

NARRATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ASSESMENT OF THE REPORT

Short description

This research report is produced in the framework of the YOUTHShare project "A Place for Youth in Mediterranean EEA: Resilient and Sharing Economies for NEETs" and more specifically in the context of Work Package 1 (WP1) "Stimulate Trans-locally: A transnational Research Network for the study of Youth Employment policies in the Mediterranean European Economic Area":

- An ample description of the target groups and relevant contexts in the four countries:
 - NEET's definition and backgrounds;
 - Young NEET's in the four countries;
 - Vocational training and education;
 - Linking vocational training to youth employment;
- Studying NEETs vis-à-vis training initiatives : secondary data analysis
- Studying NEETs vis-à-vis training initiatives : primary analysis for target sectors;
- Studying training initiatives targeting NEET's;
- Conclusions & ways forward.

On the methodology

A mixed method designed was used, based on desktop research, secondary data analysis, including analysis of national statistics from the four countries. The fourth chapter complemented the analysis of the third chapter with qualitative research methods and collection of first-hand data: interviews of experts in the field, public workers and outsiders interacting with the NEET's. The use of qualitative methods proved to be necessary for the understanding of the specific contexts.

On the results (conclusions in chapter 6 – p.171)

A key finding of the report is that no individual policy can solve the NEET problem:

- The problem of youth unemployment and exclusion arises from a complex situation, where many factors together determine the outcome, both directly and indirectly. Some factors appear to be stable over time, and to be rooted in the national cultures and social structures of the study countries;
- Many decisive aspects depend on fundamental social elements, like the concept of education or social trust in public institutions;
- In terms of the Youth Guarantee, data revealed some problems, deriving from the implementation in the different national contexts. In order to improve this:
 - administrations need to better synchronise different initiatives directed a young NEET's;
 - better evaluations of what works and what does not work, needs to be carried out;
 - Even the best strategy depends on being known, and social factors, like the trust in employment services, are crucial for that success;
 - complaints about the education offers not providing useful skill, or Youth Guarantee users not wanting to train in the fields that companies needed;
 - but also signs of the willingness to learn and work together to build better policies from public workers, activists and representatives of the companies;
 - the Youth Guarantee is seen mainly as an employment policy in Greece and Cyprus. Meanwhile, Italy had a more favourable approach into training options, and Spain had invested the most in education offers;
 - no check if the Youth Guarantee is working better or worse for migrants;
 - the effect of *subsidised offers* differs from country to country;
 - remarkable how small the gap between men and women appears to be;
 - The economy is a more relevant factor than the Youth Guarantee, and we have seen that the decrease of NEETs mainly affects the unemployed NEETs, but not the inactive NEET;

- in the fifth chapter, the survey shows that the system is learning from its failures and mistakes.
- Concerns (p.177):
 - Some stakeholders and NEETs commented on their fears regarding the future of the economy - sooner or later, another crisis will hit us and the COVID19 crisis proves it. From this experience, many lessons can be learnt, and being ready for that type of situation sounds like a good idea to prevent at least some damage;
 - one should not forget the basic building blocks, which are not the Youth Guarantee schemes, but the education and training policies directed at the young;
 - If the educational systems do not provide the young people with the skills they need to find jobs in the market; if the people do not make adequate use of existing agencies; if the cultural values stand in the way of providing job opportunities to the youth; if social institutions make it more challenging to get access to measures to find solutions many things should have to adapt to the current situation in the 21 st century. By doing this, NEET policies may will succeed better in the future.
- Key findings: (*Lessons fort the future, p. 176*)
 - no individual policy can solve the NEET problem;
 - many decisive aspects depend on fundamental social elements, like the concept of education or social trust in public institutions;
 - about the Youth Guarantee: data revealed some problems, deriving from the implementation in the different national contexts. In order to improve this, the administrations need to better synchronise different initiatives directed a young NEETs Also better evaluations of what works and what does not work, needs to be carried out;
 - There were also instances where people responsible for implementing Youth Guarantee schemes were not aware of how the schemes should work;
 - Even the best strategy depends on being known, and social factors, like the trust in employment services, are crucial for that success;
 - the education offers not providing useful skill, or Youth Guarantee users not wanting to train in the fields that companies needed;
 - emphasising the added value of including the regional perspective & and finding good practices.

GLOBAL EVALUATION

This research offers a well elaborated frame of references, definitions and descriptions of NEED's and there educational and training environments/conditions in the countries involved. There is a broad description on understanding education and training in relation to NEED's and a theoretical and historical approach to a quantitative description of the present situation at the European, national and regional levels. The report emphasises on the need of qualitative instruments to get grip on the specific contexts of young NEED's.

The overall conclusion is clear: the improvements in the situation for young and unemployed may be the result of the advancement of the economy rather than something that may be attributed to the Youth Guarantee policy itself.

The research offers a lot of relevant conclusions and recommendations, but it is a pity they are spread over the report. The report should have won usefulness by summarizing all lessons learned and ideas for a the future in a clear overview.