



## Questionnaire Results Final analysis

Countries participating: **Bulgaria, Malta, Slovenia, Romania, Latvia, Portugal**

Number of respondents total:

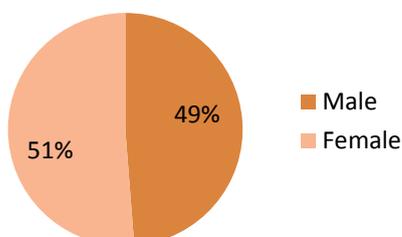
NEETs: **287 (two hundred and eighty-seven)**

YOUTH WORKERS: **121 (one hundred and twenty-one)**

This survey has been conducted among **287 NEETs** and **121 YOUTH WORKERS** from **6 countries: Bulgaria, Malta, Slovenia, Romania, Latvia and Portugal**. It aims at providing more detailed information about NEETs' background, specifics, problems and limitations, challenges and tendencies for the future. By addressing NEETs' problems the project partnership is striving:

- to **enhance the capacity of rural youth workers** to support NEETs and get them involved in local community life, the training system and/or the labour market;
- to **provide non-formal learning opportunities** for people active in youth work from rural areas;
- to **foster quality improvements** in the youth work of the participating organizations.

### Gender

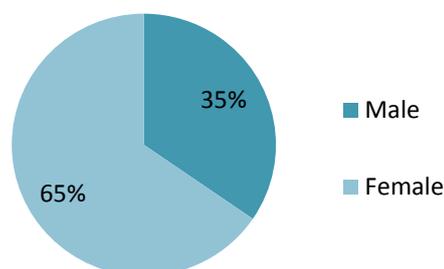


Presenting NEETs group the numbers of women and man surveyed is almost even 147 female – 51% and 140 male – that is 49%.

The participants are randomly selected without regard to gender. Therefore, these results may be a reason to believe that gender is not determinative for whether someone will drop into the NEETs group.

In the case of youth workers the number of women marks a significant predominance.

### Gender

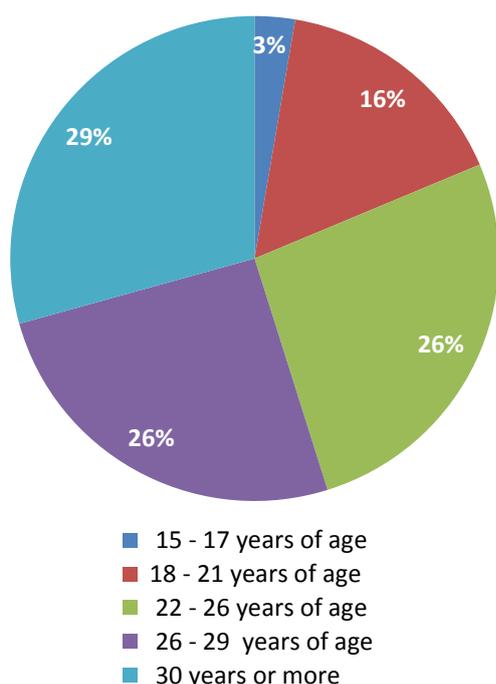


The women surveyed (79 – 65%) are almost twice as many as the men (42 – that is 35%). On this basis we can make the conclusion that women are more involved in youth work in general.

The results overviewed in this analysis are based on the participation of NEETs of 5 (five) different age groups. 3% of the people are between the age of 15-17, 16% are about 18-21 years old, 26% are at the age of 22-26. Other 26% of the respondents are in-between 26-29 years of age and most of the people are at the age

of 30 and more. These numbers indicate a serious problem in combating NEETs phenomenon in all five countries. This is such a considerable number of people at their most active working age of about 30, when they are supposed to already have respectable professional experience to rely on and to further develop.

### In which age group do you belong?



Steps forward, apart from the general measures needed, could be counselling for additional qualification and training opportunities for the acquisition of skills and knowledge for reentering the labour market, campaigns and initiatives for motivation increase, etc., all supported and facilitated by experienced youth workers.

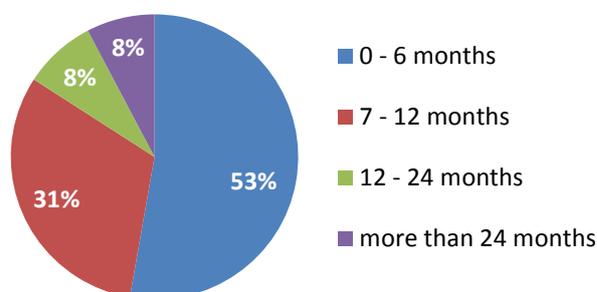
NEETs are not necessarily with a very low level of education or unqualified. More than half of the NEETs interviewed (51%) graduated secondary education. 11% had graduated higher non-university education and other 23% are university graduates. Unfortunately, yet only 3%, there are also

unemployed with post university level of education. Despite the high level of education, even they, for some reason, couldn't find their place on the labour market.

It is hard to point the level of education as determinative for unemployment in general, although, it plays a role, no doubt. But the fact that such a great number of people with a good level of education are incapable, not motivated, not interested or somehow limited to enter the labour market flashes lights for the need of immediate measures. Issues to be considered:

- work with students to combat early school dropouts;
- work with young people since very early age for career counseling, career development and opportunities after secondary education graduation;
- measures to increase motivation and promote lifelong learning among youth;
- better coordination between educational institutions and the business;
- education offered corresponding to market actual needs, etc.

### Duration of unemployment



A very big percentage of the respondents (53%) have been unemployed for less than 6 months, 32% - for a period from 6

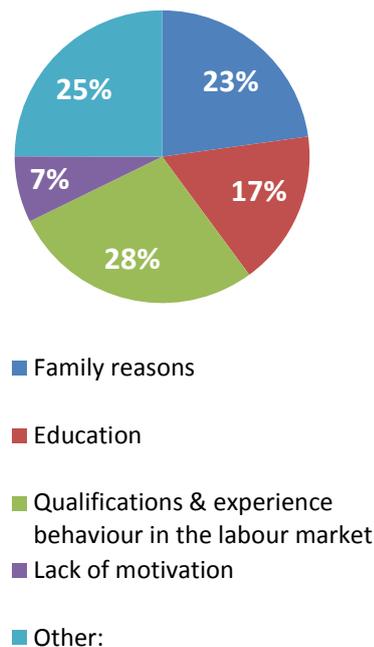
months to one year. 8% are out of the labour market for a longer period – from 12 to 24 months. The 8% left declared unemployment for a period longer than two years. The longer the period gets, the less motivated people become and the harder it is to successfully take part in the society life. The requirements become more and more sophisticated and the NEETs become less fit to the situation. So it is important to work for shortening the period of unemployment and/or using it efficiently by taking some training courses, additional qualification, voluntary work or any other form of occupation what will prevent from entirely dropping out of social life.

About 95% of the NEETs interviewed are registered in the public employment services. The percentage of course varies in the different countries but we could make a rather positive general conclusion with regard to this matter. Having these people registered is already a step ahead because they become more visible, easier to reach, contact, inform, include in different kinds of activities, initiatives, workshops, trainings, employment, etc. that can help them take their place in the society.

There is a considerable number of young people, who are unemployed, not studying, not involved in any form of activity and unfortunately not registered anywhere. The big aim is to manage to identify this group of youth, to start working with them and for them. In many cases they don't even realize that being stuck out of any form of life activity may become a real problem. The moment after graduation is the breaking point that can

change everything. The role of youth workers right before this stage – from early school years – is very important. Students need to be well informed of the different ways they can follow after graduation.

### What are the main reasons you are not in employment?



One of NEETs' biggest problems is believed to be the mismatch between youth expectations related to job, career, incomes and opportunities and what can they actually do to meet the market needs and requirements. In many cases young people find convenient excuses for their unemployment (in this survey presented by part of 25% of the respondents) such as: *lack of satisfactory position and payment, low payment compared to the qualification, lack of work in the area, etc.* According to the present survey some 28% point their *qualification and working experience and behavior on the labour market* as determinative for being unemployed. This rings the bell that some

have already realized, and most likely experienced, that being employed is not just receiving wages for spending time at work, but it is tightly linked to their potential and dedication.

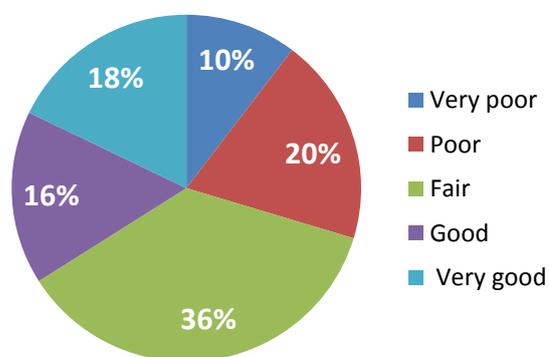
Here comes the very important role of the youth workers – well qualified and experienced enough to reach these 28%, to motivate them and to support them with information about suitable VET opportunities for better skills and qualifications more adequate to the labour market. Such build up through studying, lifelong learning, development and active citizenship.

*Lack of motivation* to seek and maintain employment is the problem of 7% of the NEETs interviewed. Measures like youth activities, initiatives to gather and get young people involved in action are extremely needed. Once the individuals see themselves as a full part of something workable this will positively affect their self-confidence and their motivation.

23% of the participants do not manage to find a job due to family reasons, which are not specified and not subject to this survey, yet remain a major issue to consider. Educated school staff, children's pedagogical consultants and social workers, campaigns for family support and many others may be sufficient prevention measures and tools for early work with the children. Sharing of problems and better communication in the families and between families and schools/institutions/organizations may reduce these 23% radically.

The education came out be not sufficient enough, not adequate to the business, not applicable, simply not enough to help 17% of the respondents succeed, on the contrary it led to unemployment. Technological progress for years now, for good or bad, irreversibly changed the demand and supply on the labour market. The rapid development of the IT sector and the insertion of technologies in all spheres of life imposed new standards for work and management, for studying and travelling, for living, all leading to the need of specific adequate skills and competences. Closer relations and cooperation between the business and the training institutions and organisations may be a solution, or part of one. Namely, development of training programs for education and qualification of staff and specialists in the fields needed by the business, from workers, to administration and up to board of managers – by thinking and by potential to work.

**How would you rate the level of support provided to unemployed youth by the national public employment services of your country?**



The results of this questionnaire show that the support provided to unemployed youth

by the national public employment services needs improvements. 10% of the answers rate it as very poor.

About 35% think it is helpful but could be better and give it a fair rate. Only 18% believe that the services offered and the support provided are very good and sufficient.

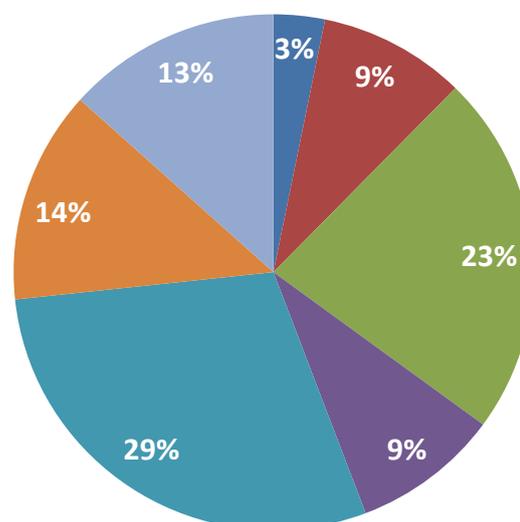
The distribution of the percentages between the five levels of estimate proposed, from very good to very poor, indicates that the users' experience varies. The simple conclusion we can make in view of the situation is the need for changes in the services provided and work of the public employment services in general. A good approach in this direction could be the differentiation of a specialized support office for unemployed youth, providing consultancy, assistance in creation/completion of job application documents (CV, cover letter, European Language Portfolio (ELP), etc.). The provision of these services would only be able through youth workers who know the problems and the needs of NEETs but who also know the opportunities and the tools for development.

This survey tries to define NEETs background, the obstacles forming their unfavorable situation and the limitations they must overcome. Nearly 30% of the respondents, asked for the main obstacles they face when trying to find a job bring forward the *mismatch between education and labour market needs* again as one of the general hitch. These people who have already realized the problem would probably be more opened to seek and receive support. They will be more willing

to take advantage of informative initiatives, consulting and guidance for training and career development.

For another large number of respondents (23%) the main obstacle in finding a job is the *lack of experience and reputation*. The relationship between this barrier and the above described is undeniable. The lack of knowledge and skills adequate to the labour market leads to unemployment which brings about the lack of work experience.

### What are the main obstacles that you face when trying to find a job?



- Administrative burdens
- Lack of adequate funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs
- Lack of experience and reputation
- Lack of mentors (mentorship programs)
- Mismatch between your education and labour market needs
- Lack of internship opportunities

A considerable number of the participant (14%) in the survey think that it might would have been easier for them to get hired through *internship programs*. The internship opportunities are a suitable solution especially for those (we already

mentioned above) who have already recognized their unfit qualification. Convincing them that internship is their shortest way to get qualified and employed will cost less efforts and resources.

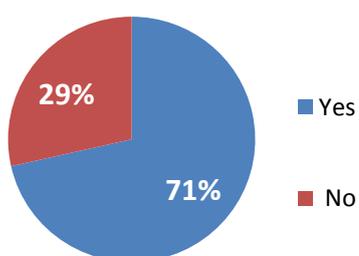
Among the other obstacle that youth encounter are: *lack of adequate funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs (9%), lack of mentors (mentorship programs) (9%)*. Only 3% experienced administrative burdens.

According to NEETs measures that could be taken by both the state and other actors for youth unemployment reduction are:

- *provision of more information;*
- *teaching about entrepreneurship;*
- *changes in the field of education;*
- *qualification – professional;*
- *harmonisation between education and labour market;*
- *internships availability;*
- *state support and adequate policy;*
- *higher wage for skilled labour;*
- *equal pay for young people.*

In response to their expectations about 70% of the respondents believe and declare that they know their competences. This seems positive but here comes quite a contradiction.

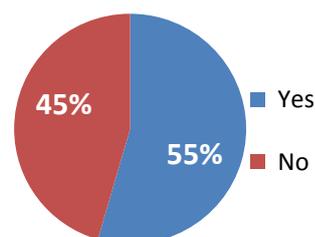
### Do you know your competences?



The problem is that young people (but not only) actually don't even know the meaning of "competences". When asked to

point theirs among the listed halt of these people think that *enthusiasm, rigor, and motivation* are things describing their competences. Obviously, the society, represented by youth workers, teachers, tutors, etc. should make greater efforts to contribute to better awareness about what the skills and competences are, how we acquire them, how we develop them, how we use them. And not least, how to be good promoters of our own competences in order to be competitive on the labour market.

### Do you know what are the available resources that would help you go back to school/Faculty or finding a job?



More than half of the participants (55%) state that they are acquainted with the resources that can help them go back to education/training or employment, namely:

- job portals;
- Internet, connections, various projects;
- ensuring good pay, additional training to one's qualification;
- professional courses;

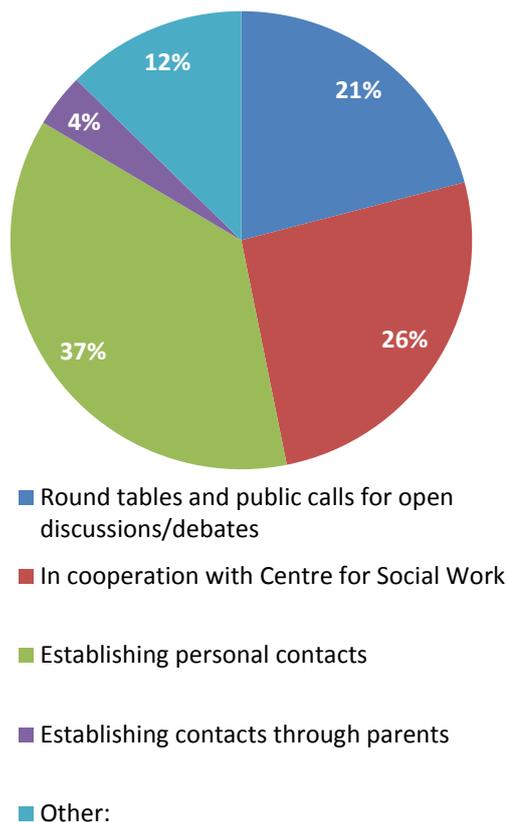
but the fact that they are still unemployed means that either these resources aren't fully useful, or the users might not work with them properly, or there must be something else missing.

The facilitators in the process of identifying and dealing with the missing parts of the puzzle are the youth workers. Their role in solving a problem that has been deepening for years of a rich background is sizable from a practical point of view, but above all is loaded with a particular human significance.

“Youth work” is defined as activities that intentionally seek to impact young people. Nowadays, the task of youth workers is much broader and complex and their role is not only to engage young people in informal education. Youth workers are helping young people to develop their skills and talents mainly during their extracurricular time and through informal education but also support them with consulting, social assistance (including within the family), tutoring, etc.

Although only 22% of the youth workers participating in this survey have educational qualification in the field of youth work, all 121 are experienced in dealing with the problems of youth of any nature, including NEETs group specifics. About a quarter of them are working with young people through formal institutions, as social workers in schools. Other 25% are related to non-formal education and training of young people for youth work. 19% are involved in voluntary and occasional youth work: informing and consulting young people. 16% do project-based youth work. There are people participating in international youth work, research work, etc. But it would be more correct to say that youth workers very often combine several of the roles and activities above mentioned when approaching NEETs.

### How do you approach NEETs?



Youth workers approach NEETs best by *establishing personal contacts* and in *cooperation with centers for social work*. Other useful tools are *round tables and public calls for open discussions*, which are also a form of a personal contact. It comes out that a very small percentage of the youth workers *communicate with parents* when approaching NEETs. Very often NEETs’ problems are conditioned or influenced by the family environment. The cooperation between youth workers and the parents as a form of prevention from early school age of the children could affect in a positive way many cases of early school leave, aggression, isolation, etc. Youth workers who spend time with the kids, sometimes just as much as their parents do can recognize a problem from its very generation. The identification of problems and the seeking of solutions

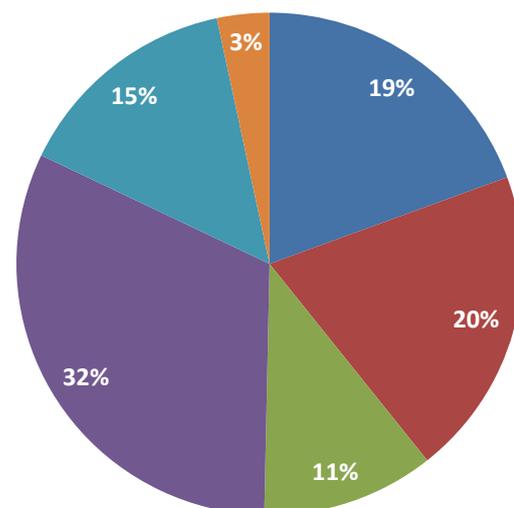
together with the parents and the youth workers form a sense of affiliation with the society that helps young people grow more confident and more socialized.

EU funded activities/initiatives are also listed as another opportunity to work with NEETs.

Our respondents think that the successful youth worker is first of all a *good motivator*, he/she is an *enthusiastic person, a good listener, well experienced – not necessarily in a formal way*. This is another confirmation of the social importance of youth worker’s figure. All those characteristics are a way of describing the attitude towards youth/NEETs. Very few of the answers point formal education in the field as one of the keys for success. Most probably because in some of the countries there is no formal education for qualification of youth workers aiming at working with NEETs. Nevertheless, results of the following question show that the *lack of formal education and working experience in the field of NEETs in specific* are an omission.

NEETs are the most complicated group of young people, the hardest to identify, the most difficult to find and above all the most complicated to work with. One of the biggest problems is that there is no up-to date information about them. In most cases they are out of any statistics, thus the traditional approaches become insufficient.

### What logistical problems do you encounter working with NEETs ?



- No formal documentation on NEETs (who/where/why)
- Difficult to approach NEETs (they are not members of youth communities/organisations)
- Not enough youth workers (working force)
- Lack of resources (money)
- Lack of formal education and working experiences for youth workers (NEETs as specific group)
- Other:

All those listed above are deeply related. Obviously *the lack of financial resources* is at the core. It is a prerequisite for the *number of youth workers engaged*. There is *no formal documentation on NEETs* due to the lack of staff working in the field that can make researches and maintain up-to-date data.

15% of the respondents draw attention to the lack of formal education for youth workers in terms of NEETs specific group.

20% of the youth workers note that NEETs are difficult to approach - they are not members of youth

communities/organisations. This has its logical explanation based on the three main implementation problems encountered when working with NEETs:

- *unresponsiveness of NEETs* (not active job-seekers/indifferent for education);
- *passiveness of NEETs (inaction)*;
- *NEETs as unemployable workforce* (negative responses from employers).

So it is very important to work with youth/NEETs:

– for prevention (from early school age to keep those with potentially risky background from becoming NEETs);

– for better awareness of how being inactive can affect a very important part of their life;

– for building up responsibility and skills for communication of different nature, time management and work organisation, labour habits (incl. through apprenticeship);

– for providing information and assistance about making the best job application (writing a CV, cover letter, European Language Portfolio (ELP), etc.) and/or finding employment.

*Referring to a social worker and/or giving psychological assistance* are also ways of supporting NEETs.

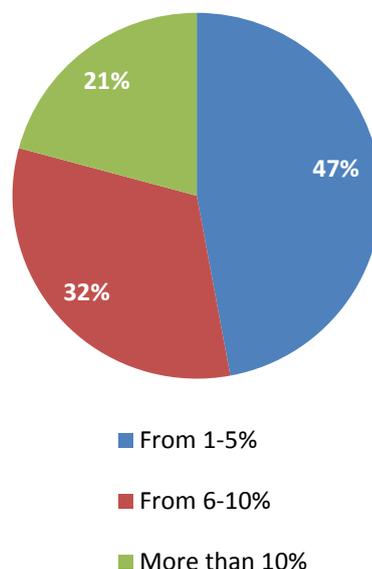
More than half of the youth workers participating in this survey are NGO members. With this regard they say that NEETs can also profit from:

– opportunities for international experiences for informal education provided by organizations;

– initiatives for promotion of good practices;

– personal support for participation in projects that young people want to attend and/or organize.

**What is the rate of success (get them involved into non-formal and formal education, getting a job) with NEETS according to your experiences?**



Measuring the rate of success and making any general conclusions that equally valid for six countries with different experience and history in youth work is not an easy task. Unfortunately, the results are rather unsatisfactory without regard to a specific country. Almost half of the answers show that a very low percentage of up to 5% of the cases end up successfully for the NEETs – they manage to find employment or get involved in forms of education or training.

In this context, according to youth workers there are several improvements that could influence youth work with NEETs in a positive way and lead to better results.

## **1. Improvements in the approach and the work with NEETS:**

- as a starting point to make a study of their actual numbers at the moment, and to set up a system of early school age monitoring and prevention;
- it is important not to give up, one-on-one work/approach, motivation;
- cooperation of all institutions - employment services and centres of social service, for new ways of approaching young people, interesting workshops, and searching for new potentials;
- education about working with young people and experience in the field;
- better cooperation between individual institutions, a proper strategy and/or a plan, guidance for the young towards certain goals;
- street youth actions, promotion and activities at places where young people hang out;
- centres for social work should recommend these young people to join youth centres and vice versa;
- using the term 'NEETs' less when addressing them for it is demotivating;
- to orient themselves in the social sphere so that, through their personal experience, they can motivate others like them;
- more publicity and cooperation between the different institutions in order to promote the group, evoking and summarizing the difficulties encountered in their coverage and work;
- to have a state policy to make a better connection between the training offered and the needs of the market.

## **2. Improvements in youth workers' individual work with NEETS to achieve better results:**

- working with parents;
- education and experience;
- participation in international projects and volunteering;
- implementation of national program for NEETs;
- implementation of successful European practices adapted to local conditions;
- establishing more contacts, involving more resources - human, financial to improve interaction and work, introducing mandatory training and experience to work with this specific group;
- cooperation between NGO and the National agency of employment;
- better awareness of training/job offers available; devote more time for motivation and be more convincing to reach goals;
- devote more time for individual consultations and look for more practical assistance to NEETs and provide more practical information;
- initiate discussions organize activities focused on education and/or employment issues, invite employers;
- psychological support and help for personal skills recognition. to stimulate joy and satisfaction in NEETs from their personal achievements and to create moderate optimism, ambition and sense of responsibility towards their own lives and development.