



2015

LESSONS LEARNED AND THE NEW PLANS.  
Overcoming Challenges of the Youth Unemployment  
in the Baltic Sea Region

REPORT



INTA SIMANSKA  
ISConsulting  
ISConsulting@outlook.lv

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## Introduction

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Young people who are neither employed nor educated or trained, pose a problematic issue in the context of youth employment and they also face a risk of not only lowered one's well-being but also minimized individual human security. The focus to youth, who are not employed, and have not completed education or have not been enrolled in any education institution and have not received training (hereof - NEET), was brought up at the political agenda of the EU after the realization of the scope of the youth unemployment rate during and after the economic crisis in Europe in 2008-2009.

From the second quarter of 2008, the youth unemployment rate in the EU-28 has taken an upward trend peaking in 23.8 % in the first quarter 2013, before receding to 21.4 % at the end of 2014<sup>1</sup>. The youth unemployment rate had declined sharply from 2005 until 2007, reaching its minimum value (15.2 %) in the first quarter 2008. The age group "youth" is a valuable part of workforce to complement to economy and many EU Member States have implemented specific measures for the youth to ease the transition into the labour market.

The report highlights national and cross border projects, and initiatives addressing the youth employment and social inclusion in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. The financial source of the projects is either the European Social Fund or other EU financial instruments.

As the Member States realized that the youth unemployment is not only a national issue but it is evident across the EU community, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union have worked on a measure to reduce the unemployment among youth. The actions have resulted a special measure called the *Youth Guarantee* that was recommended by the Council in 2013. The *Youth guarantee* refers to a situation in which young people receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. An offer of continued education could also contain quality training programmes that lead to a recognised vocational qualification<sup>2</sup>.

Therefore the specific youth group defined as NEETs has been an aspect of economic policy and more specifically labour market policy in the EU. Since 2013 the EU Member States have implemented both national and EU set measures to foster youth employment by:

1. Alleviating the entry into the labour market (with methods like developing individual employment portfolio, offering apprenticeships, internships, work placements and mentoring);
2. Motivating for acquiring an education degree, starting with secondary level, vocational education and training, and academic education (by means of scholarship provisions and free education);
3. Reaching out for those young people who have turned away from the intervention of the government in their daily affairs as they mistrust the public administration in general. Therefore public employment services and municipalities implement

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat. *Unemployment Statistics*. April, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> The Council of the European Union. *Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01)*. Official Journal of the European Union. 2013.

measures to build trust among youth and public institutions with means of peers, *marketers* and unofficial community leaders.

The report informs about the measures taken by eight EU Member States of the Baltic Sea Region to integrate youth into the labour market, and to diminish the risk of youth being socially excluded due to the lack of employment. The glance is taken at Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany\*, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden (hereof in alphabetic order) and the projects funded by the European Social Fund and other EU funding to work on NEETs and youth employment.

In this report the definition of “NEET” refers to young people that are between the 16 and 25 years of age and are not in employment, nor in education or training. Though, as activities for NEETs are part of economic policy, very often the described projects target unemployed youth in general.

To sum up, the projects that are selected for this report follow such criteria:

- the target groups are **unemployed youth, early school leavers** and **NEETS**,
- the activities are implemented in **Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland** and **Sweden**,
- the projects are funded by the **European Social Fund** and other EU funding,
- the projects were implemented until the end of 2014 and started latest in 2013 therefore covering the EU planning period of **2007-2013**,
- the projects that are implemented and will be implemented to address the youth unemployment and NEETs **until 2020**.

The first chapter of the report covers latest statistics of youth unemployment, early school leaving and generally the number of NEETs in the Baltic Sea Region (hereof BSR). The statistics show that the general situation in the BSR regarding youth employment and early school leaving is better than in average of the EU-28 area. The chapter also reflects on latest findings of the OECD's report *Skills Outlook 2015. Youth, Skills and Employability*. The second chapter addresses projects that were implemented until the end of 2014 and started latest in 2013. The chapter bears a high importance, because it shows the historical competence of countries working on youth employability and social inclusion. The chapter refers to the extensive additional document *Appendix 1. The Summary of Projects and Initiatives*. The successive chapter outlines new approaches and EU funded projects to encourage youth to enter the labour market. The third chapter is supplemented with two extensive appendixes: *Appendix 2. The Digest of the ESF Funded Projects for NEETs 2014-2020* and *Appendix 3. ESF Funded Projects for Youth Employability 2014-2020*. In total, the report presents information that is gathered from more than 60 projects and initiatives that were implemented and are going to be implemented in the Baltic Sea Region to increase the NEETs employability and to foster their social inclusion.

The final chapter displays recommendations for further actions that could be developed in close cooperation with BSR Member States considering their previous experience and knowledge to ease the entrance into the labour market and to develop human security for the youth with means of extended labour policy measures. Considering the gathered evidence of effective results of the integration of the NEETs into the labour market, following

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\* Here and after the report covers activities that have taken place in four regions of Germany: Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein.

recommendations for trans-national projects among the Baltic Sea Region's Member States are proposed:

1. Founding of the Guidance Centres across the Baltic Sea Region;
2. Establishment of the Academy of the Baltic Sea Region;
3. Mobile Employability Package for the NEETs;
4. Business Package for Youth Initiatives.

The report does not have the ambition to cover all the projects that have been and will be implemented in the Baltic Sea Region with the contribution of the EU funding. Though, the report does intend to demonstrate the mainstream projects and initiatives of the decade to respond to youth unemployment and social exclusion but it also reveals more unorthodox measures taken up by public employment services and other public and private institutions.

To conclude, the data gathered about the eight Member States in the Baltic Sea Region has shown a common mind-set in tackling youth employment issues. It is obvious that there are different methods how countries work at the regional and national levels to decrease the unemployment level across various age levels and social backgrounds that a social group "youth" has. The knowledge and experience embedded in the national and regional ESF administrations and employment agents show several variations of possible cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, like Germany and Denmark that can share and elaborate the knowledge on motivating young people to start their business; another operational project group could be Germany and Finland with their knowledge on one-stop agencies for youth; Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are good examples of how a work in charity organizations and voluntary sector in general is beneficial for one's development of professional skills; Sweden is a great example on how to network various official agents to target the youth unemployment; whereas Poland has one of the few *Second Chance Schools* that have good results in empowering the NEETs and working with their social inclusion and integration into the labour market.

The report *Lessons Learned and the New Plans. Overcoming challenges of the Youth Unemployment in the Baltic Sea Region* is an activity of a project *School to Work*, run by *Swedish Authority of Local Communities and Regions* in partnership with Swedish municipalities and other partners of which one is the *Norden Association*. The *Norden Association* is a priority area coordinator of the EUBSR strategy area *Education*.



## Statistics of NEETs in the Baltic Sea Region

According to the Eurostat report *Unemployment statistics*<sup>3</sup> released in May, the youth unemployment rate in the EU-28 was 23,8% in the fourth quarter of 2013 (in comparison to 23,1% in 2012) and the youth unemployment ratio was 9,8% (it was 9,1% in 2012). The data of youth unemployment in the Baltic Sea Region in 2013 was as follows:

- in Denmark the unemployment rate was 12,8% and the ratio was 8,1%,
- Estonia – the unemployment rate was 19,1% and the ratio was 7,4%,
- in Finland the unemployment rate was 20% and the ratio was 10,3%,
- in Germany the unemployment rate was 7,9% and the ratio was 4,0%,
- Latvia – the unemployment rate was 23,9% and the ratio was 9,1%,
- in Lithuania the unemployment rate was 20,6% and the ratio was 6,9%,
- Poland – the unemployment rate was 27,2% and the ratio was 9,1%,
- in Sweden the unemployment rate was 22,6% and the ratio was 12,8%.

Thus, the lowest youth unemployment rate was in Germany (7,9%), but the highest one was in Poland (27,2%) and accordingly the lowest youth unemployment ratio was in Germany (4%) but the highest ratio in 2013 was in Sweden (nearly 13%). The level of youth unemployment has decreased in most of the Baltic Sea Region's countries in comparison to 2012 (see column *Change, 2012* in table 1. *Youth Unemployment Trends*). The exception is Finland and Poland, where the rate and ratio has increased since 2012 (see table 1. *Youth Unemployment Trends*).

<b>Youth Unemployment Trends</b>					
<b>Country</b>	<b>Rate, 2013</b>	<b>Change, 2012</b>	<b>Ratio, 2013</b>	<b>Change, 2012</b>	<b>General unemployment rate, 2013</b>
Denmark	12,8%	-0,2%	8,1%	-1,0%	7,0%
Estonia	19,1%	-1,8%	7,4%	-1,3%	8,6%
Finland	20,0%	+1%	10,3%	+0,5	8,2%
Germany	7,9%	-0,2%	4,0%	-0,1%	5,3%
Latvia	23,9%	-4,6%	9,1%	-2,4%	11,9%
Lithuania	20,6%	-6,1%	6,9%	-0,9%	11,8%
Poland	27,2%	+0,7%	9,1%	+0,2	10,3%
Sweden	22,6%	-1,1%	12,8%	+0,4	8,0%
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>23,1%</b>	<b>+0,1</b>	<b>9,8%</b>	<b>+0,3</b>	<b>10,8%</b>

Table 1. *Youth Unemployment Trends*

Generally, the Baltic Sea Region is doing much better to employ youth in comparison with the average EU-28 situation.

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat. *Unemployment Statistics*. May, 2015. Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics#Youth\\_unemployment\\_trends](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment_trends)

Another focus to look at the needs of NEETs and provision of services for young people, is the number of early school leavers. Poland and Lithuania have great results in combating the number of youth who leave the school and training too early. In 2014 Poland had only 5,4% of youth who were not in education or training, and Lithuania had 5,9% whereas Estonia had the highest number of early school leavers – 11,4% which is even more in comparison with last two years (see table 2. *Early School Leavers from Education and Training*)<sup>4</sup>.

<b>Early School Leavers from Education and Training</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Denmark	7,7%	8,0%	9,1%
Estonia	11,4%	9,7%	10,5%
Finland	9,5%	9,3%	8,9%
Germany	9,5%	9,8%	10,5%
Latvia	8,5%	9,8%	10,6%
Lithuania	5,9%	6,3%	6,5%
Poland	5,4%	5,6%	5,7%
Sweden	6,7%	7,1%	7,5%
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>11,1%</b>	<b>11,9%</b>	<b>12,7%</b>

Table 2. *Early School Leavers from Education and Training*

All in all, the number of early school leavers among the eight BSR countries is lower than the EU's average rate. In most of the countries the situation in the last two years is improving and the number of early school leavers is decreasing (except the cases of Estonia and Finland). The lowest number of early school leavers from education and training is in Poland – only 5,4% of those of age of 18 to 24 years old, who have lower secondary education and are not in further education and training. According to the OECD report *OECD Skills Outlook 2015. Youth, Skills and Employability* (issued on 27.05.2015), education attainment and cognitive skills influence the likelihood to become NEET. OECD report points out that young people with low literacy and numeracy skills are more likely to belong to NEET group but most young NEETs have relatively good cognitive skills.

Another existing trait in research of NEETs shows that youth with an immigrant background face extra barriers regarding integration into the labour market. These barriers are:

- knowledge of language,
- recognition of foreign qualifications,
- lack of contacts with employers,
- limited knowledge of the labour market,
- and also discrimination is a hurdle against integration<sup>5</sup>.

Besides the fact of employment and early school leaving, another angle to look at the situation presented by NEETs is their readiness and will to work (Table 3. *NEETs and Their Activity Status*). According to Eurostat information, most of the young people who are NEETs and

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat. *Early leavers from education and training*. 2015. Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators>

<sup>5</sup> OECD. *OECD Skills Outlook 2015. Youth, Skills and Employability*. 2015. OECD Publishing, p.92.

would like to work are found in Poland (11,5% of those who are NEETs and are seeking for job) and less in Denmark (4,8%), whereas the EU-28 average percentage was 10,8% in 2014 (see Table 3. *NEETs and Their Activity Status*)<sup>6</sup>.

<b>NEETs and Their Activity Status</b>						
<b>Country</b>	<b>Persons who would like to work</b>			<b>Persons who do not want to work</b>		
	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Denmark	4,8%	4,8%	5,2%	2,5%	2,8%	2,9%
Estonia	7,3%	8,1%	9,3%	6,5%	6,1%	5,8%
Finland	7,0%	6,4%	5,9%	4,8%	4,4%	4,4%
Germany	5,3%	5,5%	5,7%	3,3%	3,2%	3,6%
Latvia	10,8%	11,5%	13,2%	4,4%	4,1%	3,9%
Lithuania	7,8%	8,8%	9,3%	5,1%	4,9%	4,6%
Poland	11,5%	12,2%	11,6%	4,0%	4,0%	4,1%
Sweden	5,1%	5,0%	5,3%	2,7%	2,8%	3,1%
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>10,8%</b>	<b>11,4%</b>	<b>11,2%</b>	<b>4,4%</b>	<b>4,5%</b>	<b>4,6%</b>

Table 3. *NEETs and Their Activity Status*

Despite the fact that Danish NEETs are mostly reluctant to start working, there are few Danish NEETs who do not want to work – only 2,5% of them. Young Estonian NEETs express least their readiness and willing to work – 6,5% of them do not want to work.

NEETs who are inactive and do not search for a job may not be registered at public employment services, especially in countries with no welfare benefits for youth and no requirements to prepare for labour market. These inactive NEETs might be particularly hard to reach by labour market and education providers. According to the OECD report *OECD Skills Outlook 2015. Youth, Skills and Employability*, the number of inactive youth in Denmark, Estonia and Finland is bigger than the number of unemployed NEETs<sup>7</sup>. This trait marks a challenge for those designing and implementing activities for NEETs.

To decrease the number of NEETs and to help youth to integrate into the labour market, OECD report *OECD Skills Outlook 2015. Youth, Skills and Employability* recommends to take-up such actions:

1. High-quality pre-primary education for all children in order to help mitigate disparities in education outcomes and to give every child a strong start to their education;
2. Teachers and school leaders should identify low achievers early on to give them the support they need to attain sufficient proficiency in reading, mathematics and science, and prevent them from dropping out of school entirely;

<sup>6</sup> Eurostat. *Young people not in employment and not in any education and training by sex, age and activity status*. 2015. Website: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

<sup>7</sup> OECD. *OECD Skills Outlook 2015. Youth, Skills and Employability*. 2015. OECD Publishing, p.89.



3. Public employment services, social welfare institutions and education and training systems should offer some form of second-chance education or training. In return for receiving social benefits, young people could be required to register with social welfare or public employment services, and participate in further education and training;
4. Education providers and business sector should cooperate with each other to design qualifications frameworks that accurately reflect the actual skills of new graduates;
5. Work-based learning should be integrated into both vocational and academic post-secondary programmes.

According to the reports provided by eight Member States of the Baltic Sea Region (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany (specifically focusing on Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein), Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden), governments and private actors have been involved in reducing youth unemployment with special focus on NEETs at least since 2000. The activities implemented in the Member States were funded by the EU funds, national budget and also private donors' assignments fundraised by civil society organizations. So far, the aim of meeting the needs of NEETs has been to combat the youth unemployment. Therefore three main approaches have been implemented in the Baltic Sea Region:

1. Social benefit payments for those who are unemployed;
2. Services provided by the public employment agencies and private actors (civil society organizations and businesses) to help to find work and to learn new skills;
3. Working on vocational training by providing courses in the correspondence to the needs of the businesses and also by working hard on improving the image of vocational training institutions.

In recent years the focus in the Baltic Sea Region has expanded and now it includes activities that develop NEETs social skills, provide socio-psychological help and coaching, and also economy-planning services for individuals. This is also the scope suggested by the OECD as there is a potential to meet the needs of NEETs more effectively.

The next chapter informs about the projects that were implemented in the Baltic Sea Region to ease the transition from school to work, to foster youth employment, and to prevent early school leaving in 2012-2014 period.



**A**s many sources point out, the period had especially negative impact on youth employment after the financial crisis hit Europe in 2008. When many employers fired even experienced employees, it was very challenging to get the first job for newly graduates, not to mention the youth without completed education and no professional skills. Therefore, many governments changed their activities or adjusted to them to become more effective in order to foster youth employment.

As a result of the crisis and the sharp increase in youth unemployment across the EU, since 2010 young people have received a lot of attention when it came to European Social Fund (ESF) support and much more. More than 20 million young participants under 25 years have received ESF support, nearly 30% of all final recipients were given support until the end of 2012. In some countries (DE/Germany, France, Hungary, FR, HU), young people accounted for 40 % or more of all participants. In the 2007-2013 period, the ESF amounted more than EUR 10 billion per year<sup>8</sup>.

For the last two years the European Commission encourages Member States to design and implement actions for youth which:

- Are based on a strategic and integrated approach;
- Support the Youth Employment Package objectives;
- Can directly target young people (e.g. job placement, training) and/or reform systems and structures (e.g. employment or education services access and quality – including training systems);
- Involve partnerships at national and regional/local level between all stakeholders (employers, public employment services, education and training institutions, regional/local government, youth organisations);
- Target actions to individuals only not systems<sup>9</sup>.

As Latvia and Lithuania were amongst those EU countries with the highest youth unemployment rate in 2012, countries received additional funding from the European Commission to support creation of job opportunities for young people and to facilitate SME access to finance. The latest results reported in March 2014 show that the ESF resources reallocated to specific actions for youth amongst these eight countries (Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain) of total number around 4.2 billion EUR, of which 1.8 billion EUR have been committed to projects which are currently ongoing in the Member States. European Commission reports about the situation in March 2014:

- In Latvia, 11 million EUR have been allocated and committed to several measures supporting young people without vocational qualifications and seeking new, labour market-oriented, qualifications. As a result of these measures, the proportion of young unemployed receiving EU support will jump from 24% to 40%, while the number of persons in vocational training would double;

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<sup>8</sup> European Commission. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. *Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund. European Social Fund thematic paper*. 2014. P.5.

<sup>9</sup> European Commission. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. *Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund. European Social Fund thematic paper*. 2014. P.8.

- In Lithuania, the number of participants in currently implemented activities is still growing. A new initiative has been launched that provides first job-skills and subsidized placement for 3 450 young people. Re-allocated amounts reach 36 million EUR from which 33 million EUR have been committed to projects<sup>10</sup>.

Looking closely at the projects funded by the ESF and those projects that have been implemented in the eight Member States of the BSR during the period of 2007-2013, the evidence shows that countries have focused their effort more on incentives that integrate NEETs in the labour market and now they have re-designed or changed the entire focus of the activities financed by the European Social Fund and national budgets.

When the eight Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany (area of Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein), Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) of the Baltic Sea Region are compared, it is evident that the majority of the countries held the opinion that the emphasis on meeting the needs of NEETs must be put in integration into the labour market. The aim to reduce early school leaving (including vocational schools) had become secondary with the exception of Denmark. Denmark is also a country that has its own approach to integrate young people in the labour market. It has started a reform on a public benefit system where the core scope is shifted on the completion and start of studies.

The Member States have focused their attention on such activity areas like “Guidance and Counselling” and “Integration into the Labour Market”, therefore the most popular activity groups among the eight Member States for the 2007-2013 period were:

- development of professional skills,
- organization and introduction of short-term vocational courses,
- organization of traineeships,
- one-stop guidance centres.

Hence, such theoretical clusters of knowledge and skills acquired by the MS can be *highlighted* in three clusters: *Active Employment Measures*; *Individual Guidance* and *Ability Building Activities*. The theoretical clusters are developed considering the focus of activities funded by the ESF in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany\*, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden in the period of 2007-2013. A common characteristic for activities included in clusters is the target group – unemployed young people in age between 15 years to 25 years. Though, since 2012 several countries distinguished a special group – youth not in employment, nor education and training.

Cluster I	
Active Employment Measures	
Traineeships	DK FIN LV SE
State subsidized allowance	EE DK FIN LV
Individual vacancy offers	FIN DE* LV LT
Available start-up funding	FIN SE

<sup>10</sup> European Commission. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. *Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund. European Social Fund thematic paper*. 2014. P.6.

\* Germany or DE refers to regions of Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein in Germany.



Volunteering for the public good **EE LV LT**

Picture 1. Cluster I. Active Employment Measures

Countries of the first cluster represent governments' direct action to encourage youth integration into the labour market with the financial and counselling means. The common requirement was that the individual had to be registered in the employment service to gain access for the help provided by the state. The first cluster also represents wide cooperation between the government and stakeholders – educational institutions, businesses and civil society organizations. As the graph shows, Finland and Latvia had a great potential for mutual cooperation to develop even more effective methods to reach out to the target group, and also to have a spill-over effect to the other countries in regards of creating a system for unemployed youth who get tailored vacancy offers, state subsidized salary or a traineeship offer. Lithuania also fits in this group as the government had programs for youth to gain work experience while being trainees or volunteers. Whereas, Sweden and Finland are the best examples of the effects of youth self-employment via the mean of start-up funding.

The next cluster *Individual Guidance* is best represented by Germany, Finland, Latvia and Poland. These countries provided youth with a guidance and motivational schemes that were set at the local level (e.g. private or public (the subordination is held by the local council) youth centres) in towns and cities. Young people who got the help from these incentives did not have to meet the requirement to be registered at the public employment system. Therefore, this cluster can be considered as more open as it welcomes everyone in need.

Cluster II	
Individual Guidance	
Youth guidance centers	DK FIN DE* LV
Self-sufficient living	FIN DE* PL

Picture 2. Cluster II. Individual Guidance

Denmark has a special role in the second cluster *Individual Guidance* as it had a focus to another set of activities. The activities provided by guidance centres in Denmark were focused on early school (including VET students) leavers as the country has started a reform of the unemployed youth benefit system. The aim of the guidance centres were to guide youth through different offers of education programmes and to begin with – finding the best suited education programme for every student.

Poland implemented dozens of projects that addressed children and youth in institutionalized foster-care. The activities were designed to ensure the social inclusion of the youth after they have left the foster-care and also to ease the possibility of finding a job, and generally, to be self-sufficient.

Finland has developed a one-stop guidance-centre-network that covers the country. The guidance centres offered a diversified support to the young people. The young people were offered general guidance services and specific education, social care, health care and employment services to advance emotionally, socially and professionally.

Whereas the third cluster *Activity Building Activities* combines activities that were the most popular – development of professional skills (present in every BSR MS), short-term vocational courses, and mentoring and coaching. As the first cluster, and the third one as well represents activities that were available for those unemployed youth who were registered in the employment system.



Cluster III	
Ability Building Activities	
Development of professional skills	EE FIN DK DE* LV LT PL SE
Mentoring and coaching	FIN DK DE* LV LT PL SE
Counselling on every-day activities	FIN DE* PL
Short-term vocational courses	EE FIN DK DE* LV SE

Picture 3. Cluster III. Ability Building Activities

Activities that were only in Finland and Germany, but now are recognisable elsewhere because of their importance, are counselling on every-day activities, like running a household economy. Hamburg was a city that started a set of counselling activities for youth who needed support, for example, to find a flat. The youth were offered various training courses outside the school environment and also had a personal coach.

To have more direct impact in decreasing the number of NEETs and unemployed people in general, the European Union has launched a shared initiative the *Youth Employment Initiative*. The requirements for the implementation of the Initiative are to be obeyed by every Member State, but the liberty to choose the method of reaching out to youth and ensuring the results of the Initiative are designed by the Member States individually. The next chapter explores the *Youth Employment Initiative*.

## Measures to Foster the Youth Employment

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The new shift of youth employment strategies has been evident in most of the Baltic Sea Region's Member States. What once started and had become a traditional approach of youth employment, now has been upgraded and changed. Such set of activities as "development of professional skills" still has a high importance. But the need to identify various target groups and diversify them from the big group "unemployed youth aged 16-25" has been recognized as one of the first necessities. Therefore, the Member States are eager to invest funding both in training specialists whose task is to identify and stratify young people and also in offering youth tailored means of employability.

The Member States are ready to go one step forward. They are ready not only to make NEETs employable but they are also willing to invest in strengthening human capital of young people. If individual's level of human capital is high, the greater is the likelihood that the government will not have to invest as many resources into welfare benefit system.

Therefore for the ESF planning period 2014-2020, the Member States have foreseen that unemployed young people can take part in the activities aimed to foster employment if they fit in any of these target groups:

- jobseekers,
- young people, aged 16-25 (there are variations among the MS of the age group referring "youth"),
- NEETs,
- young people looking for a job,
- low-skilled workers,
- disadvantaged (mentally and physically) groups,
- early school-leavers,
- being at the risk of social exclusion,
- long-term unemployed people.

For the period 2014-2020 almost every MS of the BSR has defined a special target group "young job seekers". The group has the widest access to participate in activities funded by the European Social Fund.

The area of action "youth employment" has three aspects that asks for attention when analysing the activities of ESF and considering possible cooperation:

1. *Youth Employment Initiative* as an approach is used in most of the BSR MS and generally tackles youth unemployment which ensures that all young people who leave formal education or become unemployed and are under age of 25 – whether registered at employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months. The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education and adapted to each individual need and situation;
2. Projects for NEETs – specifically designed initiatives that target a specific group of youth and offers special measures for them to develop their skills and get education. In most cases the activities are aimed for those young people who meet all the conditions: no employment, no education and no training;
3. Projects that are created to foster young persons' employability are available for those people who have or have not been registered at the employment services for further education and work experience and who receive unemployment benefit (if the necessary conditions are met).

Therefore, youth who are not employed, nor in education or training have the access to wide range of activities (both in the schemes of Youth guarantee and those designed for

unemployed youth), though the entering position is participation in activities designed specifically for NEETs.

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

To foster youth employment across any age of young people and across any professional and educational background, countries not only invest their national funding for the appropriate measures, but they also use the ESF allocations that come with the special measure of the *Youth Employment Initiative* implemented by the European Commission. The initiative aims to support particularly young people not in education, employment or training in regions with the youth unemployment rate above 25%. Four of the BSR countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden) have the opportunity to increase the effort to lower youth unemployment rate as the EC has allocated special resources for the Youth Employment Initiative (see table 4. *The Allocation of the Youth Employment Initiative Special Envelope per Member State*).

<b>The Allocation of the Youth Employment Initiative Special Envelope per Member State</b>		
<b>Member State</b>	<b>Regions eligible for extra funding under the YEI</b>	<b>YEI specific allocation, million EUR*</b>
Denmark	NO	-
Estonia	NO	-
Finland	NO	-
Germany	NO	-
Latvia	YES	27.10
Lithuania	YES	29.69
Poland	YES	235.83
Sweden	YES	41.26

\*Member States have to match these amounts by at least the same amounts from their European Social Fund allocation.

Table 4. *The Allocation of the Youth Employment Initiative Special Envelope per Member State, 2014*

Examples of measures benefiting individual young people (specifically NEETs) that can be supported by YEI are:

- provision of traineeships and apprenticeships,
- provision of first-job experience (placements),
- reduction of non-wage labour costs,
- targeted and well-designed wage and recruitment subsidies,
- job and training mobility measures,
- start-up support for young entrepreneurs,
- qualitative vocational education and training,
- second-chance programmes<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. *Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund. European Social Fund thematic paper*. 2014. P.10.

After the discussions at the European Commission the European Council in May 2015 decided to increase advance payments for the Youth Employment Initiative by almost 1 billion EUR in 2015. The regulation adopted by the Council also removes the main bottleneck in the implementation of YEI by releasing the financial burden on the Member States' budgets and allowing them to roll out quickly measures against youth employment<sup>12</sup>. The financial burden to the MS budgets restrained governments to take the actions in full speed, which was represented by the case of Sweden (during parliamentary discussions in the European Parliament in 2014):

*Sweden currently has a higher unemployment rate than comparable EU Member States. Three regions of Sweden have been granted extra support from the EU's Youth Employment Initiative (YEI): Southern Sweden, Central Norrland and North Central Sweden. These regions are to receive a total of around SEK 1 billion in EU aid, with the proviso that the extra funding initially has to be found by Sweden itself, after which the Commission will retrospectively reimburse it.*

*However, the Swedish Government recently decided for budgetary reasons to pay out only a fraction of this aid in the first two years. The authority responsible for implementation, Arbetsförmedlingen, states in an analysis that major projects consequently cannot be launched, and various local-authority areas are being left without aid<sup>13</sup>.*

In February 2015, the European Commission's Directorate-General for *Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion* in connection with the YEI informs that:

- In Latvia the YEI specific allocation represents 29,010,639 EUR for the 2014–2015 period (matched by the same amount from the ESF). The growth and employment programme which includes the YEI has been adopted in November 2014. The increased pre-financing will reach 8,703,192 EUR;
- In Lithuania the YEI specific allocation represents 31,782,633 EUR for the 2014–2015 period (matched by the same amount from the ESF). The YEI is programmed as part of the single multi-fund Operational Programme which has been approved in September 2014. The increased pre-financing will reach 9,534,790 EUR;
- In Poland the YEI specific allocation represents 252,437,822 EUR for the 2014–2015 period (matched by the same amount from the ESF). The national ESF OP Knowledge Education Growth 2014–2020 which includes the YEI has been adopted in December 2014. The increased pre-financing will reach 75,731,347 EUR;
- In Sweden the YEI specific allocation represents 44,163,096 EUR for the 2014–2015 period (matched by the same amount from the ESF). The YEI is part of the ESF program for growth and employment adopted in December 2014. The increased pre-financing will reach 13,248,929 EUR.

Activities within the *Youth Employment Initiative* are the ones that have the chance to start an immediate effect in the Member States as in contrast to the ESF projects.

The measures introduced by the European Commission are embedded in the national activities to tackle the youth unemployment, early school leaving and specifically, the issues brought up by the NEETs. Therefore, the BSR MS have come up with different projects that address the NEETs from various aspects.

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<sup>12</sup> Latvian Presidency of the Council of European Union. *Youth employment initiative: Council increases pre-financing to €1 billion*. May 19, 2015. Website: [www.eu2015.lv/News/Media\\_releases](http://www.eu2015.lv/News/Media_releases)

<sup>13</sup> European Parliament. *Implementation of Youth Employment Initiative in Sweden*. July 24, 2014.



To get a general overview of the projects that will be run in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany (specifically in regions of Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein), Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden, to meet the needs of NEETs and to foster youth employment by initiatives financed by the European Social Fund during 2014-2020, following methods were used:

- study of operational and national programmes presented to the European Commission that contains activities for young people,
- study of documents released by the European Commission and the Council of European Union,
- inquiry of regional and national ESF managing bodies, and ministries working in areas of employment and education,
- acquiring statistics from *Eurostat* and *OECD* about youth unemployment and share of NEETs,
- learning about the latest findings about the situation in areas of youth employment and NEETs.

The findings give a general overview about target groups, area of activities, planned results, geographical area and the possible positive effects in the Baltic Sea Region. Most of the findings represented in this chapter, refer to the information extracted from the data sheets that were filled or otherwise delivered by the regional and national ESF managing bodies, and ministries working in areas of employment and education. The respondents were asked to provide such information on six categories:

1. Project management (legal status of leading implementer, number of partners involved and legal status of partners);
2. General information of the project (issue to be solved, geographical area of the project, expected cross-border partnerships, primary and secondary target group, budget of the project, source of funding and duration of the project);
3. Activities and expected results (primary and secondary activities, expected qualitative and quantitative results, impact of activities, sustainability of results in the BSR, sustainability of results in the respective country, and international scope of the activities);
4. Risks (project management (administration, budgeting, and partnerships), human resources and contractors, time frame of the project, political visibility and stakeholder involvement, technological risks, strategical risks (including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR));
5. Added value of the cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region (expertise to spill over/ share with other MS, and experience to be gained from other MS);
6. Comments and additional information.

The respondents had no difficulties to provide with the information regarding the aspects of project's management, general information, and in most cases the category of the activities and expected results was covered well. Though, none of the respondents could provide with the information about such indicators: sustainability of project's results in the BSR and international scope of the activities, strategical risks, including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR. Considering the guidelines provided by the European Commission



on the implementation of the *Youth Guarantee*, it is possible to conclude that the governments have not foreseen the positive effect to be spilled over or gained from other BSR MS to tackle the issues of the employability and social inclusion of the NEETs because the funding must be allocated directly to the target group. Though, several respondents have replied that they see the benefit of transnational cooperation to start or to continue the work with the NEETs as it has proved its value in projects funded from other funding sources. The transnational cooperation to tackle the NEETs would contribute to the implementation of a priority area *Education* defined in the EU Baltic Sea's Strategy. According to the Strategy's priority area *Education*, by 2020 such objective shall be met: improved global competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Region and a smart, inclusive and sustainable growth through:

- Increased pupil/student mobility – increased knowledge about the BSR and its cultures – forming a common belongingness;
- Closer cooperation between educational institutions in BSR - building a common area for education;
- Strengthened international position in education – attracting students from outside the BSR to our higher education institutions.

Coming back to the information that is gathered and outlined in the report it is important to point out, that the information gives a general overview about the projects and it does not have the ambition to cover all the initiatives that target the NEETs, unemployed youth and the early school leavers in the Baltic Sea Region. There are three reasons:

1. Countries are at different stages of planning and implementation process of the ESF activities. Some countries like Denmark, Sweden and Poland are running projects already whereas other countries are still in the planning phase. Therefore, there are projects that have a detailed layout of the planned activities and there are also projects that offer a general overview of the planned activities and the target group;
2. The bureaucratic systems for the ESF planning and managing differ, and therefore there are different sources of information. For example, the information about the situation in Poland is provided by non-governmental organization CARITAS, information about Latvia was provided by the Ministry of Finance but information about Estonia was provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The sources of information are noted in the Appendix No.2. *The Digest of the ESF Funded Projects for NEETs 2014-2020*;
3. Though, the projects mentioned in the chapter provide a good insight about the nature of the activities and they are mentioned by several sources as potentially good examples on how to decrease the number of the NEETs. The information about the activities that plan to address the NEETs in the following two years is covered by the Appendix No.2. *The Digest of the ESF Funded Projects for NEETs 2014-2020*. Whereas the information about projects that aim to decrease the youth unemployment and the number of early school leavers is covered by the Appendix No.3. *ESF Funded Projects for Youth Employability 2014-2020*.

The additional information was gathered from the official publications on the website of the European Commission on the site of the European Social Fund and also the directory of the projects financed by the ESF.



## THE OUTLINE OF THE ESF FUNDED INCENTIVES FOR THE LABOUR MARKET

The EU Member States of the Baltic Sea Region have dedicated reasonable resources and effort to develop employability and professional skills of the labour force, and specifically to help the young people to enter the labour market. Some of the Member States have foreseen that a special attention shall be addressed to those young people who are at risk of early school leaving or have left the school without receiving the degree. The source of the information outlined below is the European Commission's website on the ESF funded activities in every respective Member State.

**Denmark.** Ensuring a qualified workforce one of the key priorities in Denmark. Higher education and especially vocational training play a significant role. The experience shows that people with a vocational education are much more likely to be employed throughout their lives in comparison to those with low or no skills, a large share of the ESF investment is devoted to increase the number of participants in vocational training. Another focus is on projects helping to build the competences of younger people and to reduce the number of early school-leavers.

**Estonia.** The ESF is also helping to improve professional skills among disadvantaged groups and the low-skilled, and responds to youth unemployment via the *Youth Employment Initiative*. The ESF funding is going to help Estonia to adapt its education system to match better to the changing social and labour market demands. There is greater emphasis on reducing the numbers of early school-leavers and developing better career and support services for the young people. Further investment in schools aims to improve the quality of the education by raising the skills and competences of teachers, principals and youth workers, and upgrading study materials and curriculum. The modernisation of teacher-training competence centres and better access to career services seek to raise education standards and to increase the take-up of vocational training.

**Finland.** The ESF employment projects in Finland are going to work to reduce the employment rate, and in particular the number of young people without jobs. In the field of education, the ESF funding ensures young people and adults to get the skills they need to prosper in their careers by creating supplementary training facilities and running tailored activities for individuals that develop their personal employability skills and social skills.

**Germany.** The ESF investments are being made available through 17 operational programmes, one for each of the German *Länder* and one at federal level. At the national level, the budget is divided equally across three priorities: employment, social inclusion and education. There are different emphases for these priorities between the East (which receives more funding) and West of the country, and between individual regions – reflecting different circumstances and needs. The ESF projects are addressing the impending shortage of skilled workers by offering training for all workers and particularly the young and older people. Reconciling work and family life is another objective: training and qualification measures aim at improving the employability and job prospects especially for women. Reducing the number of early school-leavers is another focus, as is facilitating the transition from school into work for young people. Furthermore, in line with the ongoing need for new skills, all workers and jobseekers, from all age groups, are encouraged to take up training and learning opportunities. The ESF measures also aim at making sure that education and training – and the skills and qualifications they lead to – are relevant to the needs of industry

by involving stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce and industry, by cooperating with enterprises, and by involving NGOs, and education providers.

**Latvia.** Young people are going to benefit from actions funded by the *Youth Employment Initiative*, and are offered training, work experience and apprenticeships as well as individual help to make the transition into working life. Overall, the ESF investments are bringing improvements to the education and vocational training systems by ensuring they offer people the right skills and qualifications to prosper in the labour market. A comprehensive career guidance system and a new lifelong learning implementation model launched at regional level are under the development.

**Lithuania.** Helping people in the labour market is a major priority for the ESF investments in Lithuania. Active measures are underway to help jobseekers to get the skills they need to find a work. Young people are going to benefit from projects implemented within the *Youth Employment Initiative*. The projects will help them make the transition into work and offer work placements and apprenticeships. Projects are going to help young people to stay at school to get qualifications and then will guide them into the working life.<sup>14</sup> In this period the *Ministry of Education and Science* plans to assign 35 million EUR to reduce the early school leaving and school dropout rates, and the *Ministry of Social Security and Labour* plans to assign 90 million EUR.

**Poland.** The ESF projects in the field of employment are taking an individual and demand-driven approach with a focus on people who are finding it most difficult to get a job. Personal coaching and guidance and an emphasis on skills that are in demand are among the measures being deployed to improve jobseekers' employability and to help them into the labour market. In addition, measures are supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment, in particular among young people. The education system and training system are also benefiting from the ESF support. Projects are building partnerships with enterprises and employment organisations, both to offer work placements and apprenticeships, and to ensure training opportunities are relevant to needs.

**Sweden.** Sweden is dedicating a major part of ESF funding to boost the labour force, in particular helping young people and those with a migrant background, especially women. Projects across the country are providing tailored pathways into working life for people who face particular obstacles, such as low qualifications or disabilities. These pathways involve a range of measures, such as individual coaching and training of new skills. For young people, there is additional support from the *Youth Employment Initiative* in certain regions. In the field of education, the ESF investments are going to improve the relevance of training systems, ensuring that people have the right skills to guide them into working life. There is also support for combining work and training, and for apprenticeships.

Six of the seven countries are going to invest the ESF funding for social inclusion measures, e.g. for disadvantaged people to be integrated into the labour market. Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden build a group of countries that are going to have projects for job-seekers with migrant background. Whereas Denmark, Estonia, Germany and Sweden is a group of countries that will have projects to prevent early school leaving. It is interesting that some of the BSR countries have assigned the ESF funding for increasing the employability of

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<sup>14</sup> The European Commission. *The ESF in Lithuania*. Source: [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)



women (Germany, Lithuania and Poland). Every country of the Baltic Sea Region has assigned the ESF funding for such groups of activities:

- development of professional skills (activities like seminars, training, apprenticeships, work experience, individual support),
- improvement of qualifications of the workforce,
- mentoring, coaching, and counselling for increasing the suitability and readiness to enter into the labour market,
- and improvement of the life-long-learning (including the VET) system and curriculum.

## THE OUTLINE OF THE SPECIFIC ESF PROJECTS FOR THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Every country covered by the Report is going to implement projects that have a target group *Young people searching for a job*. Though, there are some differences. Some of the countries are going to reach-out to those young people who are out of reach of the public employment services with specially designed activities while other group of countries is going to have activities for those young people who are registered at the PES job-seekers registers.

The information provided below displays the clusters of the BSR countries that are going to implement projects with similar characteristics to integrate the NEETs into the labour market and to foster their social inclusion. The clusters are organized according to the similar characteristics and they refer to the available information provided by the national ESF administrators/ planners and stakeholders who are in charge of the implementation of the projects. The clusters are arranged in respect of two dimensions: target group and planned activities. The information is demonstrated only about the projects that aim to address the employability and social inclusion of NEETs.

### Characteristics of the ESF Funded Projects for NEETs

A target group *NEETs* is specifically identified.

Tailored employment activities for the individual (vocational courses, job placements, internships).

Activities for improvement of professional and social skills.

The method of courses very often is *group activities*.

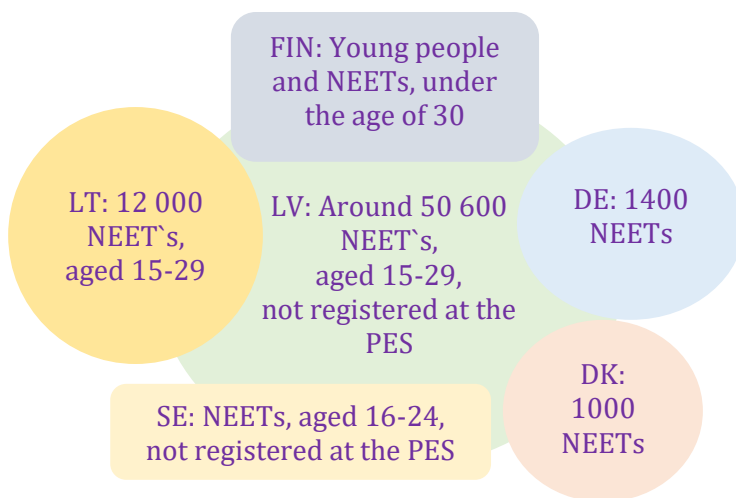
Activities for youth employability is still a sphere of public interaction.

Activities for youth business start-up, mentoring, counselling is a PPP sphere.

## DIMENSION: TARGET GROUP

For the period of 2014-2020 four countries of the BSR have identified a specific number of the NEETs that shall be introduced with the ESF activities that aim to foster the employability of the NEETS and to integrate the young people into the labour market. These countries are Latvia and Lithuania, with the largest group of the target group. Latvia expects to work with around 50 600 NEETs in the period of 51 months. Lithuania is determined to reach out for 12 000 NEETs within 36 months. Whereas Germany (in case of Hamburg) expects to reach out to 1 400 NEETs in total of 36 months and Denmark plans to work with 1 000 NEETs within 24 months (the project is already in on-going process).





Picture 4. The Expected Number of Participants

The number of the NEETs involved in the projects differ greatly. The differences are because of the projects' characteristics: Latvia and Lithuania will have long-term and nation-wide projects whereas Denmark, Germany and Sweden will have regional and local projects.

The most significant difference among the projects that were implemented in the previous period of the ESF funding and now is that the specific target group "NEET" is

identified and going to be addressed. The importance of the separation of the specific subgroup NEET from the group *Unemployed youth* lies in the fact that the activities introduced in the projects for NEETs must differ significantly because there are various issues that must be addressed simultaneously in order to foster the employability not only to integrate the NEETs into the labour market.

### DIMENSION: PLANNED ACTIVITIES

The countries of the Baltic Sea Region have different methods of addressing the employability and social inclusion of the NEETs, but the new planning period has brought a new understanding of how to address more effectively the issues of the NEETs. The most effective method is seen by using the **holistic approach**. The holistic approach follows the premise that the young people who are not in employment, education or training can be successfully integrated into the labour market if they are individually empowered with the basic social and educational skills, guided and mentored through the process of learning and work placement. It means that the activities are successive and incorporated not as separate measures as it was done before when approaching the unemployed youth.



Picture 5. The Holistic Approach

**Denmark** and **Sweden** addresses the NEETs via the means of education measures. The two Nordic countries are implementing activities that aim to prevent the early school leaving and that aim to motivate young people to acquire education and sufficient vocational skills not to become unemployed after leaving the school.



Whereas **Poland** (Gdansk, in particular), **Hamburg** and **Finland** are going to implement activities that foremost welcome the young people at the one-stop guidance centre where they can receive the information and guidance in one institution and therefore faster the process of the empowerment and the integration into the labour market. The centres are less formal and therefore more welcoming than the ones usually offered by the public employment services. After being acquainted with the work of the one-stop guidance centre, the NEETs participate in various courses that provide with the general education and VET, social skills and employment skills and equally important – the mentoring and guidance is a lasting activity for the ones enrolled in the programme. The one-stop guidance centres also offer employment placements. The potential success of the holistic activities lies in the coordinated cooperation among various stakeholders from social, health and education institutions.

The three **Baltic countries** are going to implement activities that will develop special social, educational, psychological and motivational services and support measures for the NEETs. The activities available for the NEETs will be individually tailored.

**Sweden** is having several regional multi-governance projects with many stakeholders that aim to prevent early school leaving and ease the transition in the labour market.

Additional information about the projects is available in the Appendix No.2. The Digest of the ESF Funded Projects for NEETs 2014-2020 and the Appendix No.3. *ESF Funded Projects for Youth Employability 2014-2020*.

Although, the countries have not planned to have trans-national cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region, the exchange of experience has a great potential for enriching the scope of the expected results of the projects because of the accumulated experience and to lessening the possibility of not succeeding as it was the case for some countries in the previous planning period. The fact is, the NEETs is a social-age group that must be addressed with combined methods in order to succeed with the social inclusion and integration into the labour market.



## Conclusions and Suggestions: the Potential of the Cooperation

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For the last five years the Member States of the Baltic Sea Region have accumulated considerable experience on, how to address the youth employability and early-school leaving issues, and the social inclusion of the youth. The recent years after the economic crisis in Europe have urged the Member States to have a closer look and to run more direct actions to integrate the young people into the labour market and to foster the well-being of the youth who are not in employment, education or training. Several countries in the Baltic Sea Region have reached-out to the NEETs and early school-leavers and have reached reasonable success. After the completion of the programmes introduced by the projects, NEETs:

- Have become employed;
- Have returned back to the school;
- Have started studies;
- And feel more secure about the way their daily routines are carried out.

The projects that have addressed the employability and the social inclusion of the NEETs have such characteristics in common (at smaller or larger scale):

1. The person who reached out for the NEET was a person-of-trust: either a family member, a youth community leader or a young person with a similar background;
2. The projects addressed issues like: personal empowerment and development of social skills, development of the basic educational skills (ICT courses, languages and maths), an active integration into the labour market (formation of individual's professional portfolio, apprenticeships, internships, job mentors and job placements);
3. The projects are implemented with a wide range of involved stakeholders working at various levels of the public administration and also partners from the Third sector, businesses and education institutions.

In comparison with the projects that were implemented previously in field of the youth employment, the new projects for the 2014-2020 period have lessened considerably the focus from the improvement of systems in fields of education, VET and public employment service. The focus on improvements of systems in fields of education, VET and public employment service were more in spotlight in 2007-2013.

A large extent of activities that aim to foster the employability of the NEETs and their social inclusion are in the field of non-formal education. The activities complement formal education with important distinct skills if the young person is still in the education system but face the risk of early school leaving. The non-formal activities have a positive impact on one's personal and professional development for those young people without access to formal education or those who mistrust the public authorities. In retrospective glance, the projects that had the non-formal education approach had positive results and the young people were very responsive and expressed that internships and volunteerism offer opportunities to develop life skills and improve employment prospects, including in entrepreneurship.

The projects have a general focus on those young people who are at risk of early school leaving at the secondary level or at the VET, but there is considerably little focus on university drop-outs. Additionally, the employment incentives are mostly designed for those young people who are unemployed and have not completed their studies at the secondary school or





VET. The number of activities that ease the integration of newly university graduates into the labour market is small.

Vocational training, internships, volunteering, and short-term work placements were active employment measures used in 2007-2013 period. In the new planning period several additional employment measures are used: apprenticeships and support to entrepreneurship, especially in regards to self-employment.

The previous experience has proved that the projects that offer tailored support services more successfully integrate both motivated and not motivated NEETs. It is imperative that projects with tailored support services investigate the needs of the NEETs more thoroughly and they have a wide range of project partners in order to reach high deliverables.

The projects that have more face-to-face activities and especially if they employ such specialists as psychologists and coaches, tend to have better results in means of participants who succeed at work or school after the completion of the project. If participants do not experience the emotional support and sympathy from people who consult or offer employment measures, they are more likely not to complete the project. Thus, people who attend the NEETs have a great influence on their future engagement into support processes.

The *marketers* who approach the NEETs for them to take a part in the project, and the personnel who is delivering the process of support and motivation (e.g. coaches, trainers, mediators, facilitators) must have updated qualifications and specialised knowledge about the NEETs. There are very few countries that are going to address the issue of the competences of the *marketers* and the support personnel, though the importance of their skills and knowledge have a severe impact on the success of the project. It is advisable to find the means of addressing these issues.

The duration of projects that aim to ease the entrance into the labour market to those NEETs who are motivated to work and study, is usually short or medium, whereas the duration of projects that aim to reach out for NEETs who are not registered in any systems (e.g. PES and education) is advised to be a long-term project.

Considering the identified activities and results of the projects that address the NEETs', youth employment and social inclusion, a number of recommendations are proposed to potentially intensify the cooperation among the Member States of the Baltic Sea Region and to implement transnational projects that are beneficial for decreasing the number of the NEETs and would be considered to be funded by the European Social Fund until 2020. The recommendations focus on young people who are not in education, employment, or training and are 18-30 year old.

## **RECOMMENDATION 1: FOUNDING OF THE GUIDANCE CENTRES ACROSS THE BALTIC SEA REGION**

The one-stop-guidance-centre approach has proved to be successful in Hamburg, Gdansk (features of the second chance school) and Finland in terms of the number of people who have continued education, vocational training and employment after completion of the program. Other countries of the Baltic Sea Region (e.g. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) have established a nation-wide network of youth centres with the responsibility of the youth



integration into the labour market and the measures of individual empowerment, and social inclusion with the additional measures set to address the NEETs.

The three Baltic countries have not had activities that were addressed directly to the NEETs (previously, Estonia has experienced hardships to address the early school leavers of the VET due to the lack of specially designed activities, as it was acknowledged in the project evaluation) but to the unemployed youth in general. Therefore the exchange of methods is highly recommended. Whilst, the Baltic countries can contribute with their great experience of engaging the young people to volunteer in the Third sector and public institutions in order to develop individual employability and learn new skills.

The pilot project of the strategic cooperation to prevent early school leaving and to succeed with employment offers for the young people should have two phases. The first phase would be the exchange of knowledge on addressing the NEETs and engaging the young people as volunteers. The second phase should be the settlement of pilot-projects of the guidance centres at the local level in the Baltic countries.

Germany and Finland has had great investments to create the youth-guidance centres and Poland has invested a lot of effort to create the Second Chance School. Therefore, the best methods to reach the NEETs can be adapted in the most suitable forms in the Baltic countries. The youth guidance centres can be either a public or a private organization (as it is in Gdansk and Hamburg). The benefit of choosing a partner from the Third sector is the more flexible, client-oriented approach to clients. Additionally, it is less likely that the non-governmental organization will have the same level of a mistrust as it would be in the case of the public organization.

The countries involved: Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ACADEMY OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION**

The second project of the strategic cooperation to prevent early school leaving and to succeed with employment offers for the young people is the *Academy of the Baltic Sea Region*. The Academy would be the learning and teaching platform to multiply the effects of best methods on how to successfully work with the NEETs issues in various fields of interactions. The Academy would work in three fields: Lifestyle Coaching, Employment Mentorship and Youth Marketers.

Some of the countries have already implemented projects that have activities for the NEETs like personal coaching, mentoring and peers who motivate the youth to continue the education or to enter into the labour market. The experience lies in Denmark (with a special focus on youth with migrant background), Germany (integration services in Hamburg) and Sweden (for unemployed youth and NEETs who are not registered at the public employment registers, and early school leavers). The holistic approach that has been introduced in Hamburg and several municipalities in Sweden, and with a special focus in Denmark, has proved a great success as the number of the NEETs who are involved in the project, experience positive changes and build-up a motivation to get out from the vicious circle of no-education-no-job-risk of social exclusion and possibly social misbehaviour.



It is important that there are professional lifestyle coaches who help the NEETs individually in order to ensure that one becomes self-sufficient. Firstly, the experience gained with the projects from the last three years strongly recommends the presence of a coach who guides and helps with social behavioural problems. Secondly, the projects that have mentors who provide professional guidance once the young NEET has got the employment, have better results of youth employment after the completion of the programme. Thirdly, the profile of the unemployed youth and the NEETs have significant differences that must be addressed with specific measures, especially if the young people are out of the reach of the public employment services or education institutions. Hence, the marketers have a crucial role to establish trust and to approach the youth with similar backgrounds as they had once themselves. The approach of *Youth Marketers* or peers (in case of Denmark and Germany) is at high significance for the project to be successful.

The overall information provided by the Member States assures that there will be incentives for coaching, mentoring and reaching-out but the evidence suggests that there is a need to perform the activities in more holistic way in order to prevent the failure to reach out to the NEETs.

The activities of the project should include medium-term seminars, group discussions and online learning with available tool-box. The primary group would be the NEETs who have found the job or completed the education as a result of interaction ran in the respective country. The secondary group would be the personnel working with the NEETs and the project managers who plan the activities.

The countries involved: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: MOBILE EMPLOYABILITY PACKAGE FOR THE NEETS**

The previous planning period had several examples of trans-national cooperation to foster youth employment. A big share of such projects were ran in regions of Germany and also in Brandenburg. The aim of the exchange programs was to provide the youth with the employment placement abroad and therefore to motivate the participants to enter the labour market once they have returned. An additional characteristic or element of the projects was a mentor who helped the individual to succeed with the professional duties and interaction with colleagues.

The labour market of the Baltic Sea Region is heterogeneous in means of acquiring specific specialists but with lack of having them despite the investments in education. Therefore, *Mobile Employability Package for the NEETs* can be implemented to answer the specific shortages of the labour market supply.

Therefore, the Member State is welcomed to point out the shortage of specialists and look for a partner that can provide with the placement in order to motivate the young people to participate in the programme. The recommended activities of the project are: the establishment of a network of interested parties that unite employers and NEETs from several countries, setting-up of a mobility scheme regulations for NEETs that describe the apprenticeship and internship placements, the implementation of the course *Internship abroad* that provides the youth with the basic language skills and cultural exchange expectations, active process of acquiring the professional skills, return to the home country

and work placement with a personal mentor and set monitoring period for at least three months.

The countries involved: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4: BUSINESS PACKAGE FOR YOUTH INITIATIVES**

Several Member States of the Baltic Sea Region (e.g. Denmark, Finland and Germany) have had successful activities for unemployed young people and also NEETs that aim to motivate people to come up with a business idea and become self-employed. The set of activities *Business Package for Youth Initiatives* would be (based on previous projects): vocational courses on business and finance administration, marketing, individual mentoring on the business idea, business administration and official requirements that must be fulfilled when having the self-employment status, group work among the NEETs on the prospective business plans, professional recommendations from people in finance and business, and business angels for further development of the products or services.

Considering the EU effort to support social entrepreneurship in every field of interaction and regardless of people's age, gender and abilities, the financial contribution of the *Business Package* should be aimed at the promotion of social business.

The countries involved: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

The follow-up activities of the recommendations would contribute greatly to decrease the number of the NEETs and early school leavers in the region, but even more importantly, the actions taken-up by the Member States would be of strategic importance at the EU level.



## Appendix 1. The Summary of Projects and Initiatives

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### ESF FUNDED PROJECTS FOR THE NEETS

The appendix presents information about the projects funded by the European Social Fund and other EU funding that aim to help the youth who have neither employment nor education and training to increase their employability. Projects are selected according to such criteria:

- Target group – NEETs, the youth without a job, and the youth who have not completed their education;
- Area – the Baltic Sea Region and other areas where there was a partnership with a Member State from the BSR;
- Funding – activities funded by the European Social Fund or other EU financial means;
- Activities – aimed to increase employability (both social and professional skills) and help to complete education.

Therefore, the appendix has an overview information about the projects (activity wise, reaching out to NEETs or unemployed youth) funded by the European Social Fund or other EU funding in the Member State of the Baltic Sea Region. The overview provides information every single project's activities, results, target group and funding that have been implemented until 2014 and started in 2013 (latest), with some exceptions of projects that have ended in 2012 because of their long-term impact and suitability to the criteria. The appendix does not reflect on projects that were initiated by the European Commission's Youth Employment Guarantee.

The analysis has proven that very few countries had special measures to tackle NEETs as a specific target group. Another aspect that must be taken into account is that very few countries had transnational cooperation projects that were funded by the ESF. Though, the overview gives a very good information of the competences within the BSR countries to work with NEETs and to enhance their employability.

#### CASE STUDY: DENMARK

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, schools are exposed for not being able to deal 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 people<sup>15</sup>.

To raise the level of education and to enhance youth employability, a project *Youth in Growth* (table 1. Project *Youth in Growth*) was implemented in 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 out-reached to the youth who have no employment nor education or training in the period 2007-2013.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Youth in Growth</b>
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	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. A crucial key of the success of the project was the establishment of social networks within and among the teams (carried out by coordinators).
Funding	European Social Fund
Area	Denmark
General information	Two types of courses were offered during the project. A short course lasting eight weeks allowed the 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.  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 the young people a sense of belonging and taught them how to cope in social situations.

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 have been funded by the government and the European Social Fund as they are measures for enhanced lifelong learning process.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission. *Peer Review on Early School Leaving, 15 March 2013, Brussels. Draft Report. 2013, P.16*

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Retention Caravan</b>
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 a support to vocational schools and had 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 the young people with their learning.</p> <p>As a part of the offer available to 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*.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>We Need all Youngsters</b>
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	<p><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.</p> <p>A team of so-called 'parent role models' was also created to share experiences among parents.</p>

Table 3. Project *We need All Youngsters*

A project *Hold On Tight Caravan* was ran 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*).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Hold On Tight Caravan</b>
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.
Results	Overall school and training drop-out rates fell from 20% to fewer 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 too early to leave with useful qualifications. This is true for both first- and second-generation immigrants, and is particularly so in vocational education where the drop-out rate can reach up to 60%.</p> <p>In response, the <i>Hold On Tight Caravan</i> project provides 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 ensures a coordinated approach to each young person at risk at the grass-root level in schools.</p>

Table 4. Project *Hold On Tight Caravan*

Though, 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 education<sup>16</sup>. The system has been up and running since 2004. The 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 whole<sup>17</sup>. The Youth Guidance Centres are financed by municipalities. Approximately 82 million EUR per year is spent on youth guidance<sup>18</sup>.

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 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, and individual and group guidance sessions. These activities take place in the students' schools. The regional guidance

<sup>16</sup> 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)

<sup>17</sup> 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](http://www.europa.eu/ European Platform for Investing in Children/ Practices that Work/ Practice User Registry/ Youth Guidance Centres)

<sup>18</sup> European Commission. *Peer Review on Early School Leaving, 15 March 2013, Brussels. Draft Report. 2013, P.26.*



centres cooperate with the youth educational institutions in general and especially regarding young people with an extended need for guidance.

A project *Training for all, Phase 1 UTA1* is worth to mention in the concept of opening doors for youth to enter into the labour market (table 5. Project *Training for all, Phase 1 UTA1*).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Training for all, Phase 1 UTA1</b>
Target group	VET students, pupils, VET institutions, NEETs
Activities	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 had been to achieve the government's objective that 95% of those in any particular school grade had 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 set to continue. The group of young people (15-24) who were not in education system had 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 received training after leaving school.  The project had many sub-projects operating in various fields and levels (including 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 one 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 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 unemployment<sup>19</sup>. 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 origins from the national funding.

<sup>19</sup> European Commission. *Peer Review on Early School Leaving, 15 March 2013, Brussels. Draft Report. 2013, P.28.*

## CASES STUDY: ESTONIA

Estonia has implemented several projects in 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 Fund<sup>20</sup>. NEETs were not the primary target group within these projects but they benefit indirectly of projects' results.

One of specially designed programs to prevent early school leaving from VET was KUTSE or otherwise called as *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 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 set-back of reaching the quantitative results to fill the financed positions for studies and the fact that the drop-out process was still on-going, 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 the higher education institution. One such initiative is programme *Primus* that is supported by the ESF. The aim of the programme (implemented in 2008-2015) is to support the improvement of higher education institutions' graduates' professional competitiveness. To implement the programme, 22 higher education institutions, the Federation of Estonian Student Unions and Estonian Information Technology Foundation are 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 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;

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<sup>20</sup> Sihtasutus Innove. *Projects Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)*. Website: [www.innove.ee](http://www.innove.ee) /Homepage / Organization / International Cooperation / Projects Funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

6. Training of adjusting 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 Archimedes Foundation. The ESF programme Primus had 21 partners (19 universities, *Federation of Estonian student unions* and *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 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<sup>21</sup>.

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

1. The support for beginning learners:
  - introductory course "Studying in higher education",
  - freshmens' weeks, introductory seminars,
  - guidebooks, handbook "The Smarter Study Skills Companion". The handbook has such chapters: *A toolkit for understanding what 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 future*<sup>22</sup>.
2. Development of academic and career counselling in HE:
  - in-service training,
  - new academic and career counsellors,
  - cooperation with secondary education and regional counselling services.
3. Support services for students with special needs:
  - scholarships for students with special needs,
  - development of support services in HEIs,
  - physical accessibility of learning environment.

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<sup>21</sup> Noorma, M., Ruul, K. *EFS Program Primus for Higher Education Quality Enhancement in Estonia*.

<sup>22</sup> Kasealk, M. *Career services in Estonia (HE)*. 2013.

Another tool for students to ease the entrance into the labour market was the creation of the Studentweb [www.tudengiveeb.ee](http://www.tudengiveeb.ee) (Table 6. Initiative for students to ease the entrances into the labour market).

<b>Title of the initiative</b>	<b>Creation of the <i>Studentweb</i> <a href="http://www.tudengiveeb.ee">www.tudengiveeb.ee</a></b>
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.
Results	Created software tool for Estonian student and employer information portal <a href="http://www.tudengiveeb.ee">www.tudengiveeb.ee</a> . 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 into the labour market?
Funding	European Social Fund
Area	Estonia
General information	The activity was initiated by nine universities and is the opportunity for students to apply for the jobs and internships, to order delivery to one's e-mail of job and intern-ship 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](http://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 and implement the ESF conditions in the area of human resources' development, the foundation Innove was set 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 the youth. One of their tools is the national LLG website (Rajaleidja) that provides information for career and other resources. It has separate sections for the youth, adults and also professionals.

Another form of provision 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 is supervised by the *Innove*. These centres are available for customers under the age of 26. In 2013, the youth centres faced a problem at local/ regional level that there was not a clear distinction between services provided by the PES offices and the youth centres<sup>23</sup>.

Estonia implemented a 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

<sup>23</sup> Vuorinen R., Borbély-Pecze, T. B. *Review of the Concept of Career Services 2013-2020 in Estonia*. 2012. P.6.

unemployment for young people in 2011-2012. The aim of the project was to help the youth to find a job by providing them a tailor-made support to advance their integration into the labour market. The project had put a special focus to those young people who have not registered at the public employment service and therefore have 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 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 the 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<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> 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.



## CASE STUDY: FINLAND

Finland has had several projects funded by the ESF to help the unemployed youth or the 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. There have been implemented two projects in the region of North Karelia. The project *Open College* was targeted for 15-24 year olds who have no job 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*).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Open Vocational College and Counselling and Guidance Centre (Open College)</b>
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	1250 participants took part in the project. There are over 30 One-stop Guidance Centers in Finland that have already started their action or action is starting during 2015; to prevent early school drop-outs there is Open College network and national co-operation; 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
General information	The study program was based on individual, functional and alternative studies, <i>learning-by-doing</i> method, individual length and content (also short-term study periods) of studies.  The college did not stop student enrolment at any time. The cooperation among the college and guidance centre helped students to develop realistic personal study plans for future learning.

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

The second project ran in North Karelia focused on young people between age 15 and 24 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*).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Youth Support Project in North Karelia</b>
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	About 40 % of those who finished the project enrolled in vocational education or other training. A further 40 % went on to work, participate in a workshop or an on-the-job training, take maternity leave or enter military service.
Funding	European Social Fund (Youth guarantee initiative)

Area	Finland
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.

#### 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 job in 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 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.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Petra – Youth to Work and Education</b>
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	Overall amount of customers since 2010: 3800 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 got guidance in life management.
Funding	European Social Fund
Area	Finland
General information	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. The 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.

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 one-self in the labour market. The initiative of One-stop guidance centre has become a national one with a strong network and as such will be supported until 2020.



## CASE STUDY: GERMANY

The information about the case of Germany is presented regarding four regions: Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein.

In particular, region Brandenburg has actively ran activities for the unemployed youth and especially for the youth with a migrant background. As in the case of the project *Lotsendienst for Migrants* (table 10. Project *Lotsendienst for Migrants*) many projects took a business approach in Germany and in particular, in the form of self-employment. The youth were motivated and helped to come up with business ideas. The business ideas also received seed-money grants to actually start-up.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Lotsendienst for Migrants</b>
Target group	Migrants, including the youth
Activities	Individual coaching for immigrants who were interested in starting their business; participation in a session at an Assessment Center; the business idea was discussed in a group of a maximum of 12 people and their suitability as a person looking to go into business was established. After that the AC Lotsendienst and the applicant decided whether to proceed to undertake a qualifying consultation. From then, the potential business start-up candidates worked on a business plan with the advisors. The business start-up candidates were supported by business start-up pilots during the first year of self-employment.
Results	432 migrants had established a wide range of businesses in the State of Brandenburg. 83% of the businesses established between 2010 and 2014 were still operating on 31.12.2014. Since March 2004, Lotsendienst had advised around 1 400 persons who were interested in setting up their own businesses. 735 of these were prepared via individual coaching for starting their business.
Funding	ESF
Area	Brandenburg, Germany
General information	The project is a stable cornerstone of work of Lostensdienst in Brandenburg. The activities that were implemented during the project, are still active for those migrants who want to set-up a business in Brandenburg.

Table 10. Project *Lotsendienst for Migrants*

A project with a similar business approach project *Startbahn: Business Start-Up* (table 11. Project *Startbahn: Business Start-Up*). The project offered professional help for unemployed people to develop and implement a business plan. And it also followed the approach that the suitable measure is getting a self-employment status. The project took place in Schleswig-Holstein and the target audience were unemployed people in general (not youth specifically).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Startbahn: Business Start-Up</b>
Target group	Unemployed people, including youth
Activities	Consultations, expert support, three-week foundation camp, individual discussions, development of business plans and evaluations, feasibility study for business ideas carried out by experts.



Results	Founders of Startbahn created nearly 2,500 jobs for themselves and for others. A total of 4000 people undertook training in business and commerce via the start-up seminars.
Funding	ESF
Area	Schleswig-Holstein, Germany
General information	The project Startbahn which was promoted by the ESF has helped to ensure that everything goes smoothly with the initial business idea right from the beginning. It is expected that Startbahn will continue the activities until 2016.

Table 11. Project *Startbahn: Business Start-Up*

Another project that had a business approach was *Zukunft Lausitz – die Gründerwerkstatt* (table 12. *Project Zukunft Lausitz – die Gründerwerkstatt*). The project targeted unemployed young people with a special attention on women. The project also offered vocational training, coaching, support for setting-up a company and the *seed-money*.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Zukunft Lausitz – die Gründerwerkstatt</b>
Target group	Unemployed young people
Activities	Coaching, vocational training course, setting-up a business incubator “Future Lausitz”, individual counselling and educational support, access to microfinance, mutual exchange with problems, workshops.
Results	In the first two years (2010-2012) of the project, already 150 women and men were supported. 68 companies have been established in such diverse sectors as event management, occupational therapy or motorcycle repair.
Funding	ESF
Area	Brandenburg, Hamburg
General information	Self-employment as a mean to overcome unemployment with a business setting was the core aim of the project.

Table 12. *Project Zukunft Lausitz – die Gründerwerkstatt*

Though, as the greatest success of the ESF funded projects is seen in the *Youth Employment Agency (Jugendberufsagentur)* (table 13. *Project Youth Employment Agency (Jugendberufsagentur)*). The “model of youth well-being when entering the employment sphere” was introduced in Hamburg by the project and now it has spread out also to other regions. The project provided the youth with a “employment-safety-net”, which meant that a youngster entered one building and was offered a welfare, individual development and employment services to equip oneself with help of mentors and coaches for getting a job and staying employed.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Youth Employment Agency (Jugendberufsagentur)</b>
Target group	NEETs, especially unemployed youth under age 25
Activities	Paid apprenticeships (up to three years and combined time at school and at the company), job coaching, career counselling, and social support, voluntary 900 hours of German language class (up to level B1).
Results	About 350 counsellors were available and 14,300 young people made use of the measures between October 2012 and September 2013. A total of 8,446 persons applied for a dual apprenticeship, and 84% of them

	received assured access to training, employment, secondary school or introductory training due to the help of the agency.
Funding	National, social contributions, the ESF, the YEI, other EU funding
Area	Youth centres in 147 locations in Germany, and the number is increasing
General information	The agencies aim for the professional and social integration of young people for the need of support, through the collaboration of three main institutions: Employment Agency, Job Centre and the Youth Welfare Services. Concrete measures were coordinated by the local stakeholders. The advantage with the organisational form was first and foremost shorter handling processes for the individual youth and the officials. It cut waiting lines for new meetings, extensive paperwork, unnecessary phone calls and referral procedures. Instead, it improves the communication and cooperation between officials that were working with the same youth. The Youth Employment Agency also cooperated with other actors in its network such as NGO's, schools, team searching for the youth in their neighbourhood knocking on the doors or meeting them on the streets, etc. in order to find all youngsters that need help and offer the adequate support.

Table 13. Project *Youth Employment Agency (Jugendberufsagentur)*

A rather specific approach was taken in a project *Heavy Metal – Our future in the Metal Trade* (table 14. Project *Heavy Metal – Our Future in the Metal Trade*). The project had activities in several regions in Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen, Berlin-Brandenburg, Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein and Rheinland-Pfalz) and had activities in a specific industrial area – metalworking. The project was designed for young migrants who have no job and who are motivated to get into the labour market.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Heavy Metal – Our Future in the Metal Trade</b>
Target group	Young migrants
Activities	Local recruitment campaigns, a two-day training about the the project, a two-year vocational training, career guidance, career plan, workshops and brain-storming, discussions, coaching, multipliers of the project.
Results	51 volunteers have become career's advisors and a further 16 young entrepreneurs have been trained, more than 700 multipliers via this and ca. 1000 young people reached.
Funding	ESF, Federal Metal Association
Area	Nordrhein-Westfalen, Berlin-Brandenburg, Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein and Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany
General information	The specific objective of the project was the sustainable intercultural opening of the metal craft. This should help the restructuring of the local career guidance, in particular by raising awareness and training of volunteer members of the guilds of metal craft to be reached on the so-called career guidance officers and their support for their recruitment. Another objective for the target group of the young immigrants, women and practically gifted was the demonstration of the career opportunities in the metal crafts, and obtaining them for training in metal crafting.

Table 14. Project *Heavy Metal – Our Future in the Metal Trade*



Germany was one of the few countries in the BSR that implemented transnational cooperation projects with other EU Member States and other countries to decrease the youth (in specific groups) unemployment. The projects were funded by the ESF and continued until 2013.

Germany set a good example for the “marketers’ strategy” when certain people reached-out to the unemployed youth and the NEETs, or those who are at the risk of early school leaving. The marketers in this case were parents (table 15. Project *Parents on Site (Eltern vor Ort)*). They served as examples to other families and presented the view that they can inspire their own children and persuade to complete the education.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Parents on Site (Eltern vor Ort)</b>
Target group	Parents, especially of migrant origin
Activities	Training of moderators (parents), parent meetings
Results	Over 1500 parents attended parent meetings or obtained counselling. About 40 active parents took the qualification as parent moderators.
Funding	ESF
Area	Hamburg, Germany
General information	The project aimed to advise parents on education and occupational affairs as they have a great impact on youth decision-making in their future life. In 2012, "Parents on site" won the prestigious Hidden Movers award in the category language support and in 2013 the project was recognised as "education idea".

Table 15. Project *Parents on Site (Eltern vor Ort)*

Land Brandenburg has implemented not only projects to motivate and train the unemployed youth but also to ease the entry into the labour market for university graduates (Table 16. Project *Time of Entry (Einstiegszeit)*). The project worked not only with graduates and companies that could employ them, but also with small and medium size companies to help them to become more attractive to the future employees.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Time of Entry (Einstiegszeit)</b>
Target group	Graduate youth
Activities	Consultations, moderation process between graduates and companies about the professional needs and possibilities, development of flexible work schedules for small and medium companies, balancing between career and family.
Results	Around 45% of the young people who were in the programme were women. From the total of 2 231 placements made until 2012, 75% were for fulltime positions and the remaining 25% were part-time. Over half of the workers placed in part-time jobs were able to work towards further qualifications in their remaining time. Until 2013, 75% of the hired workers had received permanent contracts upon programme completion and 95% continued to work for the companies they were placed in.
Funding	ESF
Area	Brandenburg, Germany
General information	The project focused on university graduates who found it hard to find a job. The project helped to keep young people in Brandenburg and assisted

	companies in securing their needs for skilled employees. It was achieved through the help for the entry into a job and also with a support during the first six months of activity in the company.
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Table 16. Project *Time of Entry (Einstiegszeit)*

A project that dealt with a target group that is hard to reach – young people who have not completed their education, who have low social skills and who have no employment – was *Come In* (Table 17. Project *Come In*). The project was very much focused on individuals' particular needs and it offered a wide range of support and counselling. Much can be learned from the project *Come In* as it reached-out for those people who have been out from the reach of government institutions and has great results of integration in the labour market. The project is also important as it has several partners abroad and particularly from the BSR (with the exception of France).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Come In</b>
Target group	Unemployed people under age of 26 who have problems to integrate into the labour market due to poor performance at school, family problems, drug abuse, debt, a police record or even a lack of social skills.
Activities	Trainings in small working groups on professional, employability (e.g. job application training, basic competencies, German and math, general education, computing or sports) and social skills; consulting and coaching; psychological counselling; counselling on how to cope with everyday issues; help in finding a job or internship placement; monitoring of the participant after initiative's completion and also "post-care"
Results	Until 31.12.2014. (on-going project until 2016) 1 836 young people were mobilized and integrated into the project. Participants participated in activities that were organized by four different centres in Hamburg. 914 participants were taken care of until the end of 2014. After the completion of the program, participants took following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% had a job contract,</li> <li>• 25% participated in vocational training,</li> <li>• 8% continued or took a school or further education,</li> <li>• 14% were further politically assisted measures for the job market,</li> <li>• 4% other.</li> </ul>
Funding	ESF
Area	Hamburg, Germany
General information	The project's mission was to lead young people into vocational training or a job at the end of the support phase and finally open up new vistas for the participants, who generally attend the initiative for around six months. The project implementators worked in close cooperation with partners: UNGA IN (Stockholm, Sweden), Jobready (Göteborg, Sweden), KOMBACK (Vetlanda, Sweden), Youth Power (Visby, Sweden), Direction Future (Dalarna, Sweden), Light my Power (Lubuskie, Poland), Medborgarskolan (Region Väst, Sweden), Association ROUDEL (France).

Table 17. Project *Come In*

Another project tackling the youth unemployment was *PACE-Mobil* (table 18. Project *PACE-Mobil*). The specific difference with the *PACE-Mobil* project is its focus on reaching out for the



unemployed people in various regions and also the focus on involving unemployed people in voluntary work and community service.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>PACE-Mobil</b>
Target group	Young unemployed people
Activities	Job centers, municipalities, NGOs and youth organizations, as well as education and training institutions worked together to provide predominantly three types of voluntary support to young people – outreach work, supporting young people during important meetings (e.g. court hearings and credit advisement) and placing young people into internships and community service.  The counsellors worked from a small bus (VW-Bus) to reach different parts of the region. There are two different teams of mobile counsellors.
Funding	National, social contributions and ESF
Area	Hannover, Germany
General information	The PACE-Mobil project brought together several partners to offer mobile counselling to young job seekers or young unemployed people in the Hannover region.

Table 18. Project *PACE-Mobil*

Several transnational projects were implemented in Germany to combat youth unemployment until 2013. Although the projects did not take place in the respective regions (Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein) they do serve as great examples for possible cross-border cooperation. The project *IdA-Göttingen – “The challenge abroad”* (see the table below) gave the unemployed youth training opportunities in Germany and internship placements abroad in Malta, France and Spain. The core of the activities was a six-weeks stay abroad with practical internships and professional language training. Before leaving Germany, each participant attended a 6-8 weeks seminar that intended to prepare for life and work abroad. The seminar covered topics like language training, instructions on cultural and geographical details as well as information on professional and daily life abroad were the subjects of the preparation course. Back in Germany, a follow-up course was organised where all experience and knowledge that was gained abroad was systematically evaluated and used to form the basis for further job planning.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>IdA-Göttingen – “The challenge abroad”</b>
Target group	NEETs
Activities	Working visits, individually tailored internships (6 weeks up to 6 months), language classes, intensive personal preparation.
Results	Following the project, more than two-thirds of teenagers had started training (educational, professional, university), taken up a regular job or moved into further qualification measures. There was also a high proportion of young people with an immigrant background, and particularly young women, who could have been reached through the project so far (41% of participants).
Funding	ESF
Area	Germany, Malta, France and Spain

General information	"The challenge abroad" was a part of the federal ESF program IdA - Integration through exchange. The program aimed to increase the training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged young people and people with disabilities with the help of working visits abroad.
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Table 19. Project *IdA-Göttingen - „The challenge abroad“*

Another abroad placement for unemployed youth was organized by the *Gesellschaft für Berufsförderung und Ausbildung mbH*. The project's *IdA - Move and Work* (table 20. Project *IdA - Move and Work*) preparation phase took place in Germany for four months and it included: language courses and intercultural training, learning about country-specific affairs, career orientation, key competencies, CV and job application training, and theatre workshops. The second phase was the placement abroad that took place for two months in total. Within those two months the participants were provided with language courses, internships in businesses, participation in workshops and clubs, cultural and free-time activities. The last phase of the project happened in Germany and it took four months to run the follow-up activities, which were as follows: review of the stay abroad, job application activities and qualification, possible internships and work, training or school placement.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>IdA - Move and Work</b>
Target group	Disadvantaged young unemployed people, disabled people, students of special schools or vocational colleges, unemployed youth.
Activities	Work visits abroad, intensive preparatory phase, language classes, tailored and individual internship for 16 weeks in combination of working visits and succinct occupational qualifications for 6 weeks, professional exam, working groups, individual counselling.
Results	More than 70% of participants were integrated into the labour market or enrolled in the formal education.
Funding	ESF
Area	Germany, Turkey and the UK
General information	Project „Move and work“ was a part of the federal ESF program IdA - Integration through exchange. Through working visits abroad, the program aimed to increase the training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged young people and people with disabilities. The Münster project involved close cooperation with partners in the UK and Turkey. The phase abroad was followed by intensive aftercare and placement based on the improved or newly acquired skills.

Table 20. Project *IdA - Move and Work*

Germany (in case of Hamburg, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein) implemented several projects focusing on helping people to get employment via developing business plans and becoming self-employed. The very positive aspect of Germany's approach is that while the participant received information and developed practical skills for setting-up a company, it was possible to receive grants for starting the business and also continuous coaching and mentoring support. Another common trait for the ESF projects ran in Germany, is the very practical aspect of giving opportunities for youth to develop skills that are needed for employment in combination with personal development activities ran by specialists. Thus, there were projects that provided youth with apprenticeship, education, coaching, mentoring and also counselling.



## CASE STUDY: 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.

A project that aimed to re-integrate 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 for four months) or are handicapped, or their maternity or paternity leave has ended. A person could have applied for a nine month paid employment placement (with a salary 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.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Workplace for Youth</b>
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: 1056; number of employees who participated in the project: 527. Until 2013, more than 80% of participants were employed after the project was completed.
Funding	ESF
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 project's *Development and Implementation of Support Program for Disadvantaged Youth* (see the table below) aim 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.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Development and Implementation of Support program for Disadvantaged Youth</b>
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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 program (consists of six parts: support for positive behaviour, socio-emotional education, method "Peer learning to promote literacy", parental competence development of students an 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 program, website for information exchange among specialists and as a publicity source for the project.
Results	Prepared 11 vocational education programs, eight manuals, collection of scientific articles "Support for inclusive education", one professional aptitude program, developed and validated seven professional oriented educational programs in schools, developed six primary career tests, developed six virtual games and five interactive games, created TV program cycle "School and I" with 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	ESF
Area	Latvia
General information	The project developed and implemented inter-institutional cooperation models in all 15 municipalities as a result the 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 receiving structured information on nature of the problem-solving process set enabled educational institutions the problem-solving process to get 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. One of such aimed to reduce the risk of early school leaving and to support pupils and teaching staff, and ease the entrance 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 support of many partners, both public institutions and local municipalities, and non-governmental organizations. The activities were mainly focused to improve the work of teaching staff and the quality of learning equipment.

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





<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Training of Unemployed and Job Seekers in Latvia</b>
Target group	Jobseekers, 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	ESF
Area	Latvia
General information	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 has been achieved based on the principle 'Money follows the trainee'. Free choice of the training establishment was offered to facilitate training quality and ownership of results, say the project's coordinators.

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 not 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 (in means of scholarships).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Promotion of Primary Vocational Education Attraction</b>
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	ESF
Area	Latvia
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 of such activities was an 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 with the higher education.



In 2014, 276 associations and foundations had created 747 jobs and employed 866 young people<sup>25</sup>.

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. Though, there were national projects that provided youth with motivational approaches to enrol in vocational education and to become more employable but the projects did not reach out for those youngsters who are out of education and employment systems. It is worth to point out a unique project that was run by University of Latvia and involved many stakeholders *Development and implementation of 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.

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<sup>25</sup> 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/](http://www.es.gov.lv/) Sākulapa / Iekšējais tirgus un uzņēmējdarbība / 866 jaunieši bezdarbnieki iegūst darba pieredzi, ar NVA atbalstu veicot darbu sabiedrības labā. 05.11.2014.

## CASE STUDY: LITHUANIA

Lithuania has had a rather unique approach in the context of the Baltic Sea Region for tackling the 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 the 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 Program had nine projects which began in 2013. The projects focused on declining the number of early school leavers and unemployed youth. The goal of activities was to promote the 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 projects were youth with basic, secondary, vocational, post-secondary or higher education and not attending any formal education programs, and those who are 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 1000 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 the youth centres.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Volunteers for the Safety of People</b>
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 a part in the training courses and 1000 young people performed volunteering practices in police activities.
Funding	ESF, national funding and private funding
Area	Lithuania

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

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



<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Volunteering – a First Step towards a Successful Career</b>
Target group	Young people of 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 <i>Good Internship for Volunteers</i> 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; 2. Announcements of volunteering places in organizations; 3. Typical plans of 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 had 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 2000.
Funding	ESF
Area	Lithuania
General information	The aim of the project was to increase young people's socialization and the diversity of employment forms and to promote the integration of the 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 effectively to 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.  After the completion of all the activities, every volunteer was given a certificate to proof their activities and gained skills

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 Lithuanian Labour Exchange (a national public employment service) started a national project *Trust Yourself* (see the table below). The activities embedded in the project were the ones typical for active labour measures but the new aspect of the project was the multi-level governance and the wide network of partners that had brought unique



knowledge on how to foster youth employability. The project is also going to be implemented in the new programming period.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Trust Yourself</b>
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 are provided to reach-out for young people who have left school but 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 for the active 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 the 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 1480 participants should successfully complete the program, at least 518 individuals should be offered to participate in the active labour market policy measures.
Funding	ESF
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: 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) and social and professional skills development in voluntary work (at least 200 hours). The description of the projects give the impression that the activities were designed for active and motivated NEETs who have trust for the national employment service and other institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Lithuania has implemented projects that have had a wide range of the 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.



## CASE STUDY: POLAND

Social inclusion has been one of the main approaches for ensuring employability of Polish youth, especially of 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 for Polish projects on 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.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Innovations 15, Testing and Implementation of New Methods of Early Social Intervention and Preventing Social Exclusion of the Youth above 15 Years Old</b>
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</i> , <i>Life is Business</i> and <i>E-Horizons</i> , consultations and individual coaching, competence 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 <i>Best Practices for advisory services and education, and local co-operation for 15+</i> , 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	ESF, 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 of 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 counseling solutions and solutions for local cooperation in scope of early social intervention and prevention of social exclusion for the youth above 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 above 15 Years Old***

Another project that aimed to strengthen and to 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 they would have to employ after leaving the



institution. The project also had a 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 entrance 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).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>A Bridge to the Future, The MOST Program</b>
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 here-and-now attitude. Its main aim was to drive Centre's students' attention on continuing education or taking up work after leaving <i>The Sociotherapy Center</i>. The training was an essential part of preventing from 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 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 get an 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 wouldn't be possible without effective information exchange between the schools and the employers.</p>
Results	The pupils learnt to use the basic technology in a specific profession, handling tools, devices and machines in a given profession, and also learnt to distinguish 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	ESF
Area	Ustka, Poland
General information	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. Firstly, <i>The Life Alternatives Training</i> aimed to drive students' attention at continuing education or taking up work after leaving <i>The Sociotherapy Center</i> . Secondly, <i>The Vocational Training Programme</i> 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 competences and many of them managed to establish successful and creative relationships with employers and colleagues.

	The project was implemented in partnership with the Chamber of Craft and Entrepreneurship Central Pomerania in Slupsk.
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Table 28. Project *A Bridge to the Future, The MOST Program*

A 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.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Second Chance School</b>
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 for one's needs and abilities.
Results	66% of the participants complete the <i>Second Chance School</i> and of those 45% are found actively working.
Funding	ESF
Area	Gdansk, Poland
General information	The leader of the project is a private organization <i>CARITAS Archdiocese Gdańsk</i> with partners the <i>Municipality of Sopot</i> and <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 Gdansk is focused on developing unemployed youth's employability. The traditional model of the *Second Chance School* has a strong focus on early school leaving preventative measures and also re-integration in the education system after one has left it. Generally, the *Second Chance School* project was designed and proposed by the European Commission already 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 qualification<sup>26</sup>. A report *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe – Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education* conducted for the European Commission in 2013 stressed the importance of the collaboration among countries to implement the model of the *Second Chance Schools* and it came up with a 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”<sup>27</sup>.*

<sup>26</sup> Office of Economic Cooperation for Mediterranean and Middle East. *Second Chance School*. Source: [www.ocemo.org/ About us/ Our Members](http://www.ocemo.org/About%20us/Our%20Members)

<sup>27</sup> Day, L., Mozuraityte, N., Redgrave, K., McCoshan, A. *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe – Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education*. 2013. P.9.



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 projects<sup>28</sup>.

Therefore there is a good platform of knowledge, expertise and skills for the model the *Second Chance School* 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 an award *Best Human Capital Investment 2014* 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 the 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 agenda<sup>29</sup>.

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

<b>Title of the initiative</b>	<b><i>Voluntary Labour Corps</i></b>
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	ESF
Area	Poland
General information	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

<sup>28</sup> Day, L., Mozuraityte, N., Redgrave, K., McCoshan, A. *Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe – Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education*. 2013. P.51-52.

<sup>29</sup> ESS V NOVICAH. *Wielkopolska vocational education programme picks up award*. 2015. Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=67&langId=sl&newsId=8590>

	<p>exclusion, as well as tasks related to education and upbringing. The VLC structures consists 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>
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Table 30. Initiative *Voluntary Labour Corps*

The ESF funded activities in Poland have had a focus on the development and efficiency of the institutional systems and their workers, working with the well-being of the youth in the education and the 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 the foster-care to succeed their social inclusion after leaving the institutionalized foster-care or foster family. Although, these projects had the main focus at the social aspect of one’s personal development, the external evaluations point out that the activities have had an impact on the youth social skills in achieving employment.



## CASE STUDY: SWEDEN

Sweden implemented several projects that targeted the 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 national scale (*Unga In* and *Plug In*) and two regional ones (*Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors* and *Youth Into Work – W18-24*).

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Unga In</b>
Target group	NEETs, aged 16-24
Activities	Information campaign for youth, creation of “ambassador” network of teachers and social welfare officers, counselling, employment services, psychologist services, young marketers (young people with the background of similar environment as the target audience) from the employment service, social workers.  The ambassadors informed, educated and supported marginalised young people and created a personal contact to get them involved.
Results	At the end of the project, 1,008 young people participated in <i>Unga In</i> , 571 of them completed it of which 23% continued working and 35% entered education system.  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.
Funding	Regional, ESF
Area	Sweden
General information	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 for a holistic, inclusive approach with individual participants (i.e. where their entire life circumstances were considered), which in 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, Malmoe, Skellefteå and Gävle.

Table 31. Project *Unga In*

The project *Plug In* is a very special project as it involves many partners in 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*. As of implementation the project at the regional level, the case of the *Plug In Västerbotten* 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 has provided with very good results: the students' presence has increased in the participating secondary schools, and the students' school performance has also improved. The activities included motivational coaching and tailoring of teaching methods to make it easier for students to reach the learning targets.

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

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Plug In</b>
<b>Target group</b>	Early school leavers, aged 16-20
<b>Activities</b>	Development of a guidebook <i>Turning Absence into Presence</i> , development of a web platform <i>Pluginnovation</i> , conferences, coaching and support, study support for pupils, vocational guidance, workshops, regional activities.
Results	Summarized information about the results is not available.
Funding	ESF
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 <i>Pluginnovation</i> platform where research, intervention methods, statistics and innovations related to the issue of school drop-outs were gathered.</p> <p>The core part of <i>Plug In</i> was consisted of more than 100 initiatives or projects that were developed and implemented at the local, municipal or school level.</p> <p>The guidebook and web platform included actions for interventions, research, statistics and innovation. The <i>Pluginnovation</i> 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.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Coaching Project in Sandviken-Hofors</b>
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	ESF
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*

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

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Youth into Work – W18-24</b>
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 program" for young people in every municipality (training, networking events and support in the run of the program), developed and implemented "a door" (coordination within the municipality regarding young unemployed) or "A common input", (co-ordination 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 participants (in total there were 2 875 participants) study or work after participation in the project's activities.
Funding	ESF
Area	Dalarna, Sweden
General information	15 municipalities of Dalarna region in Sweden cooperated to ease the entrance into the labour market for youth who encountered a problem of getting an employment. The cooperation lasted for four years among 15 municipalities and local branches of the public employment service.

Table 34. Project *Youth into 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 quitted the 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 got an 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, enrolment in adult education, internship acquirement and completion of school. An additional feature of the continuing operations was the collaboration at the national and the transnational level.

Sweden has had several initiatives and projects to decrease the 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 for the public employment service. Even more, Sweden had few but large-scale and multi-governance projects that worked with preventative and re-integration measures for early school leavers in the field of education, in

particular. 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 at large scale and involved many partners from various governance levels. Though, the hardship was the measurement of the effect of the projects' 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 the consideration as best-case samples for addressing the needs of the NEETs.



## TRANSNATIONAL INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS WITHOUT THE ESF FUNDING

The chapter illustrates information about the projects that are not funded by the European Social Fund but aim to work specifically with the NEETs' issues and that have carried out activities in close cooperation with one or more Member States of the Baltic Sea Region in between 2013-2014.

The scope of the projects and initiatives described below has a common trait – they seek for the methods how the NEETs are recognized and reached. The projects are designed to have activities for the NEETs and specialists who work with youth.

The *Lifelong Learning Programme* is one that has supported the most of the projects that work with the NEET related issues in the EU, also including the Baltic Sea Region. The second program that has supported many projects is Erasmus+. The projects are transnational and reach from one region to another, e.g. from the Baltic Sea Region to the Mediterranean region.

The information about every project is written in a separate table and it indicates the title of the project; target group; activities; results; source of funding; territory of action and general information. Sources of the funding are grouped and coloured. The digest of the initiatives is about the following EU funding programmes:

- Lifelong Learning Programme;
- Leonardo Da Vinci;
- **7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development;**
- Erasmus+.

Countries of the BSR are **bolded**.

Sweden and Denmark have been very active partners to work with the NEETs issues within the framework of most of the EU programmes. The activities of the projects were exchanges, study visits, and networking activities, also studies and reporting. The chapter has information about six projects:

1. *NET not NEET* with partners from Denmark and Sweden;
2. *SET4Work* with partners from Germany (Dresden) and Lithuania;
3. *Preventing Dropout* with partners from the Oresund Region (linking Denmark and Sweden);
4. *CHARISM – Case Management for Unemployed Youth* with a partner in Hamburg, Germany;
5. *RESL.eu* with partners in Stockholm, Sweden and Warsaw, Poland;
6. *ET-NEETs - Effective Training for NEETs* with a partner in Poland.

The chapter also introduces with four initiatives that are ran by or supported by the SALTO-YOUTH network working with European priority areas within the youth field and especially with the focus on NEETs issues (a strategic approach for the period 2014-2016).

The two countries that have implemented a considerable number of projects from the EU sources mentioned above are Spain and the UK. The projects have had two main focuses: 1) the identification of the NEET, 2) activities for NEETs to ease their social inclusion and integration into the labour market.

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>NET not NEET</b>
Target group	NEETs, young unemployed people
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Peer Reviews and Study Visits to Aarhus, Denmark and Stockholm, Sweden.</li> <li>• Need analysis' reports about the situation in Spain, Ireland, Italy, Romania and Turkey.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five <i>Laboratories of Dialogue</i> in Spain, Ireland, Italy, Romania and Turkey (every country had three events).</li> <li>• Final European Conference in Brussels to discuss the results of the project. We will involve private and public stakeholders as well as selected experts and policy makers.</li> </ul>
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three study visits involving partner organizations and external participants from different EU countries.</li> <li>• Training and information sessions for VET&amp;PA actors in order to provide operational guidance to implement the project results and discuss their usability and transferability. This enabled them to plan and implement an action plan on NEET in their local context.</li> <li>• A Toolkit for local administrations to provide practical information and guidance on planning and implementing a plan of action focused on NEETs through VET, welfare system and Employment centers and services in specific contexts.</li> </ul>
Funding	Lifelong Learning Programme
Area	<b>Denmark (Aarhus)</b> , Ireland, Italy, Romania and the institutional partner <b>Sweden (City of Stockholm)</b>
General information	The overall objective of NNN was to implement local and European networks, composed of VET&PA actors, supporting and strengthening their services, methodologies and tools and offer them new strategies to contrast the NEET phenomenon at European and local level.

Table 35. Project *NET not NEET*

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>SET4Work</b>
Target group	Trainers of young unemployed people
Results	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New approaches, behavioural changes towards employment within the main target group – unemployed people with difficulties were introduced and adapted. The course enabled these persons to access (further) vocational education, training and/or the first labour market.</li> <li>2. Including e-learning helped to reach people who live in small cities and rural regions as well. It brought the VET institutions closer to the usage of new media in their learning settings.</li> <li>3. The course had an influence on the trainers and VET stakeholders concerning their attitude and resources to focus and support this target group in the right way.</li> <li>4. To understand and support the implementation of ECVET, the transparency concerning learning outcomes, the quality of VET, the quantity of ECVET-partnerships, with an aim to improve opportunities for work throughout Europe.</li> </ol>
Funding	Lifelong Learning Programme
Area	<b>Germany</b> (Dresden), Italy, <b>Lithuania</b> , Slovakia and the UK
General information	<p>The project recognised that people who felt that learning has left them behind could learn and became valuable community members. The project aimed to bring together -in one package- three key learning tools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An innovative Training for Trainers course that invites trainers to re-consider how they viewed and prepared their audience;</li> </ol>



	<p>2. A set of informal and non-formal Learning Sessions that assisted and motivated learners into a learning environment;</p> <p>3. A business start-up course based on social enterprise values. A model that put people and community before profit.</p> <p>The learning tools were adapted to the local needs of the partner organisations and their clients in five participating countries, then tested in a classroom and e-Learning facility. The products were developed to the formal accreditation based on ECVET principles.</p>
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Table 36. Project *SET4Work*

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Preventing Dropout</b>
Target group	Teachers
Activities	Learning circles, teacher exchanges and seminars, sub-projects for pupils to develop and test methods for increased penetration
Funding	Capital Region of Denmark and <a href="#">Interreg IV</a>
Area	<b>Oresund Region (linking Denmark and Sweden)</b>
General information	The project involved 12 upper secondary schools from Oresund Region (linking Denmark and Sweden). The objective was to establish an integrated collaboration between upper secondary schools, counsellors and researchers in Sweden and Denmark in order to develop and share knowledge. Through research groups, exchange of staff and seminar the project aimed at improving a support for young persons to make them choose the right educational level or to complete the level they had already started.

Table 37. Project *Preventing Dropout*

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>CHARISM – Case Management for Unemployed Youth</b>
Target group	Youth, unemployed youth, disadvantaged youth
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charism handbook <i>Paths to Successful Integration of Young People into the Labour Market. A Handbook for Practitioners</i></li> <li>• National reports about implementation of Charism concept in Austria, Germany, Greece, Slovenia and Spain.</li> <li>• National reports about implementation of EQAVET, EQARF and ECVET in Austria, Germany, Greece, Slovenia and Spain.</li> <li>• National reports on Training CHARISM Case Manager in Austria, Germany, Greece, Slovenia and Spain.</li> <li>• "CHARISM Passport", an instrument to make visible formal and informal competences of unemployed youth.</li> </ul>
Funding	<a href="#">Leonardo Da Vinci</a>
Area	Austria, <b>Germany (Hamburg)</b> , Greece, Slovenia and Spain
General information	The core of the CHARISM-project was the idea to support the enduring employability of participating youth. The CHARISM aimed to elaborate individual strengths of the youth and therefore gave them a lasting set of tools securing their employability. Furthermore, it was the explicit goal of

	<p>CHARISM to create awareness amongst participating youth about their personal responsibility for their occupational advancement in terms of a basic understanding of competitiveness. The main goal of the project was to secure lasting employability of its participants by elaborating their individual strengths.</p> <p>The CHARISM Case management "is a guidance procedure for unemployed people where the "manager" focussed individually on the unemployed person and worked with a holistic approach, taking into account any aspect that could empower the unemployed person."</p>
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Table. 38. Project *CHARISM – Case Management for Unemployed Youth*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>ET-NEETs - Effective Training for NEETs</b>
Target group	<p>Group A: organizations that are directly related to the level of NEETs procedures and management-driven support, local governments and related departments of social services, large foundations etc.</p> <p>Group B: NGOs, charities, small and medium-sized enterprises, training institutions, teachers and trainers who provide specialized training on behalf of the group A.</p> <p>Group C: NEETs - people outside employment, education or training, are the main beneficiaries of the project ET-NEETs.</p>
Activities	<p>The development of a common framework for identifying indicators to measure the effective training. You will now be possible to provide educational institutions with instruments to measure the impact and effectiveness of the training they provide.</p> <p>Creating an online platform, which will include a "best practice" in relation to training programs for NEET at the European level.</p> <p>Develop training materials for teachers and trainers working with NEETs.</p>
Funding	<a href="#">Erasmus+</a>
Area	France, <b>Poland (Rzeszow)</b> , Spain, the UK
General information	<p>ET-NEETs project is a response to the lack of systemic mechanism for the exchange of good practices in support of people known as NEETs. Following the recommendations of the European Commission partnership in this project would also help NEETs in raising the eight key competences.</p> <p>The main objective of the ET-NEETs is to provide innovative support, guidance and providing a significant impact on the quality of training offered by the teachers and educators of young people in difficulty.</p>

Table 39. *ET-NEETs - Effective Training for NEETs*

<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>RESL.eu</b>
Target group	Early school leavers
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To design common EU definitions and concepts on early school leaving and conduct comparative policy analyses;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To collect data on youngsters, families, schools and particular research areas across partner countries in Europe;</li> <li>• To identify characteristics of youth at risk of ESL as well as protective factors (such as social support mechanisms, resiliency and agency of pupils, etc.) which may encourage potential ESL pupils to gain qualifications via alternative learning arenas;</li> <li>• To examine ESL prevention in schools and ESL remediation through alternative learning arenas in seven EU member states in order to let good practices inform the EU policy-makers on early school leaving.</li> </ul>
Funding	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7)</b>
Area	Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Netherlands, <b>Poland, University of Warsaw, Faculty of Education</b> , Portugal, Spain, <b>Sweden, Stockholm University</b> , the UK.
General information	The RESL.eu project presented a comprehensive, intersectional and gender sensitive approach of the issue of Early School Leaving (ESL) in Europe aiming at in-depth analyses of existing data and the collection of new empirical data in order to innovate educational systems at the European, national and regional level.

Table. 40. Project *RESL.eu*

As noted before, there are several initiatives and projects beyond the Baltic Sea Region that explore the early school leaving and the youth unemployment issues. For example, a Spanish, a Portuguese, an Italian and a Czech local authority partner unite to explore the causes of early school leaving in their regions, and to develop new solutions to address it. They involve the secondary schools in their respective regions, as well as two teacher education institutions. The cooperation is one of the strategic partnership project within the Erasmus+ program.

Within the last few years several stakeholders have been very active to raise awareness, advocate and act on the needs of the NEETs and their active inclusion in the social and professional life. This chapter contains information about initiatives that have been active in the Baltic Sea Region from 2014. The initiatives are: transnational networks, international conferences and get-together-meetings to create a space for exchange on the measures for helping the NEETs. The activities mentioned in the chapter are specifically designed to tackle the issues of the NEETs and they take place or are organized by one of the Member State of the Baltic Sea Region.

One of the best organized set of activities with the focus on NEETs in the European Union in the last years is carried out by the SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion Resource Centre. The Centre has adopted a longer-term strategic approach to address European issues in the field of the youth inclusion and specifically, for the period 2014-2016 they focus on young people in NEET situation. In 2014, the Centre focused on the accumulation of the existing knowledge and experience and in 2015 the Centre organizes seminars, conferences, partnerships, publications, tools, etc. for youth workers, as well as NA Inclusion officers. Established in 2000, SALTO is a network of eight Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. As part of the European Commission's Training Strategy, SALTO-YOUTH provides non-formal learning resources for youth workers and youth leaders and organises training and contact-making activities to support organisations and National



Agencies within the frame of the European Commission's Erasmus+ :Youth in Action programme and beyond<sup>30</sup>.

The activities that have happened already and are going to happen in 2015:

- *iNEETiative Seminar - A Holistic Approach to Youth at Risk and in NEET situations*: creating bridges and sustainable cooperation between professionals from different sectors working with young people in NEET situation and creating better opportunities for this vulnerable group on their pathway to reintegration in society and the labour market. The seminar was held in May in Romania;
- *Inclusion Colleague Support Group "Reaching out to youth at risk and NEET"*. The national Inclusion officers explored the possibilities on how to make a better use of the Erasmus+ : Youth in Action programme in addressing the issues of the NEETs. The activity took place in Estonia, in June;
- *Project Factory* is a training course on growing cross-sectorial projects for youth at risk and NEET. For 25 participants: representatives of youth, educational, social & business sector. The event will take place in Greece, in October;
- In October a report should be published that focuses on the youth work and services in order to analyse the challenges faced by the NEETs<sup>31</sup>.

Several of the SALTO-YOUTH activities have taken a place and will take a place in the Baltic Sea Region. One of the first activities was a seminar *What Is Your NEET?* The seminar took place in Finland in October 2014 (see the table below).

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Seminar <i>What Is Your NEET?</i></b>
Target group	Professionals from different sectors (youth workers, teachers, social workers, researchers, employers, local authorities, employment agencies)
Activities	Seminar
Results	The seminar had discussions about topics like the terminology and definitions of the term <i>NEET</i> , issues and reasons of the emergence of the NEETs (statistics and the importance of the issue at the EU agenda), and the holistic approach to help the NEETs (good practices and funding opportunities).
Funding	SALTO Inclusion, NA Finland, NA Malta the UK and Estonian National Agencies for the Youth in Action programme <a href="#">Erasmus+</a>
Area	Belgium, Cyprus, <b>Estonia</b> , <b>Finland</b> , France, <b>Germany</b> , Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, <b>Latvia</b> , <b>Lithuania</b> , Malta, the Netherlands, <b>Poland</b> , Romania, Spain, <b>Sweden</b> , Turkey and the UK
General information	"What Is Your NEET?" was a seminar which was the first step of inventory of the existing approaches and practices to tackle the issues of the NEETs, and will lead to research into this matter in 2015, (with a publication based on the findings), which will form the basis for further activities.

Table. 41. Seminar *What Is Your NEET?*

<sup>30</sup> SALTO-YOUTH. *SALTO: Why? What? Where? When? Who?* Source: [www.salto-youth.net/](http://www.salto-youth.net/) About SALTO.

<sup>31</sup> SALTO-YOUTH. *SALTO Inclusion Activities in 2015*. Source: [www.salto-youth.net/](http://www.salto-youth.net/) Resource centers/ Inclusion/ About the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre/ SALTO Inclusion Activities in 2015.

The follow-up activity took place in Latvia in December 2014. It was a partnership-building activity “Do You Neetwork?” The activity took place in Latvia, the representatives from the other BSR Member States were not present but one of the co-organizers was the Estonian National Agency.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Partnership-building activity “Do You Neetwork?”</b>
Target group	Youth workers, project managers, EVS mentors/tutors
Activities	Five-day training course
Results	<p>The topics of the training were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synchronisation of the knowledge and understanding of the EVS as a learning process and the target group’s needs;</li> <li>● Understanding of the benefits of the long-term holistic approach to support learning pathways of the target group and to identify EVS as an important and beneficial part of it;</li> <li>● Understanding regarding the role of organizations in the learning pathways of the young people, including the needs that can be covered by EVS;</li> <li>● Identification of organizations’ needs in order to include EVS as a part of learning pathways of young people to the full potential of the programme;</li> <li>● Understanding the quality of inclusion EVS – including quality of partnerships and holistic approach;</li> <li>● Building the network-type of cooperation and thinking of future activities for partnership development.</li> </ul>
Funding	<a href="#">Erasmus+</a>
Area	Austria, Belgium - FL, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, <b>Latvia</b> , Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, Western Balkans
General information	The activity brought together organizations working with EVS projects and/or NEETs to explore the possibilities for cooperation to provide EVS as a quality pathway for NEET to education, employment or training. Activity focused on setting up networks of interest and cooperation for practitioners working with EVS and/or NEET on both national and international levels.

Table. 42. Seminar *Partnership-building activity “Do You Neetwork?”*

An activity that was supported by the SALTO-YOUTH was *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Eastern Partnership Youth Forum* (See more information in the table below). The Youth Forum was organized in the framework of Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 'Contacts between people' in February 2015.

One of the forum’s thematic workshops was *The contribution of youth policy to foster young people’s employment/employability*. As a result, one of the recommendations proposed by the delegates of the Forum was:

*Governments are invited to ensure that decision-makers include broader youth involvement in policy making, especially related to young people "Not in Education, Employment or*



*Training" (NEETs) and Youth Guarantee related measures, and policy implementation, involving young people with fewer opportunities<sup>32</sup>.*

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>The 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum</b>
Target group	Youth organisations, youth workers, researches, ministerial representatives, representatives of business field, representatives of formal education
Activities	Three-day forum, workshops
Results	<p>Thematic workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential of mobility programmes to enhance young people's employability;</li> <li>• The role of youth work in fostering skills and competences required by the employment sector;</li> <li>• Easing the transition of young people from education to the labour market;</li> <li>• Alternative job opportunities for young people and empowering young people to become entrepreneurs;</li> <li>• The contribution of youth policy to foster young people's employment/employability;</li> <li>• Further developing cross-sectorial cooperation in the field of youth for the employment/employability of young people.</li> </ul>
Funding	<a href="#">Erasmus+</a> and multiple other sources
Area	Eastern Partnership countries and most of the Erasmus+ Programme countries
General information	<p>The Forum brought together more than 250 participants from over 30 different countries. These included all the Eastern Partnership countries and representatives from most of the Erasmus+ Programme countries. The participants were made up of major relevant sectors, including young people, youth workers and representatives of the labour market, formal education and research, Ministries, the European Commission and other international institutions.</p> <p>The main aim of the Forum was to foster greater cooperation between the countries of the Eastern Partnership and the Erasmus+ Programme Countries.</p> <p>The Forum provided space to discuss and recommend steps to be taken as regards young people's employability/employment, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people's mobility and programmes supported e.g. by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations;</li> <li>• Cross-sectorial cooperation in the field of youth;</li> <li>• Exchange of good practices (innovative ideas);</li> <li>• Youth policy development.</li> </ul>

Table. 43. Initiative *The 2nd Eastern Partnership Youth Forum*

<sup>32</sup> Eastern Partnership Youth Forum. *Recommendations*. Source: [www.youthforum2015.eu](http://www.youthforum2015.eu) / At a glance/ Results



Hence, the SALTO-YOUTH network has accumulated reasonable knowledge and resources on how to address the NEETs issues by listening at the youth, unemployed youth and youth workers.

Another initiative is the *SOS Network* (more information below in the table). SOS stands for the *Social inclusion of Students with special needs into mainstream vocational education and training and world of work*. The initiator of the project is Green Academy, south of Aarhus in Denmark. They have been the scientific coordinators on the project. Central Denmark EU Office, a Danish body located in Brussels, have been coordinating the project. The project responds to the problems of the early school leaving and thus helps to ensure a good transition from education to the labour market. The project's team have collected cases of interesting practices from classrooms in schools and training centres, from work places, counselling agencies and other learning environments and made them available through the SOS-portal [www.sosnetwork.eu](http://www.sosnetwork.eu). The project's team invite organizations, other projects, schools and educational institutions, employment centres and others in Europe and all over the world to get involved and benefit from exchanging knowledge and experience in tackling early school leaving and transition from education to the labour market. So far, the initiative has 12 partners from 12 countries of which five are in the Baltic Sea Region. The partners are:

1. Danish School of Education at Aarhus university, Denmark
2. JAMK University of Applied Science, Finland,
3. the *Association of European Social Work, Training and Education*, Hennef, Germany,
4. Wroclaw Education Concept, Poland,
5. Folkuniversitetet, Sweden,
6. City College Norwich, the UK,
7. CSCS, Italy,
8. CECE, Spain,
9. Queraum, Austria,
10. EUROED ASSOCIATION, Romania,
11. Ballymun Job Centre, Ireland,
12. ADPIOS, France<sup>33</sup>.

The operation of the SOS network started in 2011 as a project supported by the *Lifelong Learning Programme* but they have kept their independent work after the completion of the project.

Subject	SOS Network
Target group	Early school leavers, young job-seekers, teachers, researchers
Activities	<p>Provide knowledge regarding students with special educational needs and social disadvantages, including knowledge of their specific skills, potentials and strengths;</p> <p>Provide access to approaches, methods and tools that are proven effective and successful in a number of European countries and which are easily and directly applicable in daily teaching and learning all over Europe;</p>

<sup>33</sup> European Network of Inclusive Education and Disability. *SOS Network - Social inclusion of SEN-Students into mainstream VET and world of work*. Source: [www.includ-ed.eu](http://www.includ-ed.eu) / Good practices & testimonials.

	<p>Provide cooperation platform to those working with respective issues for exchange of experiences and knowledge;</p> <p>Provide a better understanding of the world of work- its demands, requirements and attitudes.</p>
Funding	<b>Lifelong Learning Programme</b>
Area	<b>Denmark (Copenhagen and Aarhus), Finland (Jyväskylä), France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland (Wroclaw) Romania, Spain, Sweden (Lund), the UK</b>
General information	<p>SOS Network aims to contribute to social inclusion of young people with special educational needs and social disadvantages into mainstream VET, labour market and society. It intends to develop and introduce new concepts for approaching the issue of social inclusion and to provide teachers, trainers and others working with these young people in learning or job-related activities with adequate, well-proven and relevant methods and tools easily applicable in daily life.</p> <p>The network takes holistic approach that underlines a need for looking at early school leaving in a context which involves different parties in addition to the VET system. Thus, the objectives of the SOS Network are: to reduce early school leaving and to foster the transition from education and training to the labour market.</p>

Table. 44. Initiative *SOS Network*

To sum up, the Member States of the Baltic Sea Region provide a vivid platform for the exchange of knowledge and practice to address the NEETs from various perspectives: implementation of the EU legislative norms in fields of education, employment and social affairs, implementation of the national youth policy and policies regarding youth education, social inclusion and employment.





## Appendix 2. The Digest of the ESF Funded Projects for the NEETs in 2014-2020

**Country: DENMARK**

**Project title: The Folk High School as a Shortcut to Education**

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public association
<b>Number of partners</b>	2
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	Public association
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	The project aims to help vulnerable young people acquire sufficient personal and vocational skills to complete an upper secondary education.
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	Region of North Denmark
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	1000 NEETs
<b>Secondary target group</b>	Staff at the folk high schools
<b>Budget</b>	Approx. 865.000 EUR
<b>Funding</b>	National public funding 55%, ESF 39%, municipal subsidy 6%
<b>Duration of the project</b>	1 January 2015 - 31 December 2017
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	234 NEET's participate in a 20 week course at a folk high school
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Establishment of project organization, competence development of staff at the two folk high schools, bridge building to upper secondary schools
<b>Qualitative results</b>	Social inclusion, positive learning experiences, active and responsible citizens
<b>Quantitative results</b>	219 of the target group will be in education upon participation
<b>Impact of activities</b>	Reduction of the number of NEETs, increase in persons with upper secondary education, reduction of youth unemployment
<b>Sustainability of results in the respective country</b>	Sustainability is expected because of high local/regional commitment and high results, enabling the folk high schools to continue similar activities on their own account after closing the project.
<b>The international scope of the activities</b>	Not applicable

Risks	
Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)	Low
Human resources and contractors	Low
Time frame	Low
Political visibility and stakeholder involvement	Medium
Technological risks	Low
Strategical risks (including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR)	Not foreseen
<b>Added value of the cooperation in the BSR</b>	
Expertise to spill over/ share with other MS	The ability of folk high schools to address NEET's problems.
Experience to be gained from other MS	
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes but not directly
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	Yes, they are a possible target group. But target groups are generally not defined in the Danish ESF program.
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	
Sources for more information on the web	<a href="http://www.vraahojkole.dk">http://www.vraahojkole.dk</a>

**Project title:** The Folk High School as a Shortcut to Education

No.	Activity	Time frame
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		Jul-Sept 2015	Oct-Dec 2015	Jan-Mar 2016	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sept 2016	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan- Mar 2017	Apr- Jun 2017	Jul- Sept 2017	Oct- Dec 2017
1	Establishing project organization										
2	Competence development of staff	x	x	x							
3	NEET's participation in education, motivation, guidance, follow-up activities	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
4	Bridge-building, traineeships	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
5	Research	x									



**Country:** ESTONIA

**Project title:** Involvement of Young People in Risk of Exclusion and Improving the Employability of Youth (Tõrjutusriskis noorte kaasamine ja noorte tööhõivevalmiduse parandamine)

Project management	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public: Eesti Noorsootöö Keskus - Estonian Youth Work Centre
<b>Number of partners</b>	1
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	Private: Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations, NENO (NGO)
General information of the project	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	The share of NEETs in the 15–29 age group was 15.3% in 2012. Young people who have neither work experience nor a qualification are more vulnerable when entering the labour market and may remain inactive for many years. In 2011, one in six children lived in relative poverty and one in eleven children lived in absolute poverty or experienced deep material deprivation in Estonia. Although the situation has improved, the economic status and social exclusion have a negative effect on children's and young people's development opportunities (incl. health). Limited or absent social awareness, activity and peers in the region, and limited development opportunities increase the risk of exclusion, which can be manifested in risk behaviour and low competitiveness. The impact of poverty and other inequalities can be reduced and the risk of exclusion can be prevented with the help of youth work. Reaching the relevant risk and target groups through consistent youth work and early detection of problems will directly affect young people's attitudes and behaviour, improve their social skills and reduce the likelihood of misbehaviour and victimisation.
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	Estonia
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	Young people (aged 7-26), incl. NEET's
<b>Secondary target group</b>	Youth workers, youth work institutions, other organizations and NGOs
<b>Budget</b>	Project: 10,46 ml EUR; 3,1 ml EUR dedicated directly to activities for NEETs.
<b>Funding</b>	ESF, national budget
<b>Duration of the project</b>	Project: 01.01.2015. - 31.12.2018
Activities and expected results	

<b>Primary activities</b>	Reduction of the impact of unequal conditions on the development opportunities of young people, and prevention of their exclusion; supporting young people in entering into the labour market. Improving access to the youth work services. Taylor-made support programmes for young people not in education, employment or training. As a result of interventions, young people will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for employment through non-formal education and information activities. The social inclusion of young people at risk of exclusion will increase and NEETs will be reintegrated in education or enter the labour market.
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Increasing knowledge of the impact of young people and youth activities, guidance for mapping the NEETs
<b>Qualitative results</b>	Increased individual human capital; decrease of youth unemployment in the local area, decrease of absence from school
<b>Quantitative results</b>	Output indicator: 8 600 NEET's will take part in the measures by 2018 (15 000 NEET's whole measure by 2020).
<b>Impact of activities</b>	Decreasing number of youth unemployment. As a result of interventions, young people will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for employment through non-formal education and information activities. The social inclusion of young people at risk of exclusion will increase and NEETs will be reintegrated in education or enter the labour market. Result indicators of the project: Proportion of those young participants benefitting from the measure who have completed the planned activities for the target group is 89% by 2023. Proportion of NEETs (aged 15–26) participating in support measures who are no longer classified as NEET 6 months after leaving the activities is 50% by 2023.
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	Low risk: administration and budgeting; medium risk: partnerships
<b>Human resources and contractors</b>	Low risk: human resources; medium risk: contractors (due to high administrative costs for partners who are subjects of public tenders)
<b>Time frame</b>	Medium risk: due to deadlines
<b>Political visibility and stakeholder involvement</b>	Low risk: for not having political visibility and of stakeholder involvement because of the high commitment to tackle the issues related NEETs
<b>Technological risks</b>	Not foreseen

<b>Strategical risks (including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR)</b>	Not foreseen
<b>Other</b>	Not foreseen
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	
<b>Sources for more information on the web</b>	<a href="https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth">https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth</a>



**Country:** FINLAND  
**Project title:** Meeting Site (Kohtaamo)

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public
<b>Number of partners</b>	Many partners, appr. more than 100
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	Mostly public, private ones e.g. NGO's involved also
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	To refine and an easy-access to counselling and guidance service for employment, education and rehabilitation for young people under 30 (One-Stop Guidance Service). To develop the web-based portal for information, guidance and counselling. The principal to develop the web-based guidance service and Ohjaamo service is that they should support each other's activities.
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	Finland
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	None
<b>Primary target group</b>	All One-Stop Guidance Centres (appr. 30) and via their actions young people under 30 years in Finland
<b>Secondary target group</b>	All professionals working with the primary (Centre) target group and youth
<b>Budget</b>	4 ml EUR
<b>Funding</b>	ESF
<b>Duration of the project</b>	36 months, 1.8.2014 - 31.7.2017
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	Coordination of One-Stop Guidance Centres, refining the service-model, developing the web-based portal for information, guidance and counselling.
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Research and evaluation, counselling, communication, branding seminars, trainings, publications.
<b>Qualitative results</b>	The service model in O-S-G Centres supports the well-being and employment opportunities of young people, the On-Stop Guidance Centre service-model is widely known among young and young adults.
<b>Quantitative results</b>	Permanent existence of around 30 One-Stop Guidance Centres in Finland.
<b>Impact of activities</b>	Decreasing number of youth unemployment and decreasing number of the NEETs.
<b>Sustainability of results in the respective country</b>	High political commitment by the local councils to carry on permanent activities when the project is completed.

<b>The international scope of the activities</b>	Benchmarking similar activities and development in other European countries
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	Low risk: administration; medium risk: partnerships
<b>Human resources and contractors</b>	Medium risk: human resources
<b>Time frame</b>	Medium risk due to the bureaucratic procedures in the country and large amount of stakeholders. Also the time frame is short to ensure the national/local commitment for permanent activities.
<b>Political visibility and stakeholder involvement</b>	High risk for having limited budget assignments. High risk for ministries having differences in their strategical approaches
<b>Technological risks</b>	High risk for too large or complicated web-based platform
<b>Strategical risks (including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR)</b>	High risk for having limited budget assignments; High risk for ministries having differences in their strategical approaches
<b>Other</b>	Low risk for missing the young target groups opinions in the planning of services
<b>Added value of the cooperation in the BSR</b>	
<b>Expertise to spill over/ share with other MS</b>	Sharing expertise and knowledge about the service model
<b>Experience to be gained from other MS</b>	Sharing expertise and knowledge about a similar type of the service model to be used to solve NEETs needs
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	YES, not as primary but tertiary
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	Not especially, but all minorities including immigrants are involved
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	



**Additional information**

The Meeting Site Project is a coordination project for One-Stop Guidance Centres (Ohjaamo) in Finland. There are around 30 One-Stop Guidance Centre projects in Finland and 20 of them are partly financed by ESF for the period 2015-2018. Most One-Stop Guidance Centre projects operate in biggest towns but there are also regional service concepts. The total ESF-funding for these OSGC-projects is not known yet. All these activities are part of implementation of the *National Youth Guarantee in Finland* and the Finnish Operational Programme *Sustainable growth and jobs 2014-2020 – Finland's structural funds programme*.



**Country:** GERMANY  
**Project title:** Youth Active Plus

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Private: Lawaetz-Foundation
<b>Number of partners</b>	12 partners and the Lawaetz-Foundation as the leading organisation of the project
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	12 partners from private youth help organisations
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	Social stabilisation of the target group and integration into jobs, training or education
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	City of Hamburg
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	1 368 NEETs
<b>Secondary target group</b>	Cooperation within the districts with the different institutions and legal systems especially with the youth employment agency and youth help organisations in every district of Hamburg. The youth employment agency is now an important interface to the project
<b>Budget</b>	6 232 143 EUR
<b>Funding</b>	ESF (36,7 %), national budget from the City of Hamburg
<b>Duration of the project</b>	36 months
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	The target group of the project is young people between 18 and 25 years old without any job prospects, with many social problems or / and whose social benefits are cut. The interventions are tailor-made and we have a look on the person holistically and provide respective activities: consultations and individual coaching, competence measurement, psychological counselling / cooperation with psychologists, and control of debt. Participants are offered to become employed and partners of the project look for an internship offers.
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Working and cooperation at the local level to reach the target group and to find solutions within the neighbourhood together with the different institutions. Hence, the cooperation at the regional level among various institutions have a high importance.



<b>Qualitative results</b>	Using the individual human resources and help them to find out their wishes and prospects. To develop together with the clients their individual ideas that address the client's needs.
<b>Quantitative results</b>	In 2014, 666 participants took part in the project of which 133 were still in coaching and advice, 533 of them finished the project in 2014; 22 (4,1 %) participants had finished the coaching process but didn't reach the aims of the process; 113 abandon the project; altogether 398 (75 %) participants were activated: 106 (27 %) of target group are employed; 68 (17 %) are looking for a job; 197 (49 %) individuals participate in school or vocational training, 27 (7 %) were in qualification.
<b>Impact of activities</b>	Decreasing the number unemployed youth and increasing the social stability of the young people.
<b>Sustainability of results in the respective country</b>	High political commitment of the local council to carry on activities after the finish of the project.
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	Low risk: administration and budgeting; medium risk: partnerships
<b>Human resources and contractors</b>	Low risk: human resources; high risk: contractors due to the end of the project in 2016 and where we have perhaps to participate the next tender.
<b>Time frame</b>	High risk due to the next application.
<b>Political visibility and stakeholder involvement</b>	Medium risk of stakeholder involvement because of the high commitment to tackle the issues related NEETs.
<b>Technological risks</b>	Not applicable
<b>Strategical risks (including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR)</b>	Not foreseen
<b>Other</b>	
<b>Added value of the cooperation in the BSR</b>	
<b>Expertise to spill over/ share with other MS</b>	The individual approach, the easy access counselling, the job projects and the possibility for internships; the local and regional cooperation to reach the target group
<b>Experience to be gained from other MS</b>	Experience on approaching the NEETS and ideas to integrate them into the society
<b>Other related issues</b>	

<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	Yes
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	
<b>Sources for more information on the web</b>	<a href="http://www.jugendaktivplus-hamburg.de">www.jugendaktivplus-hamburg.de</a>

**Project title: Youth Active Plus**

No.	Activity	Time frame					
		Jul-Sept 2015	Oct-Dec 2015	Jan-Mar 2016	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sept 2016	Oct-Dec 2016
1	Coaching and Advice for the Target group	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Steering groups in the 7 districts	x	x	x		x	x
3	Partner Meeting with all partners		x	x	x		x
4	Conference		x			x	
5	Analysis of the database	x		x		x	x
6	Accounting			x			x
7	Audit	x			x		
8	Report						x

**Country:** LATVIA

**Project title:** 8.3.3. Special Objective "To increase inclusion of SEA non-registered NEETs and foster their inclusion in education, supported measures within the framework of Youth Guarantee, and NGOs or youth centres"

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public institution
<b>Number of partners</b>	Maximum 119
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	119 local councils
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	Youth social exclusion
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	Latvia
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	Around 50 600 NEET`s aged 15-29 years, not registered in PES
<b>Secondary target group</b>	Not applicable
<b>Budget</b>	9 ml EUR
<b>Funding</b>	ESF - 85%, national budget - 15%
<b>Duration of the project</b>	51 month
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	Non-registered in PES; NEET`s motivation, profiling, consultation/advising, development of NEET`s individual programme of support measures, career consultations. Implementation of NEET`s individual programme of support measures, including individual coaching, psychological counselling.
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Elaborated methodological guidelines for the work with NEET`s
<b>Qualitative results</b>	Promoted social inclusion of NEET`s and facilitated their involvement in education. The measures will be implemented by PES within the framework of Youth Employment Guarantee, and the activities of non-governmental organizations or youth centres.
<b>Quantitative results</b>	5262 NEET`s (non-registered in PES) will receive the support from the project; 3684 of the NEET`s who will receive the support from the project will successfully fulfil individual programme of support measures.

<b>Impact of activities</b>	Decreasing number of unemployed, uninvolved in education and inactive young people.
<b>Sustainability of results in the respective country</b>	There will be elaborated methodological guidelines for local councils to continue the work with NEET's; there are no cost allocations of national budget to carry on activities after the finish of the project.
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	Low risk: administration and budgeting; medium risk: partnerships
<b>Human resources and contractors</b>	Low risk: human resources; Medium risk: contractors
<b>Time frame</b>	Medium risk due to bureaucratic procedures in the country.
<b>Political visibility and stakeholder involvement</b>	Low risk for not having political visibility due to the fact that that implementation of the project is supervised by the youth policy maker; low risk of stakeholder involvement because of the high commitment to tackle the issues related NEETs
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	
<b>Sources for more information on the web</b>	<a href="http://www.jaunatne.gov.lv">www.jaunatne.gov.lv</a>

**8.3.3. Special Objective "To increase inclusion of SEA non-registered NEETs and foster their inclusion in education, supported measures within the framework of Youth Guarantee, and NGOs or youth centres"**

**Project title:**

No.	Activity	Time frame
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		Jul- Sept 2015	Oct- Dec 2015	Jan- Mar 2016	Apr- Jun 2016	Jul- Sept 2016	Oct- Dec 2016	Jan- Mar 2017	Apr- Jun 2017	Jul- Sept 2017	Oct- Dec 2017	Jan- Mar 2018	Apr- Jun 2018	Jul- Sept 2018	Oct- Dec 2018
1	Methodological support including elaboration of methodological guidelines for the work with NEET's and training for programme managers and mentors.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Target group's youth involvement in the project: addressing young people, young person's profiling and consulting/advising, development of a young person's individual programme of support measures or provision of career consultation to the young person of the target group.		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	Implementation of young person's individual programme of support measures.			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
4	Ensuring of project quality and supervision including exchange of experience and takeover of good practice.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

**Country:** LATVIA

**Project title:** 7.2.1.Special objective project "Implementation of Active Labour Market Policy Measures in Order to Promote Youth Employment"

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public institution (The State Employment Agency)
<b>Number of partners</b>	4
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	4 public institutions
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	Youth unemployment
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	Latvia
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	15-24 y.o. NEET's individuals, registered at PES
<b>Secondary target group</b>	25-29 y.o. NEET's individuals, registered at PES
<b>Budget</b>	33 977 162,00 EUR
<b>Funding</b>	ESF (46,19%), national budget (4,78%), youth employment initiative (45,66%), private co-funding (3,37%)
<b>Duration of the project</b>	54 months
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	Job experience and education activities, measures for business or self-employment start-ups
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Job-search assistance, career counselling, measures to increase competitiveness, regional mobility support.
<b>Qualitative results</b>	Decrease of youth unemployment in the local area and to promote transition to education
<b>Quantitative results</b>	11 226 of the target group will be employed or will go back to education system. 12 920 will take part in the active labour market policy measures (individuals participate in vocational training, at informal education programmes, 1592 – subsidized employment, 1820 will get first work experience, also 4253 in NGOs, 3242 participate in workshops).
<b>Impact of activities</b>	Decreasing number of youth unemployment
<b>Other related issues</b>	



<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No

**Project title:** 7.2.1.Special objective project "Implementation of Active Labour Market Policy Measures in Order to Promote Youth Employment"

No.	Activity	Time frame									
		Jul-Sept 2015	Oct-Dec 2015	Jan-Mar 2016	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sept 2016	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan-Mar 2017	Apr-Jun 2017	Jul-Sept 2017	Oct-Dec 2017
1	Job -search assistance	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Career counselling		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	Measures to increase competitiveness			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
4	First work experience for youth	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	Subsidised workplace for young unemployed (measure for unemployed representing disadvantaged groups)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	Development of skills for work in non-governmental sector	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7	Measures for business or self-employment start-ups	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8	Informal education programmes for the unemployed	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9	Workshops for youth	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

10	Vocational continuing education and vocational improvement education programmes for the unemployed	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
11	Promotion of regional mobility of persons employed by merchants	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
12	Methodical supervision and inspection of implementation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
13	Publicity measures of the project	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
14	Project management	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x



**Country:** LITHUANIA  
**Project title:** Discover Yourself

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public institution
<b>Number of partners</b>	68
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	Public institution
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	To reduce the number of 15-29 years old young people who are unemployed, are not studying or training.
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	Lithuania
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	35 000 young people, including 12 000 NEETs
<b>Secondary target group</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Budget</b>	33 798 580 EUR
<b>Funding</b>	EU funds 92%, Lithuanian budget 8%
<b>Duration of the project</b>	36 months
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	



<p><b>Primary activities</b></p>	<p>1.1. Social, educational, psychological and motivational services for NEETs (quant. indicator 12 000 people);  1.2. Equipment of the working place for local coordinators (quant. ind. 64 work placements);  1.3. Meetings for coordinators (quant. ind. 20 meetings);  1.4. Additional professional services for NEETs (quant. ind. 12 000 people);  1.5. The support for project partners and coordination of the services which they provide (quant. ind. 2 coordinators);  2.1. Mentoring services for volunteers (quant. ind. 20 mentors);  2.2. NEETs involvement into volunteering (quant. ind. 2 000 people);  2.3. Meetings for mentors (quant. ind. 10 meetings);  2.4. Coordination of the volunteering activities (quant. ind. 2 coordinators);  3.1. Formation of working conditions for coordinators (quant. ind. 62 coordinators);  3.2. Meetings for coordinators (quant. ind. 366 meetings);  3.3. Group meetings for jobless people 16-29 years old (quant. ind. 18 000 people);  3.4. Identification of people's working abilities, professional interests and individual traits (quant. ind. 18 000 people);  3.5. Introduction about the labour market for people who are oriented to lance work (quant. ind. 12 600 people);  3.6. Introduction about the educational system for people who are oriented to education (quant. ind. 2 700 people);  3.7. Introduction about the volunteering for persons who focus on volunteering (quant. ind. 2 700 people);  3.8. Self-assessment seminars (quant. ind. 200 seminars);  4.1. Implementation of additional skills and competences (quant. ind. 5 000 people);  4.2. Informal vocational education (quant. ind. 2 500 people).</p>
<p><b>Secondary activities</b></p>	<p>Public informing about the project: advertising campaigns (radio-TV), public events, full range of releases etc.</p>
<p><b>Impact of activities</b></p>	<p>The main expected impact of the project activities is to involve unemployed young people and increase access to labour market, educational institutions, trainings or volunteering. The project will implement early intervention and activation measures for NEET.</p>



<b>Sustainability of results in the respective country</b>	The project results should increase sustainable development on economic, environmental and social dimensions. Organisations that will participate in this project will gain more practical experience. People will gain an increase access to labour market, educational system, trainings or volunteering which possibly will have an impact on public activity growth.
<b>The international scope of the activities</b>	MS does not have any NEET suited projects that go beyond the borders of the BSR.
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	No information
<b>Human resources and contractors</b>	There is a risk of the quality of services from suppliers who have less experience and / or lack of competence. In order to ensure the acquired service quality for the project participants will have a constant communication with service providers, some service checks and project participants will fill in feedback forms. There will be some coordinators who will be responsible for monitoring activities.
<b>Time frame</b>	The fact that for majority of services there will be applied a public procurement law, there is a risk not to start the implementation of planned activities on time because of delay with purchases. To ensure the project activities start on time, the documents necessary to carry out procurements were started preparing before project tender approval. With this type of a target group of participants there is a risk of achieving the special quantitative results. In order to ensure the fulfilment of the project results potential project participants and current participants will be regularly consulted, informed about the proposed activities, participation opportunities, job vacancies, further education etc.
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No

***Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?***

No



**Country:** SWEDEN  
**Project title:** Plug In 2.0

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public, multi-level governance with the <i>Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions</i> at the national level, regions, and public schools at the local level
<b>Number of partners</b>	6 regions
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	Public
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	To reduce the number of early school leavers
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	The regions: Västerbotten, Jämtland/Härjedalen, Östergötland, Kalmar, Göteborg and Skåne
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	Partners of the project <i>School to Work</i>
<b>Primary target group</b>	3000 drop outs or "risk drop outs" individuals
<b>Secondary target group</b>	School social workers, teachers
<b>Budget</b>	SEK 100 000 000
<b>Funding</b>	ESF, national budget
<b>Duration of the project</b>	36 months, starting 01.09.2015.
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	Approximately 70 workshops at the local level (the content is not identified yet)



<b>Qualitative results</b>	<p>Plug In 2.0 will continue to develop successful strategies in order to reduce the early school leaving in Sweden. Based on past experiences, it can be concluded that it is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the focus on gender mainstreaming;</li> <li>• Enable more municipalities to further their knowledge;</li> <li>• Through the work of the PlugInnovation improve the evaluation of results, and ensure that the work is based on scientific evidence;</li> <li>• Continuing further development and changes at the systemically level, both in Sweden and the EU.</li> </ul> <p>To succeed, Plug In 2.0 will implement a multi-level governance approach in order to enable a high quality of deliverables at the different levels.</p>
<b>Quantitative results</b>	The goal of the project is to create initiatives targeting 3 000 young women and men who do not complete the secondary school or leave it without full reviews.
<b>Sustainability of results in the respective country</b>	One goal is that after the visit of the Swedish schools financed by Plug In the schools can together begin a continued cooperation by making joint applications, for example, Erasmus +
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	The project is low risk because it is an extension of a project that lasted three years earlier
<b>Political visibility and stakeholder involvement</b>	Low risk owing to the multi-level governance
<b>Technological risks</b>	Not applicable
<b>Strategical risks (including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR)</b>	Low risk because of the multi-level governance approach
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes, but not directly



<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	Yes, as a tertiary target group
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No, but we are working actively with the target group <i>refugees</i> .

**Project title: Plug In 2.0**

No.	Activity	Time frame									
		Jul-Sept 2015	Oct-Dec 2015	Jan-Mar 2016	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sept 2016	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan-Mar 2017	Apr-Jun 2017	Jul-Sept 2017	Oct-Dec 2017
1	Schools/Students exchange to the BSR		x	x	x		x	x	x		
2	Regional project managers participations in meetings for School to Work	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	The project leader, SALAR, for both Plug In 2.0 and School to Work participate in international conferences and high level meetings to market the projects.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x



**Country:** SWEDEN  
**Project title:** Ung Framtid (YEI P03)

Project management	
Legal status of the leading implementer	Public institution
Number of partners	12
Legal status of partners	4 regions and several municipalities
General information of the project	
Issue to be solved	Aims to facilitate school-to-work-transition
Geographical area of the project	Middle Norrland, North Middle Sweden and South Sweden.
Cross-border partnerships	No cross-border partnerships
Primary target group	Unemployed youth aged 16-24, registered or not registered for the youth guarantee and without a high risk of long-term unemployment.
Budget	58 425 609 EUR
Funding	EU fund 66 %, national co-financing 33 %
Duration of the project	01.04.2015-30.06.2018
Activities and expected results	
Primary activities	<i>Arbetsförmedlingen</i> will focus on partnership with companies and organizations in order to facilitate apprenticeships and trainees on the working place. <i>Arbetsförmedlingen</i> will improve young peoples' chances in their search for jobs
Quantitative results	About 40-50 participants for each employment officer during the project and up to 26 300 participants until 2018.
Impact of activities	Decreasing the number of youth unemployment, shaping a better process of entrance into the labour market and building measures for the target group.
Risks	
Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)	Low
Human resources and contractors	Low
Time frame	Medium risk: financial resources could be delayed

<b>Political visibility and stakeholder involvement</b>	Low
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	Yes, if they are part of target group even though it is NOT considered as a special target. We do not make differences in approach.
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	
<b>Sources for more information on the web</b>	<a href="http://www.arbetsformedlingen.se/ungframtid">www.arbetsformedlingen.se/ungframtid</a>



**Country:** SWEDEN  
**Project title:** UngKOMP

<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public institutions
<b>Number of partners</b>	10 municipalities
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	Public authority
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	The purpose of UngKOMP is to expand cooperation between the PES (Public Employment Service) and municipalities and to influence each organisations' methods for working with unemployed youth. It will be achieved with multi-skilled teams from both organisations. The project should both prevent and reduce long-term unemployment within the target group. By implementing the earlier ESF project Unga in, the project UngKOMP will expand upon proven experience and will be established in 20 municipalities in the period 2015-2018. UngKOMP is also an important platform for development in the PES's overall strategy to increase the public trust about the organization and to increase its efficiency.
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	In total 20 municipalities of which 15 are new to the project's approach and the other five are: Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö, Gävle and possibly Skellefteå
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	Planned together with Poland and Germany
<b>Primary target group</b>	Young people between 16 and 24 years of age who are not studying, have not completed secondary education, are not working or in any system with the municipality or public employment agency
<b>Secondary target group</b>	Public employment service workers
<b>Funding</b>	ESF
<b>Duration of the project</b>	2015-2018
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	Holistic approach: inclusive counselling, project's multi-competent team available for the youth, workshops, training, courses.
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Improving cooperation with wide group of actors (coaches from municipalities, PES workers, psychologists, young marketers).

<b>Qualitative results</b>	Prevention and reduction of long period unemployment of young people and increase of trust between Employment Service and participants; increased efficiency with a focus on coordination, collocation and cooperation between the Employment Service and municipality.
<b>Quantitative results</b>	Of all the participants at least 60% receive employment and education when they finish their participation in the project. Those who do not leave the project for work or education, the majority being provided another adequate effort. In 2015, the project should attract 4000 participants. The participants' confidence in the Employment Service has increased, expected to generate spin-offs in other groups of young and partners and the general public. Equality between young men and women in the project has improved.
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	Low risk
<b>Human resources and contractors</b>	Low risk
<b>Time frame</b>	Low risk
<b>Political visibility and stakeholder involvement</b>	Low risk
<b>Technological risks</b>	Not applicable
<b>Strategical risks (including the commitment to reach goals of the PA in the BSR)</b>	Implementation of UngKOMP is not prioritized in municipalities and <i>Arbetsförmedlingen</i> , few resources for commitment to goals which are not prioritised by PES
<b>Added value of the cooperation in the BSR</b>	
<b>Experience to be gained from other MS</b>	Holistic approach on how to gain trust from the target group.
<b>Other information</b>	Planning is done for year 2015. No additional information is yet available for the coming years.

## Appendix 3. ESF Funded Projects for Youth Employability in 2014-2020

**Country:** LATVIA  
**Project title:** 7.2.1.SO Youth Guarantee Project “Within the Implementation of Primary Professional Education Programme Guarantees to Youth”

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public institution (The State Education Development Agency)
<b>Number of partners</b>	39
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	30 public institutions, 6 local government institutions, 2 state-owned Ltd. and 1 institution of derived public person
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	To reduce youth unemployment and to facilitate young people's integration into the labour market
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	Latvia
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	17-24 y.o. NEET`s individuals with or without pre-professional qualifications and may be registered at PES and young people aged 15 to 24 years in imprisonment.
<b>Secondary target group</b>	25-29 y.o. NEET`s individuals with or without pre-professional qualifications and may be registered at PES and young people aged 25 to 29 years in imprisonment.
<b>Budget</b>	29 421 641 EUR
<b>Funding</b>	The European Union budget for the financing of the special allocation to the Youth Employment Initiative 45,87%, ESF 46,01%, national budget 8,12%.
<b>Duration of the project</b>	51 month
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	Implementation of primary professional education programmes for acquiring 2nd and 3rd level professional qualification in 1 or 1,5 years and implementation of education programmes for improving general basic skills within the framework of professional continuing education programme and professional development programme for imprisoned persons.



<b>Secondary activities</b>	Ensuring career support activities in professional education institutions and in places of detention; Allocation and payment of monthly scholarships for students of professional education institutions in the amount of 70 to 115 EUR per month; Information and publicity for the project; Project administration.
<b>Qualitative results</b>	Decrease of youth unemployment in the local area, promote transition to education
<b>Quantitative results</b>	6500 youth, who have acquired 2nd or 3rd level professional qualification; 500 youth in places of detention, who are involved in general basic skill development, professional development or continuing education programmes
<b>Impact of activities</b>	decreasing number of youth unemployment; to extend the initial vocational education programme implementation, including the acquisition of the general basic skills, vocational training and further education students in places of imprisonment, and to ensure the necessary vocational qualifications for students to the labour market recovery, as well as to promote their competitiveness in the labour market
<b>Risks</b>	
<b>Project management (administration, budgeting, partnerships)</b>	Low risk: administration and budgeting; medium risk: partnerships
<b>Time frame</b>	Medium risk due the delay of approval of legal basis.
<b>Other related issues</b>	
<i>Is national funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is ESF funding allocated for youth policy's activities?</i>	Yes
<i>Is the target group "teachers" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<i>Is the target group "roma youth" recognized as a primary, secondary or tertiary group in projects focusing to solve NEETs issues?</i>	No
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	

**Sources for more information on  
the web**

[http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/es\\_fondu\\_projekti/jauniesu\\_garantija/](http://viaa.gov.lv/lat/es_fondu_projekti/jauniesu_garantija/)





**Project title:** 7.2.1.S0 Youth Guarantee Project „Within the Implementation of Primary Professional Education Programme Guarantees to Youth“

No.	Activity	Time frame																	
		Apr-Jun 2014	Jul-Sept 2014	Oct-Dec 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Apr-Jun 2015	Jul-Sept 2015	Oct-Dec 2015	Jan-Mar 2016	Apr-Jun 2016	Jul-Sept 2016	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan-Mar 2017	Apr-Jun 2017	Jul-Sept 2017	Oct-Dec 2017	Jan-Mar 2018	Apr-Jun 2018	Jul-Sept 2018
1	Implementation of primary professional education programmes for acquiring 2nd and 3rd level professional qualification in 1 or 1,5 years		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Implementation of education programmes for improving general basic skills within the framework of professional continuing education programme and professional development programme for imprisoned persons		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3	Ensuring career support activities in professional education institutions and in places of detention	x*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
4	Allocation and payment of monthly scholarships for students of professional education institutions in the amount of 70 to 115 EUR per month		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	Information and publicity for the project	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	Project administration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

\* Before student enrollment, project management personnel throughout the whole territory of Latvia will meet with the target group of young people and provide advice on opportunities to participate in the project (in June)

**Country:** LITHUANIA  
**Project title:** Promotion of the Partnership Between the Public and Non-governmental Sectors in the Implementation of an Integrated Youth Policy

<b>Project management</b>	
<b>Legal status of the leading implementer</b>	Public institution
<b>Number of partners</b>	8
<b>Legal status of partners</b>	Public (4 municipalities and one department of Youth Affairs)
<b>General information of the project</b>	
<b>Issue to be solved</b>	The main objective of the project is to strengthen the public sector, working in the field of youth policy and to provide a systematic overview about youth issues in the municipalities. Also to draft recommendations for improvement existing legislation, implementing the youth policy of quality assessment mechanisms.
<b>Geographical area of the project</b>	City of Vilnius, Jonava District, Kelmė District, city of Klaipėda, Lazdijai District, Skuodas District, city Šiauliai, Telšiai District
<b>Cross-border partnerships</b>	No cross-border partnerships
<b>Primary target group</b>	State and local authorities and institutions of state officers and employees working in the area of youth affairs, Youth Affairs Council members at the Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Social Security and organizations working with youth employees or members.
<b>Secondary target group</b>	All young 14-29 years old people, including NEETs.
<b>Budget</b>	944.948,70 EUR
<b>Funding</b>	ESF (85%) , national budget (15 %).
<b>Duration of the project</b>	37 months
<b>Activities and expected results</b>	
<b>Primary activities</b>	Evaluation of coordination mechanism activities between the public and the non-governmental sector, quality assessment mechanisms of the implementation of youth policy, establishment of the youth workers certification system.
<b>Secondary activities</b>	Strengthening of the capacity of people who work with youth; Youth workers evaluation and development; Coordination activities between the public and the non-governmental sector.

<b>Qualitative results</b>	Improvement of better cooperation between public and non-governmental sector working in the field of youth policy; Established youth workers certification system and trained youth workers.
<b>Quantitative results</b>	17 studies about youth cooperation and youth problematic; 17 events for cooperation between public and non-governmental sector; 1 long-term youth problems research concept; 1 established and evaluated youth workers certification system.
<b>Impact of activities</b>	Increased quality of youth policy at national and regional levels enabling non-governmental youth organizations to become partners in the public sector.
<b>Comments/ Additional information</b>	
<b>Sources for more information on the web</b>	<a href="http://www.esparama.lt/paraiska?id=3761&amp;pgsz=10">http://www.esparama.lt/paraiska?id=3761&amp;pgsz=10</a>

