaging them in the process. The interaction with this network of community actors is also intended both at **learning about the labour market trends and involving them already in the project** not only for the transition of the young NEETs into the labour and or education systems, but also for providing other necessary referrals aiming at NEETs social inclusion, shaping the project's aim of improving the overall system and its implementation through the stakeholders network at local (and in the community), regional and national levels.

To prepare the intervention model application, a focus group session with the network of stakeholders needs to be carried out with the following objectives:

- General situation of economic activity and labour market needs at local level
- General situation of NEETs in the area of activity of the stakeholders
- The main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats of current strategies for improving the situation of unemployed people including NEETs
- The top priority to improve the situation, in terms of strategies that can be pursued by local or regional actors like municipalities, employer's associations, training centres, NGO's, schools, etc
- The most important objectives of the project and how the model can contribute to the social inclusion of NEETs
- What each stakeholder can do to support the project and how they can benefit from it

d. Data Collection /Good Practices

Data collection of good practices was crucial for the development of the current model². The information provided in IO1 report³ shaped what it is considered in the model, namely:

- The characterization of the NEETs
- The good practices and its characteristics (strengths and weaknesses) in each of the partner countries

² "Building networks of community support for NEETs: good practices from Europe", ISOB GmbH, Erasmus+ ComNetNEET" Project, November 2018

³ "Community Networking for NEET Integration: Towards a Common European Model: Guidelines for Practice and Recommendations for Policy", ISOB GmbH, Erasmus+ "ComNetNEET" Project, November 2018



- The analysis and categorization of the good practices into three main types: “engaging”, “orienting and stabilising” and “inserting”
- The identification of the main actors involved in the good practices: NEETs, Staff and Youth Leaders, Local Community and Stakeholders Network

The model also share the vision proposed in the report mentioned above of using a matrix of educational and training chains to describe activities to integrate NEETs, as well as to better support the young NEETs transition between “the various stages of education and training in order to prevent dropout and to provide the pathways of education most appropriate for the need of the individual.”

e. Tools Development and Staff Training

According to the project application it is also part of the Model of Intervention targeted at NEETs, the creation of the intervention tools to support the model concept implementation. (see IO2 – A2 - Creation of the tools for action).

On the other hand, and furthermore, the preparation and training of the staff due to their involvement in the application of the model, is also foreseen. (see IO2-A3 - Preparation and training of staff that will be involved in the use and testing of the model).

In conclusion, the model attempts to provide a possible solution to what has been identified as lacking by this specific group of vulnerable young people – NEETs. The proposed interventions develop an individual centred system and consider the importance of having staff prepared to follow the young person in a NEET situation throughout the intervention, including during the internship or other modalities/measures considered as part of the inserting phase of the NEET intervention. Finally, the model emphasizes the fundamental role of the local community and of the stakeholders’ network, in supporting the transition into the E&T system and/or the labour market and the overall NEET social inclusion. Based on this conceptual structure, the model presents a series of measures focused on the local community and on how to engage them, how to make them more aware of their role in orienting/stabilizing and inserting the local young people in a NEET situation.



B. NEETs Intervention (measures targeted towards individuals)

Following the preparation for the intervention, also the measures targeted at the young NEETs are based and departed from the information provided in IO1, as regards the integration of NEETs, which is the ultimate goal of the project and, therefore, is at the core of the design of the model of intervention. Ultimately, this intervention could be presented and offered as an alternative to the more conventional measures of employment and education and training.

NEETs have been characterised⁴ as having a complex set of problems, and limitations: i.e. financial problems, health problems, limited meaningful relationships and role models, as well as lacking trust and loss of contact with relevant institutions. These problems and limitations lead these young NEETs to an overall lack of social integration deeply interconnected to a lack of social capital, situation where they become harder and harder to reach overtime and the longer they remain in a NEET situation.

By having this NEETs characterization as a backdrop for the model of intervention presented in this report, the design of a coordinated and articulated strategy should consider in particular the following:

1. The use of non-traditional measures of employment, education and training
2. The relevance of a socio-spatial approach of social services and training
3. The potential role of youth associations, sports clubs, youth workers, informal youth groups, social enterprises, cultural associations
4. The regional networks

In the recent years the paradigm of education and training has been considering the relevance and the need of interconnection, by necessarily improving the transitions between the educational and employment systems. This is why “more appreciation of vocational education and the value of work-based learning” have been identified as the two main paradigms identified.

The measures so far have been aiming at better orientation, building skills and competences through the cooperation of the relevant institutions framing the concept of “chains of education” referring to the support of these young people improving their necessary transitions.

The practices identified in IO1 report aiming at social integration of young NEETs were grouped in 3 intervention stages or elements that were incorporated in the model: “**grabbing**”, “**orienting and stabilising**” and “**inserting**,” with a particular focus on the soft skills gaps and skills mismatches which can act as obstacles to motivation, access and integration into the VET/education system and into the labour market.

⁴“Community Networking for NEET Integration: Towards a Common European Model: Guidelines for Practice and Recommendations for Policy”, ISOB GmbH, Erasmus + “ComNetNEET” Project, November 2018



Also as a “lesson learned” from IO1 report, the intervention needs to be applied in a flexible way, according to the individual interests revealed by the young person, reason why the model of intervention foreseen the design and implementation of an **individual action (IA) plan**, which should operate in a flexible and in a no mandatory way.

Through these transitional schemes, young NEETs should be better prepared for reintegrating either the E&T system or the employment system.

a. Engaging

The “grabbing” element documented in IO1 was conceptualized in the model of intervention as “engaging” element, considering the deeper and more committed level of intervention the word “engaging” represents.

“Engaging” includes activities to reach out to the hard to reach youth who have lost contact to the regular institutions and therefore are not accessible by regular ways and themselves do not seek help or apply for services. Innovative ways to get in contact with young people with such characteristics are needed. The engaging approach should be considered as transversal and continuous to the whole model implementation as these young people are not only hard to reach initially but also, they lose motivation and interest easily. Engaging should be promoted through the activities of the model but should be also incorporated as a set of tools for the young people to find ways of keeping engaged autonomously, ideally when the social integration is achieved.

i. Initial individual contact and communication actions with young NEETs to clarify expectations

One of the main activities included in the engaging element is communication activities as well as clarifying activities clearly from the beginning. The main purposes of engaging would then be keeping young NEETs in contact with relevant institutions, helping them to seek actively relevant information, to use adequate media as well as communication channels with people and institutions, encourage education and work ethics, provide them with real solutions and teach them to seek for help or apply to services.

On the other hand, the contact with these young NEETs will probably demand a pro-active and persistent way of contacting them, presenting them with relevant information and orientation, using appropriate language (meaning dynamic and common to them) and exploiting the communication channels that they already use. Activities should be communicated as opportunities for these young persons, rather than obligations. Clarifying the expectations and clarifying what is being offered right from the beginning of the interactions with the young NEETs and all along the way is very important to build trust.

These communication activities may vary but should include low barrier access communication, face to face contact, good knowledge of the target group preferences and habits, good knowledge of the labour market trends, dynamics and needs.



ii. Family involvement

Depending on the dynamics and needs of these young NEETs, family involvement should be considered, as well as other social systems, as informal “scenes”, not only fundamental for engaging but also, for orienting and stabilizing, where supporting the family system can play a pivotal role in the construction of the individual action plan of the Young NEET, as well as keeping it on track, for instance.

iii. Youth leaders

As stated previously in the preparation for the intervention model, the Youth Leaders play an important role because they function as an accessible role model, but at the same time as a peer who could be identified as one of them. It is a young person with the characteristic previously identified, from the community that mediates the system and the young NEET. The youth leaders should be informally trained in how to better engage young NEETs.

iv. Alternative activities such as sports, arts, culture, communication, etc.

Sports, arts and culture are activities that are important in these young NEETs lives and that can function as alternative and non-formal ways of reaching out to them through activities they enjoy and they can be involved at the same time in productive and healthy manners.

Volunteering schemes as well as these activities provided by services and associations close and in the socio-spatial area to these young people, like youth associations, sports clubs, youth workers, informal youth groups, cultural associations and others, have a massive potential by being activated, maximize and increase the social capital of these young NEETs.

This “social space” is a visible area for youth and function as multiple access points ready to be used. These alternative ways of reaching youth (rather than the more formal ones like education or training) should take an important role in building confidence, structure and bridges to relevant institutions. Furthermore, a plan for community facilitation with strong local networks and clear coordination in the overall model is important.

b. Orienting/stabilizing

The orienting and stabilizing element have been described in the IO1 as: ““Orienting” and describes all the methodologies to build relevant competences, trust, confidence and motivation to become able and willing to re-access regular measures of education and training. The aspect of “stabilizing” acknowledges that overall stabilisation is a multi-factorial and long-term process rather than a momentary phenomenon. Progress and setbacks need to be expected and balanced. Therefore, support must be as long term and as tailored as possible.”

i. Referral to local stakeholders according to different support needs

As it was referred above, a relevant network of multiple agents can provide important opportunities for referrals. These agents can be inside or outside the traditional chains of education and training.



Looking into the individual needs of these young NEETs, local stakeholders and informal social system can provide not only opportunities for work based learning, soft skills and employability skills acquisition but also helping youth on orienting them in becoming more self-organised and look for support in all areas of their lives, for instance to know where to find solutions for all questions of their lives arising (housing, mental and physical health, leisure, etc.)

ii. Individual coach-based sessions (define and monitor individual action plan)

The individual coach-based sessions are another important set of activities of the orienting and stabilizing element, in particular helping the young NEETs in defining and monitoring their Individual Action (IA) Plan. For this it should include:

1. First screening of the young person profile: identify the characteristics and the situation
2. Development of the IA Plan: based on the information from the first screening, develop a set of activities matching both the needs and the personal interests of the young NEET and the systems in which he/she can be integrated
3. Monitoring of the IA Plan: continuous support and supervision of the initial IA Plan, and make necessary adjustments
4. Second screening of the young person: follow up of the first screening, to evaluate where he/she was and where he/she is at that screening moment
5. Improving self-confidence and motivation: this set of skills plays an important role in keeping the young NEET motivated and involved in the process until the end, namely surpassing problems and difficulties/obstacles that may arise along the way
6. Meaningful life purpose: helping the young NEET in developing purpose, goals, and dreams plays an important role in motivating and increasing self-esteem

The development of the IA Plan should follow an integrated approach and should include the active participation of the young NEET. The plan should be designed for and with the young NEET.

iii. Group sessions (train soft and employability skills – key competences)

The group sessions aim at training soft and employability skills as key competences of the young NEETs and it should include:⁵

1. Ability of future vision and professional projection (contacts with young employees, study visits to companies, internships, workshops, volunteering activities)

⁵ “Mentoring and Coaching Sessions: Employability and Transition for School/VET to Work” Fundación Metal Asturias, Erasmus + “NEETS at RISK” Project, December 2015



2. Logical and abstract thinking
3. Problem solving and creative ability
4. Preparation for access and integration into: a) VET provisions
b) work-based learning experiences

iv. Mentoring sessions (guidance by a professional)

Ongoing social and education support can be provided through mentoring sessions, guided by a professional. These activities can be useful for developing basic job search techniques, as well as a way of embedding and empower **entrepreneurial thinking** for orientation to increase **self-efficacy** and increase career options.

v. Inform about different pathways to the E&T system return

Information about different and realistic options to return into the education and training system should be provided and discussed with the young NEET. For instance, by promoting and participating in **school and VET tours and fairs**.

c. Inserting

i. On-job experiences (e.g. job-shadowing; informative interviews; job tours; internships; on the job training; workshops)

Insertion is a crucial element of the model. Following the previous tailor-made approaches, in this phase the young NEET is expected to be ready to integrate experiences whether in the E&T system and/or in the employment system.

In this stage, young NEETs are expected to increase their contacts with educational and professional opportunities through vocational experimentation, namely:

- Short-time internships (1 week to 1 month)
- Job tours /Visits in companies (1 day)
- Job shadowing

These apprenticeship-type of training opportunities must involve directly the companies and organisations of the previously identified local community and stakeholders' network, being very important that these experiences are well prepared in advance. ⁶

ii. Build and expand apprenticeship-type training opportunities (dual system)

Training should be directly labour related, where learning is complemented by work-based learning, for instance. This type of apprenticeship training, should be more inclusive and

⁶ "Guidelines for Work and VET Placements Mentoring and coaching sessions 2 - provide work experience opportunities", ISOB GmbH, Erasmus + "NEETs at RISK" Project, December 2015



flexible/ non-traditional, including aspects of social support (transportation, meals, family) to the training arrangement.⁷

iii. Prepare for national and European mobility

National and international mobility is a reality for young people today. Preparing young NEETs for this reality is a means of increasing skills and opportunities for them to be integrated in the labour and social systems (health, housing, civil society).

iv. Empower for self-organisation, embed entrepreneurial thinking

Young NEETs should be embedded with entrepreneurial thinking as a means of becoming better and more effective employees, or to learn to start a business or increasing their societal impact and participation, for instance being social entrepreneurs or accessing to micro credit programmes opportunities as means for insertion.

⁷ “Guidelines for Work and VET Placements Mentoring and coaching sessions 2 - provide work experience opportunities”, ISOB GmbH, Erasmus + “NEETs at RISK” Project, December 2015



C. Local Community Intervention (measures targeted towards system building)

As previously stated, the intervention uses community networking as a mean to build a system for supporting young NEETs. The transitions into formal systems of education and training are supported by the local partners, for instance through local schools and VET providers. This ongoing local network of community support, which is not limited to the previously stated (see the diagram with the design of the intervention model, page 9) is relevant even after the integration of the young NEETs in the more formal E&T or employment systems as an important way to avoid dropouts and setbacks. The local community intervention plays an important role operating in the formal systems, but also in the informal but still extremely relevant and meaningful support network for the young NEET's social integration (also in areas of health, finances, family, sports, culture, etc). For this, a plan for the local community and stakeholder's facilitation is recommended.

a. Engaging

Engaging the local community stakeholders, involving them and keeping them active and interested in integrating the young NEETs may include the following:

i. **Communication actions targeting local stakeholders**

Clear communication with the local stakeholders is key for a good knowledge of the target group preferences and habits, dynamics and needs and an opportunity to match these characteristics with labour market trends. This is also a way of preparing the application of the model and to communicate opportunities and strategies to work with this target group.

ii. **Build and maintain a good network of partners to provide opportunities for work-based learning and further referrals**

These partnerships provide relevant opportunities not only for work-based learning experiences, but also for further referrals in other needed areas of each individual (such as housing, health, financial, etc).

iii. **Involve the relevant community stakeholders in developing and implementing the IA Plan**

The community stakeholders can provide important information for the profiling of the skills of the young NEETs, as well as orientation to the needs of the employers on a local and sectorial basis. All this can contribute to the design of the IAP and its successful implementation.



b. Awareness

Keeping in context the importance and the role of the network of local and community stakeholders in the integration of the young NEETs, it is very important to find ways of activating the network that already exists, as well as to increase contacts. It is very important to involve the stakeholders in the process as opportunities to find tailor made solutions both for the young NEETs, as well as for the employers and other relevant services. The following approach should be considered:

i. Increase contacts, build trust, enhance image of NEETs

Not only activating the current local community network is important, but also increasing the number of contacts and strategic partnerships, according to the demands of the involved NEETs.

Building trust with the local community network is also crucial, by providing relevant and accurate information about the characteristics of the young people involved in the intervention, as well as information about the robustness of the intervention itself.

As previously mentioned, this “social space” function as an alternative way of reaching youth and takes an important role in building confidence, structure and bridges to relevant institutions. It is recommended to develop a plan for community facilitation, where strong local network actors with clear coordination should be taking place.

ii. Use national and international volunteering schemes, non-education and training activities like sports and arts

There are several opportunities in the local communities for active participation, citizenship and volunteering as means for a better society. Activating these schemes, nationally and internationally, is important for increasing the social capital of the young people involved in the intervention.

iii. Build and maintain a good network of partners for referrals and for work-based learning, particularly employers, sectoral organisations and NGOs

To increase, activate and maintain a good network of partners for engaging young NEETs in the intervention process is very important. This can be made, particularly for referrals through social and youth work organisations, but also targeted to employers, sectoral organisations and NGOs to provide opportunities for work-based learning and other type referrals, for instance health, housing, leisure, etc.

c. Inserting

By keeping the local community and stakeholders involved since the beginning of the planning and preparation of the intervention, and by keeping them interested and aware, the transition into the education and training system as well as into the employment system are then activated in the process where they should or could have been taking part already. The types of activities in which this network can take part are:



i. Build and expand apprenticeship-type training opportunities

Following the soft skills and employability training through non-formal education and work-based learning strategies, apprenticeship-type training opportunities should be provided (e.g.: internships). Those are opportunities to involve companies directly in project partnerships based on win-win approaches.

ii. Job tours and job shadowing

Other examples of experiences with direct links to companies are “Job Tours” and “Job Shadowing”. These are opportunities for the young people involved to spend a limited time with a professional in his or her work environment, observing the day-to-day activities. These should be well planned ahead from both ends.

iii. Prepare for national and European mobility

By enhancing the mobility skills of these young people, they will increase their social and employability skills. Institutions and organizations can help to foster the mobility skills and opportunities of these young people and help them improve their self-confidence and becoming aware of other educational and career related possibilities.

iv. Reintegrate in the E&T or employment system

The reintegration into the education and training system is one of the main goals of the intervention, in a more sustainable perspective along the way where social integration is the “bigger” aim. Another option for achieving the inserting phase would be the integration into the labour market (employment) system in a continuous and sustainable way.



D. Ongoing Support Structure and Follow Up

By using the principle of case management, already previously incorporated in the engaging and orientation/stabilising elements, where it is developed, implemented and monitored an Individual Action (IA) Plan for orientation and insertion for each young NEET, additional measures can be provided if considered needed for each case (such as housing, health, financial, additional competences, mediation of conflicts and other support identified as needed). This kind of support should be ongoing and ex-post, at least, 6 months after the inserting phase, mainly but not limited through the following:

- i. **Overarching coordination which looks at the individual needs and making sure that all measures, approaches, steps are logical and reinforce the autonomy of the young NEET**
- ii. **This ongoing support structure is phased out gradually once the assistance is no longer needed**
- iii. **Awareness campaigns among employees to promote young people integration, after the internships**
- iv. **Continue social and educational support (including mentoring and coaching) after initial insertion**

E. Expected Outcomes

During Regensburg meeting and Vicenza meeting all partners considered that the intervention model having as priority the social inclusion of young people in a NEET situation, in particular by creating conditions for their employability, require intervention not only with young NEETs but also with stakeholders with active participation by these.

In this sense, the activities integrated in the intervention model both with the NEETs and with the local community are expected to achieve short, medium and longer-term outcomes among NEETs and stakeholders involved in the pilot testing. The identified expected outcomes of the intervention model are:

- Stakeholders are aware of the need for better coordination of local approaches
- Stakeholders have improved collaboration with other entities (e.g., range of organisations they work with)
- Sustainable local partnership networks
- YP have a clearer vision and pathway for their future
- YP have started to implement their action plans to achieve their goals
- YP have increased employability skills, motivation and self confidence
- YP have better links with employers and increased awareness of routes into work



- YP have moved onto and remain in education/training/work after the end of the programme

F. Overall Coordination and Cooperation

The intervention with NEETs, which includes the need to involve different stakeholders with different characteristics and status, namely from the public sector, the private sector and the social sector as well as civil society organizations (youth support services, schools, universities, employment agencies, employers, NGOs, voluntary schemes, legal and institutional systems) requires coordination and cooperation between the different entities involved.

However, it is difficult to coordinate and in order for the model to succeed in its application, certain assumptions need to be considered:

- Definition of who performs the function of general coordinator of the intervention
- Approval by all entities of the actions to be developed
- Appointment by each entity of a representative with decision-making powers within the scope of its organization
- Clear definition of the functions/roles of each entity
- Periodic coordination meetings
- Elaboration of periodic reports on the intervention, including a swot analysis

G. Social Integration

The difficulties that many young people feel in their daily lives, living in situations of poverty, with living conditions that often do not meet the minimum standards of decent living, discourage those towards a positive attitude fighting to improve the situation in which they find themselves.

The motivation and sensitization of young people must begin with the creation of minimum living conditions, which include:

- right to housing
- right to physical and mental health care
- right to pre-school education from the minimum age defined in each country
- right to access to a system to monitor their integration / reintegration into society of young offenders



These assumptions are essential and all the programs or interventions that are developed for the social inclusion of young NEETs, with the local involvement of the main entities, will have to seek solutions, in terms of social and economic nature that take into account:

- The age and sex, the family of the young person and its constitution
- The country of origin of the young person and his/her possible emigrant status
- Ethnicity and customs
- The territory where they are located

On the other hand, the intervention near a young person cannot lead namely to:

- access to training for which they are not interested
- access to traineeships in entities which are not of any interest to the young person
- access to precarious employment with low pay
- indifference and statism of the official services in relation to each young person who seeks it

All of these conditions will enable the young person better conditions to have more mental and physical health, to increase his/her social capital, allow a greater diversity of contacts and participation in job / training actions according to his/her Individual Action (IA) Plan, allowing the young NEET a social integration.

Social integration is, therefore, a complex and long process, with several relevant actors playing important roles, and a complex array of activities which should be carefully articulated and coordinated, as it serves as a backdrop and it is the ultimate goal of an intervention that operates with young NEETs, such as the model of intervention proposed within the ComNetNEET project.



4. Conclusion

In conclusion, and summing up, the model of intervention departs from an analysis of good practices coming from the partner countries, and respective recommendations.⁸

This is a holistic model, aiming at social integration as a system, and requiring coordination and cooperation of multiple agents from the E&T and employment systems (through a work-based learning strategy), as well as other services and informal chains, such as social work providers, health system, housing providers, etc.

The overall integration of a young person in a NEET situation, entails an intervention with the NEET himself/herself (with the engaging, orienting and stabilizing, and inserting phases), but also an intervention of the stakeholders and local community (with the engaging, awareness and inserting phases). Both, the NEETs intervention and the stakeholders and local community intervention are supported by an ongoing and follow up structure that provides additional support to all involved in the Individual Action (IA) Plan towards the sustainable integration of the young NEET.

The implementation of this model is supported by intervention tools, detailed in “IO2 – A2 – Creation of the tools for action”, as well as by the preparation and training of the staff involved in the application of the model, detailed in “IO2-A3 - Preparation and training of staff”.

Finally, the activities integrated in the intervention model involving all parties, namely the NEETs, the staff and the stakeholders and local community are expected to achieve short, medium and longer-term outcomes which will be assessed by an impact evaluation that will be further documented in the “Impact Evaluation Report”.

⁸ For in-depth information, please read “Community Networking for NEET Integration: Towards a Common European Model: Guidelines for Practice and Recommendations for Policy”, ISOB GmbH, “ComNetNEET” project, November 2018

