

CATCHING YOUTH

methods of work in Eastern and Northern Europe

Good practices to prevent and contrast the Early School Leaving



INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

ESL can be defined as a failure to complete upper secondary school, a failure to complete compulsory schooling or a failure to gain qualifications or school leaving certificates. At the EU level, ESL rates are defined by the proportion of the population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education or less and no longer in education or training¹. Early school leavers are, therefore, those who have only achieved pre-primary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than 2 years (ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short²), and include those who have only a pre-vocational or vocational education which did not lead to an upper secondary certification. This is the working definition adopted for this document. While the term "early school leaving" includes all forms of leaving education and training before completing upper secondary education or equivalents in vocational education and training, the term "school dropout" is used with a much more restricted meaning: it refers to discontinuing an ongoing course in general or vocational education and training.

source: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52011SC0096>
"COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER Reducing early school leaving"

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1. Council conclusions on "Reference levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training (Benchmarks)", May 2003. The OECD defines early school leavers as 20-24 year olds with education below upper secondary level.
 2. International Standard Classification of Education, UNESCO 1997. ISCED 3 describes the level of upper secondary education.

MAIN STATISTICAL FINDINGS

An average of 11.0 % of young people (aged 18-24) in the EU-28 were early leavers from education and training in 2015, in other words, having completed at most a lower secondary education and not being in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. In this article, the terms 'early leavers' and 'early leavers from education and training' are used interchangeably.

Among the EU Member States, the proportion of early leavers in 2015 ranged from 2.8 % in Croatia (note that data have low reliability) to 20.0 % in Spain (see Figure 1).

The overall share of early leavers from education and training fell in the EU-28 by 2.9 percentage points between 2010 and 2015. It should be noted that there is a break in series for all countries shown in Figure 1 due to changes in the ISCED classification; nevertheless, at this broad level, the latest figures remain comparable with those for previous years. Among the EU Member States, the largest reductions (in percentage point terms) between 2010 and 2015 in the proportion of early leavers were in Portugal, Spain, Cyprus and Greece, all reporting a fall in excess of 5.0 percentage points; this was also the case for Turkey and Norway among the non-member countries. There was an increase between 2010 and 2015 in the proportion of early leavers in Slovakia and Luxembourg (up 2.2 percentage points), the Czech Republic (1.3 percentage points) and Bulgaria and Hungary (0.8 percentage points), with the proportion relatively unchanged (+/- 0.5 percentage points) in Sweden, Estonia, Slovenia, Poland and Romania.

As part of the Europe 2020 strategy, nearly all of the EU Member States have adopted national targets for this indicator, and these are also shown in Figure 1. By 2015, the proportion of early leavers was already below the national target in 12 Member States, equal to the target in Slovenia, but remained

remained above the national target for 14 of the Member States; there is no national target for the United Kingdom.

The gap between the latest rate for early leavers from education and training and the national target for 2020 was particularly pronounced in Romania (where the latest rate for 2015 was 7.8 percentage points higher than the target), and peaked in Malta where the difference was 9.8 percentage points; note that these two Member States together with Spain also recorded the highest rates of early leavers in 2015.

source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Early_leavers_from_education_and_training

REASONS FOR EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

Early school leaving is linked to unemployment, social exclusion, and poverty. There are many reasons why some young people prematurely resign from education and training: personal or family problems, learning difficulties, or a fragile socioeconomic situation. The way the education system is set up and the environment in individual schools are also important factors.

POLICY IN EUROPE, STRATEGIES

Tackling early leaving

Most Europeans spend significantly more time in education than the legal minimum requirement. This reflects the choice to enrol in higher education as well as increased enrolment in pre-primary education and wider participation in lifelong learning initiatives, such as adults returning to education (see the adult education survey) - often in order to retrain or equip themselves for a career change. Nevertheless, around one in nine children leave school or training early and this has an impact on individuals, society and economies.

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In January 2011, the European Commission adopted a Communication titled 'Tackling early school leaving: a key contribution to the Europe 2020 agenda' (COM(2011) 18 final). This outlined the reasons why pupils decide to leave school early - including, for example, learning difficulties, social factors, or a lack of motivation, guidance or support - and gave an overview of existing and planned measures to tackle this issue across the EU.

In 2014, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) jointly released a report on Tackling early leaving from education and training in Europe: strategies, policies and measures.

ET 2020 strategic framework

The strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training was adopted by the Council in May 2009. It sets out four strategic objectives for education and training in the EU: making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; promoting equality, social cohesion and active citizenship; and enhancing creativity and innovation (including entrepreneurship) at all levels of education and training. This strategy set a number of benchmarks to be achieved by 2020, including that the share of early leavers from education and training should be not more than 10 %. This benchmark is also included in the Europe 2020 strategy and the European employment strategy.

source: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Early_leavers_from_education_and_training

PROJECTS IN EASTERN AND NORTHERN EUROPE - SPECIFICATION ACCORDING TO PROBLEMS

| Problem | Practice | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| General | Voluntary Labour Corps | Poland |
| | Youth in Growth | Denmark |
| | Training for all | Denmark |
| | Creation of the Studentweb www.tudengiveeb.ee | Estonia |
| | Open Vocational College and Counselling and Guidance Centre (Open College) | Finland |
| | Youth Support Project in North Karelia | Finland |
| | Petra Youth to Work and Education | Finland |
| | Promotion of Primary Vocational Education Attraction | Latvia |
| | Volunteers for the Safety of People | Lithuania |
| | Volunteering a First Step towards a Successful Career | Lithuania |
| | Trust Yourself | Lithuania |
| | Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors | Sweden |
| | Youth to Work W18-24 | Sweden |
| | Plug In | Sweden |
| Unga In | Sweden | |

| Problem | Practice | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Ethnic minority, immigrants | Retention Caravan | Denmark |
| | We Need all Youngsters | Denmark |
| | Hold On Tight Caravan | Denmark |
| | Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors | Sweden |
| Unemployed, handicapped, prison leavers | Workplace for Youth | Latvia |
| | Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors | Sweden |
| Social-emotional problems | Development and Implementation of Support program for Disadvantaged Youth | Latvia |
| Functional disabilities | Training of Unemployed and Job Seekers in Latvia | Latvia |
| Children from foster care | Innovations 15, Testing and Implementation of New Methods of Early Social Intervention and Preventing Social Exclusion of the Youth above 15 Years Old | Poland |
| Addictions, conflict with the law, single motherhood | Second Chance School | Poland |
| Teenagers after leaving a sociotherapy centre | A Bridge to the Future, The MOST Program | Poland |

1. Dania

Since 2002 Denmark has invested resources to decrease the number of early school leavers (ESL) or drop-outs, especially in vocational education and training system. The government has also implemented various measures for early intervention in case of early school leaving and youth unemployment.

Many activities have been aimed to guide students into the VET and to advise students during their study process, and afterwards guide them into the labour market. The third element - guidance into the labour market - has been the most challenging one. There are not enough apprenticeship places within the VET system. The Peer Review on Early School Leaving reports that once enrolled in the VET system, there is a risk that schools will not be able to maintain cooperation with young people who often have multiple and severe problems (social and emotional difficulties, learning difficulties, etc.). Therefore, schools need to be equipped to deal with students who need extra support. A certain percentage of young people need special training programmes that are adapted to their abilities. Many companies are not prepared to take apprentices either because their profile is too narrow to cover the whole training programme or because they do not want to work with very young people³.

To raise the level of education and to enhance youth employability, the project Youth in Growth (Table 1. Project Youth in Growth) was implemented in the Danish towns of Hjørring, Broenderslev and Frederikshavn. The project Youth in Growth aimed to help 400 young people aged between 18 and 25. The project's on-the-job training tasters allow the young people to get a feel for different types of training options. Another related goal was to teach participants the personal and social skills they need to prosper in life. A remarkable quality of the project is its target group - NEETs. This is one of the rare ESF funded projects that reached out to the youth who have no employment or education or training in the period 2007-2013.

3. European Commission. Peer Review on Early School Leaving, 15 March 2013, Brussels. Draft Report. 2013, P..16

| Title of the project | Youth in Growth |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Youth, NEETs |
| Activities | Courses to improve youth qualifications, coaching, supervision, building-up coordinators' network, partnership building between education, employment centres, business councils, and social partners. |
| Results | <p>The project significantly contributed positively to the development of young people's education readiness. 73% of the three-month course graduates were still in progress with the initiated or planned activity. Students were generally satisfied with the curriculum, the performance of coordinators and teachers.</p> <p>A crucial key to the success of the project was the establishment of social networks within and among the teams (carried out by coordinators).</p> |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Denmark |
| General information | <p>Two types of courses were offered during the project. A short course lasting eight weeks allowed young people to think about the kind of training they want to undertake. The longer 20-40 week courses provided a specific educational focus and gave participants a chance to improve their general qualifications.</p> <p>Coordinators provided individual supervision and monitored participants as they undertook their programmes. They kept in touch via telephone calls, Facebook or through face-to-face meetings. The relationship between the coordinator and the young person was crucial. The coaching addressed specific individual problems and helped to develop new, more constructive types of behaviour. In addition, group activities gave young people a sense of belonging and taught them how to cope in social situations.</p> |

Table 1. *Project Youth in Growth*

Specially designed projects have been implemented to decrease the number of drop-outs among migrants Retention Caravan (to be supported in 2014-2020, Table 2. Project Retention Caravan) and We Need all Youngsters (Table 3. Project We Need all Youngsters). The initiatives were funded by the government and the European Social Fund as they are measures for the enhanced lifelong learning process.

| Title of the project | Retention Caravan |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Ethnic minority youth |
| Activities | Mentor teams; support for skills development of teachers; coaching, mentoring; development of cooperation with parents; intensive learning |
| Funding | National funding, European Social Fund |
| Area | Denmark |
| General information | <p>Essentially, the Retention Caravan initiative provided a wide range of material and resources that aimed to increase young people's motivation and capacity to choose a vocational training and to increase the retention of young people in initial vocational training.</p> <p>The Retention Caravan offered support to vocational schools and developed a range of online activities and tools that could be used to support the professional development of teachers to help young people in completing their homework. The project offered coaching and mentoring services and encouraged greater cooperation between parents by providing them with the support and the skills they needed to help young people with their learning. As a part of the offer available to the VET school, a dedicated retention coordinator was allocated to the school. This person was a part of the Retention Caravan team and visited the VET school in order to work alongside the VET institution in a variety of different ways.</p> |

Table 2. Project *Retention Caravan*.

| Title of the project | We Need all Youngsters |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Ethnic minority youth, parents, education institutions |
| Activities | Task Force, job and educational bazaars, homework support (Homework assistance cafés), information and recruitment campaigns, role model network, volunteer mentoring. |
| Funding | National funding, European Social Fund |
| Area | Denmark |
| General information | <i>We Need All Youngsters</i> created a team of young role models with a migration background who have been successful in education and the labour market. These role models travelled around the country discussing their experiences with other young people who have an immigrant background and giving advice on how to choose and successfully complete education programmes. A team of so-called 'parent role models' was also created to share experiences among parents. |

Table 3. Project *We need All Youngsters*

The project *Hold On Tight Caravan* was run by the Ministry of Education and funded by the ESF to motivate the ethnic minorities' youth to start or complete the VET. The project is managed in schools by coordinators who ensure an individual approach to each young person at risk of school failure or drop out (Table 4. Project *Hold On Tight Caravan*).

| Title of the project | Hold On Tight Caravan |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Ethnic minority youth, parents, educational institutions |
| Activities | Homework centres, mentoring, parental involvement, personal teachers for every student, teachers equipped with new teaching methods, and their developed pedagogical skills. |

| Title of the project | Hold On Tight Caravan |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Results | Overall school and training drop-out rates fell from 20% to less than 15%, while the gap with ethnic Danish students had narrowed. |
| Funding | National funding, European Social Fund |
| Area | Denmark |
| General information | <p>In Denmark, up to twice as many young people from ethnic minority backgrounds drop out of education, leaving too early with any useful qualifications. This is true for both first- and second-generation immigrants and is particularly so in vocational education where the dropout rate can reach up to 60%.</p> <p>In response, the Hold On Tight Caravan project provides a support platform for all the elements of the education and training process to increase the number of minority young people who have received education qualifications. The initiative was managed by retention coordinators who ensure a coordinated approach to each young person at risk at the grass-root level in schools.</p> |

Table 4. Project *Hold On Tight Caravan*

The youth guidance system and the availability of the 52 Youth Guidance Centres in 98 municipalities in Denmark are among the strengths of the Danish system. Their work supports the transition to upper secondary education and helps young people to find their career path. The system focuses on the individual needs of the students. The primary focus of the Youth Guidance Centres across Denmark is to provide educational guidance to those who have not started upper secondary or vocational education or who have dropped out of the youth education⁴. The system has been up and running since 2004. The

4. Danish Ministry of Education. Youth Guidance Centres. Website: [www.uvm.dk / Education/ Educational and vocational guidance/ Youth Guidance Centres](http://www.uvm.dk/Education/Educational%20and%20vocational%20guidance/Youth%20Guidance%20Centres)

Danish government's main objective is to make it easier for the young people to make realistic decisions about learning opportunities and careers for their sake and for the good of society as a whole⁵. The Youth Guidance Centres are financed by municipalities. Approximately 82 million EUR per year is spent on youth guidance⁶.

Another type of guidance centres are the Regional Guidance Centres with the responsibility for guidance in relation to the transition from youth education to higher education. The Regional Guidance Centres' main target groups are as follows: students in youth education programmes, young people and adults outside the education system who wish to enter a higher education programme, students in youth education programmes with an extended need for guidance concerning the choice of education, vocation and career. The regional guidance centres focus on the transition from youth education to higher education. They organise a wide variety of educational and vocational guidance activities for students in upper secondary education including workshops, seminars, career fairs as well as individual and group guidance sessions. These activities take place in the students' schools. The regional guidance centres cooperate with the youth educational institutions in general and especially regarding young people with an extended need for guidance.

The project *Training for all, Phase 1 UTA1* is worth mentioning in the concept of opening doors for youth to enter the labour market (Table 5. Project *Training for all, Phase 1 UTA1*).

5. European Platform for Investing in Children. Youth Guidance Centres. Website: www.europa.eu/ European Platform for Investing in Children/ Practices that Work/ Practice User Registry/ Youth Guidance Centres

6. European Commission. Peer Review on Early School Leaving, 15 March 2013, Brussels. Draft Report. 2013, P..26.

| Title of the project | Training for all, Phase 1 UTA1 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | VET students, pupils, VET institutions, NEETs |
| Activities | An information campaign, networking, working groups among VET institutions and business companies, task force, staff training, cataloguing of business and education possibilities in Bornholm, development of e-platform, personality development programs for students, internships. |
| Results | The criterion for success was to achieve the government's objective that 95% of those in any particular school grade have participated in at least one youth training course. In 2008, the number for Bornholm was 84%, and by 2012 it had risen to 94%. This positive trend looks like it will continue. The group of young people (15-24) who were not in the education system has decreased by approximately 200. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Bornholm Island, Denmark |
| General information | The project's objective was to build a better framework for business on the Danish island of Bornholm and to improve the island's educational and training system in order to ensure that more young people from Bornholm aged 15-24 have received training after leaving school. The project had many sub-projects operating in various fields and levels (including a political one). Many stakeholders were involved in the implementation of the project. |

Table 5. Project *Training for all, Phase 1 UTA1*

As a part of the Danish active labour market policy, it is essential to have early intervention. In addition, young people, who experience unemployment, have particular rights. As a general rule for the unemployed, a person will have

a personal interview within the first week of announcing their unemployment to the job centre. This interview is then the starting point for a tailored and integrated effort run by the employment service to secure an individual's entry or a return to the education system or employment. All of the young and unemployed will receive an active offer within one month of unemployment⁷. It is important to note that the ESF funding is a very small part of the funding for the youth employment measures in Denmark because the biggest share originates from national funding.

2. Estonia

Estonia has implemented several projects in the fields of vocational education (Vocational Education Content Development; Promotion of Vocational Education), general education (Study Materials for Children with Special Educational Needs; Raising the Qualifications of General Education Teachers 2008-2014; Raising the Quality of General Education by Means of Internal and External Evaluation System) and lifelong guidance services (Development of Career Services) that were funded by the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund⁸. NEETs were not the primary target group of these projects but they benefit indirectly from the projects' results.

One of the specially designed programmes to prevent early school leaving from VET was KUTSE or otherwise called the back-to-school initiative. The programme was financed both by the ESF and national budget and the activities took place in between 2010 and 2013. The aim of the programme was to enable people who have dropped out of vocational studies to take them up again and acquire a qualification, improve their qualifications and thus enjoy

7. European Commission. Peer Review on Early School Leaving, 15 March 2013, Brussels. Draft Report. 2013, P..28.

8. Sihtasutus Innove. Projects Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Website: www.innove.ee /Homepage / Organization / International Cooperation / Projects Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

better opportunities on the labour market. In 2010, there were nine vocational education institutions and 40 students that participated in the programme; by the spring of 2011, there were 57 participants. In 2011, the programme was also opened for low-skilled adults as the programme could not reach the number of students who had left the education system. The setback of reaching the quantitative results to fill the financed positions for studies and the fact that the drop-out process was still ongoing, the programme was not considered to be successful. However, the KUTSE programme taught two important lessons. First, special measures must be implemented to persuade and motivate youth to finish VET studies. Second, VET institutions need to recognize their role in helping potential drop-outs and raising awareness about the need of skills and completing education.

As of tertiary educations, there have been and still are several initiatives that are carried out in order to help students and to prevent early school leaving once they are enrolled at a higher education institution. One such initiative is the programme Primus that is supported by the ESF. The aim of the programme (implemented in 2008-2015) is to support the improvement of professional competitiveness of higher education institutions' graduates. To implement the programme, 22 higher education institutions, the Federation of Estonian Student Unions and the Estonian Information Technology Foundation were involved. The programme focuses on the development of six activity areas:

1. Sustainable and high-quality competency in the area of higher education pedagogy, i.e. teaching stuff;
2. High-quality implementation of study programmes based on the learning outcome, i.e. quality of study;
3. Quality of recognition of prior learning and work experience, i.e. RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning);
4. Support systems and result-orientated management skills that support the conduction of studies, i.e. strategic management;
5. Research and analyses in the field of higher education, i.e. research and analysis;

6. Training of adjustment to studies for entrants by providing study and career counselling services and support services to students with special needs, i.e. students.

The total cost of the programme was 15.6 million Euros. The programme was supported by the European Social Fund and carried out by the Archimedes Foundation. The ESF programme Primus had 21 partners (19 universities, the Federation of Estonian student unions and the Estonian Information Technology Foundation) and it carried out such operations:

1. Improving the teaching and supervising skills of teaching staff;
2. Development of high-quality education based on learning outcomes;
3. Development of the quality of RPLWE (the system of recognition of previous learning and working experience) implementation;
4. Supporting strategic management capacity building in institutions of higher education;
5. Carrying out surveys and analysis;
6. Development of students' support services.

The operations had a wide range of activities that were implemented both for HI personnel and students, like Summer and Winter schools, conferences, seminars, workshops, meetings, supervision, training courses (more than 200 per year), mentoring, issuing of handbooks (e.g. the handbook for students The Smarter Study Skills Companion), study visits, networking (both nationally and internationally), creation of websites and e-courses, research and surveys, etc.⁹

The sixth operation of Primus was designed specifically for students. The operation ran the following activities:

1. Support for beginning learners:
 - introductory course “Studying in higher education”,
 - freshmens' weeks, introductory seminars,

9. Noorma, M., Ruul, K. EFS Programme Primus for Higher Education Quality Enhancement in Estonia.

- guidebooks, handbook “The Smarter Study Skills Companion”. The handbook has chapters such as: A toolkit for understanding what a university involves; A toolkit for managing yourself; A toolkit for developing your learning skills; A toolkit for improving your academic writing; A toolkit for performing well in assessed coursework; A toolkit for succeeding in exams; A toolkit for the future¹⁰.

1. Development of academic and career counselling in HE:

- in-service training,
- new academic and career counsellors,
- cooperation with secondary education and regional counselling services.

2. Support services for students with special needs:

- scholarships for students with special needs,
- development of support services in HEIs,
- physical accessibility of learning environment.

Another tool for students to ease the entry into the labour market was the creation of the Studentweb www.tudengiveeb.ee (Table 6. Initiative for students to ease the entry into the labour market).

| Title of the initiative | Creation of the Studentweb www.tudengiveeb.ee |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Students |
| Activities | The information portal's major role was to provide information to students about internship and job placements. The portal also provided information about: studying requirements in Estonia and events for students' social life, general information about living in Estonia, internship and work offers, and information that helps to enter the labour market. The portal still has the functions mentioned above. |

10. Kasealk, M. *Career services in Estonia (HE)*. 2013.

| Title of the initiative | Creation of the Studentweb www.tudengiveeb.ee |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Results | Created software tool for Estonian student and employer information portal www.tudengiveeb.ee. General purposes: 1) to make it easier for employers to share job/placement offers, 2) to point out different important topics for students, alumni and potential students: What is going on in the higher education? How to be successful in the higher education? How to enter the labour market? |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Estonia |
| General information | The activity was initiated by nine universities and is an opportunity for students to apply for jobs and internships, to order delivery to one's e-mail of job and internship offers in the preferred field, receive information and direct references to living, studying and working in Estonia. |

Table 6. Initiative Creation of the Studentweb www.tudengiveeb.ee

In summer 2014, the implementation of the above-mentioned operations ended. Only two operations lasted until 2015: the support for students with special needs and the special higher education scholarship.

To promote educational and training programmes as well as to implement the ESF conditions in the area of human resources' development, the foundation Innove was established in 2003. Innove consists of several organizational units but the one dealing with LLL and youth is the *Agency for Lifelong Guidance*. The agency provides career guidance services for youth. One of their tools is the national LLG website (Rajaleidja) that provides information for career and other resources. It has separate sections for youth, adults and also professionals.

Another form of career guidance service provision is youth centres. According to the report *Review of the Concept of Career Services 2013-2020 in Estonia*,

17 youth career guidance centres receive their funding from the ESF and under the supervision of Innove. These centres are available for customers under the age of 26. In 2013, the youth centres faced a problem at a local/regional level in that there was not a clear distinction between services provided by the PES offices and the youth centres¹¹.

Estonia implemented the project *Guiding the Young Adults of Pärnumaa to the Labour Market with the Help of the Community* to break the vicious cycle of lack of experience and unemployment for young people in 2011-2012. The aim of the project was to help youth find a job by providing them tailor-made support to advance their integration into the labour market. The project placed a special focus on those young people who were not registered at the public employment service and therefore had no access to enhance their qualifications and skills. The young adults developed their professional skills in civil society organizations (a similar experience shared in Latvia and Lithuania) in the Pärnu County. The young job seekers received communication and motivation training, counselling, assistance with drafting job applications as well as the chance to participate in vocational training. Out of the 42 young participants, 30 found a job and half of the volunteers continued to participate in community activities at the end of the project.

An aspect that must be considered for the activities implemented in the period of 2014-2020 is that the programmes funded by structural funds often named students or youth in general as their target group but the direct beneficiaries of the activities are teachers, youth workers, etc.¹²

11. Vuorinen R., Borbély-Pecze, T. B. *Review of the Concept of Career Services 2013-2020 in Estonia*. 2012. P...6.

12. Kirss, L., Haaristo H.-S., Nestor, M., Mägi, E. *Executive Summary: Evaluation of the implementation of ESF measures in the area of general education and youth work in Estonia*. 2013. P.5.

3. Finland

Finland has had several projects funded by the ESF to help unemployed youth or early school leavers in the period of 2010-2014. These projects have been at the regional and local scale, like North Karelia, Helsinki and city of Vantaa. Two projects have been implemented in the region of North Karelia. The project *Open College* was targeted for 15-24-year-olds who unemployed or who have prematurely left the education system. The college provided vocational training modules which allowed participants to get acquainted with different sectors of the economy (Table 7. Project *Open College*).

| Title of the project | Open Vocational College and Counselling and Guidance Centre (Open College) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Unemployed youth or early school leavers aged 15-24 |
| Activities | Vocational training modules, alternative learning methods, personal study plans, personal guidance and support was offered constantly with GC, tailored career guidance services for every individual, employment services. |
| Results | 1,250 participants took part in the project. There are over 30 One-stop Guidance Centres in Finland that have already started their operations or operations are starting during 2015; to prevent early school dropouts there is the Open College network and national cooperation; new methods of network co-operations are developed on how to support young people outside work and education; group based and individual actions for unemployed young people. |
| Funding | European Social Fund (Youth guarantee initiative) |
| Area | Finland |

| Title of the project | Open Vocational College and Counselling and Guidance Centre (Open College) |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General information | <p>The study programme was based on individual, functional and alternative studies, learning-by-doing method, individual length and content (also short-term study periods) of studies.</p> <p>The college did not stop student enrollment at any time. The cooperation among the college and guidance centre helped students to develop realistic personal study plans for future learning.</p> |

Table 7. Project *Open Vocational College and Counselling and Guidance Centre (Open College)*

The second project ran in North Karelia focused on young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who are at risk of marginalisation to help them to find their way back into training or employment (Table 8. *Project Youth support project in North Karelia*).

| Title of the project | Youth Support Project in North Karelia |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Unemployed youth or early school leavers aged 15-24 |
| Activities | Career counselling and guidance with vocational training; group-based activities; individual evaluations; vocational guidance; help to organise their daily routine |
| Results | <p>About 40% of those who finished the project enrolled in vocational education or other training.</p> <p>A further 40% went on to work, participate in a workshop or an on-the-job training, take maternity leave or enter military service.</p> |
| Funding | European Social Fund (Youth guarantee initiative) |
| Area | Finland |

| Title of the project | Youth Support Project in North Karelia |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General information | The project addressed 950 young people who had dropped out of studies or had been unable to find or retain a job. They received support in the form of group-based actions, individual evaluations and vocational guidance as well as help to organise their daily routine. By combining career counselling and guidance with vocational training, it enabled the participants to try out different training options. |

Table 8. Project *Youth Support Project in North Karelia*

The project Petra - Youth to Work and Education (Table 9. Project *Petra - Youth to Work and Education*) that involved unemployed youth and those looking for a job in the city Vantaa displayed an extra effort than offering in-depth support to help young people to find work and to take on-the-job training or complete their education. The project was actually a platform of a one-stop-agency as it connected welfare and healthcare services to ensure that the participants get all the help they need to turn their lives around.

| Title of the project | Petra - Youth to Work and Education |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Unemployed youth and young job seekers aged 17-24 |
| Activities | Provision of one-stop employment services, cooperation with businesses, authorities and the third sector, 11 service counsellors with different areas of responsibility (job and trainee counselling, study counselling, social counselling, health counselling, financial and debt counselling, business cooperation, third sector cooperation, communication and online counselling). |
| Results | The overall amount of customers since 2010: 3,800 females (35%), 12% of participants who did not speak either Finnish or Swedish, 900 jobs, 450 traineeships, and participants went through basic health checks and received guidance in life management. |

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the project | Petra - Youth to Work and Education |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Finland |
| General information | <p>The project based in the city of Vantaa offered in-depth support to help young people find work, take on-the-job training or complete their education. Petra's overriding goal was to help people early in their lives to ensure that they do not stay unemployed for too long. Guidance was provided by a professional network that was experienced in offering employment services, training placements and educational activities. Local youth service teams were involved in the project, which also had connections with more than 200 local enterprises. The project promoted equality and non-discrimination in employment services.</p> |

Table 9. Project *Petra - Youth to Work and Education*

To conclude, Finland's projects took a regional scope and they worked in three directions: 1) personal guidance and coaching; 2) offering activities that help to finish education and 3) activities that develop professional skills. Finland was one of the first countries in the Baltic Sea Region that offered activities for self-development and self-understanding that later on contributed in positioning oneself in the labour market. The initiative of the One-stop guidance centre has become a national programme with a strong network and as such will be supported until 2020.

4. Latvia

Projects in Latvia focused on unemployment reduction in general, and they were open for youth to participate in the period until 2014. There were no projects specifically designed for youth who have no employment, nor education or training.

The project that aimed to reintegrate young people in the labour market was the project *Workplace for Youth* (see the table below). The target group of the project were young people who have been unemployed at least for six months (later it was changed to four months) or are handicapped, or their maternity or paternity leave has ended. A person was able to apply for a nine month paid employment placement (with a salary of not less than EUR 285). The project provided grant payment to employees who participated in the project (EUR 143 for one placement for first six months). The employee could have been either a public or private entity.

| Title of the project | Workplace for Youth |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Unemployed youth aged 15-24; vulnerable or socially marginalised groups, such as disabled people, prison leavers |
| Activities | Employment placement; courses for social and professional skills; workshops; professional trainings for nine weeks in one of the three previously selected fields (three weeks in each field); assistant in a workplace; career planning; counselling to resolve personal issues; group activities to improve motivation, and therapy sessions for the acquisition and renewal of elementary work skills. |
| Results | The number of unemployed youth who participated in the project: 1,056; the number of employees who participated in the project: 527. Until 2013, more than 80% of participants were employed after the project was completed. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Latvia |
| General information | Latvia's Workplace for Youth project sought to give young people a helping hand into the world of employment. A set of activities were available, including practical training in a work environment and cooperation with employers. |

Table 21. Project *Workplace for Youth*

A project addressing young people who are at the risk for early school leaving was implemented by the University of Latvia in close partnership with 25 schools, 15 local councils and several non-governmental organizations. The aim of the project Development and Implementation of Support Program for Disadvantaged Youth (see the table below) was to explore, simulate, evaluate and test a social exclusion risk mitigation and prevention system for 13-25 year-olds in 15 municipalities in order to reduce the risks of social exclusion and the number of young people leaving school early and not in education as well as to promote vocational oriented education and employment by strengthening the capacity of institutions involved in the development of a support system and increasing the competence of personnel involved in the project level.

| Title of the project | Development and Implementation of Support Program for Disadvantaged Youth |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Young people aged 13-24 who are at the risk of social exclusion, youth counsellors, teachers, education specialists |
| Activities | Development and implementation of the social exclusion reduction programme (consists of six parts: support for positive behaviour, socio-emotional education, the method "Peer learning to promote literacy", parental competence development of students, educational support and cooperation in education institutions at local and national levels, career support package, mentoring alternative life experience "Nightingale"), short TV shows on national TV programmes, website for information exchange among specialists and as a publicity source for the project. |

| Title of the project | Development and Implementation of Support Program for Disadvantaged Youth |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Results | Prepared 11 vocational education programmes, eight manuals, collection of scientific articles "Support for inclusive education", one professional aptitude programme, developed and validated seven professional oriented educational programmes in schools, developed six primary career tests, developed six virtual games and five interactive games, created the TV programme cycle "School and I" with a video series of 25 short films, target audience involved in the project: 2,273 teachers and support specialists, 310 parents, 11,656 pupils and students (of which 4,297 were aged 15-24), 100 representatives of educational institutions. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Latvia |
| General information | The project developed and implemented inter-institutional cooperation models in all 15 municipalities. As a result, diminishing social exclusion problems were solved in collaboration with educational institutions and local government institutions. Professionals and authorities that were responsible for the municipalities of educational institutions received structured information about the nature of the problem-solving process, which enabled educational institutions to address the problem-solving process to obtain immediate support. It also provided a system developed for the electronic movement of information between the professionals that were involved. Municipal specialists recognized that cooperation had greatly improved between local government and state institutions, the case management and accelerate their solutions had become much better in quality. |

Table 22. Project *Development and Implementation of Support Program for Disadvantaged Youth*

There were many projects implemented under the national ESF program's activity *Formation of inclusive education and disadvantaged youth support system, the necessary personnel training, provision and improvement of competence* in Latvia. The aim was to reduce the risk of early school leaving and to support pupils and the teaching staff, and ease the entry into the labour market. Two projects were implemented that targeted a special group of young people - youth with functional disabilities. These projects were implemented with the support of many partners, both public institutions and local municipalities, and non-governmental organizations. The activities were mainly focused to improve the work of the teaching staff and the quality of learning equipment.

The main project tackling unemployment was the project *Training of Unemployed and Job Seekers in Latvia* (see the table below). The participants of the project were active job seekers, registered at the public employment service. Young people were also participants of the project.

| Title of the project | Training of Unemployed and Job Seekers in Latvia |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Job seekers, including youth |
| Activities | Professional training and development; retraining and higher education programmes; internships at employers who provide the selected specialty; courses for basic social and professional skills. |
| Results | A total of 120,118 men and women had been supported through modular training programmes, requalification and continuing education measures, directly helping the State Employment Agency to maintain the country's skills pool and re-employ valuable workers who were unfortunate to lose their jobs in a difficult economic climate. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Latvia |

| Title of the project | Training of Unemployed and Job Seekers in Latvia |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General information | <p>The aim of this Latvian project, which had supported over 120,000 unemployed people by keeping them in training, was to maintain their competitiveness so that they can continue to attract employers and remove obstacles preventing them from finding a job again. Improvement in training quality was achieved based on the principle 'Money follows the trainee'. A free choice of the training establishment was offered to facilitate training quality and ownership of the results, say the project's coordinators.</p> |

Table 23. Project *Training of Unemployed and Job Seekers in Latvia*

To increase the employability of youth who have finished secondary school but have not enrolled or completed studies at the university, a nation-wide project was started to attract youth to enrol in vocational schools. The project *Promotion of Primary Vocational Education Attraction* (see below) was not targeting NEETs but rather providing more attractive vocational education and more attractive conditions for completing studies (by the means of scholarships).

| Title of the project | Promotion of Primary Vocational Education Attraction |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Vocational students aged 14 to 18 years old and older. |
| Activities | Scholarships were provided to those who had good results in study achievements, attendance, participation in different 'out of school' activities, professional competitions and exhibitions. |
| Results | 31 983 students took part in the project |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Latvia |

| Title of the project | Promotion of Primary Vocational Education Attraction |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General information | The project aimed to enhance the attraction of vocational education to ultimately reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion. The project worked with vocational education establishments in every region of the country in order to provide scholarship grants to students from 14 to 18 years old and older. |

Table 24. Project *Promotion of Primary Vocational Education Attraction*

Latvia implemented several activities from the youth guarantee action. One such activity was employment in the non-governmental sector (including trade unions). The person had to be a registered as a job seeker, aged 18-24 years old and not possessing higher education. In 2014, 276 associations and foundations had created 747 jobs and employed 866 young people¹³.

Another youth guarantee activity was “Youth workshops” that provided youth with the opportunity to learn about three vocational education programs and to receive a scholarship while studying.

To conclude, there were no specifically designed projects for targeting the needs of NEETs in Latvia. Although there were national projects that provided youth with motivational approaches to enrol in vocational education and to become more employable, the projects did not reach out to those youngsters who are out of the education and employment systems. It is worth to point out a unique project that was run by the University of Latvia and involved many stakeholders entitled *Development and implementation of a support program for disadvantaged youth*. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it created a system that helps to predict a risk for a pupil to become socially excluded. Social exclusion is one of the biggest problems that also NEETs encounter. The unique product of how to reduce the risk of social exclusion of youth is definitely an asset for the Baltic Sea Region.

13. Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra. 866 jaunieši bezdarbnieki iegūst darba pieredzi, ar NVA atbalstu veicot darbu sabiedrības labā. Valdības tīmekļa vietne par Latviju Eiropas Savienībā www.es.gov.lv/ Sākumlapa / Iekšējais tirgus un uzņēmējdarbība / 866 jaunieši bezdarbnieki iegūst darba pieredzi, ar NVA atbalstu veicot darbu sabiedrības labā. 05.11.2014.

5. Lithuania

Lithuania has had a rather unique approach in the context of the Baltic Sea Region for tackling youth employability and social inclusion. In the period of 2007-2013, Lithuania implemented several ESF funded projects that approached youth employability and social inclusion by engaging young people in voluntary work carried out by civil society organizations and public institutions that work for the public benefit. Volunteering was seen as a core aspect for youth to acquire professional and social skills that develop one's employability by volunteering for the public good in various municipalities.

The measure *Non-formal Education Development* of the ESF Human Resource Development Programme had nine projects which began in 2013. The projects focused on the declining number of early school leavers and unemployed youth. The goal of activities was to promote non-formal education in order to improve the civil and national education supply and thus to increase the level of socialization and employment of young people. The backbone of the activities consisted of: training and courses to develop social and professional skills (up to 40 hours) and social and professional skills development in volunteering practices (at least 200 hours).

The participants in the projects were youth with basic, secondary, vocational, post-secondary or higher education and not attending any formal education programs, and those who were unemployed. The total number of participants in trainings in all nine projects was 4,375. The outcome of the projects was to increase the employability of youth and not to provide employment.

One of such projects was *Volunteers for the Safety of People* (check the table below). The target group was students and NEETs, and also adults but their mentors were police officers. The project had a national scope. The target group was 1,000 unemployed young people under age of 29, and the project mentors were around 90 police officers from 8 police headquarters. The young people participated in activities like: surveillance, various police preventive actions (summer, traffic safety, missing people), dissemination of information about violence prevention, surveillance of preventive measures in public and sports events, introduction with safe-neighbourhood ideas, participation in activities at youth centres.

| Title of the project | Volunteers for the Safety of People |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Unemployed young people under the age of 29 |
| Activities | Training and courses to develop social and professional skills (up to 40 hours), preparation of training methodology for mentors, mentorship, implementation of voluntary vocational guidance to help to define individual's professional profile. |
| Results | Increased social and professional skills. 4,375 participants took part in the training courses and 1,000 young people performed volunteering practices in police activities. |
| Funding | European Social Fund, national funding and private funding |
| Area | Lithuania |

Table 25. Project *Volunteers for the Safety of People*

Another project that sought the improvement of youth employability via the means of volunteering and community development was the project *Volunteering - the First Step towards a Successful Career*.

| Title of the project | Volunteering - the First Step towards a Successful Career |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Young people 16-29 years of age who have accomplished secondary, vocational or higher education but currently do not study or work |
| Activities | A three-day training session about the creation of individual job-seekers portfolio, 200 hours of voluntary work training in various companies and organizations, set-up of the online platform Good Internship for Volunteers that has a database of volunteers and volunteering placements. The main functionality of the website is: 1. Registration and profile creation for various non-profit organizations; |

| Title of the project | Volunteering - the First Step towards a Successful Career |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activities | 2. Announcements of volunteering places in organizations; 3. Typical plans for volunteering activities in the organizations; 4. Volunteer applications for volunteering announcements; 5. Messaging with volunteers; 6. Plan and schedule for volunteering; 7. Evaluation of volunteers; 8. Certificate for volunteers; 9. Archive of volunteering activities. |
| Results | 501 young people participated in the trainings, the number of organizations that had registered at the website for volunteering until 2015 was more than 130 and the number of volunteers exceeded to 2,000. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Lithuania |
| General information | <p>The aim of the project was to increase young people's socialization and the diversity of employment forms and to promote the integration of young unemployed people into the labour market. The project promoted and disseminated the idea of volunteering, and the target group gained practical skills that would help to effectively integrate into the labour market. The project was run by the Lithuanian Business Employer's Confederation in cooperation with the Lithuanian Youth Council, SMK University of Applied Social Sciences in Lithuania and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange.</p> <p>After the completion of all the activities, every volunteer was given a certificate to prove their activities and gained skills</p> |

Table 26. Project *Volunteering - a First Step towards a Successful Career*

The other seven projects that were implemented as activities for the measure Non-formal Education Development of the ESF Human Resource

Development Program were:

- Libraries for Youth;
- Discover Yourself;
- Mission Possible;
- Volunteering Community Building and Development;
- Look at the World of Profession Differently;
- Strengthening of Professional, Social and Entrepreneurial skills among Young Unemployed;
- I am! (Building my Own Life).

In 2013, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (a national public employment service) started the national project Trust Yourself (see the table below). The activities embedded in the project were typical for active labour measures but the new aspect of the project was the multi-level governance and the wide network of partners that brought unique knowledge on how to foster youth employability. The project will also be implemented in the new programming period.

| Title of the project | Trust Yourself |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | 16-25-year-old NEETs |
| Activities | Mentoring, counselling, individual guidance, informal education through active tasks and involvement in society, participation in new attractive forms of socialisation (for example, visiting theatre, cinema, bicycle ride or canoeing, etc.), active labour measures, a special bus visited municipalities to meet youngsters and to offer individual counseling and information about the PES services provided to reach-out to young people who have left school but had not yet registered with the PES. |
| Results | 2,491 participants were involved in the Project's activities until the 31st of March, 2015 of whom 714 were employed, 446 were guided towards active |

| Title of the project | Trust Yourself |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Results | labour market policy measures (90 individuals started participation in vocational training, 154 took part in subsidized employment, 165 public works, 19 support for the acquisition of working skills, 7- job rotation, 11 implementation of projects of local employment initiatives, 80 went back to school, 329 cancelled participation due to various reasons). The expected results of the project were: at least 1,480 participants should successfully complete the programme, at least 518 individuals should be offered participation in active labour market policy measures. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | 15 municipalities in Lithuania |
| General information | The aim of the project was to encourage the integration of young people into the labour market or education system, through rehabilitation, preparation for employment and the experience of non-governmental organizations. Within the project many and various partners were involved: the Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 10 Local Labour Exchanges, 40 NGOs. The duration of the project: 17.10.2013-31.07.2015. |

Table 27. Project *Trust Yourself*

To conclude, Lithuania has implemented projects that were contracted with public and private institutions to ensure that the young unemployed persons foster their employability by requesting the implementation of two core activities: training and carrying-out courses to develop social and professional skills (up to 40 hours) as well as development of social and professional skills in voluntary work (at least 200 hours). The description of the projects gives the impression that the activities were designed for active and motivated NEETs who have confidence in the national employment service and other institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Lithuania has implemented

projects that have a broad partnership network and therefore the country has actively introduced the concept of multi-governance. The partnership network had public and private organizations working with youth in various fields.

6. Poland

Social inclusion has been one of the main approaches for ensuring the employability of Polish youth, especially young people in foster care. The projects had activities for very young children (age 6-13) and also late teenagers (age 15-18), and also personnel working with children in institutionalized foster-care. The activities for the age group "15-18-year-olds" were interpersonal training, career counselling, learning to manage the household budget, addiction prevention and professional integration into the labour market (trainings, professional practices with employers and supported employment). Most of the projects were implemented until 2014. A characteristic aspect of Polish projects on the integration of children in institutionalized foster-care was cross-border cooperation. There were at least four ESF funded projects that were implemented in partnership. The partners were from Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, Spain, and the UK. One project was *Innovations 15, Testing and Implementation of New Methods of Early Social Intervention and Preventing Social Exclusion of the Youth above 15 Years Old*. The project was implemented in a partnership with private organizations from Italy, Luxemburg and Spain.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the project | Innovations 15, Testing and Implementation of New Methods of Early Social Intervention and Preventing Social Exclusion of the Youth above 15 Years Old |
| Target group | Young people who are older than 15 years |
| Activities | Adaptation of three models on early social intervention and prevention of social exclusion: <i>Work as Family, Life is Business and E-Horizons</i> , |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the project | Innovations 15, Testing and Implementation of New Methods of Early Social Intervention and Preventing Social Exclusion of the Youth above 15 Years Old |
| Activities | consultations and individual coaching, competency measurement, psychological counselling and control of debts, guidance for mapping the young people and coaching on creating a 'road map' for youth, study visits, trainings for psychologists, counsellors and community workers. |
| Results | Three study visits to adapt the produced guidelines Best Practices for advisory services and education, and local cooperation for 15+, three publications on European best practices in integrating youth with specific problems, nine conferences, six films, 14 trainings for psychologists, counsellors and community workers, three seminars to adopt strategies and action plans for the three models. |
| Funding | European Social Fund, municipality funding and private funding |
| Area | Poland, Italy, Luxemburg and Spain |
| General information | <i>Białostocka Fundacja Kształcenia Kadr</i> implemented an innovative project to test new instruments of early social intervention and social exclusion prevention for youth older than 15 years of age who were in educational care facilities, foster families and families suffering from addictions and violence. The aim of the project was to adapt, test and disseminate nine models of counselling solutions and solutions for local cooperation in the scope of early social intervention and prevention of social exclusion for youth over 15 years old. |

Table 28. Project *Innovations 15, Testing and Implementation of New Methods of Early Social Intervention and Preventing Social Exclusion of the Youth over 15 Years Old*

Another project that aimed to strengthen and develop the social capital of children and youth in institutionalized foster-care was called *Select the Future*. The project had activities that provided knowledge and skills for youth which they would have to employ after leaving the institution. The project also had cross-border cooperation. The partner was in Romania. The methods used in the project were simulation games, sessions on planning personal finances, workshops and implementation of internationally acknowledged activities for fostering social inclusion for post-institutionalized youth.

A locally implemented project that aimed to ease the entry into the labour market for youth who have completed secondary education was called *A Bridge to the Future, The MOST Program* (see the table below).

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the project | A Bridge to the Future, The MOST Program |
| Target group | Pupils aged 13-18 |
| Activities | <p>Implementation of "<i>The MOST Program</i>" two modules: <i>The Life Alternatives Training</i> and <i>The Vocational Training Programme with The Training for Work: "The Assistant of....."</i>. The module <i>The Life Alternatives Training</i> aimed at students' performance in the future, after leaving the institution, not a here-and-now attitude. Its main aim was to focus the attention of the Centre's on continuing education or taking up work after leaving <i>The Sociotherapy Center</i>. The training was an essential part of preventing demoralization, apathy, unemployment and exclusion or drop-out.</p> <p><i>The Vocational Training Programme</i> aimed to prepare students both in theory and practice for work. The training was based on a convertible system of vocational training. The main idea of this programme is a parallel two-way system of education in a vocational school, where students study theory, and then train at a workplace, where the trainees receive apprenticeship training. One of the vital advantages of this solution was definitely the adaptation of the curriculum to the real needs of the employers, which</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of the project | A Bridge to the Future, The MOST Program |
| Activities | wouldn't be possible without an effective information exchange between the schools and the employers. |
| Results | The pupils learned how use the basic technology in a specific profession, handling tools, devices and machines in a given profession, and also learned to distinguish the appropriate selection of materials and their technological processes, the application of health and safety regulations and fire safety in the workplace, and acquired knowledge of basic principles of environmental protection. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Ustka, Poland |
| General information | <p>The Youth Sociotherapy Center in Ustka implemented this innovative project, using different therapeutic techniques. Combined, these techniques provided a new method of treatment for troubled adolescents. The 'MOST Programme' consisted of two modules which complemented each other.</p> <p>Firstly, The Life Alternatives Training aimed to focus students' attention on continuing education or taking up work after leaving The Sociotherapy Center. Secondly, The Vocational Training Programme aimed to prepare students both in theory and practice for work. The programme was based on a dual system of vocational training. The project equipped the participants with social competencies and many of them managed to establish successful and creative relationships with employers and colleagues.</p> <p>The project was implemented in partnership with the Chamber of Craft and Entrepreneurship Central Pomerania in Słupsk.</p> |

Table 28. Project *A Bridge to the Future, The MOST Program*

The project Second Chance School worked directly with NEETs. The project offered holistic activities for one's development from three aspects: emotionally/psychologically, education-wise and professionally.

| Title of the project | Second Chance School |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Unemployed youth aged 18-25 who do not study |
| Activities | A seven-month course with psychological training, personal coaching, life-skills training, individual support (psychological and medical assistance, personal assistance), group support, activity club, computer training, professional portfolio development. The course is individually tailored to each participant's needs and abilities. |
| Results | 66% of the participants complete the Second Chance School and of those, 45% are found actively working. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Tricity, Poland |
| General information | The leader of the project is the private organization <i>CARITAS Archdiocese Gdańsk</i> with partners the <i>Municipality of Sopot</i> and the <i>Copenhagen Youth School</i> . The youth who are involved in the <i>Second Chance School</i> very often have a challenging background: addictions, conflict with the law, single motherhood, interrupted education, etc. |

Table 29. Project *Second Chance School*

The model in Sopot is focused on developing the employability of unemployed youth. The traditional model of the *Second Chance School* has a strong focus on preventative measures of early school leaving and also re-integration into the education system after one has left it. Generally, the *Second Chance School* project was designed and proposed by the European Commission back in 1995. Officially opened at the end of 1997, Marseille's Second Chance School

(E2C) was the first school of this type to be set up in Europe. The objective of the Marseille Second Chance School is to ensure professional and social integration, through education and training, for young adults aged 18 to 25 years, who have been out of the school system for at least a year, and who do not have a diploma or qualification¹⁴. The report *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe - Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education* conducted for the European Commission in 2013 stressed the importance of collaboration among countries to implement the model of the Second Chance Schools and it came up with the following recommendation:

For the European Commission to provide a platform for transnational dialogue and exchange on the theme of “learning from second chance education to prevent Early School Leaving”¹⁵.

The report *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe - Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education* also outlines good practices of multi-actor cooperation in order to prevent early school leaving. The best case examples in the Baltic Sea Region are:

- *Jonas Ivaškevičius Youth School* in Vilnius, Lithuania. Cooperation among initial education schools, parents, police, health organisations, child rights protection and adoption services, social workers;
- *Municipal second chance education* in Gothenburg, Sweden. Cooperation among social services, public employment services, and other EU funded projects¹⁶.

Therefore, there is a good platform of knowledge, expertise and skills for the *Second Chance School* model to operate in many areas of the Baltic Sea Region. In the context of the report, it is worthwhile to mention a project that was funded by the European Social Fund and received the *Best Human Capital*

14. Office of Economic Cooperation for Mediterranean and Middle East. *Second Chance School*. Source: www.ocemo.org/About-us/Our-Members

15. Day, L., Mozuraityte, N., Redgrave, K., McCoshan, A. *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe - Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education*. 2013. P..9.

16. Day, L., Mozuraityte, N., Redgrave, K., McCoshan, A. *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe - Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education*. 2013. P..51-52.

Investment 2014 award in the latest edition of the national Polish competition *Best ESF practices*. The project *Time for Professionals - Vocational Education in Wielkopolska* implemented a programme in vocational schools in the region, helping to adjust vocational training to labour market requirements. Around 9,000 students from the fields of IT, advertisement management, mechatronics, logistics, economy and trade participated in the project's activities, including practice labs, training modules and career advice sessions. A follow-up project, planned to run from 2015 to 2022, will target 15,000 students in fields of study considered to be important for the labour market. Schools will receive additional equipment and teaching materials. In addition, practice labs and trainings at employers' job sites are on the agenda¹⁷.

Last but not least, the *Voluntary Labour Corps* initiative must be outlined. The initiative is part of a Polish measure of the youth guarantee implementation. It is a governmental institution with a special focus on the integration of NEETs (see the table below).

| Title of the project | Voluntary Labour Corps |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | NEETs |
| Activities | Job matching, vocational counselling and training services, psychologists and lawyers, benefit from foreign language, computer, driving, entrepreneurship courses and social skills training. |
| Results | 7,400 young people altogether have benefited from the initiatives of the VLC in 2014. |
| Funding | European Social Fund |
| Area | Poland |

16. Day, L., Mozuraityte, N., Redgrave, K., McCoshan, A. *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education*. 2013. P.51-52.

17. ESS V NOVICAH. *Wielkopolska vocational education programme picks up award*. 2015. źródło: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=67&langId=sl&newsId=8590>

| Title of the project | Voluntary Labour Corps |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>General information</p> | <p>The Voluntary Labour Corps is a state-run organisational unit working to prevent the social exclusion of young people. The Voluntary Labour Corps is a labour market institution supervised by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy that performs state tasks directed towards teenagers over 15 years of age, and the unemployed under 25 years of age, that include employment services, counteract social marginalization and social exclusion as well as tasks related to education and upbringing. The VLC structures consist of 750 organisational units and branches operating throughout Poland.</p> <p>In the EU financial perspective 2007-2013, the Voluntary Labour Corps became one of the key implementers of the European Youth Employment Initiative. The initiative strives to assist the NEETs.</p> |

Table 30. Initiative *Voluntary Labour Corps*

The ESF funded activities in Poland had a focus on the development and efficiency of the institutional systems and their workers, working with the well-being of the youth in education and welfare institutions. Nevertheless, there were also good projects that worked directly with unemployed young people and young people who were at risk of early school leaving. Poland has invested a lot of resources for work with children and youth at foster-care facilities so they can successfully leave such institutionalized facilities or a foster family. Although these projects had their main focus on the social aspect of one's personal development, the external evaluations point out that the activities have had an impact on youth social skills in achieving employment.

7. Sweden

Sweden implemented several projects that targeted youth unemployment in the period of 2007-2013 and out of those there were also such projects that targeted the youth who were NEET and early school leavers. Two of the

projects were on a national scale (*Unga In and Plug In*) and two regional ones (*Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors and Youth to Work W18-24*).

| Title of the project | Unga In |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | NEETs, aged 16-24 |
| Activities | <p>Information campaign for youth, the creation of an “ambassador” network of teachers and social welfare officers, counselling, employment services, psychologist services, young marketers (young people with a background in a similar environment as the target audience) from the employment service, social workers.</p> <p>The ambassadors informed, educated and supported marginalised young people and created a personal contact to get them involved.</p> |
| Results | <p>At the end of the project, 1,008 young people participated in Unga In, 571 of them completed it of which 23% continued working and 35% entered the education system.</p> <p>In addition to providing information at events and with the help of teachers or social welfare officers, the project relied on 'ambassadors' to bridge the gap between support services and those in need of help. Because they had recently been in the same position as the target group, they could more easily reach out to them.</p> |
| Funding | Regional, European Social Fund, |
| Area | Sweden |
| General information | <p>The project provided participants with coherent and individualised support, through its multi-competent team and collaborating partners, such as schools and care institutions. It contributed to a holistic, inclusive approach with individual participants (i.e. where their entire life circumstances were considered), which in</p> |

| Title of the project | Unga In |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General information | return created realistic expectations of the young persons involved. One of the main reasons for success was that the project's managers were young people and therefore established more trust with the participants. The project was implemented in five cities: Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö, Skellefteå and Gävle. |

Table 31. Project *Unga In*

The project *Plug In* is a very special project as it involves many partners at various governance levels: five regions, 70 municipalities (originally, 55 municipalities but the number is increasing) at the local level, and at the grass-root level schools, civil-society organizations and other partners have been involved in order to decrease the number of early school-leavers at the secondary level. The project works with two target groups: young people who are at the risk of leaving school without completion of education and young people who have already left the school before its completion. The project has several sub-projects and activities in the municipalities and also activities that are for everyone together, like the web-platform *Pluginnovation* and the guidebook *Turning Absence into Presence*. Since the implementation of the project at a regional level, the example of the *Plug In Västerbotten* project gives a good impression. Nearly 300 students participated in the ESF-financed Swedish project *Plug In Västerbotten*, which aimed to reduce the number of dropouts from secondary school. The project provided very good results: the students' presence increased in the participating secondary schools, and the students' school performance also improved. The activities included motivational coaching and tailoring of teaching methods to make it easier for the students to reach the learning targets.

The project is run by the *Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions*.

| Title of the project | Plug In |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Early school leavers, aged 16-20 |
| Activities | Development of a guidebook Turning Absence into Presence, development of a web platform Pluginnovation, conferences, coaching and support, study support for pupils, vocational guidance, workshops, regional activities. |
| Results | Summarized information about the results is not available. |
| Funding | European Social Fund, |
| Area | Sweden |
| General information | <p>The Plug In initiative combined personal follow-up with actions targeting municipalities, schools and society in at least 70 municipalities to improve the educational context in a sustainable way. One important element of Plug In was the Pluginnovation platform where research, intervention methods, statistics and innovations related to the issue of school dropouts were gathered.</p> <p>The core part of Plug In consisted of more than 100 initiatives or projects that were developed and implemented at the local, municipal or school level. The guidebook and web platform included actions for interventions, research, statistics and innovation.</p> <p>The Pluginnovation was meant to serve as a resource centre, mainly for practice and research, both for the municipalities involved in the project and also for other stakeholders.</p> |

Table 32. Project *Plug IN*

A regional project that tackled youth unemployment and unemployment amongst immigrants was implemented in two towns Sandviken and Hofors. The name of the project was Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors (see the table below). Participants were given work experience and training sessions

involving a coach. The exchange with findings and also methods were also discussed in various forums in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Ireland.

| Title of the project | Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Young people (including disabled young people), immigrants |
| Activities | Coaching, training, working experience, Breakfast Club involving a cognitive therapist, health coach. |
| Results | A total of 769 people (549 people in Sandviken and 220 people in Hofors) started the project since its beginning. In total 30% of the participants integrated into the labour market and 21% of the participants stayed in the education system. |
| Funding | European Social Fund, |
| Area | Sweden |
| General information | The project was set up in two municipalities of Sandviken and Hofors. It aimed to give youngsters, aged 18-25, and immigrants, aged between 25 and 64, the boost they need to find employment. |

Table 33. Project *Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors*

The project *Youth to Work - W18-24* covered a bigger area - Dalarna, a region in central Sweden (see the table below).

| Title of the project | Youth to Work - W18-24 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Target group | Unemployed youth aged 18-24 who have difficulty entering the labour market but who are likely to cooperate |
| Activities | Implemented "Training and the internship programme" for young people in every municipality (training, networking events and support in operating the programme), developed and implemented "a door" (coordination within the municipality regarding |

| Title of the project | Youth to Work - W18-24 |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activities | young unemployed) or "A common input", (coordination with all authorities in accordance with the model of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions), developed and implemented "Competency Verification", a tool to communicate and to prove the results of the non-formal learning. |
| Results | Around 60% of the participants (in total there were 2,875 participants) study or work after participating in the project's activities. |
| Funding | European Social Fund, |
| Area | Dalarna, Sweden |
| General information | 15 municipalities of the Dalarna region in Sweden cooperated to ease the entry into the labour market for youth who encountered a problem of obtaining employment. The cooperation lasted for four years among 15 municipalities and local branches of the public employment service. |

Table 34. Project *Youth to Work - W18-24*

Visby (a town on Gotland Island) was one of the municipalities where a local scale ESF project was implemented. The project *UNGDOMSKRAFT* (Youth Power) targeted young people (16-20-year-olds) who did not attend secondary school and who had quit school prematurely and therefore were at the risk of social exclusion. The length of the project was around six months and it was rather flexible regarding the location of the activities. The activities were set to happen in the *Youth House Fenix* in Visby but those who could not arrive were visited by the project's team and the specialists. The project was implemented in 2011/2012 and received additional funding for the activities in 2014. In the first phase of the project, at least 70 young people participated in the project's activities: development of personal action plans, guidance, professional training, enrollment in adult education, internship acquirement and completion of school. An additional feature of the continuing operations

was collaboration at the national and transnational level.

Sweden has had several initiatives and projects to decrease youth unemployment, and the country has been one of the few in the Baltic Sea Region that had projects to reach-out to those young people who are out of the reach of the public employment service. Even more, Sweden had few but large-scale and multi-governance projects that worked especially with preventative and reintegration measures for early school leavers in the field of education. The implemented projects were applicable for early school leavers, unemployed youth and NEETs, and also teachers, employment officers, social specialists and others. The projects aimed to deal with the youth unemployment issue from two fronts simultaneously: targeting unemployed youth, early school leavers and education, employment and social systems. The key of the success lay in the fact that the projects were on a large scale and involved many partners from various governance levels. The difficulties encountered were a measure of the effect in the form of the project's results, because the actions were defined in a rather complicated manner. Nevertheless, the positive impacts of the large-scale projects (starting from the administration, implementation and ending with the internal evaluation) must be taken into consideration as best-case samples for addressing the needs of the NEETs.

SELECTED TOOLS AND METHODS OF WORK WITH YOUTH

Presented below are the most interesting methods of working with young people developed by UBC (Union of the Baltic Cities).

Both counsellors and teachers from the city of Turku in Finland agree that “flexible, basic education is targeted at young people who are at risk of being excluded from basic education without completing comprehensive school. In flexible basic education, teaching takes place alternately at school and at the workplace. Other learning environments are also utilised flexibly. In addition to

a special needs teacher, a youth instructor also works in the classroom. Students study in small groups of up to ten students. Each student receives a learning plan, or, if necessary, a personal plan concerning the teaching arrangements.

Students in basic education are offered the chance to learn more about upper secondary education and different occupational options.

Providing students in basic education with more information about educational options at secondary level adds to their knowledge of existing educational options. It also dispels wrong conceptions about the opportunities offered by vocational institutions and enhances the students' understanding of working life, different occupations and working life skills.

The voices of young people should be heard and they should be able to participate in all matters that relate to them. Participation and influence are themes that have been given a key role in many city strategies in Finland. It is important that every resident, including young people, has the opportunity to be heard and the chance to influence decision-making in society. Young people's point of view has a particularly significant role when planning services directed at them. Young people who have gained experience in participation and advocacy grow up to be active members of society¹⁸.

City of Tampere, Finland

“Young people, pupils, students, customers, etc. take part in the decision making at every level of education and in the city administration, especially when matters that affect them directly are concerned or services for them are planned and developed.

Modern learning environments in all levels of education

The Finnish education system and especially the curriculum are school-based which allows us to use flexible and versatile pedagogical methods in order to

18. Union of the Baltic Cities, UBC Task Force on Youth Employment and Well-Being FINAL REPORT: The Good, The Bad and The Next Practices, Turku October 2015

motivate youngsters. The learning environments in schools resemble work life as much as possible. For example, Tampere has adopted Me and My City as a learning environment. It is an award winning concept on entrepreneurship, economy and society. This learning environment is funded by cities, companies and Ministry of education. It brings together pupils and teachers, university students, companies and authorities.

The Finnish education system is built on trust in professionalism, a culture of trust on the professionalism of teachers and principals in judging what is best for students and in reporting of progress. Evaluation is seen as a tool for development, not as a tool for inspection.

Tampere LUMATE Centre (Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Technology) aims to inspire children and young people in science, mathematics and technology learning and leisure activities.

To achieve this, the Centre works in collaboration with schools; free science clubs for pupils, teacher support and in-service education for teachers and renting laboratory equipment and supplies. Lumate Centre is a joint effort of three Universities in Tampere and partly funded by the City of Tampere. It is located in the General Upper Secondary School of Technology.

Aktiivipassi (Activity passport)

The City of Tampere gives an activity passport to those who have been receiving income support due to low income for more than one year. The passport allows free travel in city buses and free entry to certain sports facilities and museums.

The experience of the city Næstved, Denmark

Næstved Kommune has had success in motivating young people by using the youth mentoring programme.

A mentor is assigned to a young person in need of social and recreational development as well as emotional support. This programme is also applied to young persons who have no parents or other adults as role models, as well as to youngsters that have received unemployment benefits for a long time. Our

goal is that 95% of a youth cohort must complete a youth education programme.

Næstved Kommune participated in a mentoring project from 2012-2014 and the results showed that the mentored youngsters had better educational achievements and attitudes toward school. At the same time, it reduced some of the negative behaviours and increased their social attitudes in a positive way. During the project, Næstved created a Mentor Corps. This Corps is now placed in the Næstved Ressource Centre where the mentors have a weekly meeting. They also meet their mentees regularly in the youngsters' own environment.

Mentoring in Næstved guarantees a young person that there is someone who cares about them and that they are not alone in dealing with day to day challenges. This has had a positive impact on the young people's lives and has motivated them to go back to school and get an education.

Mentoring was a part of the reform of unemployment benefits that became effective in Denmark on 1 January 2014.

City of Karlskrona, Sweden

Kompetensare 2.0 is a new model developed in cooperation with companies to get young people into work or education. Kompetensare 2.0 is collaboration between the municipality, the Employment agency, labour unions and the local business to reduce youth unemployment and addressing labour shortages in the future. Kompetensare 2.0 means that young job-seekers are invited to apply to a programme with a content that the business sector has selected out and are important for young people to have knowledge about to become more attractive to the labour market. The contents include the first 6 weeks of modular based training (Job & Career - Health-care - Business Knowledge & Economy - Work environment, Security and Trade union knowledge - Team Building) and then 612 weeks of practice in a business. The aim is to match young people based on the needs of the businesses.

City of Liepāja, Latvia

The reception by the city mayor/chairman and a financial award is given to outstanding pupils for their achievements and success in studies on the state level or international competitions and contests:

Twice a year pupils are invited by the city chairman at his reception and they are awarded money prizes for study achievements.

Schools for talented and gifted pupils:

Talented and gifted pupils are invited to join in the “Schools for gifted children”, where pupils can obtain more profound knowledge of subjects with the help of qualified school teachers and professors from higher education institutions.

Non-formal education accessibility in schools and in the Children and Youth Centre (the Children and Youth Centre has 4 branches):

There is a fee for after class activities but we have a system which allows us to offer nonformal education free of charge for some special pupil groups or to receive reliefs or incentives.

School activities in International projects (ERASMUS+), National and municipal level contests and sports competitions:

Schools are involved in 7 ERASMUS+ projects in the period of the years 2014-2016 with national level competitions such as: In National Broadsheets “DIENA” competitions “What's Up”, Drawing competition “My Latvia”, project competition “Zinis”, Reading competition “Children Jury”, Competition “The most friendly class”, etc.

Career Week, Creativity Week.

“Career week” - A national event where in 2014 48 cities were involved and 200 different events were held to motivate youngsters. Creativity week in Liepāja, where the schools organize various events with educational content (excursions, professionals are invited to the schools in order to tell their success stories).

“Produced in Liepāja” exhibition, where entrepreneurs exhibit their achievements. In 2015, 200 companies registered for participation.

Youth Guard organisations and activities.

Latvian National Mythological hero Lāčplēsis and his award competition. This is an annual event for school youngsters and youth guard teams. Youngsters compete in different military-related competitions and take part in an endurance race.

Shadowing

Annual state event; in 2015, there were 5,000 pupils from all around Latvia shadowing politicians, entrepreneurs and different specialists in order to get to know their daily duties and proficiencies.

Tools and methods: E-Class.

Each comprehensive education establishment has an e-record register which is available for teachers, pupils and parents. In the record register, you can see marks and progress, delays and teachers announcements.

Assistant personnel.

In each school, we have a social teacher and psychologist, and in some schools there is a career advisor. All specialists are involved in work with pupils when it's really needed.

Support team in school.

School administration, specialists (social teacher, psychologist), and a class teacher form a support team to work with pupils who have social disorders, academic failure, class delays, and behavioural problems. A team tries to find solutions through an individual approach.

Liepāja City E-learning environment

www.lip.lv

- Each pupil has an access to different E-learning aids for all subjects: Math, Latvian, History, Geography, Nature Sciences, etc.

Pupils Board in each school and a City Pupils Council.

- The Pupils Council organizes both educational and entertainment events
- One representative from each Pupils Board is involved in council activities. The City Pupils Council organizes city level events where all schools might participate and takes part in state level activities.

Youth House - volunteers, participation in International projects.

- “Youth House” is an organization in Liepāja which welcomes and does exchange activities for volunteers from the European Union and other countries (Ukraine, Turkey). Youth NGO's are another platform where youngsters can meet and pursue their interests;
- The establishment writes proposals for and implements international projects. They offer various exchange programmes in other EU countries.
- A career advisor is needed in the Youth House.

Teachers in the schools from Union “Mission Possible”.

The Union “Mission Possible” offers to schools teachers who use innovative teaching methods and help pupils who have academic and learning difficulties. This Union also organizes Summer Camps where youngsters have a chance to learn the basics of different subjects through research, nature excursions, and games¹⁹.

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SUMMARY

As you can see, in recent years in the countries of Eastern and Northern Europe, they seriously began to contemplate the problem of ESL and generating ways of combating this phenomenon. The actions taken in this area included mainly support for young people who, for various reasons, become dropouts. Depending on the needs that were the most urgent in the city/region, such programmes were designed. We note that in most cases the projects were addressed to young people who have lost their way in life and educational path. Often influencing this loss may be such factors as social exclusion, poverty, family problems, and others. Differences in the age of the target groups result from the internal criteria and standards in each country.

Thus, we see that all of these activities perfectly fit both the needs of the people as well as the policy and strategy in Europe. Thanks to such initiatives, young people have the chance to feel that they are not left alone, that the problems they face are understood by others. And the fact that dealing with the institutions and organizations gives the feeling that with such support one can do more, have a chance to rebuild confidence in themselves, their potential and capabilities as well as the aid organizations (and not only) and state.

This is aid that does not rely on the administration of ready-made solutions. This is a help, thanks to which participants have a chance to develop their skills and use them in their personal and professional paths. In short they received a fishing rod, not a fish.



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein