

# Policy paper

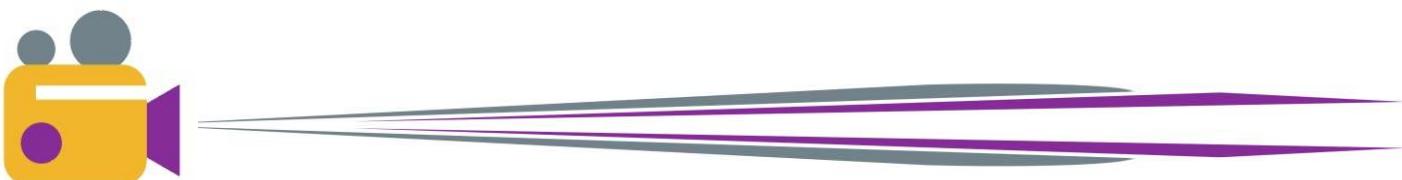


ACTION

Unlocking the talents of marginalised  
youth in a digital media environment

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## Introduction

The ACTION project aims to foster better inclusion of young people and NEETs (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training).

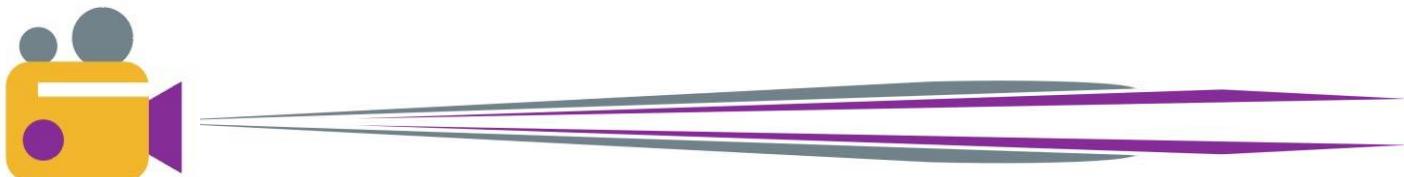
In the current ACTION Policy Paper, we, first, look into policy background related to NEETs in Europe in order to find appropriate policy measures to stimulate NEETs to participate more actively in social life and employment.

Secondly, we review the aims and goals of the ACTION project and describe the questionnaire, which was presented to youth workers, policy makers and stakeholders in ACTION project countries.

Finally, and most importantly we describe, discuss, and analyse the ideas, comments, and thoughts of various youth workers, policy makers, and stakeholders on how to improve the situation of young people and provide more motivation to them via informal training tools, such as the ones developed in the context of ACTION project.

It is important for the European Union to use its potential as effectively as it is possible. There is a number of young people who are not participating in employment and social life wasting their potential. It is important to contemplate, discuss, and think about how to help these people by using informal learning tools.

European Union is an aging society – more active training of young people and using their potential to the maximum helps to counteract the trends of aging, which reduces economic capacity of EU and reduces the dynamism of our societies when compared to global situation. Increasing regulations and inefficient support for unemployed people are capable to reduce the motivation of youngster to work or to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Lifelong learning could be one of the ways of providing young people and NEETs with additional skills and motivation to become more active economic participants of the society.



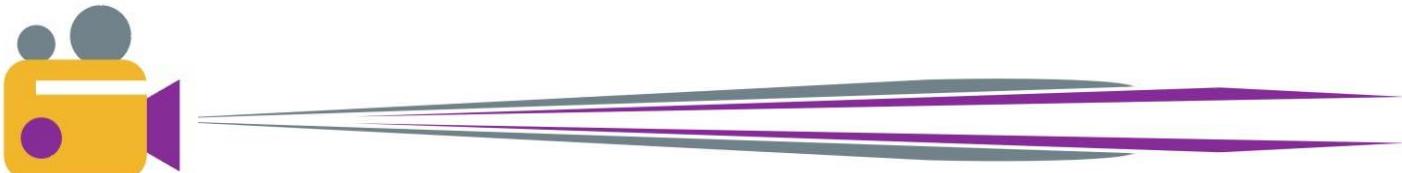
## Policy background

In these times of global crisis, one of the main concerns of European policy makers is young people and, above all, the accomplishment of the study path increasing the opportunities in the labour market.

The acronym NEET was first used in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s to define an alternative way of classifying young people as a result of changes in unemployment benefit policies. Since then, interest in NEETs has grown at European political level and definitions equivalent to this have been created in almost all Member States.

NEETs' is a term used to describe young people, aged between 20 and 34 years, who are neither in employment, nor in education and training. The indicator on NEETs aims to capture the situation of young people in transition between education and the labour market. This transition between school and work is increasingly complex and individualised for today's young people. While being a 'NEET' can also be just a temporary status, facing these temporary difficulties in entering and gaining a solid foothold in the labour market can lead to young people's disengagement from the world of work, making them vulnerable to social exclusion. The NEET group comprises of not only the conventional unemployed job seekers, but also those who are disengaged from both education and work and are therefore not looking for a job. Being economically inactive, nevertheless, does not always imply disengagement: NEETs also include those unavailable for work (young carers or those who are sick or disabled), the 'opportunity-seekers' (those who are waiting for better opportunities), and the 'voluntary NEETs' (those who choose to be inactive while travelling or engaging in activities such as the arts or self-directed learning). However, attention must be drawn to the fact that if young people are not accumulating the human capital needed for work, even those in these last three subgroups may be at risk of future social exclusion.

The importance attached to this issue is such that it has become one of the flagships of economic and employment policies proposed by the European Commission. After a steady rise in the NEET rates of 20-34-year-olds in the EU-28 from 2009 due to the economic crisis, the NEET rate reached its peak of 13.2 % in 2012 and then started to decline. The latest data available for 2019 shows that NEET rates in the EU were 14.5 % for people aged 20–24, 17.2 % for those aged 25–29, and 17.4 % for those aged 30–34. The proportion of 20–24-year-olds who were NEETs remained systematically lower than the corresponding rates for people aged 25–29 or 30–34 during the whole of the period 2008–2019, probably reflecting, at least to some degree, the relatively high proportion of students who remained in education and training at this age. It is also interesting to note there was a somewhat higher degree of fluctuation in the NEET rate for people aged 25–29 than for those aged 30–34, the former age group recording fewer NEETs than the latter from 2016 onwards. Across the EU Member States there was a wide variation in NEET rates in 2019. For people aged 20–34, the lowest rates in 2019 were below 10.0 % in Malta, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Sweden; this was also the case in Iceland, Switzerland, and Norway. There were 9 Member States that recorded NEET rates above the EU average of 16.4 %. Among these, by far the highest rates were recorded in Italy and Greece, where a quarter or more of all young people aged 20–34 was neither in employment nor in education and training (27.8 % and 25.1 % respectively); there were also very high NEET rates in Turkey (35.3 %), North Macedonia (31.2 %), Montenegro (28.8 %) and Serbia (22.7 %). There is a considerable difference between the sexes in relation to the proportion of young people who were neither in employment nor in education and



training. In 2019, more than one fifth (20.8 %) of young women (aged 20–34) in the EU were NEETs, while the corresponding share among young men was 8.6 percentage points lower, at 12.2 % (EUROSTAT).

## Risk factors and individual consequences of being NEET

Concerning the ACTION PROJECT, it is crucial to know and understand why some young people might end up as NEET status and what social, economic and personal factors increase the chances of this happening and to face these challenges.

This section focuses on the individual characteristics that may increase the risk of being NEET. Once risk factors are identified, it is essential to understand why it is important to address these risk factors and the benefits of reintegrating and encouraging young people to remain in education, training or employment. Having NEET status can have serious individual consequences for the young people concerned. They may suffer economic disadvantages due to scarring and wage penalties, but also psychological difficulties, isolation and disaffection and may disengage and participate in risky behaviour. For these reasons, being NEET is not only a waste of young people's talents. It is also a challenge for society and the economy.

In general, there is a reasonable agreement on the range of social, economic, and personal factors that increase an individual's chances of becoming NEET. It is generally perceived that NEET status results from a complex interaction of institutional, structural, and individual factors.

More specifically, the literature suggests that there are two main risk factors related to vulnerable NEET status: disadvantage and disaffection. While the educational disadvantage is associated with social factors such as the family, school and the personal characteristics of the young person, the disaffection specifically concerns the attitude of young people towards education and schooling, as expressed by unjustified absence or behaviour leading to school exclusion. There also seems to be a clear correlation between educational disadvantage and disaffection between children under sixteen and subsequent disengagement.

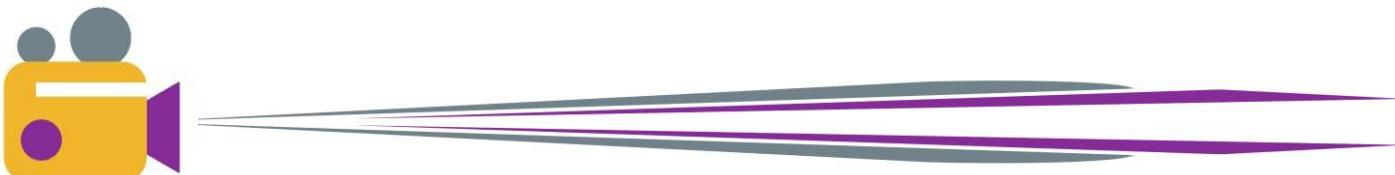
Both the educational disadvantage and the disaffection are linked to a number of underlying factors. These include family disadvantage and poverty, with one or both unemployed parents living in a high unemployment area, membership of a minority ethnic group, and having a chronic illness, disability, or special educational needs. This corresponds to other conclusions. Using data from two British cohort studies, Bynner and Parsons (2002) identify the socioeconomic family context: social class, parental education, the parents' interest in the child's education, area of residence and level of education of children as strong predictors of NEET status in old age.

Similarly, the research undertaken by the UK institutions<sup>1</sup> finds ten factors associated with being NEET: no school qualification, school exclusion, previous absenteeism, low parental skills, living in a family where neither parent works full-time, having young children, living outside the family home, having health problems or disabilities, and having parents living in rented accommodation.

Previous research<sup>2</sup> underlined that family background and individual characteristics as determinants of NEET status. At the individual level, the over-represented characteristics of the NEET population are low academic performance, teenage pregnancy and solitary parenting, special educational needs

<sup>1</sup>( <https://www.intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2013/number/4/article/youth-unemployment.html#footnote-32663-12-backlink>)

<sup>2</sup> <https://movendi.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/NEET-and-youth-unemployment.pdf>



and learning difficulties, health problems and mental illness, involvement in criminal activities, low motivation, and aspiration, including lack of confidence, fatalism, and low self-esteem. Among non-vulnerable and voluntary NEETs, motivation is often identified as one of the key factors; Those most likely to come from a privileged background and to remain briefly outside the labour market and education are likely to do so to sample jobs and education courses.

At the family level, the frequent features of NEET are economic deprivation and inactive parents, high family size, overcrowding, and poor housing.

However, it should be noted that it is often not easy to distinguish between factors that cause or lead to NEET status and those that are simply related to being NEET. Furthermore, NEETs often have multiple disadvantages and risk factors. It is therefore difficult to distinguish the factors determining the status of NEETs. This is closely linked to the fact that the statistics presented in the literature do not allow a more in-depth analysis of the contextual and individual nature of young people's pathways towards NEET status. They describe the characteristics but say little about how people ended up in their vulnerable situation.

### Heterogeneity of the NEETs population

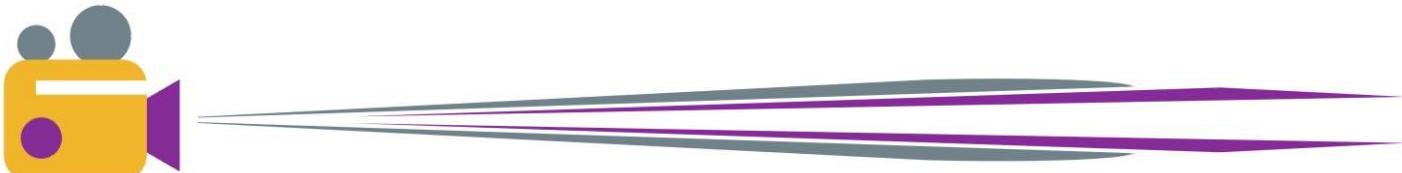
As previously discussed, some NEETs may be classified as disadvantaged and unintentionally enter into NEET status, while others may have a more privileged background and voluntarily decide to become NEET, while sampling workplaces or training courses.

This heterogeneity can be empirically demonstrated by modelling the effect of income on the probability of being NEET. An income variable, measured as the monthly income of households in euro at purchasing power parities, is included in the model together with its quadratic effect. The results show that the probability of being NEET is higher for those with the lowest monthly income level of households, and decreases with the increase in income, until the probability reaches a certain threshold. After this value, the probability begins to grow with the increase of the income until the end of the interval of variation.

This clearly reveals once again the heterogeneity of the NEET population, which makes generalizations difficult. However, factors such as education, family income and background, immigration status and health are obviously important to help explain vulnerability patterns. For this reason, two major sub-categories of NEET emerge, with very different characteristics and risk factors:

- vulnerable NEETs, which are not active in employment, education or training and are at risk of marginalisation because they often lack social, cultural, and human capital.
- non-vulnerable NEETs, which are not active in employment, education, and training, but are rich in cultural, social, and human capital and, although being NEET, are at low risk of marginalisation.

Despite this heterogeneity, in the context of complex and prolonged transitions, there is a real need to develop the conceptual tools that will allow us to map new vulnerability landscapes. NEET provides a starting point by identifying those who are not improving their prospects through commitment to education or who are denied the means to earn a living through employment.



## NEETs: Characteristics, costs, and policy responses in Europe

In the context of ACTION project, the NEET group are those that have interrupted education and are unemployed. For example, those who are in temporary or precarious forms of work and those who are under-employed are often in vulnerable and marginalised positions but are not captured by the NEET category. Similarly, some young people in education and training may be regarded as reluctant conscripts: have been forced to engage under the threat of the abolition of benefits or have been discouraged from entering the labour market because of a perceived lack of opportunity. Despite the exclusion of some vulnerable groups, the term NEET is very effective in drawing attention to the multifaceted nature of the disadvantage. This is because it includes several groups that might have different needs but are highly likely to be unemployed regularly or to be out of education and training in the short and medium term.

### Individual consequences of being NEET

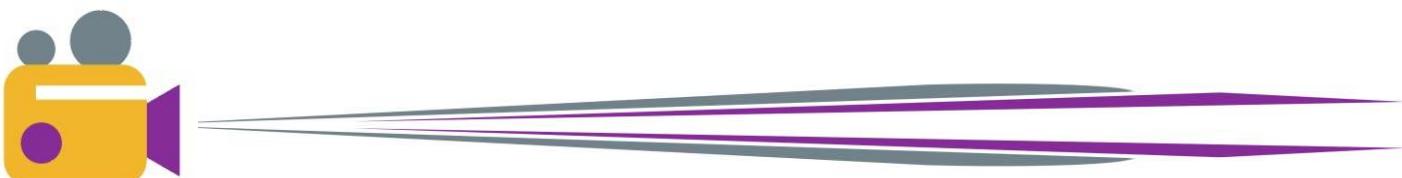
After analysing the characteristics and risk factors that may lead to NEET status, attention should be drawn to the consequences for the individual when he spends time as NEET. The aim of this project is to broaden the understanding of the benefits of reintegrating or encouraging young people to remain in education, training, or employment. Education, training, or employment have individual advantages other than increased employability.

The path to adulthood is often conceptualized as that in which various investments are made in the form of capital. Individuals succeed, or fail, in the labour market because of their stock of educational, social, and psychological features and resources. Moreover, it is the possession of economic and social forms of capital and their combination that defines the place of a young person in the social topography. While various mechanisms may hinder the acquisition of these forms of capital, the first consequence of being NEET is that the further acquisition of economic, social, and human capital is hindered.

It is well known that falling into this category is first and foremost a loss of young people's potential. Previous studies point out that spending time in the state of NEET at a young age can have long lasting consequences (OECD, 2010). These can have a negative effect on future employment results and gains as well as negative effects on physical and mental health. They can lead to disengagement from life and society, difficult relationships, drug and substance abuse and involvement in criminal activities. Furthermore, these outcomes can have a dramatic impact not only on the individual young person, but also on his family and on society as a whole. In fact, since all these results have a cost, being NEET is not only a waste of talent of young people, but it is a problem for the entire society concerned.

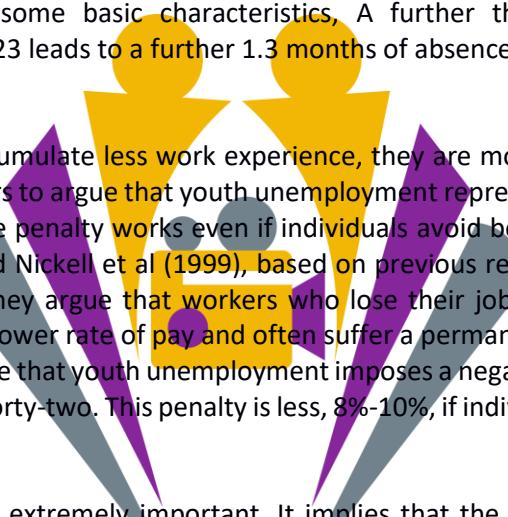
### Economic consequences

Spending short periods without work and education can be seen as a natural event in the transition from school to work. However, spending a prolonged period in NEET status can seriously jeopardise a young person's future job prospects. In this regard, the risk factors, and the individual consequences of being NEET have always been considered a serious social problem. Since the early 1970s, when the unemployment problem became more acute, many studies have studied the consequences of youth unemployment. Long period as jobless makes the transition to adulthood difficult. In particular, it is

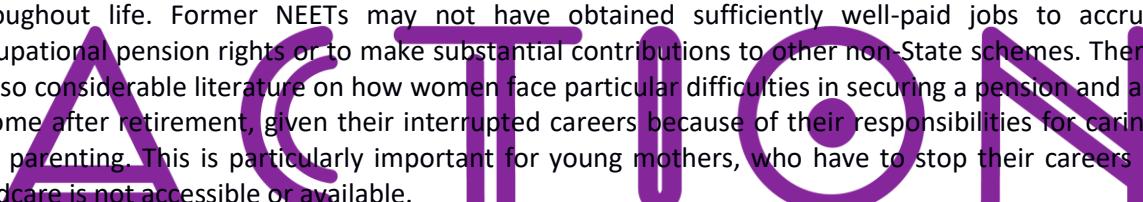


widely recognised that early experience on the labour market may have a long-term effect on labour market performance both in terms of labour force participation and future earnings. The best predictor of an individual's future risk of unemployment is his/her past history of unemployment; this leads to a vicious circle for young people living unemployment at a young age.

Many researchers reveal that the long-term effects of unemployment are conditioned on the individual's level of qualification. A lasting adverse effect is found for unskilled individuals, but not for medium to high qualified individuals. This means that poorly qualified individuals, who are more likely to be NEET, are more likely to experience future outcomes of poor employment, probably due to poor educational outcomes. Similar evidence has been found by Arulampalam et al (1998), who use the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) to show strong evidence of state dependence on unemployment among men. Gregg (2001), using the National Child Development Survey (NCDS), estimates the future incidence of unemployment on the basis of experiences of youth unemployment and notes that, depending on some basic characteristics, A further three months of youth unemployment before the age of 23 leads to a further 1.3 months of absence from work between 28 and 33.



As young unemployed people accumulate less work experience, they are more likely to earn less in the future. This leads some scholars to argue that youth unemployment represents a wage penalty on future earnings and that this wage penalty works even if individuals avoid being unemployed again. Gregg (1998), using the NCDS, and Nickell et al (1999), based on previous research, found empirical evidence of the salary penalty. They argue that workers who lose their jobs and have a period of unemployment tend to work at a lower rate of pay and often suffer a permanent reduction in wages. Gregg and Tominey (2004) estimate that youth unemployment imposes a negative impact of 12%-15% on individual wages at the age of forty-two. This penalty is less, 8%-10%, if individuals avoid a repeated incidence of unemployment.

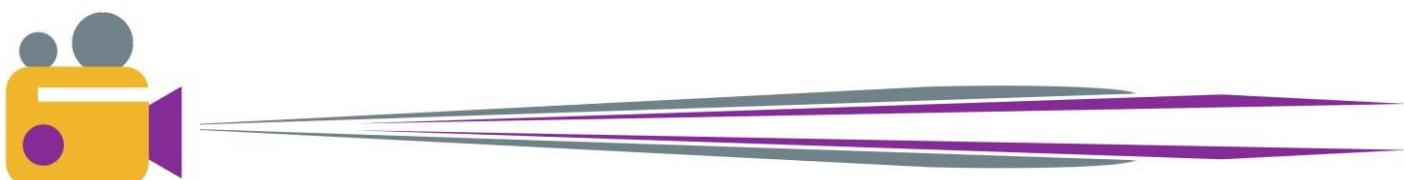


The concept of wage sanctions is extremely important. It implies that the status of NEET is not a temporarily problematic situation. Even in the long term, the NEET population is likely to have negative results, such as lower pay than that of non-NEETs. This can have far-reaching effects throughout life. Former NEETs may not have obtained sufficiently well-paid jobs to accrue occupational pension rights or to make substantial contributions to other non-State schemes. There is also considerable literature on how women face particular difficulties in securing a pension and an income after retirement, given their interrupted careers because of their responsibilities for caring and parenting. This is particularly important for young mothers, who have to stop their careers if childcare is not accessible or available.

## Psychological distress and disengagement

From a psychological point of view, there is a growing appreciation of the ways in which modern transitions can often influence the development of people's identities. While acknowledging the potential benefits of leisure time (in particular for those with the necessary resources to use it constructively), Côté (2000) argues that the extended youth phase may be characterised by marginalisation and dependence, with young people who often fail to establish a sense of direction and be confused about the choices that may be open to them.

In this regard, not only does youth unemployment have negative economic consequences for the individual, but it also creates psychological discomfort, such as feelings of loneliness, impotence,



restlessness, anxiety, and depression. It is also showed that most unemployed people experience different forms of psychological distress and can react to their situation in four different ways: disorientation (60%), which incorporates a feeling of apathy, uselessness and social isolation; health disorders (15%) that amplify the sense of social isolation and concerns about their financial situation (15%); and dependence on the ability to tap into an income without having to work for it (10%).

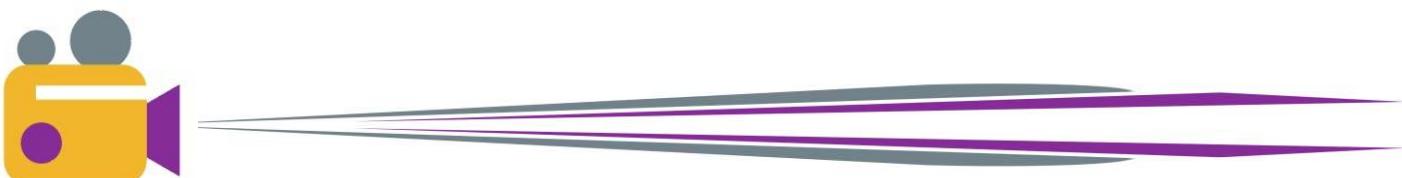
Being NEET is not only related to unemployment. It also involves disengagement from education and training. Those who fail to maintain a position in the education system or in the labour market cannot accumulate sufficient social and human capital. Moreover, being NEET is often associated with other risky behaviours that could contribute to further social exclusion. Studies on the issue have shown that NEETs are often involved in drugs and alcohol abuse, are parents at an early age and are often involved in crime. Last but least, young NEETs are more likely to suffer from poor health and depression.

Being unemployed also increases the incentive to engage in economically motivated criminal activities. There is an inextricable link between unemployment, disengagement, and criminal activities. In addition, incriminating young people is often linked to poor education and studies have shown a causal link between an individual's educational and labour market prospects and their likelihood of targeting economic crime. On the contrary, not only does unemployment make crime more likely, but a criminal record makes future unemployment more likely. Many studies agree that incarceration at a young age can have a long-term and significant impact on an individual's life. In addition to being involved in criminal activities, NEETs are at greater risk of being involved in risky behaviour in general. Young NEETs may be involved in a cumulative set of risk-related behaviours, such as alcohol and drug abuse and involvement in crime. This can lead to a dangerous spiral when those concerned become socially connected to other people involved in crime and without qualifications. NEETs are more prone to substance abuse than other young people. They are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke and take illegal drugs, all of which have a strong impact on their lives. Alcohol and drug abuse can lead to problems in getting and keeping a job, resulting in loss of earnings. At the same time, substance abuse can lead to illness, health problems and even premature death. Drug users also run the risk of being further involved in drug trafficking and crime to support their addiction

Finally, being NEET is associated with early motherhood for women. Bynner and Parsons (2002) show that NEET status has a negative effect on adult outcomes associated with identity capital formation, particularly for young women. For young men, the status of NEET leads mainly to unsatisfactory results on the labour market, while for young women the status of NEET does not only concern their performance on the labour market, but also early marriage or cohabitation, the sense of dissatisfaction with life, lack of a sense of control and experiencing problems in life. Beyond the individual consequences, the fact of being an unemployed parent may have an impact on the outcomes and prospects of the children concerned and this intergenerational outcome may have consequences for society as a whole.

## Non-formal education

Good remedies (and purpose of the ACTION Project) to face the challenges mentioned before are non-formal education and training (organised and supported learning activities that do not take place within the framework of the formal education system). Non-formal learning is undertaken intentionally, but participation in courses or activities is voluntary. As recognised by the Council of the



European Union, non-formal learning can make a significant contribution to increasing the motivation of young Europeans to undertake lifelong learning and to improving their employability and professional mobility, provided that mechanisms for the recognition and validation of acquired competences are widely available. Indeed, non-formal learning can help unlock the potential of many young people by discovering and developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes and encouraging the acquisition of new types of skills. If these opportunities are important for all young people, they can be particularly beneficial for those who find themselves in a situation of educational disadvantage. The methodology of non-formal education reaches out to all young people, including those who are not engaged in education, employment or training, and motivates them to become active members of society. As a recent study (Reiter and Schlimbach, 2015) shows, the work of young people can play a role in preventing NEET status. Youth work supports reintegration through close and informal contacts with young people, an awareness-raising action for young people and the ability to build trust in young people to get in touch with the authorities. A recent report highlights how non-formal learning can prevent early school leaving and improve second-chance programmes.

The challenge for employers, governments, educators, and employees is to recognise and evaluate the results of non-formal education. This training, provided by ACTION project, complementary to formal education, is self-managed, structured, intentional and can be participated individually or in a group. Non-formal education and youth work are open to all young people, including those not in education and employment, and motivate them to become active members of society. Often, non-formal learning is linked to youth work. Individuals participate on a voluntary basis and are often structured on learning objectives, with specific support for learning.

The experts from different countries have provided recommendations on how to reduce the gap between the skills acquired by young people and the needs of the labour market. Firstly, a framework is needed to strengthen the role of mentors, coaches, and trainers. It is necessary to invest in teaching and learning because the competence of youth leaders is essential to use quality methods and tools.

According to the European Commission, the context must also change, it is necessary to recognise and validate non-formal and informal learning in formal education and in the business sector. There is a wide lack of knowledge about non-formal learning processes and learning outcomes in young people's work activities, and little agreement on how to assess them or explain them to other sectors. In addition, the European Commission stressed the need to build a common understanding between all the parties concerned, because this is the only way to achieve broad cross-sectoral cooperation and integrated approaches that respond to the unsatisfied needs of so many young people.

The European Union programmes, with their heritage of over 30 years, have contributed to the learning and development of young people through a range of non-formal learning activities: volunteering, youth exchanges, youth initiatives. Here are some examples:

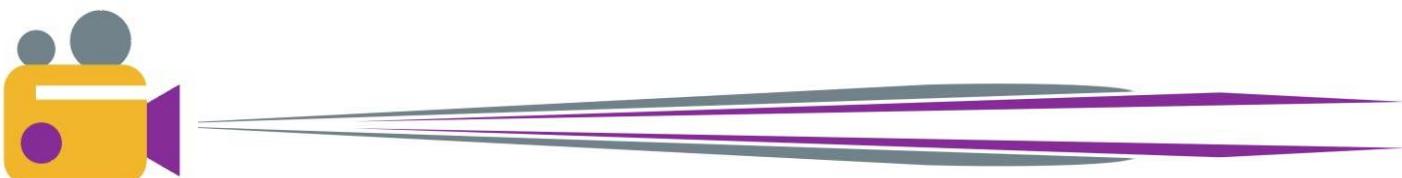
**The Young Social Innovators** Programme is working to support people aged 18 to 30 and educators across Ireland, promoting and paving the way for education for social innovation and enabling them to act as a force for change in their local communities and in society at large. The programme encourages and assists national and local youth groups engaged in community work to overcome poverty, deprivation, inequality, educational disadvantage and social exclusion. It offers young people innovative and flexible ways of participating in social action and social education. It offers a platform and a voice for young people on social issues as a means of creating a better society in Ireland and elsewhere. The programme develops services, activities, pilot projects and good practice models. It



publishes research reports, educational materials, and other aid in relation to education, social exclusion, Community action and other social issues. It also promotes social awareness within education systems. At the same time, it promotes projects that have a positive influence on the lives of young people and contribute to their personal development. Interactive workshops, designed for different age groups, help young people to recognise their creativity and potential, to learn about social innovation and entrepreneurship and to really understand that what makes a difference in terms of human rights, equality, mental and physical well-being, and the environment. They help to increase the capacity to deal with uncertainty and change. Participants have the time and space to explore their sense of identity and gain an appreciation of difference, and encouragement is offered to the voice of young people and to effective communication. Participants are invited to follow each seminar by undertaking a small social innovation action. The programme, which has been running since 2011, receives central government funding along with funds from private foundations and companies.

**Entrepreneurship Hubs** is a program that helps young people who have a business plan or an innovative idea to mature and transform it into a successful business. About forty qualified participants between 18 and 30 years of age and from different backgrounds have offices in each of the hubs or incubators that the scheme manages, along with a monthly grant. In return they complete 20 hours a week taking part in workshops and conferences, and follow courses in law, tax, financial and management topics related to business, as well as human resources and financing. They make monthly presentations of their progress. A wide range of options exist for information, mentoring and networking, as well as opportunities for exchanges with businesspeople and venture capital investors. The aim is to promote entrepreneurship. At the same time, the programme develops transversal skills in problem analysis and resolution, communication, and time management. About four hundred young people participated in the three phases of the programme implemented between February 2013 and January 2015. The programme was managed by the Greek General Secretariat for Youth, in collaboration with holding companies and private educational organisations: The Hub S.A. (Athens), I4G S.A. (Thessaloniki), ACME KEK S.A. (Heraklion) and Euroteam KEK S.A. (Patras). It is financed by the EU and the National Strategic Reference Framework.

**'Breaking waves'** was a training program for young prisoners from four prisons in Latvia, which took place from December 2012 to June 2013. Latvian and Russian participants, aged between 14 and 30, of both sexes, had learning obstacles, language obstacles or mental disabilities. The project organised long-term non-formal learning activities to develop social skills and attitudes that would facilitate re-socialisation and employability in the target group. Under normal circumstances, young prisoners receive basic and secondary education and vocational training, but little in terms of non-formal learning. To change this, the project initially gave training in non-formal learning methods and personnel approaches by experienced trainers in the field. Staff then conveyed information in prisons, according to the needs of each group or individual. Psychological tests on young detainees before and after receiving non-formal learning experience revealed an increase in their ability to work in groups, their imagination and creativity, and their linguistic and digital skills, and the ability to learn and develop projects. Participants received Youth pass certificates describing the acquired skills. This training programme was developed and financed by the National Agency for Youth in Action in Latvia. The project was carried out in collaboration with the Prison Administration of Latvia, a government institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice. Its main task is to ensure pre-trial detention as a security measure and detention as a penal punishment. To fulfil this task, the prison administration organises and supervises the work of the institutions for which it is responsible and provides financial, material and technical resources, as well as professional training for staff.



Since 2007, **Tailwind Strategy** has supported people between the ages of 16 and 30 with fewer opportunities, especially those who do not work, do not follow education or training. It enabled them to participate in international youth exchanges and the European Voluntary Service, funded by the EU's Youth in Action and Erasmus+ programme. This was part of a long-term strategy to include disadvantaged groups in education and professional careers. It has created a network of organisations working with young people with fewer opportunities and a team of professionals specialised in international mobility. This has created opportunities for small groups of young people to volunteer for up to 12 months, while rebuilding an old fishing boat in the UK, restoring a playground in Spain, or participating in an environmental project in Finland. Learning approaches are adapted to individual needs and young people acquire a wide range of skills through learning. Learning outcomes are certified in Youthpass. Erwin Zangerl, President of Arbeiterkammer Tirol, says: *"The projects support young people in the most individual way possible, especially those who do not have perfect starting opportunities in their journey from school to training and work. We offer live hands-on learning opportunities to help them cope with their lives and make them better prepared for the job market. We motivate young people by offering them positive experiences and preparing them for their professional future. The combination of work and learning in daily projects gives young people the experience of seeing the immediate benefit from their efforts"*. In 2007-2012 the project was part of the CUBIC NGO, composed of specialised youth workers, social workers, and trainers. But since 2012 it has been adopted by Arbeiterkammer Tirol, a professional group of employees, showing the importance of experimenting with innovative approaches in finding solutions for youth unemployment and helping young people in disadvantaged situations.

The '**Competence check**' has been developed by German youth organisations and is used at federal level as a tool for youth leaders and for active young people themselves. It is a model and explanatory booklet to allow the identification and description of the skills that young people have acquired in their voluntary work, facilitating access to technical language by adopting a more playful approach. It provides an overview of areas of expertise developed incidentally in the daily work of young people and uses examples of behaviour and personal reactions based on practical experience. This makes it easier for young people to relate to the abstract concepts often found in the skills profiles commonly used. In addition, proficiency testing provided an opportunity to describe the value and type of volunteer engagement. The Landesjugendring that offered this tool is a non-profit organization with twenty-two member associations. It seeks to improve the financial and legal conditions for working with children and young people in Rhineland-Palatinate, involving children and young people in all policy and social fields, recognise youth volunteering and recognise youth organisations as extracurricular educational institutions. It aims to promote democratic coexistence in all areas: society, gender equality, equal opportunities and a conscious and sustainable use of nature and the environment, without nationalist, racist, sexist, and discriminatory structures.

Erasmus+, with its integrated approach and focus on entrepreneurship and inter-agency cooperation, experimentation, and pioneering innovation in youth education, through the further development and testing of recognition tools and methods, training programmes for youth practitioners, and broad cross-sectoral strategic partnerships.

Particular consideration should be given to learning mobility as a tool for skills enhancement for young people and NEETs. This is generally a type of mobility that can develop a wide range of skills and competences among young people. The most important thing is that transversal skills such as critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and intercultural understanding are improved by periods



of study abroad. According to the Erasmus impact study, students participating in the Erasmus mobility programme improve their employability more than the non-participants. In addition, student mobility programmes can contribute to the overall quality of education.

In addition to tertiary education programmes, spending time abroad, learning about foreign cultures and interacting with peers from other countries is an important opportunity for the non-formal and informal learning of many young people in Europe. Unfortunately, the quantitative data collected at international level on learning mobility outside formal education are scarce. However, qualitative research has shed light on the benefits of learning for participants in international youth mobility projects under the Erasmus+ programme. Participation in youth mobility projects is seen as a contribution to the development of all key competences for lifelong learning.

Communication in a foreign language, sense of entrepreneurship, civic competences, cultural awareness, and expression, and learning skills are reportedly the areas in which students benefit the most. A positive impact has also been demonstrated on other competences such as communication in the first language (mother tongue), mathematical competences and a sense of initiative. Youth workers engaged in mobility projects also report that their competences were boosted, in particular in the context of managing international youth projects.

In conclusion, the two different activities, formal and non-formal, complement each other. For this reason, combining the efforts of formal education with informal and non-formal learning creates strong synergies to improve young people's chances in life and strengthens their employability.

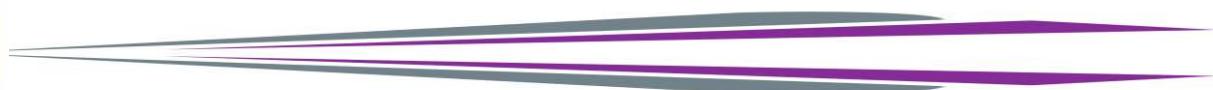
## ACTION Project Presentation

This chapter of the Policy Paper introduces the ACTION project. This paper brings out the introduction to the project and gives the results of the policy questionnaire carried out in every partner country.

ACTION "Unlocking the talents of marginalised youth in a digital media environment" is a project funded by the Erasmus+ programme that involves 6 partners: E-Juniors (France), Future in Perspective (Ireland), JKPeV (Germany), YSBF (Estonia), AKLUB (Czech Republic) and CARDET (Cyprus).

These partners have developed two kinds of resources:

1. The In-Service Training for Front-line Youth Workers aiming at supporting youth workers and front-line educators to develop their digital skills and knowledge in the preproduction, production, and post-production of short videos, so that they can provide marginalized youth and NEETs learning courses to improve at once their soft skills and to teach them how to produce videos by using digital resources.
2. The Inquiry-Based and Embedded-learning Key Transversal Skills Acquisition Resources have the objective to provide NEETs and marginalized young people new skills for reintegration into active life. In particular, the learning outputs will focus on the acquisition of necessary competences for digital and social media production.



Thus, the project objectives in terms of impact on its target groups will be:

**On youth workers:** they will have access to bespoke in-service training resources to support their continuous professional development and engage the marginalised youth target groups. Special attention is given to the digital dimension of the courses, especially when working with today's young digital natives who already have these latest technologies embedded in their everyday routines. Front-line youth professionals, who may have received little training to support online/mobile learning, will be given the right tools to work with digital natives, the young people. In the long-term, youth workers who complete the training will acquire a range of new skills and competences that will act as a foundation for further professional development and engagement with digital and social media environments in the context of supporting their at-risk target groups.

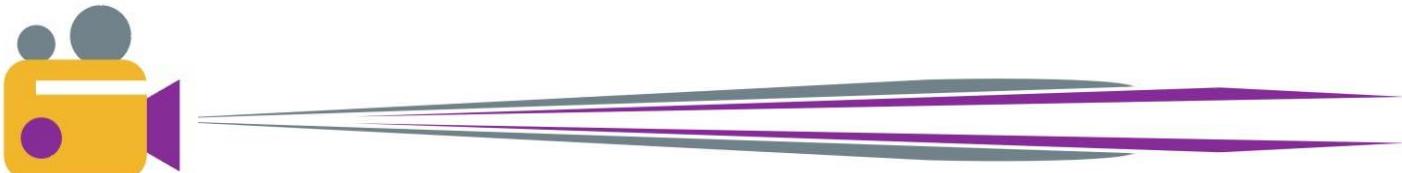
**On marginalised youth target groups:** the resources developed by ACTION will build on young people's digital and media competences and adding key transversal skills that can help them to fulfil their potential and unlock their talents to increase inclusion levels and open up labour market opportunities. The expected impact on this group is linked to their re-engagement in education and to the development of key transversal skills that are highly sought after and richly rewarded in the modern economy.

## Aims and Objectives

ACTION aims to provide youth professionals with practical training and access to resources so that they can plan and deliver creative projects with hard-to-reach young people in their community. By building the skills of these youth professionals to use digital media production techniques in their youth practice, ACTION aims to re-ignite interest among hard-to-reach young people in their education pathways, by unlocking hidden creative talents, which until now have not been fully appreciated.

ACTION specific objectives are to:

- Provide youth professionals with educational tools to allow them to produce short films
- Provide young people with the opportunities to develop their soft skills, which can be reused in any situation
- Help youth professionals to understand how to engage young people
- Unleash the creative talent of young people on topics relevant to them
- Empower young people to be able to present, in an innovative way, issues and problems that concern them
- Enhance the professional profile of youth professionals and youth organisations
- Re-engage young people in education and civic life



## Outputs

### **Curriculum for Youth Educators (Intellectual Output 1 - In-Service Training for Front-line Youth Workers - Learner Manual & Resources)**

ACTION project develops a training programme specifically for youth workers that aims to develop their core digital media skills, but also enhance their ability to teach in non-traditional environments, such as working online, integrating social media safely into their youth work, and developing creative projects with young people through informal production teams.

The main idea of the curriculum is to know how to guide young people to use digital media and create films. The practical training programme builds the skills and confidence of youth workers to use digital media and create films with young people.

The programme comprises twenty-one hours of face-to-face digital media training. This comprises of three hands-on practical workshops which will take youth workers through the film-making phases of pre-production, production and post-production. This is supported by twenty-nine hours of self-directed learning, spread across six modules, which deal with topics related to using alternative approaches in education, working in non-formal and online environments, and integrating social media platforms safely into youth work practice.

### **Curriculum for Youth (Intellectual Output 2 - Inquiry-Based and Embedded-learning Key Transversal Skills Acquisition Resources)**

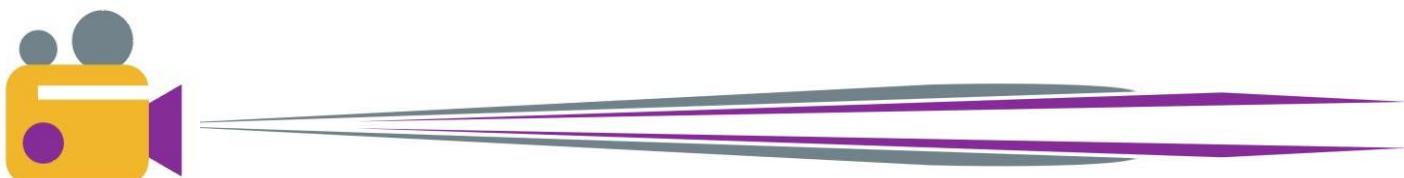
ACTION supports the local work of the newly trained youth professionals, by creating a series of activities, digital tools, lesson plans, etc. that will aim to develop the literacy, numeracy, communication, teamwork, digital skills, and civic, social, and intercultural competence of young people engaged in the production teams. These tools suggest group and individual activities which youth workers can use with young people in their production teams, to build these key skills without ever feeling like they are being educated.

### **ACTION platform (Intellectual Output 3 - E-learning portal)**

ACTION e-learning platform is the direct access to all the material produced and a platform to showcase young peoples' talent.

### **ACTION Policy paper (Intellectual Output 4)**

The Policy Paper aims to present a set of policy recommendations, informed by the experiences and perspectives of youth stakeholders in our countries. Also, to widely share the knowledge gained during the ACTION project and to enable non-involved stakeholders to benefit from the information and experience acquired during the project and provide them with ideas that will help them to further involve marginalised youth.



## Policy Questionnaire

The Policy Questionnaire is created to gather input for ACTION Intellectual Output 4 – Policy Paper from partners and stakeholders in countries involved in the ACTION consortium. This questionnaire aims to emphasise some of the most important points of the ACTION programme and to map potential ways of how the project's impact would have a beneficial effect on future policy decisions.

In addition, this questionnaire will also enquire on what additional actions can be undertaken by senior managers in the youth development field, senior civil servants and policymakers in government circles in order to promote non-formal education among marginalised young people and to support front-line youth educators in their professional practice with this target group.

The questions include the content of the training programme as well as the contribution of different parts of the project on a national and a local level.

### Questionnaire

Name of the organization	
Position in the organization	

1. What is the impact that the ACTION project could have on marginalized young people in your local community and your country?
2. What other similar actions should be undertaken by organizations active in the fields of education and social inclusion to support marginalised youth and engage them back in training and education activities?
3. In your opinion, do the activities carried out by the ACTION project and other similar initiatives have a positive impact on the integration of marginalized young people and NEETs in the labour market?
4. How do you think that such training and learning activities addressing marginalized young people could be better promoted so that the target group will be interested and motivated to actively participate?
5. To what extent do the resources fulfil the learning needs of youth professionals?
6. How should we better foster the continuous professional development of youth professionals so that they can encourage marginalized young people to take part in training and education activities?
7. How can front-line youth educators in your or other organizations integrate the project resources into their training and education activities?



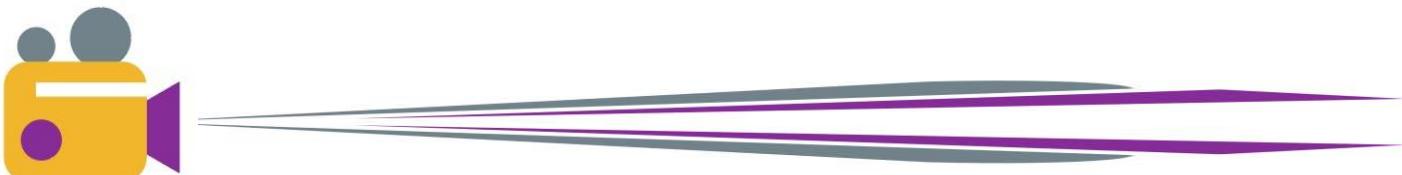
8. Is it possible for youth services/organisations to cooperate on an international level and if so, how would this be achieved and what could be the benefits?
9. Do you think that the development of resources to improve youth workers' skills and to encourage NEETs' inclusion, like those developed by ACTION, would be cost-effective and sustainable for youth and social inclusion organizations?
10. Have you already undertaken any special programmes to try to reach young people? And which ones?

## Results

All of the partners found this project (and other similar projects) very useful, helpful, motivating, funny and with a big potential. The resources developed by ACTION are well developed and clearly explained. Moreover, according to the survey, ACTION resources represent an answer to the youth educators' training needs. One of the positive things about this project is also that the resources and supports created by ACTION are open access and freely available on the web. This allows every youth educator to access them for free any time they need. One of The Czech Republic youth workers (in ALK) claimed that “[t]he biggest problem we are facing is no attractiveness of classical ways of education for some of the young people, especially with bad social background. For those young people, and only for them, are tools and activities provided by the ACTION project a great opportunity to start something new, make a new step in their life and learn something new by the attractive way.” Also, a regional consultant of The Czech Republic (from the Agency for social inclusion) claims that “[a]ny new skill, any course attended, and any education completed have a positive impact to integration to the labour market.”

It turns out that in France, this initiative is good for young people especially in the north Parisian suburbs as they do not usually have access to such projects. Besides, the Parisian suburbs might feel a little bit isolated and neglected, so this kind of initiative is necessary. As another positive point, there are more and more initiatives like this that are very helpful for the marginalized parts of society. As said by one of the French Youth Trainers (in M3 MCUBE), “[t]he resources proposed by this training fulfil the learning needs and the goals of the training. It provides the youth professionals with competences needed to successfully help the youth integrated in this training.” Also, it is necessary to provide effective training to the youth professionals as well, in order to update their competences and knowledge for successful training. According to a responsible for the youth training courses in France, the ACTION project gives “[...] opportunities for marginalized people to learn new skills and improve their skills in using social media, videos and digital tools in general in a useful and professional way [...].”

Organisations could also undertake some similar actions to support marginalised youth. A responsible for the youth training courses in France (Centre de formation Saint-Honoré) suggests that “[y]outh organizations could offer specific training to these young people whose topics and skills are chosen according to the demand on the labour market, which may help to multiply their chances to find a job. It is important to conduct surveys and collect answers directly from the young people that we want to involve in these courses. This will allow us to make sure that the course corresponds to their



expectations and will increase the chances to involve and motivate NEETs to take action to acquire new skills and start an active professional life.” Besides, as another suggestion, these activities should be promoted on social media because youngsters spend a lot of time using these tools and they will probably find the information about the courses there. A third youth worker in France (EPJ le 27) suggested raising “awareness of existing youth programs and highlighting them, such as youth exchanges and survey the needs of these young people to best adapt the training offered.”

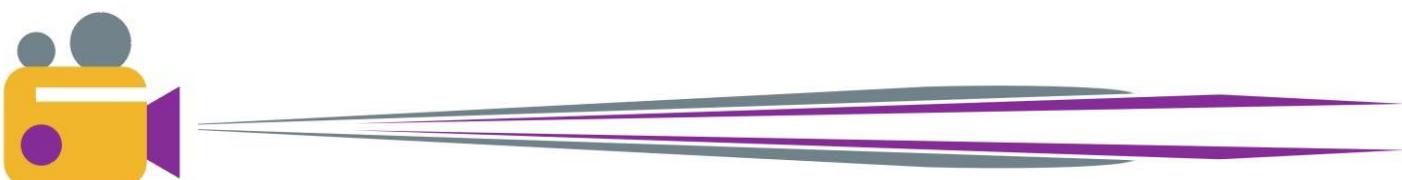
In order to better foster the continuous professional development of youth professionals so that they can encourage marginalized young people to take part in training and education activities, one of the youth professional suggested that the “[p]rofessionals should be stimulated through innovative learning opportunities so that also them can learn how to use new tools and propose them to their young students. These youth workers must be stimulated with training focusing on new topics and skills that have not been proposed yet. They must be innovative and multidisciplinary, which will allow the youth educators to adapt to different learning needs and situations and will complete their set of skills to teach young people with difficulties.”

A positive point how the resources fulfil the learning needs of youth professionals according to one of the youth workers is the fact that “[t]his is an area in which youth actors are still poorly trained and which is topical, moreover in the context of the current health context, the need is even stronger.”

One of the youth centre managers of The Czech Republic (REINTEGRA) claims that “[t]his project gives a chance to develop skills in a very attractive field [...] As this education is attractive for the target group of young people, activities attracted teachers and people working with young people in order to implement developed tools into curricula used by them. We know only the regional impact of the Action project but we very much appreciate its innovative approach and selected topics.” As one of the difficult points, the youth centre manager pointed out that “there is not a common recipe for engaging marginalized back in training and education. What we see as successful is attractive selected topics and attractively prepared learning materials together with targeted promotion among marginalized youth. Combination of those three things is the path we have to follow.” Similarly to French youth worker professionals, The Czech Republic youth worker professionals “see a big potential in media production which is attractive for teachers and students.” To better foster the continuous professional development of youth professionals so that they can encourage marginalized young people to take part in training and education activities, they suggest collecting “some success stories and good examples.” This is because “young people want to see some ideal to follow and promotion of good examples and success stories can fulfil this.”

As one of the positive points, one of The Czech Republic youth centres (REINTEGRA) has already used ACTION tools in their after school activities where they have classes focused on media production and further development of media skills that are attractive for young people.

One suggestion by one of The Czech Republic youth workers of how to better promoted so that the target group will be interested and motivated to actively participate in that “[y]oung people like to compete so maybe as a promotion could be used some kind of competition with an attractive price for the winner.” According to a regional consultant from Agency for social inclusion, “promotion should be focused on teachers and youth workers because they are providing the offer for their clients and they have to be familiar with such tools.”



Also, in order to better motivate the marginalised youth, they suggest that a “link acquired skills with concrete professions who exist on the labour market. This could be a powerful tool for motivation and as well for practical use of learned skills.”

A youth worker in Germany (Ausländerrat Dresden e. V.) claims that the marginalised young people “can learn how to work in a group and acquire appropriate social skills. They will learn how to be part of a group and have a sense of belonging. They will get to know new perspectives on a personal level and gain experiences they otherwise would not.” They also suggest that “[t]he needs and interests of the target group regarding similar actions should be identified by the target group itself. [...]. Young people need room for expressing their ideas and concerns and need that we really listen to them and to their needs. [...].”

The ACTION project is very useful, especially, as mentioned by the youth worker from Ausländerrat Dresden e. V., the marginalised young people’s “self-awareness, self-assertion and self-confidence can be boosted, and the specific skills and knowledge acquired can help them be more employable.” In order to be better promoted so that the target group will be interested and motivated to actively participate, they suggest that “[t]here should be no entry requirements, the training should be easily accessible. There must be flexibility with the participants and openness towards their everyday needs. Youth workers can speak to marginalised young people about such training and learning activities, highlighting the fact that they will benefit from such learning experiences. Also, through different social media channels, young marginalised people could get to know about such learning opportunities.”

They also think that the international cooperation might be a good option, “as it allows them to exchange experiences and knowledge, to change their perspective and to look beyond their horizon.” However, they bring out one problematic point that is the language barriers.

The ACTION project is seen as a positive impact to marginalised youngsters also by a Social Worker in the Project for intercultural Children-, Youth and Parentwork (Kinder- und Elternzentrum Kolibri e.V.): “They learn to work creatively and implement their own ideas. Their self-esteem and self-efficacy will get strengthened by creating something and presenting the result to others. At best, this gives rise to new ideas or even a professional perspective for the young people.” As one of the problematic points, they bring out that “the core problem in working with a specific target group is to reach them.” As the previous youth worker professionals, they also suggest that “it makes a lot of sense to focus on working with digital media and social media.” Also, they say that in order to integrate the project resources into their training and education activities, “it makes sense to regularly participate in workshops, supervisions, case discussions or even further training and to enable as extensive an exchange as possible.”

A project manager in European Homecare Gmbh from Germany claims that “[a]ccording to the portfolio of the respective organisation, motivating and achievable projects and initiatives should be developed for these young people. The accessibility of the target group must be considered unconditionally. Their central interest in something should be inspired through a good idea.” In order to reach the target group and have their attention, they say that “[t]he target group needs easy access. The activities need to address the concerns and problems as well as the dreams and visions of the participants within the process. They need to use social media for young people and allow them to have their say. The activities need to allow failure, should not impose obligations, but demand commitment. The facilitators should be prudent with limits. The facilitators should show transparency and serenity in all activities.”



One of the suggestions that the project manager in European Homecare Gmbh gives is that “[t]he services/organisations should check and integrate existing networks and contacts, also from other areas, in this regard”. Also, they say that international cooperation can be useful, it can motivate the target group and might even challenge their possible existing resentments.

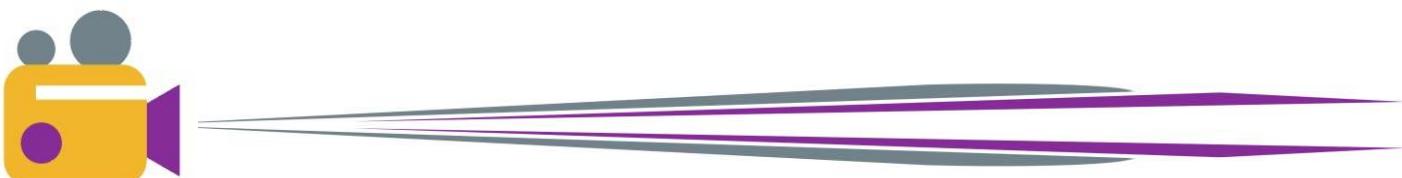
A Social Worker M.S.W & Cultural Event Consultant from Cyprus claims that more initiatives at the local level by Local Authorities can be taken. This helps to promote the development and operation of programs that concern marginalised young people. They also claim that “[t]hese programs could be related to the provision of services and activities, taking into consideration the needs and interests of young people. Some example of these programs could be the Municipal centres for creativity and activation, Interest Groups (music, photography, computer learning, painting, dance, learning foreign languages, etc).” Another suggestion that they make is that “the development and implementation of a social survey to better assess and understand the level of youth marginalization and their living conditions will enhance the appropriate planning of programs.” Moreover, “finding financial resources to provide the right equipment for youth programs is a prerequisite for attracting young people.”

As a positive point, they say that “[...] implementing the ACTION project will allow young people to acquire skills in several areas such as the development of personal, social and professional skills, the acquisition of knowledge, the development of cooperation skills, tolerance, acceptance, solidarity and above all to gain confidence in claiming the right to access the labour market.”

To better foster the continuous professional development of youth professionals so that they can encourage marginalized young people to take part in training and education activities, they suggest that “[w]ith continuous training in specialized subjects such as psychology, communication, acquisition of knowledge about the youth profile and their needs. Also through the development of assessment tools as well as the design and operation of experiential workshops through which young people will be able to cultivate their developmental skills, in subjects like art and certainly in new topics focusing on technology.”

An Owner – Career Counsellor and a Certified Life Coach in an organisation Mind-Set.life Create your Happiness Within claims that “[o]ne of the main factors that affect young people to become marginalized is that they have different skills. From a career counsellor’s perspective, a young person who realizes differently the skills that they develop in school (focusing on 3-4 domains), is very likely to become marginalized. [...]. So the way to approach them lies in their lifestyle and their peers. We need to identify 2-3 key persons/peers who have the capacity or the background to develop those skills, but at the same time, they are the link between those people who by no means are easy to become integrated into the community. [...]”

Besides, according to them, ACTION and other similar initiatives “could have a positive impact, as long as it is based on their (youth) lifestyle, as earlier stated. It should be a careful approach and it will require spending time on it. For applying this initiative, each young person should be dedicating an appropriate amount of time, personalised approach based on their lifestyle. By this, we mean that this action or by participating in a competition or with the creation of an opportunity or skills, we should make sure to provide them with the tools. To create a space for their hobby to become something bigger.”



Also, they say that marginalised young people need a positive experience: “[...] by connecting a positive experience for youth empowerment through several activities, this initiative could be a good kick compared to other daily experiences they have in their lives. Usually, marginalised youth are not positive towards their professional capacity. Thus we should try and create some positive experiences for them.” To better help the marginalised youngsters, they say that it is necessary to understand the young people: “[...], socialize and engage with youth. Adopt their lifestyle and try to understand their feelings, their fears. [...]” According to the Owner – Career Counsellor and a Certified Life Coach in Cyprus, frontline youth educators in your or other organizations can integrate the project resources into their training and education activities by being “integrated to the official school curriculum as earlier stated (specifically for government schools/ bodies).”

An Officer (responsible for the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education) in the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute says that “[s]uch projects can indeed have an impact on the young people in Cyprus, but, I would say that this depends on many factors.” As an example, they bring out the project activities and the network that will be established along with the dissemination and publicity of the developed tools in order for the marginalised youth or front line youth workers to utilize the tools that the ACTION project offers. They also claim that one important process is “[t]o become actively involved and get the feeling that this involvement was useful or it created an opportunity for themselves, to proceed with the next stage of implementation, which is the more active involvement, grouping with other people and the continuation of the initiative.”

They say as well that, as mentioned also before, marginalised young people need motivation and a sense of success: “It takes personal motivation for a young person to become so engaged and to manage to participate in the ACTION activities. This is very much related to the psychological state of a young person. So you need from the very first sessions to encourage and support them and make them believe in their own abilities. That they can do it. If you can ensure this, then yes, there is a great chance that through the activities of the ACTION project young people can enter the labour market.”

There is another important suggestion that they make – the mentors: “Mentors' role is very crucial. Mentors could be representatives of an organization that offers psychological support. These mentors can support young people but they also need to have a set mechanism for them to become empowered and supported.” Besides that, another point that might help to promote this initiative is the provision of an economic benefit. Also, according to them, the youth workers might prefer the tools that they are familiar with: “[...] in order to be more result-oriented it is important for the people involved to become trained in how to use them. If you just have them uploaded in an online portal and you provide no training or support to the people who wish to use them, I have my doubts whether someone would actually try to use them. They might feel more comfortable to use tools that they are already familiar with, without meaning that those tools are also the right ones. Despite the usefulness and the quality of the tools, the end-users need to go through a series of trainings to feel comfortable to use them.” These tools would ideally be integrated into the official school curriculum, although this is something very difficult.

However, the Officer (responsible for the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education) in Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is concerned whether these resources could be economically viable in the long term. Sustainability requires financial support and it is necessary to take care or empower an initiative.

The manager of Meath Community Resources in Ireland says that the ACTION project is a good one, because “[...] it is possible for young people of all backgrounds to develop job specific skills, but also



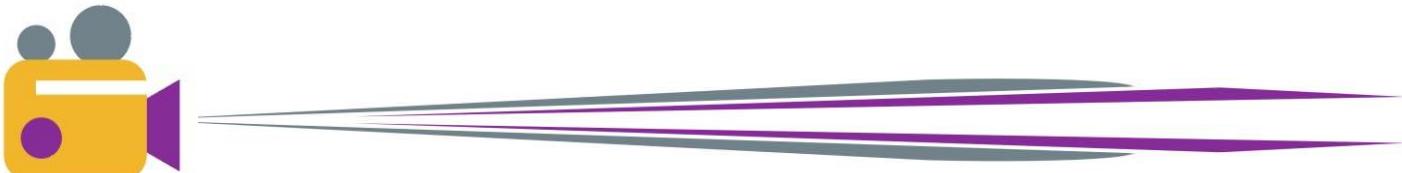
to build a portfolio of work that could help them to either gain employment in a creative sector, or to consider self-employment as a digital media entrepreneur.” They say that there should be more these kind of trainings “[...] when working with unemployed young people, they often lack the experience of being in a workplace for a solid number of hours, so it is worthwhile investing in placements and job readiness training that will help young people to feel more comfortable and confident in a workplace before they get the job.”

A manager in the organisations called Comhairle from Ireland, as the other youth worker professionals, claims that “[t]his project gives young people the opportunity to work together on something creative, and to support them to develop skills in a supportive environment.” As a small difference, they prefer not to focus only on the marginalised youth, but also on the non-marginalised youth: “We don’t like to focus on young people being “marginalised” – all young people have ambitions, dreams and potential, so this is not just something we address to “marginalised” young people, we don’t like to segregate them away from “non-marginalised” young people. The aim is to support all young people to have full and happy lives, and that is what we aim to achieve through the programmes we run. “As one of the positive things, they say that “[t]he training starts from the basics and builds up from there, so while some youth workers can jump ahead because they already know how to record good quality video, it is good that the basics are there for others. Like everything, it comes down to practice and being comfortable using technology with young people, and this is something we have all gotten better at since COVID-19.”

However, they bring out that not all the youth workers are professionals, there are also many volunteers among them: “Motivating young people to participate has very little to do with the professionalism of youth workers. Some youth workers are volunteers, and give everything to their work with young people. So it is not a case that extra CPD programmes will yield better results for young people in my view.” Also, they think that the ACTION project is cost-effective, but it needs to be accredited: “I think the approach is cost-effective; but in order for it to be sustainable, I think the programme needs to be accredited. Youth work is becoming increasingly professionalised in Ireland these days, so in order for it to be worthwhile for youth workers to complete the CPD training, it would be better if there was a CPD qualification at the end.”

A youth worker in the organisation Engage Youth Café from Ireland mentions similarly to other youth worker professionals that the ACTION project is very useful. Besides, they say it is quite innovative. As well as some other organisations, they also mention the impact of the current situation of covid-19: “The ACTION project is quite innovative as it gives youth workers a range of practical activities that we can use with young people in our group, without the need to spend a lot on equipment – because everything is low-budget, and just uses available technology that young people already have access to. Especially in our current context where we are working remotely with young people, it is a nice idea to get young people to create their own films to talk about how they are feeling and experiencing lockdown, the impact it is having on them and almost to use it as a video diary to log their experiences and emotions during the lockdown. This has inspired us to run this type of project with young people in our centre. Even though they will lose out on the team-work and collaborative aspects of the programme, at least it helps to give a voice to young people during this time.”

Engage Youth Café does not have any experience or practice of the international level, but in their experience, “youth organisations on a local or national level often have difficulty with joined-up thinking, so it would be hard to set this up on an international level.”



Concerning some weak points, they bring out the equipment available that might cause additional barriers: "It is interesting that the project can be delivered through smartphones and software that is free, but then depending on the equipment that the youth organisation has, and the digital skills of the youth worker, there may be additional barriers for those youth workers when they are using these materials."

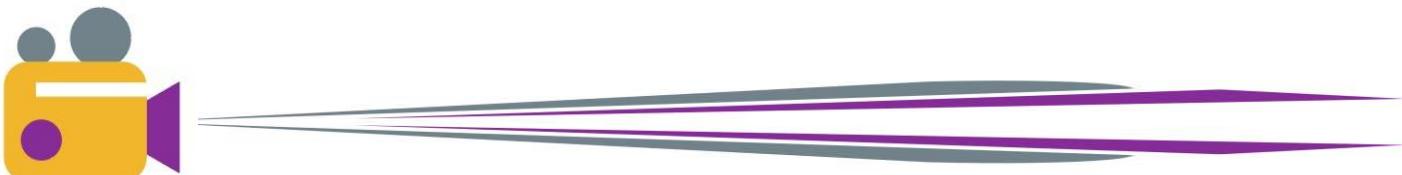
A youth worker specialist in the organisation Tartu Noorsootöö Keskus from Estonia finds that thanks to the project, there will be less youngsters who belong to the risk group. Moreover, not only the young people, who take part in the project, will benefit from the project (by finding their way back to school), but they might also influence their friends and acquaintances by spreading the word of their own positive experience. Besides, this allows the young people, who attend school, to get access to the informal and non-traditional education.

According to them, it is necessary to introduce and implement informal education in the curricula of the schools at an early age. There is also a perfect opportunity to cooperate with the youth centres. Also, it is necessary to prevent the young people becoming marginalised or in a risk group.

One of the weak points according to them is the fact that it is very hard to propagate some activity to youngsters if they do not see this as their problem or deficiency. When the youngsters see this as a problem, they are more likely to be willing to change it and to make something for that and to be motivated. Also, the youth workers need to be ready to take the responsibility to take the next step as well and to apply this knowledge practically. According to a special pedagogy specialist in the organisation MTÜ Tartu Maarja Tugikeskus from Estonia, the ACTION project will have a positive impact as the youth might have the possibility of self-growth via creative activity. Similarly, to many other youth worker specialists, the special pedagogy specialist claims that these activities should be introduced and propagated to young people by social media and also by popular and famous people who are admired by youngsters.

A specialist in Narva Noortekeskus from Estonia says that the project will definitely have a positive impact that will ideally reduce the number of marginalised youth. Moreover, they try to organise already now some activities that would create the spirit of working together and they believe that many people wish to tell their stories or share their opinion via creative activities. It is clear that non-traditional and creative are interesting for young people already now. It is also necessary to propagate these activities and to highlight which kind of knowledge and skills they can add to their CV or portfolio.

The supportive measures will definitely help a lot because especially in youth centres of smaller towns, many ideas will remain undone because of financial difficulties.



## Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

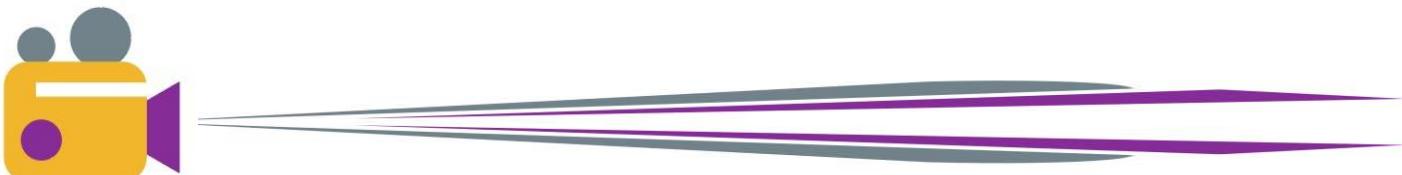
All the youth worker specialists claimed that the tools created by ACTION are very useful. According to them, it is important to integrate marginalised young people by offering them the possibility to find their way back to active life and to find out about the informal and non-traditional ways to learn.

The partners brought out some problems considering this project. Nevertheless, the importance to help marginalised youth was mentioned by all of the youth worker professionals. They said that it is important to propagate this on social media because young people already spend a lot of time there and this would be a good way to reach them.

Finally, as came out from the questionnaire, most of the youth worker professionals claimed to have been participating in one or more special programmes to try to reach young people.

### Policy recommendations:

- Youth organizations could offer specific training to the young people whose topics and skills are chosen according to the demand on the labour market, which may help to multiply their chances to find a job.
- The ACTION project activities could be introduced and propagated to young people by social media and also by popular and famous people who are admired by youngsters.
- The ACTION project gives youth workers a range of practical activities that they can use with young people in their group, without the need to spend a lot on equipment – because everything is low-budget, and just uses available technology that young people already have access to.
- Mentors' role is very crucial. Mentors could be representatives of an organization that offers psychological support. These mentors can support young people, but they also need to have a set mechanism for them to become empowered and supported.
- There is a need to development and implementation of a social survey to better assess and understand the level of youth marginalization and their living conditions will enhance the appropriate planning of programs.
- The core problem in working with a specific target group is to reach them. It makes a lot of sense to focus on working with digital media and social media. In order to integrate the project resources into their training and education activities, it makes sense to regularly participate in workshops, supervisions, case discussions or even further training and to enable as extensive an exchange as possible.
- Professionals should be stimulated through innovative learning opportunities so that also they can learn how to use new tools and propose them to their young students. Tools used must be innovative and multidisciplinary, which will allow the youth educators to adapt to different learning needs and situations and will complete their set of skills to teach young people with difficulties.
- There should be no entry requirements, the training should be easily accessible. There must be flexibility with the participants and openness towards their everyday needs. Youth workers can speak

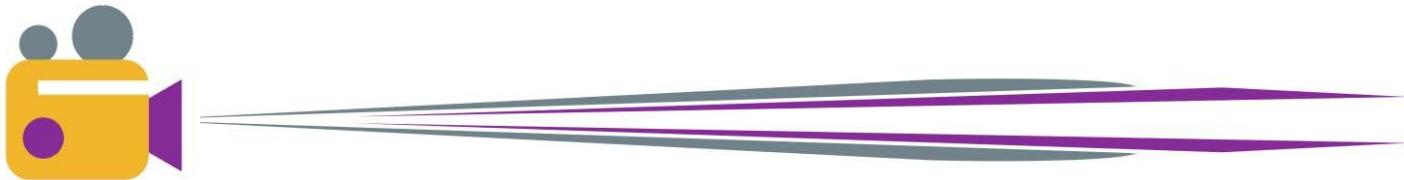


to marginalised young people about such training and learning activities, highlighting the fact that they will benefit from such learning experiences.

- The activities need to address the concerns and problems as well as the dreams and visions of the participants within the process. The activities need to allow failure, should not impose obligations, but demand commitment. The facilitators should be prudent with limits. The facilitators should show transparency and serenity in all activities.
- It is possible for young people of all backgrounds to develop job-specific skills, but also to build a portfolio of work that could help them to either gain employment in a creative sector, or to consider self-employment as a digital media entrepreneur.



# ACTION





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