



**FINAL SYNTHESIS
THE DESK RESEARCH REPORT ON THE
SITUATION AND NEEDS OF FINAL
BENEFICIARIES IN EUROPE**

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22.07.2014

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INTRODUCTION

The present Final Synthesis report has been drawn up within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci – Transfer of Innovation partnership project MY WAY which is co-funded by the European Commission through the Life Long Learning Programme (Agreement No. 2013-1-AT1-LE005-09480).

The project is based on the “Council Recommendation” of 28 June 2011 on policies to reduce Early School Leaving and prepared by seven partners from six countries:

1. **Austria** – Lebenshilfe Graz und Umgebung – Voitsberg
2. **Austria** – Bundessozialamt Landesstelle Steinmark
3. **Germany** – Stephansstift Zentrum für Erwachsenenbildung (Germany)
4. **Italy (region Basilicata)** - Euro-net
5. **Malta** – Agenzija Żgħażaġh
6. **Poland** – Społeczna Akademia Nauk
7. **Spain** – Asociacion de Servicios a Empresas y Actividades Diversas de Madrid

The aim of the Desk Research Report is to gain an overview of the state of art that focuses on the improvement of competences and employability of young people at risk as the final beneficiaries of the project in partners countries.

Young people at risk mean the age group between 15 and 24:

- Young people with special educational needs and those who come from a difficult socio-economic background are in sensible stage of development;
- Young people after compulsory education that no longer learn, are not employed and do not take part in any training;
- School dropouts and low skilled persons (without any qualifications or school certificates);
- Unemployed (for at least one year).

This Desk Research is the first collection of data, intervention programmes and good practice examples to support the improvement of the Austrian Youth Coaching programme and the development of an innovative Peer-Group-Workshop Curriculum. This research is a base for a definition of the real state of art for educational and professional situation of young people at risk in partner countries.

The State of Art is the Partnership’s instrument for identifying and analysing the existing educational programmes, their methodologies and distinctive features, but it also helps to understand what is still needed in this field and what the training needs of young people at risk in each partner country are. Also, it shows the best training practices existing in the partner countries addressed to that target group.

For this reason, it was necessary to get to know the current situation in the partner countries.

The present Final Synthesis report is divided into 10 sections according to problems the partners decided to describe and provides key findings from the countries' national reports.

SECTION 1

SHORT STATISTICAL INFORMATION FOCUSED ON THE YOUTH AT RISK

A synthetic and statistical analysis of the exclusion of young people faces certain difficulties resulting from the fact that the phenomenon is complex and has multiple causes, manifestations and effects. Despite numerous attempts to objectify the measures of exclusion, it remains a relative and subjective phenomenon. Excluded persons are usually associated with lack of foresight, educational aspirations, crime, social degradation and pathology. However, nowadays this issue is becoming more and more complex. There are completely new factors responsible for the placing of individuals on the margins of social life, such as lack of adequate competence related to modern ICT. Anyone who has no possibility of full participation in social life can be excluded. A group that is particularly prone to social exclusion are the young unemployed, and especially young unemployed women with low level of education and professional qualifications, where low professional qualifications often result from dropping out of school.

The following synthetic information of the partners about Youth at Risk in their countries include the data gathered both in relation to unemployment among young people and the issues related to education which is the main tool of preventing social exclusion.

In 2012, 25,021 youths in **Austria** were taking part in training and education programmes mandated by the Austrian Public Employment Services, and 40,297 young people were listed as unemployed or seeking employment. Compared to 2011, this meant an increase of 3.7 percent or, in absolute numbers, 1,449 more people were listed as seeking employment. In February 2014, the number of registered unemployed youths across Austria was 48,624.

The employment rate of 15- to 24-year-olds in Austria in 2012 was 54.6 percent. Compared to other European countries, Austria thus holds one of the top positions. Only the Netherlands (63.3 percent) and Denmark (55 percent) have a higher employment rate. At the bottom of the inter-country comparison are Hungary (18.6 percent), Spain (18.2 percent) and Greece (13.1 percent). The EU-27 average is 32.9 percent.

The percentage of youths aged 15–19 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET – “Not (engaged) in Education, Employment or Training”) is 13.4. This is slightly

above the mean value of the EU-27. Countries such as Germany, Finland, France, and the Netherlands are below this value.¹

This relatively low key NEET indicator in Austria can be explained by the dissemination of apprenticeships. As of December 31, 2012, the apprentice statistics issued by the Austrian Economic Chambers mentioned 125,228 apprentices. The gender ratio shows that almost two thirds of them were male (65.6 percent) and one third female (34.4 percent). Of 125,228 apprentices, 7.6 percent were trained in an inter-enterprise programme. Inter-enterprise apprenticeships (according to the Vocational Training Act) have training carried out by independent training institutions on behalf of the Public Employment Services, and not directly on the primary labour market.²

In **Germany**, every fifth of 13 million young people is affected by poverty. The reports of the German Statistic Institute mention a poverty rate of 21.1 percent for those aged 18-24. Youth poverty can be found everywhere in Germany, although with different characteristics in various parts of the country. In the federal state of Berlin (one of four cities in Germany having the status of a federal province / *Bundesland*), a majority of young people live on *Hartz IV* (financial support combining both jobseeker's allowance and social benefits). The lowest rate of *Hartz IV* beneficiaries amongst the youth is in Bavaria, a large federal province in the South-East of the country.

In the eastern provinces (former GDR), youth unemployment is 10.1 percent, which is twice as high as in the West. But youth poverty is not a problem of Eastern Germans specifically. It is rather a problem of the cities, also in the South. In the cities, the percentage of *Hartz IV* beneficiaries is consistently higher than in the countryside. Another hot spot of youth poverty are structurally underdeveloped rural areas. Therefore, youth poverty must be analysed with respect to regions and their specific economic and social conditions.

In Germany, just like in Austria, the essential instrument of overcoming poverty is education. Young people with low-level education or no formal education at all are far more exposed to poverty risks than those holding a school leaving qualification or those who have completed vocational training. Young people from immigrant families ("migration background", as it is usually called in the German public debate) who have not completed any formal education face the highest poverty risk. Even with similar school results, the youth with migration background have considerably lower chances to get an apprenticeship training position. Being offered an apprenticeship after graduating from school is much easier for their German peers, e.g. the percentage of people aged 18-25 years without school-leaving certificate and with migration background exposed to poverty risks is 48.5%, while in the case of indigenous youth it is 39.2%³.

¹ Nationaler Bildungsbericht Österreich 2012, short version.

² Brochure *Jugend und Arbeit in Österreich 2012/2013* for 2012.

³ Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBWF): VET report 2012.

1.44 million people aged 20 to 29 in Germany do not even have a certificate of vocational education. In their future lives, these people will be much more affected by poverty than those who have vocational qualifications making them attractive to employers⁴.

In **Italy** (region Basilicata), young people at risk is made up of young people “Not (engaged) in Education, Employment or Training” (NEET). There are 29,000 unemployed people aged 15-24, and 46.8% of them are women.

The main cause of the above-mentioned disadvantage is surely the poverty of the region. In 2010, 30.4% of the population and 28.3% of the families lived in poverty. The target group left school without a diploma, which is why they are not “appealing” as workforce within specialised enterprises.

This situation affects education and young people at risk in Basilicata. Dropping out of school is a complicated phenomenon which can be related to a multitude of risk factors having an impact on young people. It can be linked to several reasons such as lack of school attendance, late arrivals, non-admission to the following year due to low advancement or risk factors such as illnesses, families moves etc. In Italy, the term “dropout” is generally applied to the secondary (high school) level, since there is a great number of dropouts between the first and the second years. In 2012/2013, 1042 students in Basilicata left school and 60% of these students are aged 15-24⁵.

Malta’s youth unemployment falls below the EU average but remains a concern. Malta continues to have one of the highest rates of early school leavers as well as a significant problem with young people who finish compulsory school with low educational attainment and who are only able to access unskilled or low-skilled jobs. Malta’s rate of Early School Leavers (ESL) in 2013 was 20.6 percent, the second highest in the EU. The EU average for the same year was 12.0 percent.

According to Malta’s National Employment Policy, disengagement from education and employment of youth is a phenomenon that reduces prospects for sustainable employment and consequently raises the chances of being at risk of poverty. Unlike fellow Member States, Malta has not fully experienced the direct repercussions of the financial crisis.

The Maltese economy’s resilience to the financial crisis is reflected in a ‘moderate’ rate of unemployment relative to other Member States that peaked at 7.0 percent during the recession. As shown in Figure 1.1, the volume of locally unemployed youth at the peak of the recession (2009) was about 4,300 persons. By 2012, youth unemployment dropped to about 4,100 persons. Despite the drop in youth unemployment, Malta’s Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) rate grew from 9.8 percent in 2009 to 11.1 percent in 2011, reflecting an increase in the number of inactive youth. In volumes, NEETs increased from 1,400 in 2009 to 2,200 in 2012 (Eurostat, 2014a). Malta’s rate of

⁴ Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF): VET report 2012.

⁵ <http://www.tecnicadellascuola.it/index.php?id=49031&action=view>

Early School Leavers (ESL) in 2013 was 20.6 percent, the second highest in the EU. The EU average for the same year was 12.0 percent.

In **Poland**, persons aged under 25 years constituted 18.3% of the total number of the unemployed (385.2 thousand). The share of registered unemployed without occupational qualifications amounted to 29.9% of the total number of the registered unemployed (631.0 thousand), 9.2% were bringing up single-handedly a child aged under eighteen (193.8 thousand), while 5.2% were disabled people (109.5 thousand). At the end of the second quarter of 2013, the share of women in the total number of the unemployed amounted to 50.5%.

The majority of the unemployed registered in labour offices are people with a relatively low level of education. The two largest groups among the unemployed are persons with basic vocational education and lower secondary, primary or incomplete primary education (their shares amounted respectively to 27.9% and 27.4% of the total number of the unemployed registered at the end of June 2013). Both these populations jointly amounted to 55.3% of the total number of the unemployed. 22.1% of the total number of the unemployed had certificates of completion of post-secondary and vocational secondary schools, 11.1% of the unemployed have completed general secondary schools, while the graduates from tertiary schools constituted 11.5%. The educational structure of unemployed women was different than the structure of men, as 54.7% of the unemployed women had secondary and tertiary education, while among the men the percentage of people having such education was 34.5%⁶.

A particular feature of poverty in Poland is its juvenilization. Juvenilization of poverty means that the poverty rate among children and the youth (0-17 years old) is higher than among adults. This age category is overrepresented within the poor population in relation to its participation in the population of Poland. In 2008, 38% of the beneficiaries of social welfare centres in Poland were children and the youth.

Among the beneficiaries of social welfare centres, 28% of the youth aged 16- 18 years do not continue education. In 2012, NEETs constituted 0.6% of the group of 15-17 year olds in Poland (which was over 5 times lower than the EU average), but in the following age groups the number increased. In the group of 15-24 year olds NEETs made up 11.8% (about 1.5 percentage point lower than in the EU). In a group of 15-29 year olds – 15.7% (0.2 point lower than in the EU). It means that almost 1.2 million of young people aged 15-29 were not in education, employment or training.

The number of people at risk in **Spain** have increased in the last years due to the economic situation. The table below shows the percentage of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion (according to Europe 2020 strategy) by age groups in Spain.

According to the latest data of 2012, the age group with the highest percentage of people at risk is 16- 29, so young people are the most represented in this group. Within this age group, men have a little more representativeness than women.

⁶ http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/PW_bezrobocie_rejestrowane_2kw_2013.pdf.

Among the factors of social exclusion the economic one is key, poverty thus being the main cause of social exclusion. The performance of paid work is the main vehicle of integration in today's society. Unemployment favours fall into a situation of social exclusion, and at the same time social exclusion increases the risk of being unemployed.

At present, the percentage of young people under 25 excluded from the labour market is already over 50%, which is twice as high as in the European Union. The unemployment rate for this group was 55.06% in the fourth quarter of 2013, after experiencing an increase of 31.3 points over the years 2008-2013.

A high rate of early school leaving, which in 2012 was 24.9% for young people aged 18-24 years, is also a significant cause of social exclusion. In the last ten years, Spain has had a higher rate than the rest of the European Union, which was a minimum of 13 percentage points and a maximum of 17 points higher.

In the summary, of this point the comparative statistics and graphs can be used. They are based on the assumption that the youth unemployment rate is the number of unemployed people aged 15 to 24 as a percentage of the active population of the same age. Unemployed persons are those who (1) are not employed, (2) are available to start work within the next two weeks, (3) have actively sought employment at some time during the previous four weeks. Active population is the sum of all employed and unemployed persons. This indicator is based on the EU Labour Force Survey results.

At this point, it is useful to provide the readers⁷ with additional information on how unemployment is measured and how it interacts with education.

In the **EU28**, there were around 57.5 million persons aged 15-24 years in 2012, of whom 18.8 million were employed, 5.6 million were unemployed (forming the total labour force of 24.4 million persons) and 33.0 million were economically inactive. The high number of inactive young people is mainly explained by the fact that many are still participating in education programmes. The share of young people in education gradually declines with increasing age, which leads to the growing labour market participation of young people as they grow older.

Eurostat publishes two different indicators of unemployment among young people: the youth unemployment rate and the youth unemployment ratio. While the former expresses the number of unemployed persons aged 15-24 as a share of the labour force of the same age, the latter refers to the share of the unemployed within the total population of the same age.

$$\text{Youth unemployment rate} = \frac{\text{Unemployed 15 - 24 years} = 5.6 \text{ million}}{\text{Labour force 15 - 24 years} = 24.4 \text{ million}} = 23.0\%$$

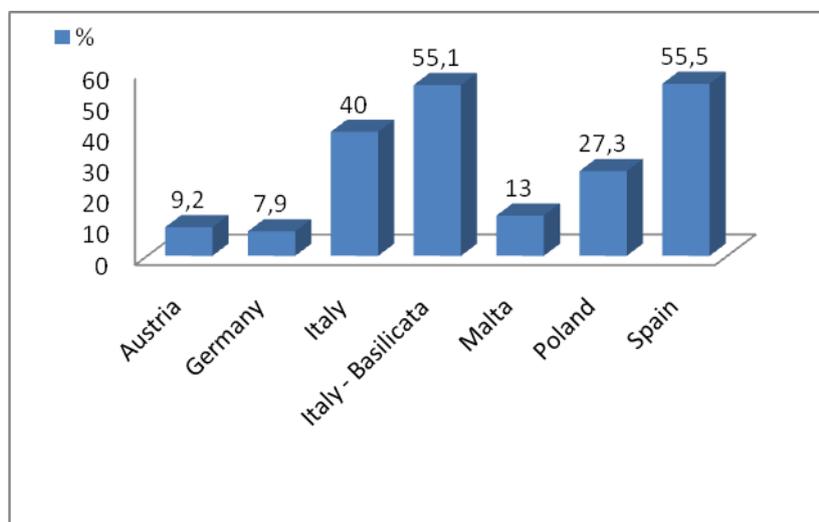
⁷ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-12072013-BP/EN/3-12072013-BP-EN.PDF

Unemployed 15 – 24 years = 5.6 million

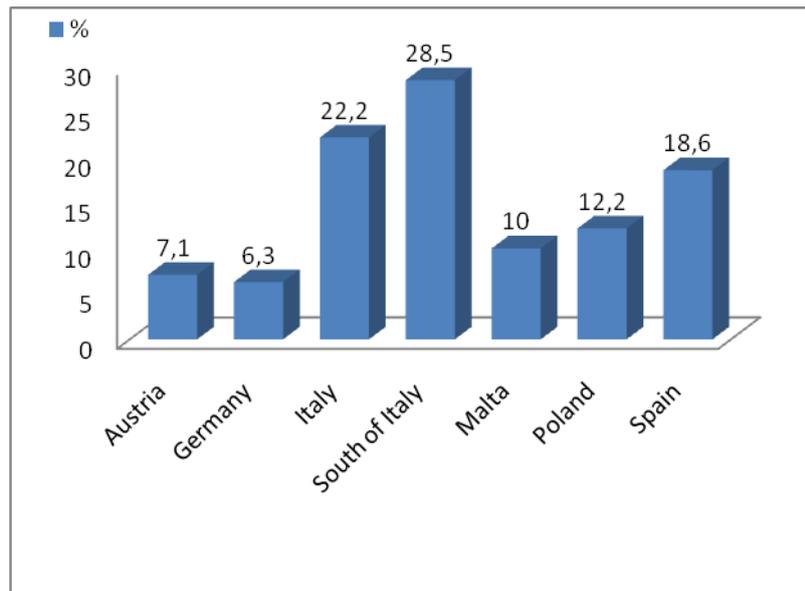
Youth unemployment ratio = **Population 15 – 24 years = 57.5 million** = 9.7%

In the **EU28** in 2012, the youth unemployment rate of 23.0% shows that more than 2 out of 10 young people in the labour force were unemployed, while the youth unemployment ratio of 9.7% indicates that 1 out of 10 young people within the total population aged 15-24 years was unemployed. As not every young person is in the labour force, the youth unemployment rate does not indicate the share of all young people who are unemployed. Youth unemployment rates are frequently misinterpreted in this sense.

The difference between youth unemployment rates and ratios is entirely due to the number of young people outside the labour force, which is particularly high for this age group since many of them are still in education. Being in education and being part of the labour force (employed or unemployed) are not mutually exclusive, meaning that there can be an overlap between participation in education and in the labour market, which is possible at any age. However, this situation is far more frequent among young people due to their transition from school or university to working life. In this regard, three typical cases are: an apprentice, but also a student with a small side job, is a part of the employed population; a non-working student who is currently available for work and actively seeking work is counted as unemployed; and a person exclusively in education and neither employed nor unemployed is considered a part of the economically inactive population.



Graph 1. Youth unemployment rate – % of active population in the same age group in partner countries (data source: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>, retrieved 21st of July 2014).



Graph 2. Young people not in employment, education or training (% of the total population) (data source: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>, retrieved 21st of July 2014).

Taking a closer look, the population of young people in partners countries is very diverse.

The youth unemployment rate is dramatically high in Spain and Italy, and particularly in the south of Italy. It is nearly a half lower in Poland and much lower in Malta, Austria and Germany. However, even if it does not exceed 10% in the last two countries, it does not mean they disregard it. Important remedial measures turn out to be the apprenticeship programmes widespread in these countries.

The NEET (“Not in Education, Employment or Training”) indicators are similar – Graph 2. This time, the first place is occupied by Italy and its southern regions, while the second place went to Spain. The order of these indicators in the remaining countries is the same as in the first graph, which means that the situation of young people is again best in Austria and Germany. This data in the remaining four countries analysed is particularly alarming, as the NEET group is at the highest risk of social exclusion.

SECTION 2

EXISTING RESEARCH REPORTS ON THE YOUTH AT RISK

The reports and analyses presented by the partners are illustrated in the table below. It presents the latest research into the risk of social exclusion faced by the youth in the years of the economic crisis – 2008-2014. The results of research conducted in different European countries are very similar.

When summarising various reports on poverty and risk-of-poverty in partners countries, it becomes clear that since the 1990s children and the youth are the population groups mostly affected by poverty. The youth and young adults are in a particularly difficult situation. A different critical point mentioned in German and Austrian surveys is the higher percentage of immigrant youth that end up in unemployment and unqualified work (compared to the indigenous youth).

Most of the research reports presented also include suggestions and proposal for practical solutions.

COUNTRY	No.	TITLE AND REFERENCE	SHORT DESCRIPTION
Austria	1	<i>National Strategy for Early Education and Training Dropout Prevention</i> , Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2012 ⁸	Suggests a strategic framework based on the three pillars: <i>prevention, intervention, and compensation</i> . The <i>prevention</i> pillar includes the reduction of class repetitions, guidelines for vocational counselling and orientation, advance programmes for challenged learners and early detection systems as well as social work in schools. The <i>intervention</i> pillar refers to the intervention by professionals such as counsellors, teachers, psychologists, and integrative vocational training as well as the <i>Youth Coaching</i> project. The <i>compensation</i> pillar includes adult education, delayed graduation, post-schooling projects, and the recognition of non-formal school completions.
	2	Early School Leaving: Theoretical and Empirical Approaches (In: SWS-Rundschau, 50. Jahrgang, 4/2010) ⁹	The article defines the reasons for dropping out as a complex mixture of individual student and family characteristics, the educational situation at large, and the affected youth's peer group. The article's author concludes that the decisive resource for correcting aborted education, particularly for dropouts from disadvantaged backgrounds, is the social capital in the form of helpful personal relationships. The author continues to note that it is essential to implement adequate programmes and measures for dropouts, if this cannot be prevented with the use of school internal measures.
Germany	1	<i>Report on the Situation of Children and the Youth</i> [Kinder- und Jugendbericht]. Ministry of Families, Social Affairs, Women and	The expert commission publishing the report on behalf of the ministry concluded that the overall situation of children and the youth in Germany has changed for the worse. The report says that, although a majority of children and the youth enjoy good conditions for growing up, there is a

⁸ "Nationale Strategie zur Verhinderung frühzeitigen (Aus-)Bildungsabbruchs" (BMUKK, 2012).

⁹ Early School Leaving: Theoretische und Empirische Annäherungen (In: SWS-Rundschau, 50. Jahrgang, 4/2010).

	Youth (BMFSFJ), 2013 ^{10;11}	considerable number facing social disadvantages, individual impairment and generally unfavourable conditions for their education and personal development. The report claims that there is “considerable poverty of children and youths”.
2	<i>Shell Youth Studies</i> , 2010 No 16. ¹²	The report describes how the conditions in which children and the youth grow up change. A large section of the report is dedicated not to children and the youth themselves but to the governmental and public structures supporting children and the youth in need. It also describes the challenges the state is facing in respect of supporting children and the youth. Therefore the report is a useful source of information on governmental structures and policies in these fields.
3	<i>Peers in the context of transition from school to work</i> [Peers im context des Übergangs Schule-Beruf] research project implemented between September 2012 and February 2013. ¹³ German Youth Institute (<i>Deutsches Jugendinstitut, DJI</i>)	The project’s aim was to establish how peer-to-peer relations of the youth influence their vocational orientation, and what is the role of the new media such as the internet, social networks etc. in this process, especially as opposed to “traditional” advisors such as parents, teachers.
4	<i>The youth of immigrant background and their mastering the transition from school to vocational training, compared with the autochthonous youth</i> [Die Bewältigung des Übergangs Schule-Berufsausbildung bei Migrantinnen und Migranten im Vergleich zu autochthonen Jugendlichen], 2014, German Youth Institute (<i>Deutsches Jugendinstitut, DJI</i>) ¹⁴	An ongoing research project to be finished by October 2014.
5	Studies by the Sinus Institute, Berlin	A characteristic approach used in the studies is to identify typical milieus of a given age group, such as “The hedonistic”, “The conservative traditional” or

¹⁰ <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/Service/Publikationen/publikationen,did=196138.html> - 14. Kinder- und Jugendbericht. Bericht über die Lebenssituation junger Menschen und die Leistungen der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe in Deutschland. Issued in February 2013.

¹¹ <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2013-03/jugendpolitik-armut-kinderhilfe>

¹² <http://www.shell.de/aboutshell/our-commitment/shell-youth-study.html>

¹³ <http://www.dji.de/index.php?id=1570>

¹⁴ <http://www.dji.de/index.php?id=1422>

			“The precarious”.
	6	<i>The Situation of the Youth from Immigrant Families</i> , National Employment Agency, (BA/BIBB Bewerberbefragung 2010)	The survey shows that <i>the youth with immigrant background</i> statistically face a less favourable situation when they apply for a job or training position, as compared to their German peers, because of their on average lower school certificates and worse school grades. There was no significant difference in their behaviour of seeking employment and applying for free positions. However, clear differences were observed between <i>the youth with immigrant background</i> and their German peers in relation to their transition into the vocational training system.
Italy	1	<i>Wiki Garanzia Giovani</i> , The Italian Ministry of Labour, 2013 ¹⁵	The report analyses the situation of the Italian NEETs. According to this report, 21.2% of young people in Italy are not engaged in education, employment or training. NEETs living in the south of Italy exceed 28.5%. The highest rates of unemployment and school dropout are registered in the south. Only 10.7% of southern young people aged between 15 and 24 have a job and 55% of southern young people are still looking for a job.
Malta	1	Gatt, S. & Gatt, K (2006) <i>The School to Work Transition of Young People in Malta: Results of a Study Among Young People Looking for Work</i> . ETC; Malta	A study that explored the school to work transition of young people registering for work ¹⁶ found that the groups most at risk were those with few or no qualifications.
	2	<i>The Personal Action Plan</i> developed by the Employment and Training Corporation	Outlines the top eight qualities sought by employers. In order of priority, these are people who: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are motivated and keen 2. Can work in a team 3. Can learn new skills 4. Present themselves well 5. Are confident 6. Will put in time and effort 7. Have a good work history 8. Have relevant experience
Poland	1	<i>The Guide on the Implementation of Support for the Socially Excluded and at Risk of Social Exclusion, Within The Human Capital Operational Programme</i> , Warsaw Kapitał Ludzki	Presents the characteristics of several groups of socially excluded persons with a description of the reasons for lack of activity in each group, taking into account their specificities, and describes the tools that can be applied to each of the groups.

¹⁵ <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/AreaComunicazione/comunicati/Documents/WIKI%20giovani.pdf>

¹⁶ Gatt, S. & Gatt, K (2006) *The School to Work Transition of Young People in Malta: Results of a Study Among Young People Looking for Work*. ETC; Malta.

	<p>[Poradnik dotyczący realizacji wsparcia dla osób wykluczonych społecznie oraz zagrożonych wykluczeniem społecznym w ramach Programu Operacyjnego]¹⁷, October 2009¹⁸</p>	
2	<p>Jadwiga Werbanowska The Issue of Non-Governmental Organizations as Service Providers for the Youth in the Labor Market [Problematyka organizacji pozarządowych jako usługodawców dla młodzieży na rynku pracy]¹⁹</p>	<p>A short description of problems of young people in the labour market – young people have problems with finding a job not only because of lack of proper qualifications. They also lack skills of looking for a job and, in general, of moving around in the world of social institutions, as well as psychological skills enabling them to do well on the job market. A great majority of young people do not understand or appreciate the importance of social skills (communication skills, self-presentation, first impression, preparation and conducting a job interview, understanding the needs of other people, etc.) to the process of seeking, finding and securing employment.</p>
3	<p>Magdalena Kopystecka, An In-Depth Analysis of Data Available to General Public and the Author's Own Research and Analysis Results Connected with Problems of Early Social Intervention, Vocational Development and Risk of Social Exclusion of Young People at the Age of 15 – 18 Living in the Lodz Province [Pogłębiona analiza ogólnodostępnych danych statystycznych oraz wyników badań i analiz własnych związanych z problemami wczesnej interwencji socjalnej, aktywizacji zawodowej oraz zagrożenia</p>	<p>The following issues were recognized as the most important barriers in vocational activation of theyouth 15+:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support for social intervention in local communities where the young people live; • Lack of vocational and social activation model based on an individual approach to the wards; • Lack of specialised career counsellors in institutions working with the youth; • Lack of diagnostic tools for social competences necessary on the labour market, based on games and simulations; • Lack of diagnostic tools for vocational interests research.

¹⁷ <http://etc.gov.mt/Resources/file/Resources/PAP%20BOOKLET-%20English%20version.pdf>

¹⁸ http://www.efs.gov.pl/dzialaniapromocyjne/Documents/Poradnik_dot_realizacji_wsparcia_dla_os_wykluczonych_s_pol_POKL_091009.pdf

¹⁹ http://www.fise.org.pl/files/1bezrobocie.org.pl/public/Raporty/JWerbanowska_raport_dot_org_pozarząd_działających_na_rzecz_młodzieży.pdf

	wykluczeniem społecznym młodzieży w wieku 15 – 18 lat zamieszkałej na terenie województwa łódzkiego] ²⁰	
4	Agnieszka Wilczyńska, Determinants of dealing with situations threatened with social exclusion by the youth [Uwarunkowania radzenia sobie młodzieży w sytuacjach zagrożenia wykluczeniem społecznym], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego 2013	Social exclusion is considered to be one of the most difficult social problems, constituting serious threat to human psychological and physical health. Within the area of psychological studies, social exclusion is treated as the effect of deprivation of one of the most fundamental human needs, namely the sense of belonging. The main aim of the book is to present conditions in which the youth deal with various situations threatened with social exclusion.
5	Barbara Fatyga, Anna Tyszkiewicz, Przemysław Zieliński The Scale and Causes of Dropping Out Of School in Poland. A Report on the School Dropout Research in 32 Communes [Skala i powody wypadania uczniów z systemu edukacji w Polsce. Raport z badań odpadu szkolnego na terenie 32 gmin] ²¹	The report is devoted to the problem of dropping out of primary and junior high schools subject to compulsory education. It refers to children and the youth leaving school at the age when they are obliged to attend school, i.e. when they are 7- 18 years old.
6	Young and Angry – Preparation of New, Effective Methods of Integration of the Youth Who Are Socially Excluded or at Risk of Exclusion [Młodzi Gniewni – wypracowanie nowych i	According to the conducted research, effective social and vocational integration of young people from the risk group faces the following barriers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of job and education; • Emotional problems; • Lack of acceptance, inability to adapt; • Underestimating one’s own abilities/ low self-confidence; • Dislike of learning;

²⁰ <http://projektmłodziez.pl/wp-content/plugins/download.../download.php?id=>

²¹ <http://www.isp.org.pl/files/19695389340780001001117708679.pdf>

		skutecznych metod integracji społecznej młodzieży wykluczonej lub zagrożonej wykluczeniem społecznym], Imperia Med. Sp. z o.o., Wrocław 2012 ²²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to cooperate; • Self-centred approach to life, demanding attitude; • Lack of family support, accumulated childhood experience; • Withdrawal, disorders; • Lack of life models, general helplessness; • Returning to adverse environment; • Largely limited social intelligence; • Social stigma; • Lack of the ability to respond to difficult situations; • Social care system that promotes development of demanding attitudes; • Poverty.
Spain	1	Caritas España, Youth and employment: the challenge of the labour integration [Jóvenes y empleo: el reto de la integración laboral] 2012.	It is a proposal of an intervention model of labour insertion addressed to disadvantaged youth, based on good practices and experiences of the public administration, social services and Cáritas. The objective of the model is to make stakeholders improve their actions aimed at the labour integration of the disadvantaged youth.
	2	Bank foundation “Fundación La Caixa”, Early school leaving in Spain [Fracaso y abandono escolar en España], 2010.	This study makes a reflection the aim of which is to capture the multiple dimensions that become necessary to explain early school leaving, from the new coordinates of education in the information society to the internal dynamics and instruments of the school system, and the social factors that influence the widespread tendency of teenagers to unlink themselves from educational institutions.
	3	Fundación Adsis, The future starts today [El futuro empieza hoy], 2013 ²³	The study of attitudes and expectations of secondary school students in Spain. It analyses students at risk of social exclusion: their educational results, attitudes towards the future and the society, aspirations, etc., comparing their answers to the answers of people not considered at risk of social exclusion.
	4	Human Resources Consultancies, Temporary Work Agencies, Human Resources ²⁴	Analyses of skills most valued by employers etc. To sum up, the skills most valued by employers include: communication skills, flexibility, the ability to understand the needs and feelings of others, the ability to work in a team, optimism, self-confidence, self-control and motivation, which are characteristics reflected in the job performance.

²² <http://mlodzigniewni.com.pl/dokumenty.html>

²³ <http://www.fundacionadsis.org/elfuturocomienzahoy/es.html>

²⁴ http://www.laboris.net/static/ca_habilidades_mas-valoradas.aspx

SECTION 3

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLITICAL STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING ADDRESSED TO THE YOUTH AT RISK

Along with labour market placement, one of the essential goals of labour market policies aimed at young adults is qualification according to individual prerequisites. Good education or training is the key to a successful integration into the labour market, making vocational training support, catching up on educational levels, and advanced qualifications the central labour market policy measures for young people.

In **Austria**, there are three visible elements of this strategy:

1. The *Public Employment Services* act as public employment offices and mediate between workers and open positions in the free labour market. The Public Employment Services offer advice, information and qualification programmes for job seekers. The employment offices also support job seekers and companies financially. The task of Public Employment Services is to provide special measures that support the youth at risk of exclusion in gaining a foothold in the labour market.
2. *Aktion Zukunft Jugend*. It has long been a central labour market policy goal to avoid the transition of young people into long-term unemployment, which is defined in this age group as unemployment lasting more than six months. The programme *Aktion Zukunft Jugend* continues to implement measures to reach this goal. The programme warrants that young people who cannot be placed immediately receive an individually tailored qualification service or are reintegrated into the labour market via special employment financial support within the first six months of their registration with Public Employment Services.²⁵
3. *Youth Coaching* is a supporting proposal for the youth related to their transition from the end of their compulsory education to the sustainable integration into the labour market. After a pilot project in Vienna and Styria, Youth Coaching was established all over Austria in 2013. Youth Coaching is a free and optional proposal and focuses on supporting the youth in their school- and job-related, but also private problems. Its aim is to evolve individual vocational perspectives for each young person and, if needed, to organise professional support²⁶. An integral part of the Youth Coaching concept is the reintegration of young people from the outside of the system into the professional and vocational training system. By

²⁵http://www.sozialministerium.at//cms/site/attachments/8/6/6/CH0023/CMS1238575260831/090401_presseunterlage_aktion_zukunft_jugend2.pdf

²⁶http://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/7/6/7/CH2124/CMS1249976411510/jugend_und_arbeit_2013_deutsch.pdf

cooperating with extracurricular institutions, the concept aims at the resumption of school attendance or bringing young people closer to advanced education systems. In the case of particularly complex problems and initial positions the concept aims at developing and pursuing adequate partial goals.²⁷

In **Germany** social work aimed at the youth is based on:

1. *SGB VIII § 13 Social Act Vol. VIII* – this sets the framework especially for social pedagogic support related to the world of work, the “Youth Accommodation” instrument (*Jugendwohnen*; the term refers to a variety of accommodation programmes for the youth during VET, outside their parents' home, with added social-pedagogical support), and detached youth work (*mobile Jugendsozialarbeit*). They are closely related to the measures of the Federal Employment Agency, as the *prescription to cooperate* in § 13 Abs. 4 of the law indicates. Therefore, as further bases of social work for the youth, the employment-oriented measures listed in SGB II and SGB III 87 are to be taken into account.
2. Regulations regarding social work at schools (*Schulsozialarbeit*) which can be found in relevant school laws of the federal provinces.
3. New challenges both for employment-related social work aimed at the youth and measures to support the transition of the youth from school to work emerged with the amendment of *SGB II* from January 2005, which divided the responsibilities between *SGB II* (active integration into the labour market) and *SGB VIII* (socially and pedagogically justified support through special measures). Accordingly, traditional social work aimed at the youth has to concentrate on the area defined in § 13 SGB VIII, and it has to be socially and pedagogically justified, and methodical (see Schäfer 2009, p.15).
4. *Transition System* (transition from school to work or to VET) concentrates multiple stakeholders with various responsibilities. Apart from the agencies jointly referred to as Youth Welfare Service (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfe*), there is a Federal Employment Agency and its local Job Centres, the municipalities and schools, particularly VET schools of different types. In the case of social work at schools, also the ministries of education of federal provinces are to be considered.

In **Italy** (Basilicata Region), an extra action to fight school dropout and to improve the educational offer addressed to secondary schools (state schools) for the academic year 2013-2014 is promoted. This action is carried out within the framework of *the national strategy of improving the educational offer*, as outlined by the Act of 8th November 2013 No. 128²⁸, taking into consideration the administrative, educational and organisational autonomy of schools. The planned activities include:

²⁷ BSB (2011): "Jugendcoaching". Vienna.

²⁸ Decreto legge 12 settembre 2013 n.104 convertito, con modificazioni, dalla legge 8 novembre 2013 n. 128, recante "Misure urgenti in materia di istruzione, università e ricerca".

- Educational activity of recovery, development and the strengthening of skills aimed at fighting school failure and early school leaving;
- Activities supporting disabled students within the process of learning and counselling;
- Planning, organising and implementing counselling related to training, university and vocational choices of students;
- Planning, organising and developing work-related learning, apprenticeship and extra school activities.

In **Malta** *The National Youth Employment Strategy*²⁹ was published in February 2013 under the previous legislature. Therefore, while the general principles might still hold true, the way some of the issues are addressed may have changed somewhat. The priorities which the national Youth Employment Strategy focused on are:

- Supporting school completion;
- Encouraging educational attainment and formal validation;
- Facilitating the successful reintegration into education, training or employment of young people who are disengaged or at-risk of being disengaged;
- Providing the learning tools which ascertain that young people are equipped with the necessary employability skills;
- Ensuring the sustainability of young people's entry into the labour market by addressing temporary, precarious and informal work arrangements.

The initiatives proposed in this Strategy were split into five main categories:

- Renewed Youth-Centred investment;
- Early intervention and prevention;
- Facilitating Transition between Education, Training and Employment;
- Equal Access and opportunities in relation to Education, Training and the Labour Market;
- Sustainability of Jobs.

This Strategy acknowledged that the entry patterns into the labour market and the choice of transition from school to further and higher education were dependent on a number of variables. These included:

- Qualifications, Skills and Competencies attained through schooling and training;
- Learning Experience in Compulsory Education;
- Individual and Family environment and aspirations;
- Active Labour Market programmes;
- Guidance and Counselling.

²⁹ Azzopardi, A. & Bezzina, D. (2013) *National Youth Employment Strategy 2015*. MEDE, Malta.

In **Poland**, a number of initiatives can be distinguished on national and regional levels, and they have resulted in the development of national strategies. The most important of them are:

1. A Scheme for the implementation of *Youth Guarantees* in Poland, developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development in December 2013³⁰ – due to the difficult situation of young people on the labour market in times of economic depression, in 2012 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy began the implementation of a programme called “Young People in the Labour Market”, including a number of actions aiming to support employment of people under 30. These activities are supplementary to standard services offered to the unemployed and job-seekers by Job Agencies. Moreover, as part of the above programme, a pilot project entitled “Your Career – Your Choice” has been launched.
2. *The activity of Voluntary Labour Corps* (OHP, Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy) has intensified in relation to young people belonging to the NEET group (aged 15-24). The forms of support prepared for young adults are mostly retraining and professional courses together with internships and a possibility of employing an intern by the employer after the internship period for an equally long period, vocational training accompanied by a practical job training module as well as group and individual job counselling and training courses in active job seeking.
3. As part of the current *National Action Plan for Employment in 2012-2014* (KPDZ/2012-2014) adopted by the Council of Ministers in August 2012, there are activities directed at young people included in the aimed action entitled: Support of groups excluded from the labour market (young people, people 50+, women, people with disabilities, parents of young children, NEETs). As part of this aimed action, the following activities are undertaken in order to support employment of young people:
 - Organisation of job centre services, job counselling and job-related information as well as vocational training courses adjusted to the needs of people at risk of social exclusion, including the members of the NEET group;
 - Increasing the accessibility of job counselling services and job information through the use of a network of mobile job information centres;
 - Implementation of a PO KL project “OHP as the labour market service provider” co-funded with the ESF funds,
 - Implementation of systemic projects for the benefit of young people at risk of social exclusion: Nowe Perspektywy (New Perspectives) and Młodzieżowa Akademia Umiejętności 2 (Young Skills Academy 2).

³⁰ <http://prom.info.pl/wp-content/uploads/.../Plan-realizacji-GdM-2014-1.pdf>

4. Krajowy Program Przeciwdziałania Ubóstwu i Wykluczeniu Społecznemu 2020: Nowy Wymiar Aktywnej Integracji (The National Anti-Poverty and Anti-Social Exclusion Programme 2020: A New Dimension of Active Inclusion) –Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw, August 2013³¹. The most important element here is Priority II: Ensuring the Consistency of Educational, Social and Vocational Activity of Children and the Youth. Preventive activities are of key importance for the development of young people, particularly when preparing them to social and professional activity in adult age.
5. *Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego (SRKL)* (Strategy for the Development of Human Capital), Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw, August 2013³². SRKL is the response to the need for the improvement of the quality of life in Poland in 2020. At the same time it is a starting point for the expansion and improvement of the quality of human capital in Poland through the use of appropriate, often very innovative, solutions tailored to the needs of people at every stage of life.
6. *The Regional Strategy for Social Policy for the Years 2007- 2020* developed by the Łódź Province Assembly³³. The groups identified as being at risk of social exclusion in the region include people aged 15-24 who: are out of education and not registered as unemployed; are still at school but have behaviour issues; are placed in educational care facilities and foster families; come from poor background and are at risk of social dysfunction; break the law. The most important social problems in the region are the growing level of poverty and social exclusion and social pathology accompanying the phenomenon.

In **Spain**, the following three elements of the national strategy have been described:

1. The *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2013-2016*, which has just been approved by the Government and which aims to improve the effectiveness of the protection system and direct it to the most vulnerable. The plan outlines poverty and exclusion issues in Spain, considering the repercussion of the crisis for the economic situation of many families. Young people play the leading role in the first strategic priority, which aims to promote inclusion through employment. The Strategy for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship has been developed especially for them and, within this framework, a Unique Job Portal will be created. On the other hand, in the field of education, the creation of plans for diversity in schools will be encouraged, together with the gradual incorporation of the Dual VET.

³¹ http://empatia.mpips.gov.pl/documents/10180/47191/KPPUiWS_ver_25-07-2013.pdf+%E2%80%9EKrajowy+Program+Przeciwdzia%C5%82ania+Ub%C3%93stwu+i+Wykluczeniu+Spo%C5%82ecznemu+2020.+Nowy+wymiar+aktywnej+integracji/8bb47d39-c2f7-40e6-bec0-06162d330895

³² <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/download/gfx/mpips/pl/defaultopisy/7616/1/1/Strategia%20Rozwoju%20Kapitału%20Ludzkiego%202020.pdf>

³³ <http://www.lodzkie.ngo.pl/files/lodzkie.../StrategiaRozwojuWojewdztwojalodzkiego.doc>

2. The *Strategy for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship 2013/2016* is a part of the Government's objective to promote measures reducing youth unemployment, either through paid employment or through self-employment and entrepreneurship. This Strategy, which is a result of a dialogue with stakeholders and their participation, responds to the recommendations in the area of youth employment made by the European Commission and is a part of National Reforms Plan launched by the government.
3. *Programas de Cualificación Profesional Inicial* (Initial vocational qualification programmes) created within the Spanish Vocational and Educational System. There are several reasons why some students finish their Secondary Education without reaching its objectives and, consequently, without obtaining the degree of a Secondary Education graduate. In this context, it is very likely that students, due to their lack of qualifications, will have to face a precarious employment situation. Pursuant to Article 30 of the Organic Law 2/2006 of 3 May on Education, the educational authorities should organise initial vocational qualification programmes addressed to students over sixteen who have not obtained the degree in compulsory secondary education.

To sum up, it can be said that the partner countries have national or regional strategies for the prevention of poverty and exclusion of young people, although their practical implementation is questionable because the policy for the prevention of marginalisation in the partner countries should assume several activities. The first of them are legal regulations allowing for the creation of different kinds of social integration centres which take into consideration the specific character of the environment the help is aimed at. This should be followed by educational undertakings, organising the work of young people aged 15-24. It is thus necessary to develop a programme of work with the youth, adjusted to local conditions.

- 1) The creation of adequate tools oriented towards an increase in the effectiveness of activities undertaken in order to counteract the exclusion processes.
- 2) The development of a consistent model of work with the youth at risk of exclusion.
- 3) Equipping the employees of these institutions and organisations with modern tools and methods of work with the youth at risk of social exclusion.

SECTION 4

EXISTING EDUCATIONAL OFFER OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND PRIVATE SECTOR ADDRESSED TO THE YOUTH AT RISK BY

Educational offers addressed to the youth at risk in the partner countries can be divided into three categories:

- a) School classes related to the supplementing of general education on primary, lower secondary and secondary levels (Austria, Germany, Italy, Malta);

- b) Classes as part of further education aimed at acquiring a profession and improving qualifications (Austria, Germany, Malta, Poland, Spain);
- c) Prophylactic classes developing social skills (Austria, Germany, Italy, Malta).

The overview presented by the partners once again demonstrates high activity related to the development of educational offers for the youth at risk of unemployment in countries such as Austria and Germany. In the remaining countries, rehabilitation activities prevail (when the issues of unemployment and social exclusion of the youth already exist) over prophylactic activities.

Detailed information can be found in the table below:

COUNTRY	NO.	EDUCATIONAL OFFER	SHORT DESCRIPTION
AUSTRIA	1	<i>Guaranteed Training and Inter-enterprise Apprenticeships</i>	Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection tries to guarantee young people a training position with a subsidiary system of replacement apprenticeships .
	2	<i>Production Schools</i>	In 2001, production schools were established in Austria for the disadvantaged youth. They do not offer any specific training, but are a combination of workshop activities and creative methods supervised by pedagogically trained experts.
	3	<i>The Ausbildungs-Fit project</i>	Young participants are given an opportunity to acquire missing basic qualifications and social skills.
GERMANY	1	<i>Benachteiligtenprogramm</i>	A governmental programme supporting the vocational training of the youth with special needs.
	2	The pilot programme <i>JUGEND STÄRKEN: Aktiv in der Region</i> ("Strengthening the Youth: Be Active in Your Region")	A new tailor-made system to support the disadvantaged youth in their transition from school to vocational education and employment.
	3	The Federal model programme <i>Jugend stärken: aktiv in der Region</i> (Strengthening the Youth: Be Active in Your Region)	The establishment of the so-called Agencies of Competence to help the youth at risk to manage their transition from school to employment.

	4	The Federal programme <i>Schulverweigerung - die 2. Chance</i> (School Refusal – The Second Chance)	Prevention of dropouts.
	5	Employment support (<i>Jugendberufshilfe</i>)	As defined in SGB VIII – it is a part of youth social work provided by vocational schools, the Employment Agency and its local branches (job centres), local enterprises and volunteers (the so-called <i>Job-Paten</i>).
	6	A federal programme “ <i>Educational Chains and Coaching for the Transition to Work for Youth at risk in Germany</i> ”	It aims at the prevention of early school leaving and ensuring successful transition from school to vocational education.
ITALY	1	“ <i>Regione Basilicata</i> ” promoted an extra action to fight school dropout and to improve the educational offer, addressed to secondary schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational activity of recovery; • Activities to support disabled students; • Planning, organising and implementing counselling activities; • Planning, organising and developing work-related learning, apprenticeship and extra school activities.
MALTA	1	<i>The National Youth Employment Strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting school completion; • Encouraging educational attainment and formal validation; • Facilitating the successful reintegration into education, training or employment; • Providing the learning tools which ascertain that young people are equipped with the necessary employability skills; • Ensuring the sustainability of young people’s entry into the labour market.
POLAND	1	<i>Labour Market Policies</i> offered by Regional Labour Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career counselling • Job placement • Intervention activities • Internship • Vocational training • Apprenticeship training

	2	<i>Voluntary Labour Corps (Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy)</i>	The offer is addressed to young people aged 15-18 who, for various reasons, want to implement compulsory education or compulsory education combining study with paid work.
SPAIN	3	Cruz Roja Española ³⁴ (Spanish Red Cross)	Complements the educational system with services oriented towards an inclusive school model: providing socio-educational support, open centres, support to immigrant children.
	1	Socio-educational intervention and youth employment (Fundacion Asis)	Supports young people at risk due to lack of personal resources, family breakdown, school failure, etc, facilitating their training and labour insertion ³⁵ .
	2	Preparation to independent living for teenagers and young people (Fundacion Asis)	Work with teenagers and young people who are or have been within their Child Protection system.

To sum up, social and professional reintegration of the youth at risk of social exclusion in the partners countries using educational offers consists in the prevention of dropping out of school or facilitating this group the return to the educational system in school and non-school forms, improving the opportunities of the difficult youth to find employment and activating the youth in socially desirable areas. The above activities are implemented by providing services related to the support of specialists (pedagogues, psychologists, speech therapists etc), organising training courses in life and social skills, preventing social pathologies, organising practical vocational training and offering financial support to those who need it most.

SECTION 5

EXISTING PEER EDUCATION OFFER ADDRESSED TO THE YOUTH AT RISK

Peer coaching is a relatively new approach which is visible in the partners' reports.

In **Austria, Italy, Malta, Poland** and **Spain** the desk research has yielded no results related to peer training and peer schooling for the youth at risk of exclusion.

By contrast, in recent years various initiatives have been developed in Germany for the youth experiencing difficulties when entering vocational training or employment, with

³⁴ <http://www.cruzroja.es/donantes/proyectos-sociales.html>

http://www.cruzroja.es/portal/page?_pageid=659,12331083&_dad=portal30&_schema=PORTAL30

³⁵ <http://www.fundacionadsis.org/es/page.asp?id=47>

volunteers acting as tutors. Peer coaching is widely used as a method in teacher training³⁶. There are fewer examples of using peer coaching as a method involving the youth themselves.

The results presented by the German partner (Project “Peer3 – support, network, qualify”) seem promising. Relationships with peers are important for the youth and young adults and their personal development. This insight from the area of youth studies has started to be applied also in the education system and in the field of transition between school and work. According to this approach, the best tutor is not the one who has greater life experience or other resources, but people of the same age and similar life circumstances as the mentee, who thus have immediate understanding of their protégées.

SECTION 6

THE MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNELS TO REACH AND MAINTIAN CONTACTS WITH THE YOUTH AT RISK FOR EDUCATIONAL REASONS

Partners presented very similar proposals in relation to the establishment of channels of contact with the youth at risk:

- 1) Counselling in schools to develop solution strategies with the young people themselves through well-targeted case management, as the school is an appropriate location for counselling conversations (**Austria, Germany, Poland, Malta**);
- 2) Close cooperation with social services like open youth work, youth centres and youth welfare offices, streetwork, education assistants, although NEETs can rarely be reached through institutions (**Austria, Germany, Poland, Malta**);
- 3) Online social networks like Facebook, Twitter and Youtube (**Spain**).

For the **German** partner, the crucial question is not which channels are most effective to reach young people at risk; young people at risk can be found everywhere, and many suitable approaches have been developed to enter into a relationship with them by social workers and others engaged in the field. Rather, the important question is: Is there enough financing available to do the social work that should be done and to reach those young people that particularly need it?

The **Polish** partner also draws attention to important psychological aspects that should be taken into account when reaching out to NEETs:

1. In the process of recruitment and then keeping the participants within educational activities, it is very important to eliminate all sorts of fears related to the undertaking of social and professional activity. The key element of the process of informing about

³⁶ <http://www.nibis.de/nibis.php?menid=3454>

classes is the personal and direct contact between the organiser and potential candidates. Persons who take part in the recruitment process are often distrustful of all kinds of formalities, such as filling in questionnaires, signing declarations and other documents. Thus, particular emphasis needs to be placed on the competencies of the person in charge of the group. It should be someone the participants trust.

2. It turns out that effective ways of encouraging the activity of young people include different forms of spending time in an environment other than the one they encounter every day, which is organised, full of ideas and diverse goals. This offers them not only an opportunity to acquire new behaviour but also allows them to see themselves and the world around them in a different light.

SECTION 7

VOCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE WORKING WITH THE YOUTH AT RISK

In **Austria**, the group of professionals dealing with the youth at risk of exclusion is diverse and includes pedagogues, psychologists, teachers, social workers, public employees, and lawyers. These professions require specific training, in most cases on a university level, but there is no cohesive education aimed at work with the youth transitioning from school to work. It requires the interplay of various groups of professions to adequately inform, counsel, and support young people and to organise additional support measures if needed.

In **Germany**, there is no lack of training opportunities, and there would be enough demand by those working in the sector to participate. However, in order to attend the training, the teacher or social worker needs the support of the employer, both in terms of the training costs, and in terms of the time spent for the training, but employers – both public and private – tend to be reluctant, chiefly due to the restricted funding they get for their work from the state. The main training programmes for people working with the youth at risk are:

- University programmes focussing on social work;
- Programmes of continuing education for teachers in all federal provinces;
- Continuing education programmes for social workers.

These offers are provided by many institutions in the public and private sectors. Besides the state, important providers of training in the respective occupations are the largest institutions involved in the German welfare system, particularly the Catholic and Protestant churches with their respective social institutions such as *Diakonisches Werk*, *Caritas*, etc.

In **Italy**, people working with young people at risk are generally teachers who periodically attend refresher courses (most of them are financed by the European Union) focused on the relationships with young people at risk.

In **Malta**, most undergraduate degree courses are generic in nature and provide qualifications in a range of fields such as education, social work, youth and community studies, criminology and psychology. Most of these courses are provided through the University of Malta's Education and Social Well-Being Faculties³⁷. Degrees at postgraduate level in each of these fields may provide additional and more specialised training that could also incorporate the youth at risk.

In **Poland**, people working with the youth at risk are teachers, school pedagogues, career counsellors, staff of the labour offices and social workers. Usually, they acquire education during their studies (1st, 2nd level or postgraduate diplomas) in such fields as: pedagogy, teaching, psychology, sociology, social science. Depending on the requirements of the workplace, they supplement their education through specialised courses or taking part in the structural or international projects devoted to the topic of supporting young adults at risk. They also improve their knowledge through daily experiences at work.

In **Spain**, the profile of professionals or volunteers working with young people at risk of social exclusion may vary. A closed professional profile cannot be established, since the intervention made by each entity or institution is "unique", depending on the available resources and the characteristics of the young people addressed.

The presented research indicates that the educational bases for people working with the youth at risk are social faculties, such as psychology, pedagogy, sociology, criminology. They are often employed as career counsellors, employment agents and social workers. However, there are cases when their qualifications for work with the groups at risk are insufficient, and they have to pay for additional education.

If people working with the youth at risk are not professionals they should use the comprehensive offer of training courses and workshops to improve their knowledge and skills. Another option is a team of professionals with diverse competencies. The **Spanish** partner proposed a useful set of professional competences of people working with the youth at risk with different problems (see the table below). This approach can be adopted in the Youth Coaching programme.

Intervention	Profile
Welcome, reception	A social worker to evaluate the needs of young people and refer them to appropriate resources.
Career guidance	A career counsellor with the capacity to be understood by a person at risk, and knowledge of psychology to motivate the young in the process.
Training before work	A social educator to guide and offer advice in the personal

³⁷ <http://www.um.edu.mt/>

	development process, in which the social education is much more important than professional competences.
Vocational training	A teacher, a trainer with knowledge and skills related to qualifications. It is really important that the trainer knows how to treat the young person in order to avoid the drop-out.
Psychological support	A psychologist, in order to work with the most unmotivated young people or those with less self-confidence.
Keeping company (mentor)	A volunteer or a worker with empathy, relationship skills, psychological knowledge.

SECTION 8

EXISTING EU PROJECTS (STRUCTURAL AND INTERNATIONAL) FOCUSED ON THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUTH AT RISK

The partners have presented numerous EU financed projects within programmes such as Leonardo, Grundtvig and others, focussed on the education of young people at risk, implemented by public and private institutions, civil society associations etc. on all levels, and particularly in municipalities or counties. In addition to the ones mentioned in the previous sections, the most important examples are presented below.

Austria

1. *CHARISM – Case Management for Unemployed Youths* (<http://www.charism.eu>)

The aim of CHARISM was to develop a European model for the integration of disadvantaged young people into the labour market. With the help of the case management approach, young people are supported in looking and applying for a job.

2. *YES – Youth Employment Support* (<http://www.youth-employment-support.eu>)

Offers support to small and medium enterprises in employing and training young people who have dropped out of school or have no job training. YES was a European project carried out between November 2007 and October 2009. It built on the results of previous projects, Eurojobmediator and ADEC (Adult Educators in Companies), which had developed valuable resources for actors in employing the youth.

3. *Stop Dropout! Risk Detection and Flexible Prevention Against Learners' Dropouts* (<http://www.stop-dropout.eu>)

The primary goal of this project is to reduce dropout rates in the school system and in adult education. This project primarily addresses psychologists, coaches, teachers, and trainers, and offers these target groups various academically sophisticated and tried methods.

4. *Addressing Youth Unemployment through Soft Skills Coaching Programmes* (<http://www.stop-dropout.eu>)

The superordinate goal of this project is to support young people in their transition from school to the labour market. By acquiring knowledge, competences, and qualifications strengthening their personal development and their active participation in the job world, this project aims to facilitate the job entry. The YUSS project has developed a coaching approach which is to make this possible.

Italy

Un Ponte per l'occupazione (also defined "Reddito Ponte") launched by Regione Basilicata and financed by the European Social Fund (RSF), gives 680 young high school or university graduates a chance to gain a voucher including counselling, training and apprenticeship that could lead, at the end of the course, to being hired in an enterprise or to financing a business project. It is aimed at fighting the growing phenomenon of occupational emigration and "intellectual" unemployment, and the promotion of the enhancement of professional skills by strengthening the employability of graduates and post-graduates looking for a job.

Poland

1. Project "New Perspectives" Second Edition (["Nowe perspektywy" druga edycja](http://www.ohp.pl/index.php?id=16161)) (<http://www.ohp.pl/index.php?id=16161>)

Operational Programme Human Capital co-funded by the European Union.

The nationwide project is aimed at 1,800 people. They are young unemployed and inactive people, including learners, aged 15-24 years, having problems with social, vocational and educational adjustment, who are at risk of social exclusion. The project's goal is to facilitate their start in life.

2. Project *ETOS - Effective Training for Outsiders of the Society* (<http://www.etosproject.eu/>)

ETOS has developed a training model which will be implemented on the job, and not in classrooms, through practical, interrelations activities, as part of which entrepreneurs (small, sole proprietorship) will become adult trainers, supported by experienced tutors.

3. "Network for Mobility in Eastern and South-Eastern European Countries for Disadvantaged Apprentices - Easy Mobil", Leonardo Mobility

(<http://www.stiftung-bildung-handwerk.de/s-b-h/152-International-Education/156-Mobility/152-International-Education/156-Mobility/170-Partnerships/303,EASY-MOBIL.html>)

The aim of the project is to promote mobility among the target group, particularly to Eastern and South-Eastern European countries

Spain

1. *SALTO-YOUTH* (<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/>)

The SALTO Information Resource Centre has been established to develop and facilitate internal communication, co-operation, and information among and between the National Agencies, the SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres for the “Youth in Action” programme, the European Commission (DG EAC), and the Executive Agency, in order to maximise the efficiency of the implementation, promotion, and management of the “Youth in Action” programme.

2. YOUNEX (<http://www.younex.unige.ch/description.html>)

The result of the project is research built on the previous work on social exclusion as well as on civic and political participation. It provides an integrated approach to the study of the effects of unemployment on the exclusion of young people from the social and political spheres.

3. COPROINTEGRATION (<http://coprointegration.eu/>)

Comprehensive Program for Social and Vocational Integration of Young Workers. Lifelong Learning Programme, transfer of innovation. European Commission.

4. YUSS (<http://www.yuss-leonardo.eu>)

Addressing Youth Unemployment through Soft Skills Coaching Programmes. Lifelong Learning Programme, transfer of innovation. European Commission. This project was coordinated by ADESEMA, a partner of the MYWAY project.

As a conclusion drawn from the review of research in this section it is worth mentioning the aspect the German partner drew attention to. It is related to the effective implementation of these projects. A comparison between EU countries in this respect is difficult because of considerable differences in size and budget. The need to promote participation in EU programmes focusing on the education of young people at risk is obviously strongest in countries struck by the economic crises of the recent years. However, EU programmes to tackle educational needs of young people, e.g. in order to help them make the leap from school to work, are helpful only in so far as the economy needs labour force. The EU programmes may help on the individual level and, in individual cases, may help to get an individual integrated into the system, but all this depends on the overall economy and its demand of labour, which, in the context of a global economic crisis, is not likely to grow. The EU programmes in the field of education and social work do not create jobs, they only help to enable their participants to get one.

SECTION 9

GOOD PRACTISE (CASE STUDIES) CONCERNING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE YOUTH AT RISK

This section presents examples of good practices (one for each of the countries) chosen from among numerous examples gathered by the partners.

Austria

Vocational Training Assistance Project – Integrative Vocational Training

Vocational Training Assistance is a service supporting the youth during their integrative vocational training or apprenticeship. Since autumn 2003, young people with learning disabilities, socio-emotional problems, physical impairments, or negative compulsory education experience have the possibility to use the services of Vocational Training Assistance. This requires an existing training contract with an enterprise where the apprenticeship takes place ³⁸.

Germany

Vocational preparation year (Berufsvorbereitungsjahr)

BVJ is a public school programme available in all federal provinces (except for *Brandenburg* which has a separate solution) and it prepares young people in need to vocational education. The BVJ has been created for pupils who, after finishing school or after they drop out of school, can't find a vocational training (apprenticeship or similar) position, nor are enrolled in next-level schools, although they are still subject to compulsory schooling. The BVJ programmes are provided by vocational schools. By attending a one-year BVJ course, a person can fulfil their compulsory school obligation, and they can obtain the certificate of secondary education (*Hauptschulabschluss*). The learning outcomes are: general education, achieving basic skills, improving the ability to take a training position, and vocational orientation.

Italy

Percorsi integrati di istruzione e formazione professionale (Integrated pathways of vocational education and training)

This offer includes a course of integrated education to vocational training. The structure of the curriculum provides for the acquisition of the following skills: knowledge which can be used in the employment context (linguistic, logical/mathematical, computer, active citizenship); cognitive and relational skills considered essential for effective job performance (communicative/relational, territory and economic system); procedural knowledge and skills related to specific technical and operational work processes.

Malta

Apprenticeship Schemes

The main aim behind apprenticeship schemes is to provide apprentices with the necessary hands-on experience at an employer's establishment while receiving the underpinning knowledge from a VET Institution. Currently apprenticeships are run in conjunction with two VET Institutions: MCAST and ITS. Two apprenticeship schemes are currently available – the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS) and the Extended

³⁸ Evaluation of the Vocational Training Assistance in Upper Austria by the Public Employment Office in Upper Austria, 2009

Skill Training Scheme (ESTS). Apprenticeships are offered in a range of vocational areas. ETC's remit in administering apprenticeship schemes includes:

- Co-ordinating calls for applications
- Assisting prospective apprentices in finding a suitable training placement
- Monitoring the on-the-job training
- Co-ordination of the Trade testing process

Poland

An integrated model of introducing the disadvantaged youth into the labour market – Centrum Wspierania Rozwoju (CWR) (A Development Support Centre)

The main aim of the project was to support professional development of the wards and the disadvantaged youth, and to better prepare them to entering the labour market and starting an independent life. The integrated model of the introduction of the disadvantaged youth into the labour market included a database of training offers, job offers, apprenticeships and placements as well as a network of support for employers (representatives of regional enterprises that are socially involved and support the professional activation of the wards), and a database containing information about the CWR's wards (including their individual profiles).

Spain

Antena de riesgos (Risk antenna)

The programme addresses the problems of young people between 12 and 21 who are at a particular risk, preventing and addressing the circumstances that may become barriers to integration and bio-psychosocial development, special attention, problems with drugs. It aims at the prevention of drug consumption, sex education, and prevention of youth violence through non-formal social education.

The examples of good practices presented by the partners confirmed that a correct diagnosis of the causes of social exclusion is the basis for the provision of effective and efficient support to groups experiencing it. Effective help to socially excluded persons also requires a diagnosis of needs which determine the participation of the given person in support activities. Further, the effectiveness and success of the activities undertaken as part of the project implemented depends on the participants' acceptance of the activities carried out.

SECTION 10

INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

This part of the report was optional, and so it is worth quoting the interview conducted by the Austrian partner.

An interview with a youth coach, male, aged 32

Question:

How would you briefly describe your current work, and how long have you been doing it?

I have been a youth coach for almost two years. My main tasks are to advise and coach adolescents and young adults in terms of their work options. We offer career orientation and application workshops. Additionally, we carry out analyses of the potential of our clients, if they wish or if it becomes necessary. We want to develop personal strengths together with the clients, and also indicate where there is room for their improvement. We aim to develop specific professional perspectives for every client; after the coaching, each young person should have an idea where to get support, which project they want to pursue, which profession they wish to learn, or which school they wish to attend.

In short, after the coaching, the young person should have an idea about his or her short-term professional options.

Question:

What are your everyday challenges related to work with young people at the intersection of school, work, and profession?

There are great challenges related to work with so many different young people, with many different dispositions, on a common goal – their personal professional future. Many young people have only vague ideas about the working world, and many have only negative expectations of this unknown working world. We try to counteract these fears, and the youth can also try out internships which we co-organise.

Often there are no further projects for the youth who are not ready to undergo vocational training. There are projects succeeding Youth Coaching, but there is often a waiting list, which also means that many young people become NEETs again, because the waiting period is frustrating, and they lose connection with the support system.

Question:

Which advanced training options have you used in the past years in your current job or which you plan to use in the future?

This year I will attend a course in mental dysfunctions in the youth. I would also like to attend a case management course in the near future.

Question:

What best practice examples for the qualification, training, and support of the youth can you think of?

One project that immediately comes to mind is Tagwerk. This project, with a very low threshold, offers young people from outside the system an opportunity to participate in a vocational project on a part-time basis. The young people are employed part-time and sew bags which are sold in the adjacent gift shop. These young people are part-time employees and can earn up to

400 Euro a month extra. The philosophy at the core of the project is that young people have the possibility of earning extra money, establishing and maintaining social contacts, and having a structured day. Additionally, the project emphasises the voluntary nature of the work, which means that the young people only get paid for the time they actually work.

Question:

Which strategies do you and your team employ to reach the so-called NEETs? What are the resulting difficulties in the participants' everyday work life and what has proven successful?

We try to cooperate with youth centres and to establish contact with young people on location. At times this works very well, at others, it doesn't. We are initiating a pilot project in relation to this issue at the moment.

Additionally, we cooperate with low-threshold youth projects and projects that deal specifically with NEETs – female migrants or asylum seekers.

Question:

Do you know of any existing peer-schooling and peer-multiplier projects with regard to school dropouts and/or NEETs?

No, I don't know of any such projects.

An interview with a Vocational Training Assistant, female, aged 32

Question: How would you briefly describe your current work, and how long have you been doing it?

This is my third year as a Vocational Training Assistant. As such, I am the contact person for people in an integrative apprenticeship. Our work includes the organisation of learning support measures during and before vocational school. While students attend vocational school, we keep in touch with teachers to determine early on whether the student requires additional support. Vocational Training Assistance also organises learning support for the final examination. Generally, we are available for all participants of the apprenticeship system, and we organise further support measures where necessary.

Question:

What are your everyday challenges related to work with young people at the intersection of school, work, and profession?

There are always challenging situations, especially with regard to vocational schools. Often the communication between teachers, business, and apprentice is not easy. Similarly, not all teachers know about the integrative vocational training model.

Question:

Which advanced training options have you used in the past years in your current job or which you plan to use in the future?

I have done various courses in partial performance difficulties in the past few years. I was particularly interested in how young people can improve their cultural skills outside the compulsory education.

Question:

What best practice examples for the qualification, training, and support of the youth can you think of?

To me, integrative vocational training is a success story. This measure allowed young people who were not as proficient in school to learn a trade with some well-targeted measures, and to gather a lot of practical experience. Many young people are then employed as skilled workers in the businesses that have trained them. This fact demonstrates the sustainability of integrative vocational training.

There are a number of other projects offering integrative vocational training that have proven useful, in my opinion. We now have production schools, work assistance, and youth coaching.

Question:

Do you know of any existing peer-schooling and peer-multiplier projects with regard to school dropouts and/or NEETs?

I don't know of any project of this kind.

The interviews confirmed that despite numerous initiatives aimed at the prevention of social exclusion of young people, peer-schooling, despite promising results being effects of its use in other educational contexts, has not been implemented within the coaching practice yet.

CONCLUSIONS

The prevention of social exclusion of young people is at the moment one of the most important issues and aims of the European social policy. The Sustainable Development Strategy, a document adopted in 2001 under the Lisbon Treaty, points out that “man is the most important development factor – a human resource”, while the limiting of social exclusion and all forms of preventing this phenomenon are the priorities of the Community’s aims. Social exclusion, as one of the main social threats, the extent and manifestations of which need to be limited and effectively eliminated, is also the opposite of the phenomenon of participation and social inclusion – the main factor of development and sustainability of a civil society.

One of the most important tasks of modern education is to develop socially-oriented personalities. The ways to solve this problem focus on the development of young people’s social skills – such skills related to personal behaviour and interpersonal relationships that allow them to control and manage their lives, to develop positive adaptation to the social environment, and to introduce changes to the environment in according to their interests and needs. It is thus necessary to provide young people from the risk groups with social, psychological and educational support, and social integration.

It is particularly desirable to develop and implement the following solutions:

- 1) Psychoeducational activities aimed at the communication skills of the youth from the risk group.
- 2) The shaping of civic attitudes and socio-cultural activity among children and young people from the environments at risk.
- 3) The use of modern technologies for prophylaxis.
- 4) Prevention of aggression – the ability to solve conflict situations.
- 5) Activities aimed at the prevention of the learned helplessness syndrome as the basic activity of poverty prevention.
- 6) Prevention of media and technological exclusion.
- 7) Institutional support in relation to exclusion prevention.
- 8) Innovative ways of spending free time as forms of preventive measures.
- 9) Prevention of the marginalisation of the youth in the society of adults.

Therefore, it is important to support young people at schools in acquiring such social competences which largely increase their chances on the labour market. The suggested activities aim to both more changes in the educational process as well as social activity around schools and activity that prepares young people for their adult lives. As far as directions for social policy development are concerned, the following guidelines for the project target group are provided:

- Decreasing institution-based help in order to increase the community-based one;
- Creation of consultancy and information points for the unemployed, families with educational dysfunctions, domestic violence victims, people with disabilities, etc. There is a need to expand the current services in the field of psychological, educational and legal advice.

Peer group workshops for young people should be a potentially powerful dropout prevention tool. Participating students must be engaged in significant, well-planned, and genuine services. Secondly, they must reflect on their experience of serving others to ensure complete learning experience. These requirements are vital to successful training results. Many favourable outcomes occur in each of the following developmental areas through participation in peer group workshops activities:

- Personal growth,
- Social growth,
- Intellectual growth,
- Citizenship,
- Preparation for the world of work.

Training can be integrated into the organisational structure of a school through four progressively complex levels of implementation: extracurricular; curricular unit;

mandatory or elective courses; and school-wide integration. The essential components of training include preparation, action, and reflection. The training continuum can be implemented at all grade levels. Research has shown that the integration of service learning into the school curriculum is an extremely effective strategy in meeting the numerous developmental needs of all students. Peer group workshop is a teaching methodology that revitalises the classroom and provides the kind of learning and experience students need to lead a successful life.

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LINKS / WEB RESOURCES

Austria

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Spain

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