

Overview of the situation in the field of NEET: the case of Slovenia and Norway

Maribor, 25. 10. 2022

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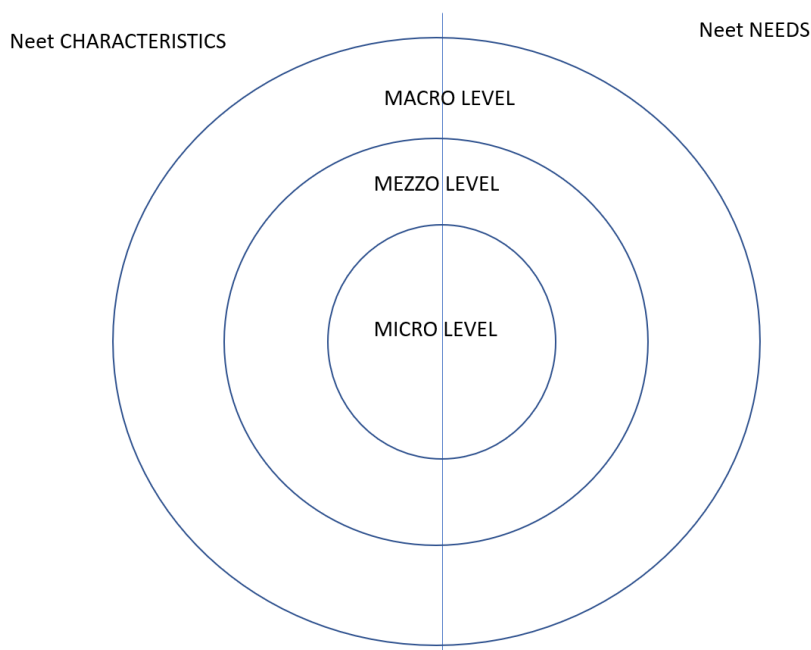
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1. Introduction

The main goal of the project “PreseNEETi se” is the empowerment and social activation of young NEETs with the main aim to contribute to the establishment of support services for NEETs. Specific objectives of the project are:

- (1) to empower and socially involve NEETs in the labour market;
- (2) include mentors in a two-tier mentoring scheme;
- (3) empower stakeholders at the systemic level with a new methodology to identify the basic characteristics and needs of the NEET population and pave the way for the concept of early intervention.

Project focuses on two main areas, namely (1) *characteristics* and (2) *needs* of the population on three levels micro (individual, idiosyncratic), mezzo (programs, organizations, communities) and macro (national and EU) levels:



One of the crucial first steps in the development of the project approach is a state-of-the-art analysis of the field. For us this step is crucial for several reasons, above all (1) to gain knowledge of existing results and examples of good and bad practices, (2) to build on already existing programmes and policies, and (3) to develop a baseline for new approach and it's

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testing. Therefore one of the first project goals consists of “ /.../ strengthening the knowledge about the challenges and effective approaches for working with NEETs, which is based on the examination and evaluation of existing documents and examples of good (and bad) practices and approaches (micro, mezzo and macro level) in the field of empowerment and social activation of NEET persons and preparation and implementation of a pre-test with NEET persons, which identifies the initial state - evaluation of their challenges that prevent their empowerment and their social activation in the labor market.”

Therefore, our analysis is designed as (1) broad and inclusive and (2) focused and exclusive at the same time. Broad review of existing policies, programmes and practices when working with NEET was crucial to gain knowledge from other national, social and cultural contexts. Selection of relevant sources was based on the broadest sense of working with NEETS on micro, mezzo and macro level. However, since our project also focuses (1) on working with NEETs in Slovenia and (2) the transfer of knowledge and experience regarding this population between Slovenia and Norway, particular emphasis was also dedicated to this area.

In our analysis we focused our attention on:

- 1.) existing policies, programmes, practices and experiences working with NEETs that enable us to gain knowledge on what works and what doesn't within this context;
- 2.) factors that either hinder, promote or are otherwise relevant when working with NEETs (particular emphasis was on micro, mezzo and macro level factors);
- 3.) characteristics of NEETs that enable us to better understand the population when tailoring innovative approach and testing;
- 4.) the detection how micro, mezzo and macro levels interact in production of positive (good practices) and negative results (bad practices).



2. Case of Slovenia

The Gini index for Slovenia in 2019 was 24.4 (World Bank, 2022) and the HDI for 2021 was 0.918 (UNDP, 2022). In 2021, GDP was €52,208 million and GDP per capita was € 24,770 (SURS, 2021). The unemployment rate is 4.2% in the second quarter of 2022 (SURS, 2022).

The majority of young people aged 15-29 in Slovenia have completed secondary school, 31% have completed primary school and 19% have a tertiary degree, but there is a significant proportion of people in this group who are still in education. Among 29-year-olds, where education is usually completed, we see that 7% have completed primary education, 52% have completed secondary education and 41% have completed higher or university education (Bajželj, 2022).

The percentage of NEET young people in Slovenia in 2022 is 7.3%, but Figure 1 shows that it has been decreasing since 2014. The only deviation was in 2020, where it slightly increased. Based on the linear prediction (dashed line), we can assume that the share will continue to decrease (Eurostat, 2022).

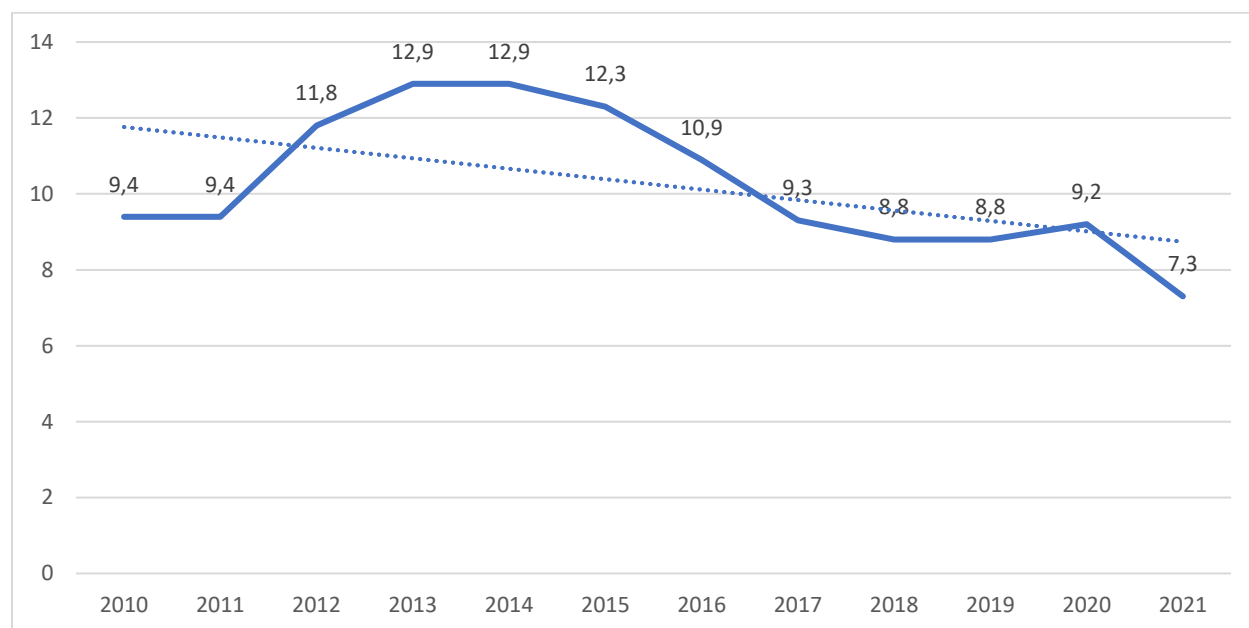


Figure 1. NEET rates in Slovenia (Eurostat, 2022).

3. Micro level

3.1 Sociodemographic characteristics

3.1.1 Gender differences in NEET status

Studies consistently show across countries that women are more likely to be in the NEET group than men. In Slovenia, for example, 56% of NEET youth were women in 2018, which is also close to the OECD average (OECD, n.d.). Norway also has higher rates of female NEETs, but the percentage is lower compared to Slovenia (20.9% in northern Norway) (Bania et al., 2019). Akktae and colleagues (2020) examined gender differences across Turkish regions and demonstrated that females are more likely to be found in NEET than males. The percentage of women in NEET ranged from 39.9% to 76.5%. Data from Poland (Fundacja Rozwoju Demokracji Lokalnej, 2020) and Croatia (Tomić, 2016) lead to a similar result, and the same is true for Austria (Bacher et al., 2014). We further examined gender differences in the NEET youth aged 15 to 29 for the year 2021 (Figure 2). Women were overrepresented in NEET status in all European countries observed, although gender gaps varied. For example, the countries with the largest gender gaps are Romania, Slovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. In Slovenia, however, the difference between gender was smaller, as it was in Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

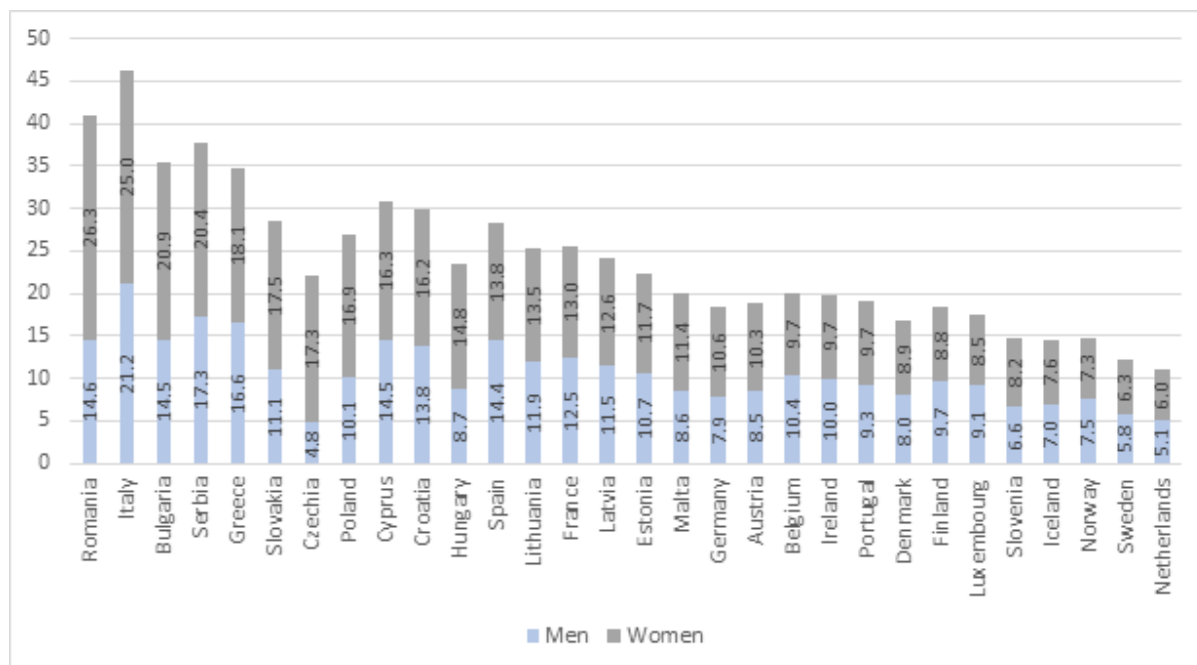


Figure 2. The gender gap in NEET status in 2021 (Eurostat, 2022).

The longitudinal gender gap in Slovenia is shown in Figure 3. It can be observed that in the last 10 years NEET youth consisted of more women than men. The gender gap has decreased

in some years, for example in 2002, 2011 and 2016. Even though the gap has decreased in the last year (2021) compared to the three previous years, we can still assume that young women are more likely to fall into NEET status than young men. Special attention for research and possible future interventions should therefore be given to young women.

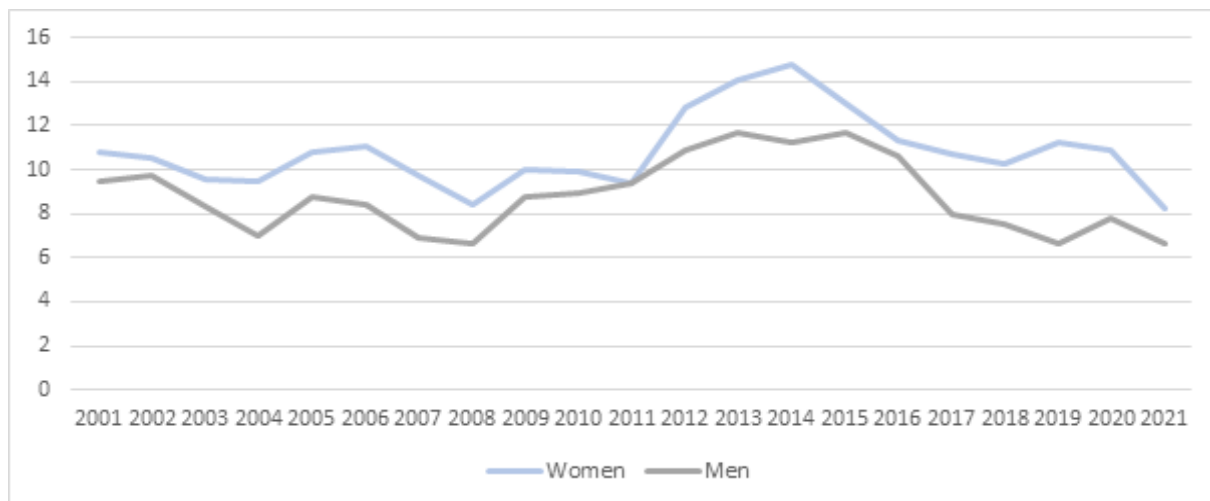


Figure 3. The gender gap of NEET youth in Slovenia longitudinally (Eurostat, 2022).

Given that women appear to be more likely to be in the NEET groups both longitudinally in Slovenia and internationally, it is important to understand the cause of these gender differences. Powell (2017) argues that these differences could be attributed to household responsibilities. Brzinsky Fay (2002) notes that women with children are most at risk and argues that this is consistent with the male breadwinner role. As far as we know, there is no Slovenian study investigating the mechanism of NEET gender differences.

3.1.2 Age differences in NEET status

According to the OECD (n.d.), rates of NEET youth increase with age; in particular, NEET rates are highest among 25–29-year-olds, followed by 20–25-year-olds. The lowest NEET rates are found in the 15–20 age group (ibid.). Higher NEET rates among older young people across Europe are to be expected as most young people go on to higher education and therefore enter the workforce later (Eurostat, 2021). Figure 4 shows the data for NEET rates in the different age groups for 2021. Most young people who are NEET in Slovenia are 25–29 years old, followed by 18–24-year-olds. Slovenia is in line with the findings from other European countries in terms of age differences. Therefore, when designing policies and interventions, special attention should be given to young people aged 18–29, especially those aged 25–29.

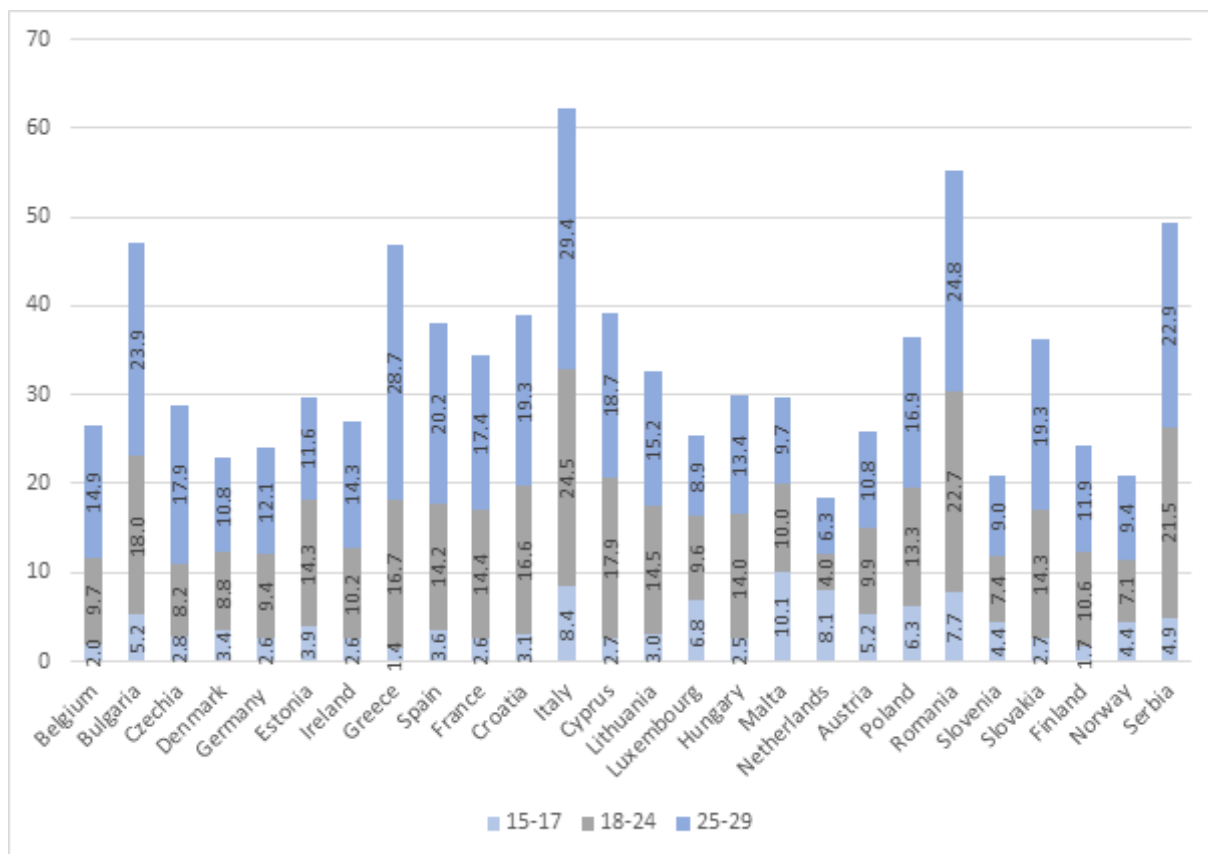


Figure 4. NEET rates across age groups in 2021 (Eurostat, 2022).

3.1.3 Migrant background as a predictor of NEET status

Ethnic or migrant background has previously been identified as a predictor of NEET membership (Bacher et al., 2017; Klug, Drobnič & Brockmann, 2019; Vancea & Utzet, 2018; Giret et al., 2020). For example, Tamesberger and Bacher (2014) found that NEET young people in Austria are more likely to have a migration background than their non-NEET peers. Furthermore, Niknami, Schroder and Wadensjo (2019) examined the characteristics of NEET youth in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden and found that in all four countries, youth with an immigrant background are more likely to be in the NEET group.

In line with previous studies, Eurostat data for 2021 show similar results (Figure 5). Young people born abroad are consistently more likely to be in the NEET group compared to native-born young people, although the differences are larger in some countries. In Slovenia, young people born abroad are significantly more at risk of becoming members of NEET (15.5%) than young people born in Slovenia (6.8%).

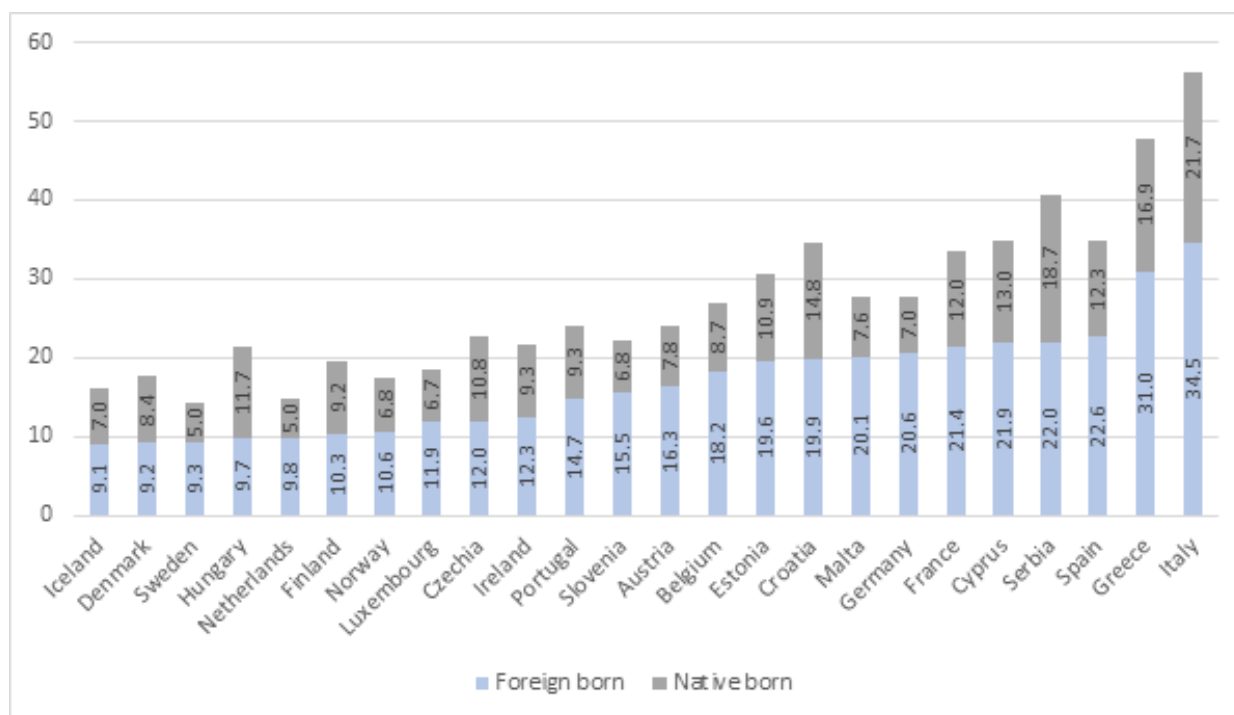


Figure 5. Differences in NEET composition in terms of migrant background in 2021 (Eurostat, 2022).

3.2 Socioeconomic determinants of NEET membership

3.2.1 Attained educational level of NEET youth

Education is an important determinant of NEET membership. Based on OECD data for Slovenia, those aged 25-29 defined as long-term NEET, are less likely to have a tertiary degree than NEET young people in the same age group, defined as short-term NEET (OECD, n.d.). These data thus suggest that those who have completed tertiary education tend to leave NEET earlier. Other European data is consistent with these findings; young people with low education (i.e., high school diploma or less) are overrepresented in NEET (Balan, 2015; Vanceta & Utzet, 2017). Furthermore, Tamesberger & Bacher (2014) found that half of Austria's NEET youth are early school leavers.

We further investigated membership in NEET based on educational attainment in European countries in 2021. Figure 6 shows that the NEET group consists mainly of young people with secondary or lower education, while young people with tertiary education are less likely to be part of the NEET group. Specifically in Slovenia, young people with a high school diploma seem to be most at risk of becoming NEET, followed by those who have not completed primary school or have completed primary school. The data is generally consistent with data from other European countries, the only exception being Greece, where those with a high school diploma were more likely to be found in the NEET.

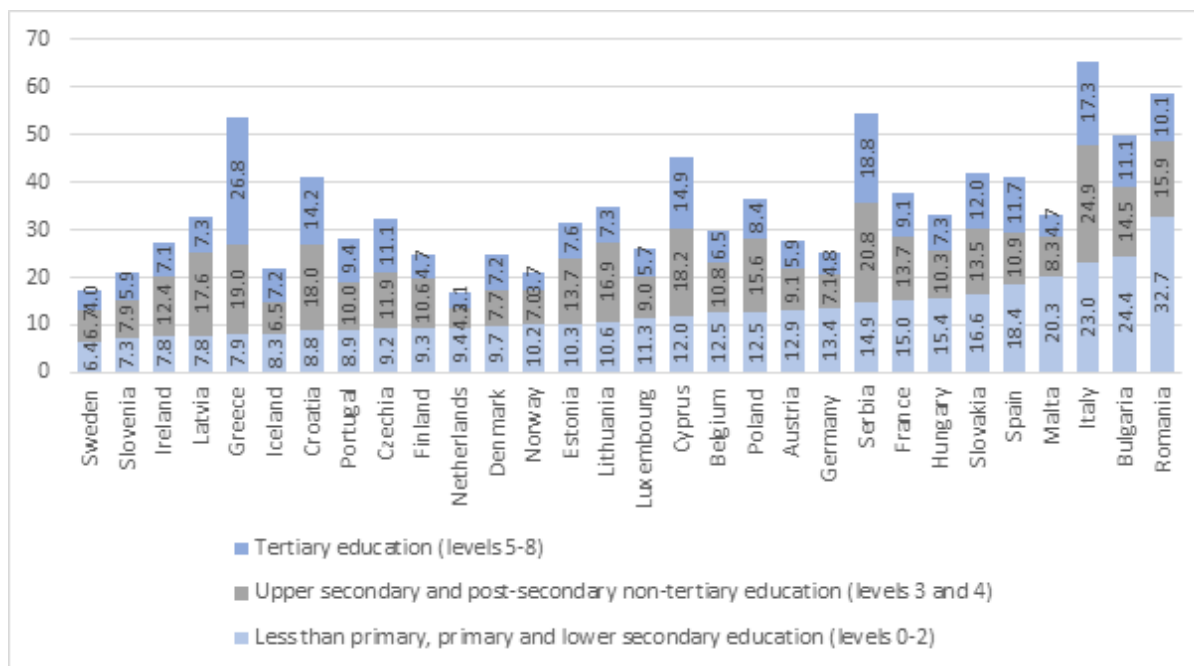


Figure 6. NEET rates based on educational attainment in 2021 (Eurostat, 2022).

In addition, the composition of NEET was examined longitudinally with regard to the level of education attained (Figure 7). Since 2014, the proportion of NEET among those with a tertiary level of education has steadily decreased. The share of young people with lower secondary education (or less) increased slightly from 2018, while the share of young people with upper secondary education increased between 2018 and 2020 and decreased in 2021. Based on longitudinal data, young people with lower levels of education (i.e. high school diploma or less) should be given special consideration when designing policies and interventions in Slovenia.

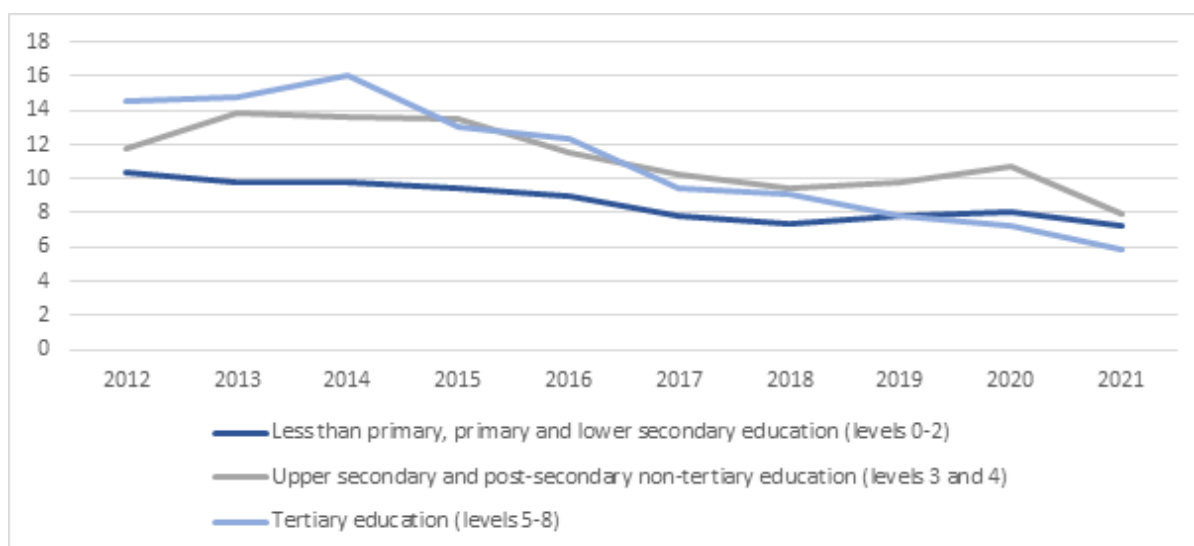


Figure 7. NEET rates based on educational attainment on a longitudinal basis in Slovenia (Eurostat, 2022).

3.2.2 Family's socioeconomic background and NEET status

Previous studies have confirmed that NEET youth are more likely to have parents with lower levels of education (Pitkänen et al., 2019; Vancea & Utzet, 2018; Tamesberger & Bacher, 2017). Giret and colleagues (2020) examined the characteristics of NEET youth in France and found that completed tertiary education of the mother was an important factor for finding a job or returning to study. Significant differences in parental education and NEET status were also confirmed in Italy; those with parents with higher education accounted for 13% of NEET, while those with parents with lower education accounted for more than 30% (Quintano, Mazzocchi & Rocca, 2018). In addition, parents of NEET youth were found to have lower expectations for their children's educational achievements (Pitkänen et al., 2019).

Lower household income was also found to be a predictor of membership in NEET (Pitkänen et al., 2019; Vancea & Utzet, 2018). For example, Turkish NEETs from economically well-situated households had a lower probability of falling into NEET status (Erdogan et al., 2017). In Finland, the proportion of NEET youth was four times higher in the lowest quintile of income compared to the top quintile (Pitkänen et al., 2019). Furthermore, a study from the UK found that 65% of NEET young people were from a low social class background, compared to 29% of those not in the NEET group (Goldman Mellor et al., 2016).

Parental (un)employment is also an important determinant of NEET status (Zuccotti & O'Reilly, 2018; Susanli, 2016; Vancea & Utzet, 2018). Pitkänen and colleagues (2019) found that experiencing parental unemployment for several years in childhood increased the likelihood of NEET membership in Finland. Zuccotti and O'Reilly (2018) also confirmed that unemployment contributes to a higher probability of becoming NEET. However, the authors emphasised that the impact of parental employment status can vary by ethnic background. In France, it was found that only 39% of NEET young people reported that both parents were employed (Giret et al., 2020).

Family structure should also be mentioned. The odds of those living with a single, working parent are likely to be higher than those living with a single, unemployed parent, although they are likely to be better off than those growing up with a working parent (Zuccotti & O'Reilly, 2018). Moreover, being NEET was twice as common among those living with a single parent as among those living with both parents (Pitkänen et al., 2019).

3.3 Psycho-social characteristics of NEET youth

3.3.1 Health

Young people belonging to the NEET group are more likely to have suicidal behaviour and psychiatric disorders (Benjet et al., 2012). In the UK, for example, young people belonging to the NEET group were found to be more likely to have co-occurring mental health problems (60%) compared to non-NEET peers (35%) (Goldman Mellor et al., 2016). This is also confirmed by findings from Australia (Rodwell et al., 2017) and Canada (Henderson et al., 2017). In addition, severe anxiety and moderate or severe depressive symptoms have been found to be common in older NEET youth (Basta et al., 2019). Veldman and colleagues (2022) investigated whether depressive symptoms affect NEET status differently by gender and age group. Their study showed that for boys aged 14 to 21 years, depressive symptoms particularly increased the likelihood of NEET, while for girls such an effect was only detected at the age of 18 years. In Slovenia, indicators of poorer mental health have not been shown to differ drastically by NEET status, and the prevalence ratio between NEET and non-NEET youth is lower compared to other OECD European countries (OECD, n.d.).

In addition to mental health, the role of physical health is also worth mentioning. In Slovenia, the proportion of NEETs among young people reporting health problems is three times higher, although it is important to note that the NEET status itself can cause health problems (OECD, n.d.). Rasalingam and colleagues (2021) examined the role of long-term conditions, including inflammatory bowel disease, diabetes, and epilepsy, and concluded that long-term conditions increase the likelihood of NEET membership.

Some studies also indicate drug use among NEET young people. In the group of young NEETs, more of them reported alcohol dependence (17%) than among non-NEETs (12%); there is an even greater difference between the two groups in the use of cannabis. In the NEET group there were 16%, compared to the non-NEETs (3%) (Goldman Mellor et al., 2015). Furthermore, in Australia, young people who regularly use cannabis were found to have a higher likelihood of NEET status, but at the same time no evidence was found of a link between alcohol use and NEET status. Juberg & Schjøll Skjefstad (2018), however, point out that there is little epidemiological evidence on the effects of alcohol and drug consumption on NEET status.

3.3.2 Relationships

Another important factor that may be related to the status are their relations, although the literature on this topic is sparse and not available for the Slovenian context. Nevertheless, Alfieri and colleagues (2015) examined the impact of different aspects of family relationships on NEET status and found that when young women had the freedom to explore their environment (e.g. parental support in decision-making,



freedom to express their own opinions), this lowered their likelihood of NEET status. On the other hand, young men who did not grow up in an environment where autonomy (e.g. encouragement to build their own identity) was promoted, but in a 'sheltered' environment, had an impact on their NEET status. The authors conclude that *"the more young people are rendered passive and kept in the family nest, the less they will be able to confront the developmental tasks associated with their phase of the life cycle, and, as a result, could end up in the condition of NEET"* (Alfieri et al., 2018, p. 318). Furthermore, Gutiérrez-García and colleagues (2017) found that NEET adolescents are less likely to have good quality relationships not only with their family but also with friends.

3.3.3 Trust

In a broader social context, NEETs' trust in institutions is also worth mentioning. Polish NEETs, for example, are less likely to be active in terms of their participation in social and political life and also report lower levels of trust in public institutions (Smoter, 2021). Erdoğan and colleagues (2017) found that NEETs in Turkey express lower levels of generalized trust (i.e. trust in people) compared to non-NEET youth. These findings were also confirmed in Italy, where NEETs showed lower levels of generalized and institutional trust, as well as lower levels of social participation (Alfieri et al., 2018).

3.3.4 Aspirations

It is important to understand how NEET youth perceive their future and what are their aspirations. Previous research shows that NEETs are pessimistic about their chances of getting ahead in life (Goldman Mellor et al., 2016). Such negative views of future are also more prevalent among NEETs compared to students and employees. In addition to pessimistic expectations of the future, NEET young people appear to have difficulty perceiving themselves as adults (Parola & Marcionetti, 2022). Interestingly, Keating and Melis (2021) found that NEET adolescents are only more pessimistic compared to their peers if they are highly individualistic.

Based on the literature review, we developed a conceptual framework for the characteristics of NEET young people at the individual level (Figure 8). The young people in Slovenia who are most likely to be at risk of becoming NEET are women, those who are between 25 and 29 years old, were born abroad and report poor health. In terms of education, those who completed high school or less are more likely to have fallen into NEET status. Parental background, mental health, relationships, trust, and aspirations are also important determinants when it comes to NEET youth, however, to our knowledge there is no data in Slovenia. Nevertheless, we assume that the findings from previous research also apply to Slovenian NEETs, as the studies confirmed the same results in different national contexts. We

therefore assume that when addressing NEETs in Slovenia, special attention should also be paid to

those with a disadvantaged family background (e.g. parents with lower educational level, low household income, single parents). Poor mental health and pessimistic views of the future should be taken into account, as well as low trust in institutions. The latter could be an important obstacle for state employment services in dealing with NEETs.

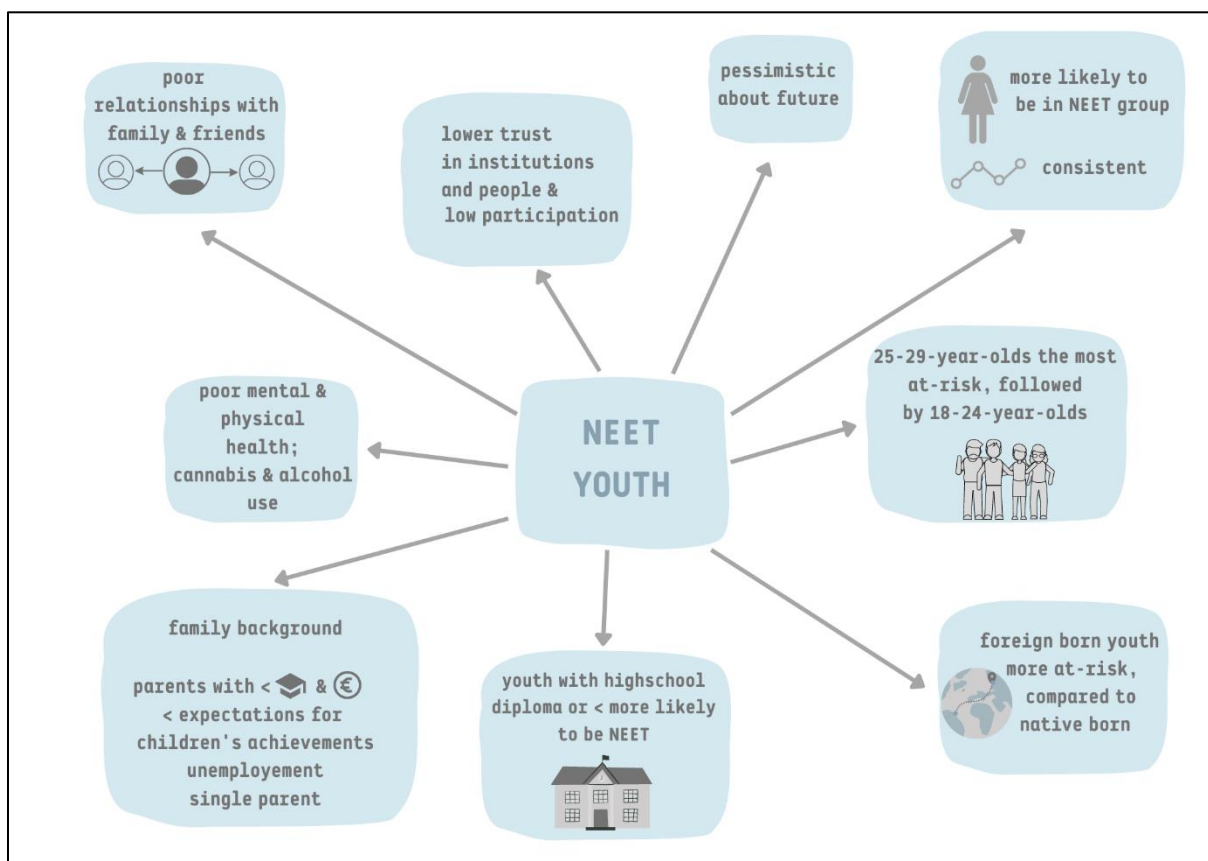


Figure 8. Conceptual framework of Slovenian NEET's characteristics.

3.4 Duration of NEET status

In general, Eurofond, which studies NEETs across Europe, divides NEET duration into two groups: 1) short-term unemployed who are unemployed for less than 12 months and 2) long-term unemployed who are unemployed for more than 12 months. In 2013, an estimated 29.9% of Slovenian young people were unemployed in the short term and 29.6% were unemployed in the long term (Eurofond, 2016). In 2014-2017, the number increased as about 50% of NEETs remained in this status for 12 months or longer (i.e. long-term NEET) (OECD, n.d.). Moreover, long-term NEETs are more likely to be between 25 and 29 years old. Further evidence shows that short-term NEET can contribute significantly to long-term NEET. In the UK, 75% of young

people who have experienced NEET for three months have been NEET for 12 months or more (Impetus, 2019).

Contini, Filandri and Pacelli (2018) have proposed a more detailed classification of NEET status duration which is presented in Table 1. Based on their classification, 46% of Italian youth experienced NEET; more specifically, a small proportion experienced "episodic NEET" (9%), while a larger proportion fell into NEET status for at least 12 months (40%). 10% of young people were in "always NEET" status (ibid.).

Table 1. NEET status duration.

NEET status			Duration	
Never employed)	NEET	(mainly	Less than 3 months	
Never student)	NEET	(mainly	Less than 3 months	
Episodic NEET			3 to 11 months	
One long NEET episode			12 to 36 months (one spell)	
Frequently NEET			12-36 months (two or more spells)	<i>Long term NEET</i>
Always NEET			37 months or more	

Source: Contini, Filandri and Pacelli (2019).

Contini, Filandi and Pacelli (2019) therefore emphasise the important role of NEET status persistence. This is crucial to consider as trajectories of NEET can have critical effects on e.g. health-related variables (Manhica et al., 2022). In particular, young people belonging to the 'late increase NEET trajectory', characterised by a persistent increase in the likelihood of being NEET, were found to be twice as likely to have a substance use disorder (ibid.). Giret, Guégnard & Joseph (2020) have also provided a more detailed categorisation of NEETs in terms of duration of status to better explore their determinants, etc. In summary, we argue that NEET status duration should be categorised in more detail, i.e. go beyond the general short- and long-term categorisation, as detailed categorisation can provide researchers and stakeholders with a more thorough characterisation and possible outcomes for each group.

3.5 NEET needs

To adapt interventions effectively, it is crucial to understand not only the characteristics of NEET but also their perceived needs. The Youth in transition project (Lamschek-Nielsen, 2020) conducted focus groups with NEETs in Slovenia and highlighted their needs. In the following section we summarise their findings.



NEETs expressed their need to achieve their **goals and the way to get there**. Their goals were found to be realistic and reasonable to achieve, both in the short and long term. In addition, it was found that their goals are usually associated with **happiness in life** - for example, a normal job, stable social relationships, happiness in the family. Next, they expressed their **motivation**, which was mostly linked to activities in physical and social environments where they **feel safe and make new friends**.

It is also important that the NEET youth express respect and trust. More specifically, NEETs stressed that they need to be **respected for who they are**, not only by their primary professional contacts (such as counsellors, etc.), but also by the people around them in their activities - at school, in companies, in courses, etc. In addition, NEETs expect **trust and confidentiality from professionals**. They also expect professionals to **assess their competences clearly and realistically**. From the interviews it appears that stable and lasting relationships between NEETs and the professionals working with them are very important for counselling and supporting NEETs.

4. Mezzo level

We were interested in how local organizations understand NEET youth and what are their specific projects, programmes, and policies. We first present an overview of programmes. Results and outcomes are added where the data was available.

Ljudska univerza Ptuj

Ljudska univerza Ptuj is a public institution participating in an international project supporting NEET youth (2018-2021). More specifically, the project focuses on counsellors working with NEET youth, with an emphasis on their training, methods, approaches and competences that they can use in their work to best support NEET youth. In the description of the project, special attention is given to young people who have problems with anxiety and other mental illnesses, as these can additionally prevent them from entering the labour market.

Univerza na Primorskem

Univerza na Primorskem is a public higher education institution participating in the international project Social NEET (2019-2021). The aim of the project is primarily to reintegrate young NEETs into the labour market. The project focuses on NEET young people aged between 18 and 29. The problem of lack of skills and work experience, incentives and entrepreneurial



culture among NEET young people has been identified. The project therefore seeks to create socially innovative entrepreneurial solutions and employment of young people in social enterprises.

Štajerski tehnološki park

From 2019-2021, Štajerski tehnološki park participated in the programme, which focused primarily on people with disabilities and members of ethnic minorities who may face discrimination from both educational institutions and employers. They have developed a tool that includes online and on-site training, staff exchanges and mentoring services. The focus is on young people who come from a rural environment, who have not graduated. The tool aims to address the skills shortage and increase interest in entrepreneurship and employment in the agricultural sector.

PiNA

PiNA is a cultural and educational association based in Koper. In their project called "Social Innovators" they focus on young people who have a university degree in social sciences and humanities, as they are a risk group for adequate and quality employment. From this point of view, the need to create jobs in the sectors of the economy that would be related to their education was identified. The project also promotes the low level of employment in the non-governmental sector.

Zavod Bob

Zavod Bob, based in Ljubljana, deals with informal education, youth street work, cultural activities, active participation of young people in society and cultural activities. In 2018, within the framework of international cooperation, Zavod Bob participated in a training entitled "*Krepitev virov moči NEET mladih – Ulično delo z mladimi*", which was primarily intended for the training of youth workers. Specifically, the training taught youth workers the concepts of community work, emancipation, networking and social marketing. There was also an emphasis on a needs or talent based approach.

Ljudska univerza Velenje

The so-called "Usmeritev zaposlitev" is programme for vocational training in information technology. The programme focuses mainly on young people between the ages of 17 and 29 who belong to vulnerable groups, e.g. Roma, migrants or refugees, young people who have dropped out of the education system, come from economically disadvantaged families, etc.



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The aim of the project is to help young people find a job in the field of information and communication technology, as this is a fast growing field.

Andragoški center Republike Slovenije

PUMO - Project-based learning for young adults is a program in the field of non-formal education. The central goal of the program is to introduce young people to and integrate them into the labor market. Based on a career plan, the program helps participants develop professional goals while acquiring skills and experience that are important for successful entry into the labor market. The Andragogic Center cooperates with the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia within the framework of the PUMO program. The program is implemented by contractors in all regions.

Center Republike Slovenije za poklicno izobraževanje

The project "Mladi na prehodu" aims to support counsellors from different fields who help NEET young people between 15 and 29 in their work. The project is based on an analysis of the needs of young people and their counsellors. Based on the needs identified, different supportive contents were developed. Special attention was paid to cross-sectoral cooperation between the counsellors, an individual counselling approach and the professional maturity of the young people. Based on the needs of the young people, it was found that NEET young people have goals that they can achieve and that they are willing to participate in educational activities if they see them as meaningful. The results of the project show that it is important for young people to be actively involved in creating solutions. It has also been shown that NEET young people are motivated to achieve their goals, especially if their motivation is triggered by the environment.

MC Trbovlje, RRA Zasavje, RA Kozjansko, MC Zagorje ob Savi, MC Šmocl Laško in Katapult Trbovlje

The Ključ project was implemented from 2016 to 2018 in the Zasavska and Savinjska regions. Its main objective was to improve employability and employment of young people aged 15-29, including vulnerable groups; NEET youth. In general, the project relied on youth work methods (mainly soft skills training), specific training (response to the needs of the business community) and solving the challenges of enterprises with the aim of employing NEET young people. 149 young people from the Zasavska and Savinjska regions were involved in the Ključ project, of whom at least 51 got a job opportunity.



Andragoški zavod – Ljudska univerza Velenje

The European project CORE - evaluation of competences for reintegration, funded by Erasmus+, is concerned with the development of the ProfilPASS tool as an instrument for evaluating competences. It is aimed at counsellors working with NEET young people, highlighting NEETs potential and interest in developing competences and helping them to get training or a job. The project provided a number of different tools to support the counseling process, tools for career guidance and tools to strengthen and improve the competences of NEET young people. Several tools are offered specifically to improve skills. For example, some are related to improving digital skills, entrepreneurship, soft skills, etc.

EPEKA

Between 2016 and 2018, the Maribor-based association EPEKA implemented the project "*Mladi z manj priložnostmi s pomočjo mladinskega dela do zaposlitve*", in which they linked youth work, social entrepreneurship and Roma minority inclusion by focusing on the education and training of NEET young people with various forms of activities in which they used informal education to acquire key competences necessary to enter employment or self-employment.

MC Idrija

In 2020, a 15-day project focused on improving the knowledge, skills and competences that are important for entering work. The competences of young people in their employment and/or entrepreneurship were related to: the importance of communication, individual social responsibility, youth work, recognition of competences, etc. The project referred to young people between the ages of 15 and 29.

Mestna občina Ljubljana

In the Strategy of Ljubljana Strategy for Youth 2015-2024, the Municipality of Ljubljana adopted several measures to promote the employment and emancipation of young people. In particular, the following are worth mentioning:

- A measure aimed at training young school leavers, through which they acquire relevant skills and the possibility of mentoring in companies whose founder is MOL. The consortium of employers created will represent mentors and possible future employers for young school drop-outs and long-term unemployed up to 29 years old;
- A measure to provide internships for high school and university students in the municipality, public institutions and companies founded by MOL.



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Based on the review of the above programmes and projects, we extracted the project objectives as a guide to the organisations' understanding of the needs of NEET youth. We found that the organisations (most of them are non-governmental organisations) focus on improving the skills and work experience of NEET youth, which is an important factor for successful entry into the labour market. Interestingly, the second most common need aims to train counsellors working with NEET on their methods,

knowledge and skills. Local organisations also seem to consider 'entrepreneurial culture' as an important need for NEET young people. Specifically, self-employment and social entrepreneurship were mentioned. Finally, information and communication skills were also identified as a need to be improved or acquired.

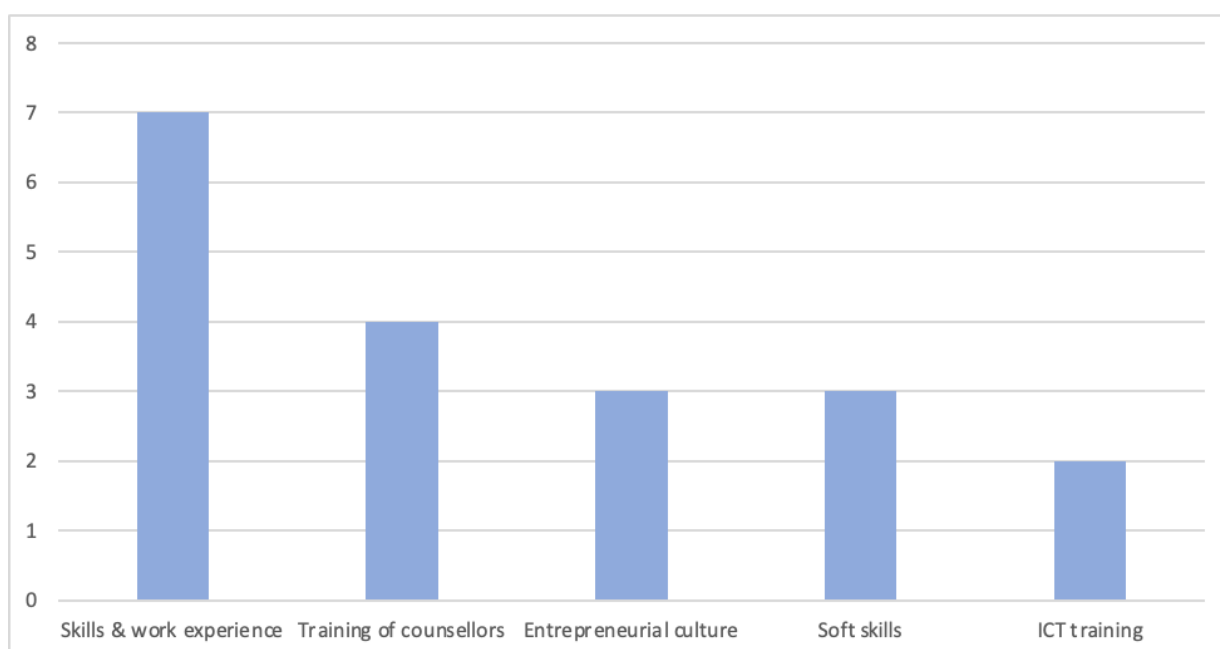


Figure 8. Needs of Slovenian NEETs as perceived by local organizations.

In a similar fashion we extracted organisation's perceptions and understanding of NEET's characteristics. We found that organisations associate Slovenian NEETs with:

- having mental health issues (anxiety and depression were mentioned specifically),
- having disability,
- belonging to an ethnic minority,
- coming from rural environment,
- are school-leavers,
- coming from economically disadvantaged families.



5. Macro level

In 2013, the National Assembly adopted a resolution on the **National Programme for Youth 2013-2022**, which is aligned with the country's basic development documents, such as the Development Strategy of Slovenia. NEET Youth is recognised and addressed in the programme. The national programme itself covers several areas, namely: 1. education, 2. employment and entrepreneurship, 3. living conditions of young people, 4. health and well-being, 5. the importance of the youth sector and 6. culture, creativity, and media.

It is worth noting that the national programme covers areas that are particularly important for NEET young people. In the area of improving young people's skills, it covers the following priority areas that would ensure easier entry of young people into the labour market:

1. creating a comprehensive recognition of informal forms of knowledge and experience and integrating formal and informal education,
2. ensuring conditions for increasing the proportion of young people who complete their studies and promoting the shortening of study time,
3. preventing early drop-out from vocational and technical secondary education,
4. improving the quality of education at all levels,
5. establishing a comprehensive system of lifelong career guidance for young people aged 15-29.

The **Youth Guarantee Programme 2016-2020** also acknowledges the problem of NEET young people and points out that many of them (about 9,000 out of 18,000) are not registered in the register of the unemployed at the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia. The programme also presented the characteristics of young people who need more help to enter the labour market: 1) young people without vocational training, 2) first-time job seekers, 3) young women who have completed higher education and 4) long-term unemployed young people who have been registered as unemployed for at least 12 months. The main objective of the programme is to quickly activate young people in the labour market and prevent long-term unemployment.

The programme emphasises the role of youth organisations in working with NEET young people. Since a large part of young NEETs are not registered with the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia, it is more difficult for them to approach them. It is therefore important



that the activities to reach this group of young people are carried out by the youth sector. The Youth Guarantee covers several areas of youth issues, but here we highlight reforms aimed at activating young people in the labour market, with four systemic measures planned:

1. strengthening of counselling work with young people at the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia (training of counsellors, etc.),
2. prevention and detection of precarious work in the labour market (raising awareness among young people, strengthening monitoring services, etc.),
3. international mobility of young people and 4. information and education about the guarantee for young people (information about opportunities, etc.).

The programme **I'm training** (2020-2023) is implemented by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia and aims at on-the-job training, whereby employers are reimbursed for the training costs of the unemployed, but the latter must be registered as unemployed at the Employment Agency. The programme envisages the placement of about 5,500 unemployed people in jobs with employers from all over Slovenia. The training with employers is expected to last three months. At the same time, within the framework of the Plan for Recovery and Resilience of the Republic of Slovenia - Labour Market, Measures to Reduce the Consequences of Negative Structural Trends, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia also implements the measure **Faster Entry of Young People into the Labour Market**. The latter offers subsidies for the employment of unemployed young people up to 25 years of age for permanent employment in the amount of 5,400 euros to 8,820 euros (300 to 490 euros per month). The employment relationship must be for full weekly working hours. Persons with disabilities who can only work part-time can be employed for a shorter weekly working time. It is planned to employ 4,000 unemployed young people from all over Slovenia.

6. Synthesis

First, we provide an analysis of the characteristics and the needs at the micro level. Regarding the characteristics, we find that women are more represented in the NEET group than men, which has been constant in Slovenia for 20 years. However, it is not entirely clear why such a difference between the gender exists, so it is necessary to establish two things: 1) how women perceive their position - i.e., what are their barriers to entering the labour market and 2) what are their needs - i.e., how can we help them overcome these barriers. We also find that the problem of NEET is most pronounced among 25-29-year-olds. Again, it is not entirely clear what their needs are. Therefore, the first step is to identify them.



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Young people who were not born in Slovenia and those who have completed secondary education or less are at particular risk of becoming members of NEET. So are young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged families and those with mental health problems, e.g., depression and anxiety, and those with poorer physical health. In the case of mental health, it is not clear whether it is the predictor of NEET status or whether it is NEET status that influences mental health. It also appears that NEET young people are somewhat socially isolated or have worse relationships with family and friends, they are also more pessimistic about their future and more distrustful of institutions and people, and at the same time they are also less socially and politically active. In Slovenia, about 50% of NEET young people are those who stay in NEET long-term, i.e., at least 12 months. It is therefore important to focus on the needs of NEET young people as early as possible, because it seems that short-term NEET status has a significant impact on long-term. In other words, we believe that early identification of needs is key to a successful transition from NEET.

After examining the micro level, we conclude that the characteristics are relatively well known, but that there is a significant lack of knowledge in identifying the needs. After reviewing the literature, we found only one study that qualitatively investigated what young NEET Slovenians understand as their needs. Roughly speaking, they refer to their goals and the need to know how to achieve them. In terms of motivation, the need for a safe environment where they can make new friends was highlighted - i.e., the need for social capital. Also highlighted were the needs related to working with counsellors, etc., where trust and reliability play a big role.

Some of the identified needs at the micro level are thus consistent with the identified characteristics, and we conclude the following:

- a. The need to achieve goals may be associated with a pessimistic view of the future. It is possible that they need help in shaping their own path because of their own perception of a pessimistic future.
- b. The need to lead a happy life, both privately (a happy family life, stable relationships) and professionally. This need may also be associated with a pessimistic view of the future and perhaps lower social capital (poor relationships with family and friends).
- c. The need for trust and respect. This need may be associated with the characteristics of low trust in institutions and people.

Considering the interaction of micro-characteristics and micro-needs, we can conclude that there is an overlap, but it is necessary to point out that regarding needs there is only one study available for Slovenia and that certain characteristics are derived from the foreign literature,



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where cross-national consistency was shown but no data were available for Slovenia. We therefore conclude that when developing interventions and understanding the needs of NEET young people, it is essential to additionally study the characteristics of young people and additionally study the needs of young people.

We were also interested in the interaction between 1. the mezzo and micro levels, 2. the macro and micro levels and 3. the mezzo and macro levels. First, we present the findings for the interaction between the micro and mezzo levels. Based on the review of local programmes, projects, etc., we find that the organisations are mostly good at identifying the characteristics of NEET young people or that they are consistent with the findings of previous research. Although not all organisations clearly specified their target groups beyond the status of NEET and the age range of 15-29, some did. For example, some organisations targeted young people who have mental health problems or a disability, come from a rural background, have an ethnic or minority background, left school early and come from economically disadvantaged families.

We assume that the characteristics are well known, but not all organisations take them into account or perhaps only consider one of the characteristics (e.g., only youth from a rural environment). As the youth of NEET are a very heterogeneous group, it would be sound if projects cover a wider range of young people (i.e., those who meet more than one of the above criteria), unless the focus is on reaching only a subpopulation of NEETs. Based on empirical data on the needs of Slovenian NEET youth, we note a shortcoming. According to most organisations, they recognise the need to improve work experience and knowledge, entrepreneurial culture, soft skills and ICT skills. Training of counsellors is otherwise in line with the identified needs. The relationship with them at the micro level has been found to be extremely important, so it makes sense to strengthen the counsellors' work skills, which should be adapted to the needs of the NEET youth.

In the interaction between macro and micro levels, we find that at the macro level, the characteristics of young NEETs are not particularly emphasised. Resolutions and programmes refer to young people in general, recognising and highlighting the NEET group, but their characteristics are not elaborated. Needs, which are logically structural in nature, are addressed in more detail. In terms of support for NEET young people, the macro level focuses mainly on employers, in the form of financial incentives and rewards that could contribute to higher employment. Informal knowledge is also recognised as important and taken into account as much as possible. At the macro level, we would consider the Youth Guarantee Program as an example of good practise, covering some subgroups of NEET young people,



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recognising the importance of working with counsellors and indirectly addressing the problem of mistrust of institutions. It was pointed out that many young people are not registered as unemployed, which makes it more difficult to reach them, and the importance of working with youth organisations, i.e. at the mezzo level was emphasised.

Regarding the macro and mezzo level, we particularly emphasise the importance of cooperation between both levels, as there is a risk that NEET young people distrust official institutions, as recognised in the Youth Guarantee Programme. At the mezzo level, we found cooperation with the macro level in some projects and programmes; this was mainly cooperation with the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia.

Based on the interaction of characteristics and needs on the one hand and the cooperation of all three levels on the other, we make the following key recommendations:

1. A more detailed study of the characteristics of NEET young people in Slovenia, which is crucial for knowing the target group and to design specific measures, interventions and programmes.
2. A more detailed study of the needs of NEET young people, as we lack knowledge about them. Especially with qualitative methods we can find out from the young people themselves what their needs are.
3. When planning interventions, programmes, measures, etc., it is necessary to understand the interaction between characteristics and needs; as it is a very heterogeneous group, this way we can find out which needs are general and which are specific to the subpopulation. This would make it possible to develop very targeted interventions.



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8. Case of Norway – general information

In this chapter, our aim is to present some facts and figures on national or macro level in Norway, to better understand the context or situation relevant to NEETs in our country, and to make it possible to compare this with similar facts and figures in Slovenia.

8.1 GDP - Gross Domestic product

Norway: Population 5.4 million, GDP in USD per capita: 79 163, Household debt: 240.9 % of disposable income, Government debt: 49.3 % of GDP, Average wage 53 078.8 USD, employment rate 77.9 % of working population, Long-term unemployment rate 24.1 % of unemployed, Self-employment rate 4.7 % of employment. (OECD, June 2022)

Slovenia: Population 2.1 million, GDP in USD per capita: 43767, Household debt: 52.9% of disposable income, Government debt: 88.9% of GDP, Average wage 44084.1 USD, employment rate 73% of working population, Long-term unemployment rate 41.1% of unemployed, Self-employment rate 14% of employment.

Unemployment rates in Norway vs Slovenia are: Norway 3.2% and Slovenia 5.5 in Aug 22. (Trading economics, 2022). According to NRK, the government expects that unemployment in Norway in 2023 will be 1.7%. (NRK, 2022).

8.2 HDI - Better Life Index

Both Norway and Slovenia perform well in many dimensions of well-being relative to other countries in the Better Life Index. Norway outperforms the average in jobs, work-life balance, education, health, environmental quality, social connections, civic engagement, safety, and life satisfaction. Slovenia outperforms the average in education, safety and social connections. It underperforms average in income and life satisfaction. (OECD BLI 2022)

In Norway, the average household net-adjusted disposable income per capita is USD 39 144 a year, more than the OECD average of USD 30 490 a year. In Slovenia, the average household net-adjusted disposable income per capita is USD 25 250 a year, less than the OECD average of USD 30 490 a year. In terms of employment of people aged 15 to 64, about 75% in Norway and about 71 % in Slovenia have a paid job, both countries above the OECD employment average of 66%. 82% of adults aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education in Norway, 90 % in Slovenia. The OECD average is 79%.

8.3 Income inequality in Norway and Slovenia

The Gini coefficient is based on the comparison of cumulative proportions of the population against cumulative proportions of income they receive, and it ranges between 0 in the case of perfect equality and 1 in the case of perfect inequality. (OECD, Economic snapshots 2022)

Gini coefficient 2021 / latest show that income inequality in Norway and Slovenia are at approximately the same level: Norway: 0,26 and Slovenia: 0,25.

8.4 Welfare in Norway

The Norwegian welfare state is very extensive and is characterised by universal welfare rights, which means that everyone has an equal right to welfare benefits (known as The Scandinavian Welfare model). (Store Norske Leksikon)

In Norway, the welfare state is largely financed through general taxation, i.e. taxes on income, consumption and wealth that are not directly linked to welfare benefits. Most public services are free or only subject to a small deductible. Norwegians with high and low incomes have the same access to public health services, education and so on.

A relatively high GDP per capita in Norway provides good possibilities or a good base to give priority to invest in keeping up and developing further the qualities of the welfare state, including financing new actions for NEETs.

8.5 Micro level

Our main focus in this chapter is to present some distinctive characteristics of the NEET population in Norway.

First, the Norwegian definition of NEETs is presented, then the number of young adults who are part of this group, as well as some risk factors linked to ending up in the NEETs category in Norway. Then various socio-democratic, socio-economic and psychosocial characteristics of NEETs are presented, and the chapter ends with a presentation of young NEETs' own narratives and needs that have been observed in research.

8.5.1 NEETs in Norway – definition and number

In Norway, we define and refer to the group of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 who are outside work, education, and training at any given time as NEETs. The definition coincides with the OECD's definition of the same group. (OECD, 2018 and Meld. St. 32 (2020-2021)) It is considered normal for young people to drop out of school, work and other training for a period of time, and then be included in school or working life. In Norway, the proportion



of young NEETs has remained stable over the past 15 years, and the total proportion of NEETS in Norway is low compared to OECD countries. (Rapport. St. 32 (2020- 2021) p. 35).

Figure 1 (Aamodt, 2022) below shows the annual number of NEETs in Norway in 2006 – 2021.

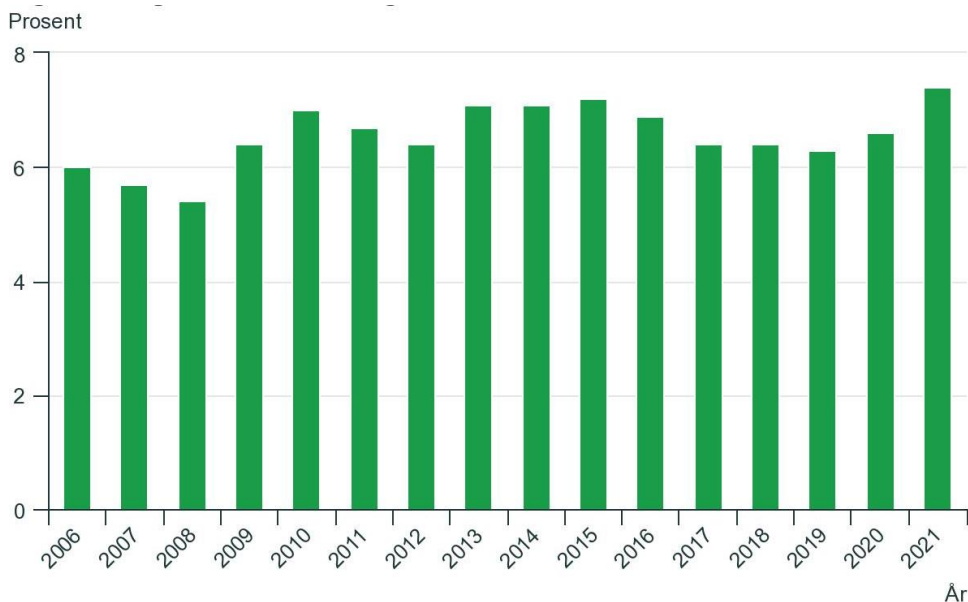


Figure 1 Annual number of NEETs in Norway in 2006 – 2021 (Aamodt 2022)

According to Eurofond (2021), the share of young NEETs in Europe has averaged 12.6 percent, while in Norway the last 16 years we have been between 6-8 percent.

8.5.2 Risk factors for ending up in the NEETs category in Norway

Young people who drop out of upper secondary school, have poor physical and mental health, as well as a weak socioeconomic background, are more exposed than other adolescents in Norway to ending up in the NEET group (Rapport St. 32 (2020-21)).

7 out of 10 Norwegian NEETs are passive or inactive, which means that they are neither in nor actively seeking a role in working life, training or education. The corresponding proportion of passive and inactive NEETS in Europe averages 5 out of 10. (OECD, 2018). This means that NEETs in Norway are less actively seeking a way out of their position compared to other countries. (OECD, 2018).

8.5.3 Sociodemographic characteristics of NEETs in Norway

8.5.3.1 Gender differences in NEET status in Norway

According to the report from the OECD (2018), Norway is one of the few countries in Europe where there is generally no significant gender difference in the proportion of NEETs. This means that young women in Norway are no more likely to be outside work, education and training than young men, as is the situation in most other OECD countries. Among young mothers under the age of 30 in Norway, 17% are NEET, compared with almost 50% across the OECD countries. (OECD, 2018). In Norway, the proportion of female NEETs due to health problems is 24 percent, which differs from the average in OECD countries of 8 percent. Male NEETs in Norway with health challenges are in line with the average of young men in OECD countries in the same category (OECD, 2018).

A study conducted by Bania, Eckhoff & Kvernmo (2019) found a gender difference between Sami and not Sami youth in Norway, where Sami youth have a somewhat higher NEET share than non-Sami youth. An estimate of the proportion of Sami in Norway based on registration in the electoral register (Persons over the age of 18) is 0.5 percent.

8.5.3.2 Age differences in NEET status in Norway

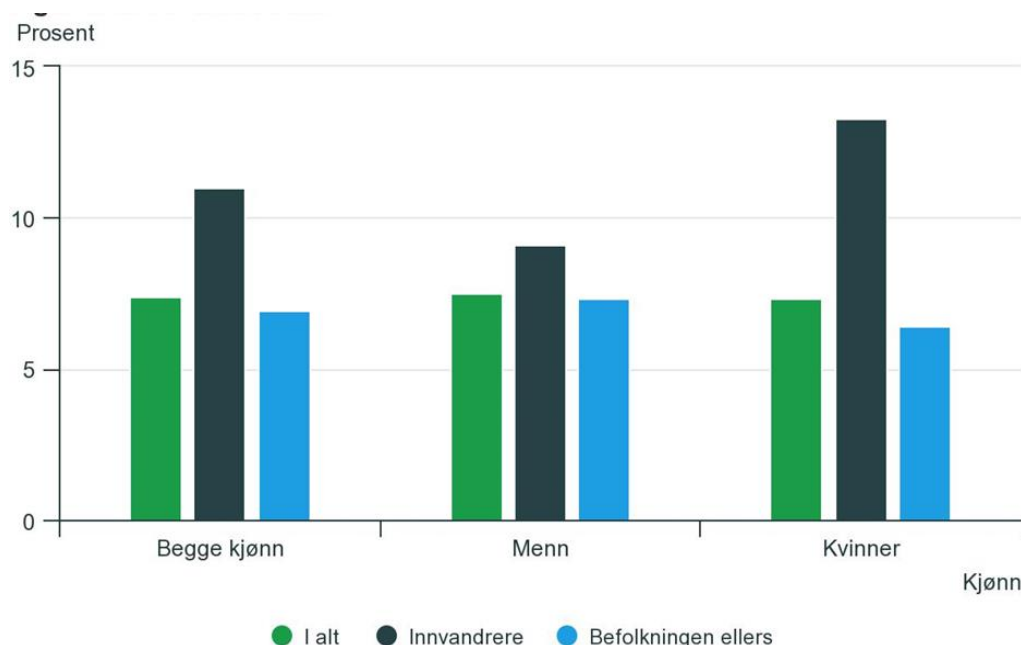
Table 1. below shows data for NEET rates across age groups for 2021 (Eurostat, 2021).

	Norway	Sweden	Denmark	European Union	Slovenia
15 - 29 years	7,4	6,0	8,4	13.1	7,3
15- 19 years	4,9	2,5	4,3	6.8	5,6
20 - 24 years	7,7	7,7	9,6	14.8	7,4
25 - 29 years	9,4	7,7	10,8	17.3	9,0

According to the table, most NEETs in Norway are in the group of 25-29 years, followed by the group of 20-24 years, and finally 15 - 19 years. According to the table, Norway is the Scandinavian country with the highest proportion of NEETs in the category 15 – 19 years. Norway and Slovenia have a quite similar proportion of NEETs in the categories above.

8.5.3.3 Immigrant background as predictor of NEET status in Norway

Figure 2 (Aamodt, 2022) below shows data for NEET share distributed by immigrants in 2021



The figure 2 explained as table

Gender	Total	Immigrant	The rest of the population
Both sexes	7.4 percent	11 percent	6.9 percent
Men	7.5 percent	9.1 percent	7.3 percent
Women	7.3 percent	13.3 percent	6.4 percent

Table 2 (Aamodt, 2022)

The table above shows that 11 percent of immigrants in the age group 15-29 years are NEETs, which is a higher figure than for the rest of the population. The result may be related to the fact that there is a larger proportion of immigrants who only have education at primary and lower secondary level than among the rest of the population, and therefore drop out of further education and working life. (Rapp. St. 32 (2020- 21)).

The table also shows that there is a higher proportion of immigrant women who are NEETs than immigrant men. 9.1 percent of immigrant men are within the NEET category, while the corresponding figure for immigrant women is 13.3 percent in 2021. The figures differ from the rest of the population, where 7.3 percent of men are NEET s and 6.4 percent of women.

The result above coincides with the OECD report from 2018, which shows that adolescents born outside the Norway have twice the risk of becoming NEETs compared to Norwegian-born (16 % vs. 7.5%).

8.5.3.4 Socioeconomic characteristics of NEETs in Norway

8.5.3.4.1 Achieved level of education for NEET youth in Norway

Figure 3 (Aamodt, 2022) below shows education level data for NEETs in 2021.

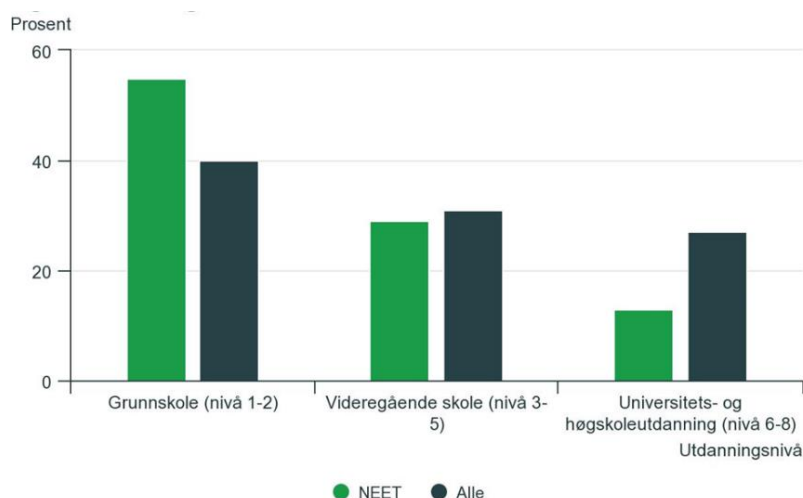


Figure 3 explained as table:

Education level	NEET	All
Primary school (levels 1- 2)	55	40
High School (Level 3- 5)	29	31
Higher education (Level 6- 8)	13	27

Table 3 (Aamodt, 2022)

The table above shows that 55 percent of young NEETS only have education at primary school level, while the corresponding percent for the entire population in the same age group is 40 percent.

The result is consistent with a report from the OECD (2018), which shows that there is a correlation between young people's exclusion and education level. According to the OECD (2018), young people in Norway who do not complete upper secondary education are seven

times more likely to gain NEET status than young people who have higher education. Research conducted by Fyhn et al. (2021) and Suren et al., (2018) confirm that early dropout from education and employment increases the risk of lifelong exclusion in Norway.

Barth et al. (2016) show that there is a correlation between the skills students have acquired in primary school, and predictions of future NEET status. This is confirmed by the research of Birkelund et al. (2010), which shows that grades in primary school were the most important risk or success factor for grades at upper secondary level. The better the grades in primary school, the less likely it was that the student would have dropped out of high school.

8.5.3.4.2 The family's socioeconomic background and NEET status in Norway

According to the OECD (2018), in Norway there is an increased risk of becoming NEETs for children who grow up in families with low income. Growing up in a low-income family is associated with poorer educational outcomes and with a higher risk of long-term unemployment in the future (Meld. St 32, (2020–2021)). Children with an immigrant background and children with single parents are overrepresented in the statistics on children living in low-income families in Norway. (Hansen, et al., 2020). This confirms that these children are a vulnerable group when it comes to future NEETs status.

According to the OECD report (2018), children living in families in Norway when their parents have a low level of education, are at increased risk of becoming NEETs in the future. The same report shows that young people whose mother has not completed further education have twice the risk of future NEETs status than young people whose mother have completed a higher education (OECD, 2018).

The correlation between characteristics of the children's parents and family situation and children's future drop-out from the labour market is confirmed in the research of Bonneux (2007), which shows indications that parents' low education, disability and unstable marriage could predict early disability and dropout from working life by their children in the future. A study from 2010 (Hyggen, 2010) shows corresponding results, that parents' low socioeconomic status can negatively affect their children's future integration into the labour market. Another study conducted by Bania (2019) found that adolescents having parents with low education, and at the same time having poor relationships with peers, had a slightly higher risk of NEET status than others.

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According to a report from the OECD (2018), adolescents born outside Norway have twice the risk of becoming NEETs, compared to adolescents born in Norway. Research from Markussen et al. (2014) and Sutterud (2018) may explain some of the reason for this. Markussen et al. (2014) points out that having an immigrant background can have a negative impact on school completion, while Sutterud (2018) has found a correlation between immigrant background and increased risk of receiving social assistance. At the same time, there is research that nuances a clear connection between immigrant background and future exclusion. Brekke (2014)'s research shows, among other things, that immigrants who drop out of upper secondary school in Norway are not necessarily more vulnerable to falling outside future education and work than ethnic Norwegians.

Social differences from early childhood have consequences for children and young people while becoming an adult, and the quality of life as an adult. (Meld. St. 32 (2020–2021)). A study from Dæhlen (2018) shows that children and young people who have received help from the child welfare services in Norway have a high risk of dropping out of upper secondary school. According to Dæhlen, only 37 percent in this group achieve study and vocational qualifications, which indicates that children and young people who receive help from the child welfare services are a vulnerable group regarding becoming NEETs in Norway. The findings are confirmed by Bufdir (2021) which shows that 1 in 3 who have received child protection measures do not work or is not in education after primary school, and 32 percent in this group receive public benefits 10 years after completing primary school.

Research shows that children and young people who grow up in unsafe homes are at greater risk of experiencing exclusion as adults compared to other children. Anvik's research (2012) shows that mental health problems can often be associated with a difficult upbringing and challenging relationships in childhood. Such challenges could later have an impact on the person's functioning in school, work life and relationships.

In Norway, children who, due to a challenging upbringing environment, are in contact with the child protection services during their childhood has an increased risk of exclusion in the long term (Meld. St (2020–2021) p. 57). This is supported by Backe-Hansen et al. (2014), who in their research show that young people with experience from the child protection services have often grown up in families where socioeconomic factors and family background have had a negative impact on the children's upbringing.



8.5.3.5 Psychosocial characteristics of NEETs in Norway

8.5.4.6 Health

According to a report from the OECD (2018), physical and mental health problems are widespread among Norwegian NEETs compared to other countries. In Norway, 11 percent of male NEETs are NEETs due to health challenges, which is in line with the OECD average (2018). At the same time, Norwegian female NEETs with health challenges differ from the OECD average, which is 8 percent, while the Norwegian figure is as much as 24 percent. (OECD, 2018)

Mental health challenges and disorders are the main reason why young people receive disability benefits in Norway (OECD, 2018). A report from the OECD (2018) points out that the Norwegian welfare system may have as a consequence that young people with health challenges stay for a relatively long time as receivers of benefits from the public sector. It is noted that favourable health-related benefits for young people with reduced work capacity can contribute to inactivity way too long, which in turn may lead to exclusion from the active society in the long run. (OECD, 2018).

Young people who belong to the NEETs group in Norway are, among other things, six times more likely to feel depressed, and ten times more likely to report poor health than their peers (OECD, 2018). According to the OECD (2018), mental health challenges can be both a cause and a consequence of exclusion. Whatever the reason, health challenges can contribute to further marginalization for young NEETs.

Research shows that poor physical health alone can be a risk factor for NEET status (Rasalingam, 2021). Rasalingam's analyses shows that adolescents who grow up with long-term somatic disorders are less likely to finish high school, and that these young adults are more likely to be NEET at age 21 compared to other peers without health problems. Similar results are confirmed in a study from Bania (2019) showing that adolescents who experienced mental health problems and muscle and skeletal disorders as adolescents were more likely to have NEET – status in the future.

8.5.4.7 Relationships

In Moshuus et al. (2019) research, it is stated that the risk of longer interruptions from education can be reduced if young people's school participation is understood in the context of their relational belonging among friends, family, and communities.

Research has shown that a lack of support from teachers and a sense of loneliness can increase the risk for students, who need special follow-up in upper secondary school, to drop out of school. Therefore, this confirms that the relational and social aspect of school functioning is of great importance. Especially in the first years of school, support from teachers is important. When the student gets older the support from fellow students becomes more important. Ensuring a good relationship between student and teacher and an inclusive and safe school environment can contribute to a lower dropout rate for young vulnerable students in the long run. (Fyhn et al., 2021).

8.5.4.8 Summary of the psychosocial risk factors

- Physical and mental health challenges among children and young adults in Norway seem to increase the risk of future status as NEET.
- The Norwegian welfare system may have as a consequence that young people with health challenges stay for a relatively long time as receivers of benefits from the public sector.
- Experience of loneliness and lack of relational support among children and young adults in Norway seem to increase the risk of future status as NEET.

8.5.6 Young NEETs in Norway - their own stories and needs

In Norway, NORCE Research Centre has conducted an analysis of young people in the NEET category through literature searches, as well as presentations of research where the young people in the category themselves have been given the opportunity to express themselves (Fyhn et al., 2021). The following findings can be drawn out as interesting with regard to what young NEETS themselves tell about their experiences and needs related to their exclusion.

When young NEETs themselves talk about the cause of exclusion, it is psychosocial problems related to relationships, low self-esteem and lack of coping, as well as structural factors such

as meeting with the system that is supposed to help, that are highlighted.

In their research project, many NEETs stated that they felt “thrown around as a ball” in a rigid system, where it was challenging to establish good relationships with people who were supposed to be helpers. For many, an experience of lack of belonging became an important explanation for their exclusion. The youth’s explanations of reasons for their exclusion included troubled family background or upbringing, perceived bullying, broken or missing relationships in everyday life and little affiliation with peers. Lack of coping and low self-image, as well as lack of follow-up at school or in the support system were also mentioned by young people as reasons for exclusion.

When young NEETs themselves explain what they think could be the solution for them to return to education, training and working life, they point at the same factors as above that contributed to exclusion. These were particularly relationships, self-esteem and coping, but now with a positive sign. Supportive interactions with adults were something that the young people in the project highlighted as a possible and important measure to help them get into school and work life again. This could mean individualized and close follow-up from adults in the auxiliary device or system who could provide the young person with care, support and who could “push” the young person when this was needed in the process towards inclusion and activity (Fyhn et al., 2021).

8.5.7 Summary

What is distinctive about Norway is the large number of NEETs who have mental health challenges, as well as the number of young people who drop out of upper secondary school. Both factors, together with various socio-economic factors such as growing up in a family with a low income, can contribute to an increased risk of children and young people ending up in the NEET group in Norway (Meld. St. 32 (2020-21)).

We can conclude that measures to prevent future exclusion for children and young people in Norway must not be too general whether they are meant to be directed towards the individual child or the family, as characteristics and needs varies. Measures to prevent future exclusion, as well as to help young people who fall outside school and work, must be put in place at different levels within individual, group and community level. There are needs for tailormade and creative measures.



The measures on different levels should reflect a diversity of different needs, preferably from an early age as some of the risk factors will be known and observed from an early age.

8.6 Mezzo level

Our main focus in this chapter is to present examples of different kinds of stakeholders or institutions, such as public and private companies, social entrepreneurs and NGO's who offer workplaces, work training, courses and meaningful activities, help and assistance to NEETs in Norway. Our aim is, that the information presented, together with additional information gathered from visits to some of them as well as dialogues with them during the visit to Norway, will provide deep enough information to add some new ideas to the benefit of NEET's in Slovenia as a part of this project and its goals.

In the presentations, we also describe systematic collaboration between different stakeholders. This can be seen as a network around the NEET – being ready to be activated, when visible for him or her.

8.6.1 The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV)

NAV have both municipal and state services. Partnership between municipalities and central government is one of the main measures in the NAV reform, which aims to give users one door into the public welfare services. The NAV reform took place between 2006 – 2011.

Young people under the age of 30 are a priority target group in NAV. This means that young people who need help from NAV to get a job or complete upper secondary education must receive a thorough and quick clarification of their situation and be followed up further by a youth supervisor.

NAV in Stavanger cooperates closely with various employers, with the goal of a permanent job for the individual. NAV have offices in most cities in Norway, offering similar services as in Stavanger.

The NAV office shall take care of the individual's overall need for assistance, and offer individually adapted follow-up with the services, measures and instruments available to the office. It is the individual's needs that form the basis for what help should and can be given.

Pursuant to Section 17 of the Social Services Act, the NAV office has a duty to provide help and guidance through outreach activities when such a need is assumed to exist. An example



of this may be outreach and motivational work towards young people who avoid help or do not seek help themselves.

Young people who want or need assistance to get into work are entitled to a need- and possibly work ability assessment, cf. section 14 a of the NAV Act. The outcome of this assessment governs the help the NAV office gives the individual. For example, it may be necessary and appropriate to have measures and instruments such as work training/work practice or a job club. Young people may be entitled to benefits such as unemployment benefit and work clearance allowance. Young people may also be entitled to the Qualification Programme, cf. Section 29 et seq. of the Social Services Act. (NAV 2022)

In Appendix 1 is an overview of "Measures and instruments to get a job" from NAV. Most IPS contacts in Norway are employees of NAV who specialize in IPS.

8.6.2 Individual Placement and Support (IPS - Individual Job Support)

IPS is occupational rehabilitation integrated with treatment to people with severe mental disorders (bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, major depression and so on) (Brinchmann et al., 2019). The method is used internationally and is research-based. The goal in IPS is to find ordinary workplaces, with regular pay and working conditions.

IPS has been tested in Norway through eight pilot projects in collaboration between the Directorate of Health and the Directorate of Labour and Welfare. This was evaluated through an effect study conducted by Uni Research in 2016 (Reme, Silje Endresen et al., 2016) and showed that this way of working also worked better in Norway than the traditional work rehabilitations. However, the transition from project to regular operation is difficult, perhaps especially because it requires such close cooperation between health and NAV. These are challenges that are also known from elsewhere in the world.

Today, there are 58 IPS specialists and contacts in all counties in Norway (IPS teams), usually employed by NAV and health enterprises.

IPS UNG (IPS Young, 16 – 30 years) is the newest initiative and is a joint assignment between the Directorate of Health and the Directorate of Labour and Welfare. Below are the source and a list of some main points (IPSNOR, 2022; NAV, 2022)

- Part of the inclusion initiative (initiative to include young people in work and education – involving different stakeholders), strengthening of IPS efforts and strengthening of youth efforts in NAV

- Target group: persons under the age of 30 with moderate to severe mental disorders and/or substance abuse problems, including young people with reduced working capacity/functional ability
- The goal: that more young people in the target group complete education/apprenticeships and get into paid work
- The trial must follow the same framework and guidelines as IPS in general.
- The IPS quality scale for young people will be used to quality assure the work
- It is considered whether the education sector is invited to participate in the IPS Young initiative

8.6.3 Inn på tunet (“Entering the yard”)

“Inn på tunet” is a national measure with joint approval scheme and quality assurance. Farms can apply and become qualified for being approved as a partner in the program. The objective of “Inn på tunet” is primarily to contribute positively to the health, development, and well-being of the individual user. The offers are based on cooperation with the upbringing, education, health or social sector, and include activities based on both farm and farmer resources.

The offers are adapted to all levels and ages on farms, including NEETs. Most of the services are aimed at upbringing and training, work and work training as well as health and care – here also to prevent exclusion for young people. (Inn på tunet 2022)

8.6.4 UngInvest Rogaland

Operation by Rogaland County Council. Similar measures are also available in other counties in Norway. The service is part of the social task of preventing exclusion and dropouts for the youth group. The offer is free and is given to young people who do not have a school to go to. UngInvest is a county-based, practice-oriented and strength-based training programme for young people aged 16-24 years. (UngInvest, 2022)

"The goal is to recruit and retain young people in upper secondary education, so that more young people qualify and become attractive for the future of work. Through conversations focusing on young people's strengths, trusting relationships are built, where each young person gets to use their unique potential. This contributes to increased implementation, increased learning results and young people who become active citizens with jobs and good



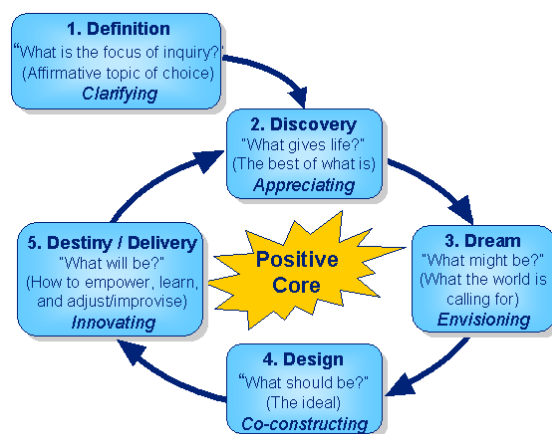
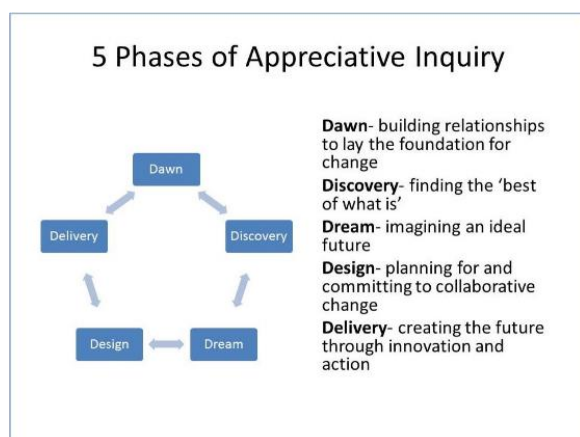
lives. There is continuous intake throughout the school year, and it should be possible to get a place within a few days.

UngInvest wants to help young people believe in themselves and their opportunities. Together with the young people, positive images of the future are created - where they are in work, have their own income, family – an ordinary life with as high a degree of fun and well-being as possible. Flexible learning paths are facilitated, adapted to the young people's point of view and needs". (UngInvest, 2022)

It cooperates closely with upper secondary schools, vocational training offices and working life, as well as other support services such as NAV, PPT (Public pedagogic-psychologic service) and OT (Public Follow-up Service for youngsters 15 – 24 years old). "Coordinated efforts work, especially when they involve young people, parents and partners in a genuine, pro-active and loving way with high expectations of what we can achieve." (UngInvest, 2022)

In Appendix 2, we briefly describe the "Appreciate inquiry model" (AI). The model is used in UngInvest as a basic principle for cooperation between teachers and students. According to UngInvest, they consider themselves not as a school, but rather as "development and training measures".

Illustrations of the AI model



(Positive Psychology, 2022)

8.6.5 TAFU Rogaland

A collaborative project between: NAV Rogaland, Kriminalomsorgen Region Southwest (Criminal care), Stavanger and Sandnes municipalities, Rogaland county municipality for



convicted men 18 – 40 years. TAFU Rogaland uses the KrAmi Malmö model's two main pillars: consequence pedagogy and management cooperation.

The main strategy is close cooperation between municipalities, correctional services, training authorities and NAV. It is a goal to get users into permanent employment or education. The users also receive follow-up in their spare time through organized activities, as well as stimulation for self-directed active leisure in the long term. There is the possibility of a separate space for exercise and leisure activities, free from the influence of previous social circles. (TAFU- Rogaland, 2022)

8.6.6 Follow-up service (OT - Oppfølgingstjenesten)

OT (Public Follow-up Service for youngsters 15 – 24 years old) helps all young people aged 15-24 with juvenile justice, and who are not in upper secondary education. OT cooperates closely with NAV and is present at all upper secondary schools in Rogaland and has also its own OT coordinator for the young people at UngInvest.

OT offer guidance and help to find out which opportunities are relevant for the individual in situations as: Turned down public schooling, Taking out a waiting year or gap year, Not applying for a school place or an apprenticeship or left school or an apprenticeship. (Rogaland fylkeskommune, 2022)

8.6.7 Exclusion Commission (Stavanger Municipality)

Exclusion Commission was established by the mayor of Stavanger municipality in 2021. The commission has looked at how young people aged 13-25 have been affected by exclusion, and how Stavanger as a local community can combat it now, and in the aftermath of the pandemic. The work was completed in 2022, after delivery of 2 sub-reports.

Some Findings were highlighted in Interim report 2 on exclusion:

“Young people who are at risk of exclusion often have complex needs. These are young people who live in our communities, who grow up with experiences such as neglect, bullying, and exclusion from school, work, and social communities.

They need community where they are accepted and recognized as they are.



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If we are to prevent young exclusion, radical changes are needed for better coordination and cooperation, and better information about all the good measures that can be offered.

Conclusion: Today's society does not make use of young people's resources, not enough is being done to include those who fall outside, and the support system is not coordinated well enough. The result is considerable costs both for individuals and for society.”

The Commission's recommendations for preventing exclusion in Stavanger

- Efforts that mitigate the consequences of risk factors for exclusion.
- Early detection of the risk of exclusion and early intervention in primary school.
- Measures for increased completion of upper secondary school.
- Increased opportunities in working life.
- Efforts to increase participation from young people who fall outside employment, education or training (NEET group).
- Research efforts aimed at young exclusion.” (Stavanger community, 2022)¹

8.6.8 Wild roads (Ville veier)

Ville Veier is a non-profit AS (Ltd) with a non-profit and social purpose and is an approved provider of work preparation training (AFT measures) where NAV is the applicant body. The goal of the participants is to complete upper secondary education, higher education or get into work. This prevents permanent exclusion among young people.

Ville Veier in Stavanger offers a work-oriented measure for young adults who, for various reasons, have fallen outside education and employment. As a method, theatre and art subjects with health-promoting intentions are used together with close individual follow-up to strengthen the participants' mental health and life skills.

Concept and method combine creative work with close individual guidance and follow-up over time. Over the years, several professional productions have been made with public performances in collaboration with professionals and educators from the arts and cultural life in Stavanger.

Ville Veier represents an innovative practice in the Norwegian welfare society at the intersection of innovation, art and health, with very good results. In 2017-2020, Ville Veier entered a research collaboration with NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and

¹ <https://www.stavanger.kommune.no/samfunnsutvikling/prosjekter/utenforskapskommisjonen/>



Technology) which describes Ville Veier's work as pioneering work in a Norwegian context. (Ville veier, 2022)

8.6.9 Red Cross – national and local NGO

The Community Service “Fellesverket” is a national initiative for young people between the ages of 13 and 25, run by the organization Red Cross. Today there are 16 similar “Fellesverket” spread over 13 cities around Norway. They are, among others, in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø and Stavanger.

Fellesverket is a physical meeting place where all young people, regardless of social or economic status, can take part in various activities that are free of charge. In their premises, young people can, among other things, be with their peers, play games, get help with their homework, and participate in job training. The community service is run by adult volunteers who get involved in the various activities with the young people.

The purpose of Fellesverket is to prevent alienation for young adults. A free low-threshold offer is considered by the Red Cross to be an important and suitable measure to help young adults have a physical meeting place where they can experience togetherness, mastery and development in the face of peers and safe adults. (Røde kors, 2022)

8.6.10 Green care & green work on farms

One (out of several examples): The Ullandhaug Organic Farm Foundation is a non-profit foundation with the purpose of promoting ecological thinking, knowledge, and way of life by establishing and developing meeting places and activities for social, cultural and business initiatives in connection with the cultivation, production and sale of organic and healthy foods in a sustainable environment.

In collaboration with NAV and Stavanger municipality, the farm has 15 places for work training. This is especially an offer for people with mental disorders where the goal for many is to get out into ordinary work. They also have some workplaces for permanently adapted measures, and in cooperation with Stavanger municipality they have up to 4 internships for disabled people. Focus on coping, based on a basic respect and recognition of the individual human being is their core values. (NAV *Grønt arbeid* 2022)



8.6.11 Metropolis – cultural centre and drug-free stage for young people

It is home to a dance and music studio, a large hall that holds up to 300 spectators, meeting rooms, organizational offices, and a café for young people in Stavanger aged 16 – 23. It regularly hosts drug-free events, such as concerts and workshops throughout the year. Run by Stavanger municipality.

- Metropolis is a cultural centre for young people located on Nytorget in Stavanger.
- Have premises and equipment for a variety of activities.
- Young people shape the expressions and activities of the house according to their own needs.
- User participation is central both in the planning and operation of the house.
- Most offers are free

(Stavanger community, 2022)²

8.6.12 From victim to warrior (Fra offer til kriger)

"Crazy enough to be normal" The quote is taken from Linda Øye, who started with the development of her own ltd. company in 2014, within what can be characterized as Social Entrepreneurship. The background for the project is that many who become ill have a feeling of being different from others and sit on the side of society. They are prevented from having a real participation in society, partly because many see themselves as "weak" and / or go into a victim role.

Social entrepreneurship is about developing and adopting new solutions that yield results both socially and economically. Through experience-based knowledge, practical experiences and their own networks, social entrepreneurs can have advantages over traditional public solutions. Social entrepreneurs are passionate about those they are trying to help. In "From victim to warrior", courses are offered lasting up to 6 months, lectures, guidance and workpreparation training for young people between 18 – 30 years. (Fra offer til kriger, 2022)

² <https://www.stavanger.kommune.no/kultur-og-fritid/ungdom-og-fritid2/metropolis/#kulturhus-for-ungdom-dette-inneholder-metropolis>

8.6.13 Church City Mission (Kirkens Bymisjon)

“Kirkens Bymisjon” is a national organization with local initiatives (also in Stavanger). It offers

- Workplaces / work training with flexible work routines for NEET's
- Organizes volunteers who follow up and motivate NEETs (Valves – "Person to thrust")
- Various other activities, including leisure activities

(Kirkens bymisjon, 2022)

8.6.14 Private companies in cooperation with NAV

NAV's supervisor who is having the responsibility for personal follow-up of his client / youth, works closely with employers in various industries who are willing to try out hiring young people with challenges. NAV's employees have a close dialogue with both young people and their employer while the work is in progress.

Seven examples of companies in the Stavanger – Sandnes area that cooperate with NAV; six of them are private companies and one is public:

Company name	Branch
Power Forus	Computers, Home Appliances & Electronics
Brustadbua	Colonial shop and Bakery
REMA 1000	Supermarket – Colonial shop
Dynamo Logistikk	Storage, Logistics, Transport
Finn Midbøe	Plumber
Motor Forum Stavanger	Workshop for cars and tire hotel
Triade Barnehage	Municipal kindergarten

Offers from the employer: Mentoring and Guidance, training / apprentice, salary (paid by NAV) until employment on normal terms, cooperation with NAV on individual adaptation and measures in the workplace.

8.5 Macro level

8.5.1 Norway & EU understanding of NEET's and programmes and measures to meet their needs

As far as we know, there are essentially no significant differences between Norway's and the EU's understanding of NEETS' characteristics and needs. Norway is also known to act in accordance with the EU within most areas, including the development of policies and programmes relating to NEET's.

Nevertheless, there will be national differences in priorities, level of intervention and type of intervention, which we believe are linked to time-specific national variables (in all EU countries and in Norway), such as

- Differences in National resources and economy
- Political leadership with inequality between conservative and social democratic priorities
- Traditional national values based on private versus public responsibility for the welfare state
- Degree of tradition of participation in voluntary work in each country

We therefore choose first and foremost to provide a nuanced picture of Norway's understanding of the characteristics and needs of NEET's, and Norway's development of policies and programmes to meet these needs.

8.5.2 Relevant policy and research in Norway seen in context

In the spring of 2021 Norway, the incumbent government presented **Parliament Notification 32** (Rapp.st, 2020-21) "**No one outside - a comprehensive policy to include more people in working life and society**". (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. (2021)).

The notification describes various reasons why people in Norway drop out of school, work and society, and proposes relevant measures to counteract exclusion for the population as a whole in the short and long term.

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Although the content of the white paper covers the entire population of Norway, this is an important document with regard to getting an overview of how Norway at the national level will work to prevent and meet challenges related to young NEETs in Norway.

The notification refers, among other things, to various focus areas that will be important for further developing and strengthening efforts related to preventing exclusion in the years to come. Some of these will be able to help to meet the needs of NEETs in the present, as well as be preventive for developing NEETs in the future.

Policy focus areas that on this context can be highlighted are:

- Early intervention for vulnerable children and adolescents
- Preventing child poverty and exclusion for children and young people
- Strengthening mental health for children and adolescents
- Preventing school dropout and dropout from upper secondary education
- To include young people in working life and society

The focus areas coincide well with what research refers to are characteristics, causes and needs of NEETs in Norway presented at the micro level in this report.

In order to stimulate and facilitate future research that supports the priority areas that are above, it is possible for universities, university colleges and other research groups to apply for economic grants for various research projects via the Research Council of Norway.

An example is the call for financial support for **collaborative projects to implement knowledge-based measures for children, young people and families** (Research Council of Norway, 2022). 8– 10 million NOK have been allocated for this purpose / project, and the duration of the project will be 2-4 years.

The purpose of the announcement for this program is to stimulate research that can contribute to good and relevant knowledge for practice to strengthen the services offered to children, young people and families, as well as show how the services can be implemented in practice. This may directly or indirectly support one or more priority areas mentioned above. The applicants were encouraged to collaborate on projects, including cooperation with NGOs.

Appendix 3 provides an overview of various other research projects in academia in Norway that directly or indirectly concern the NEETs group.



8.5.3 National policy focus areas

In the following there will be a short presentation, based on the focus areas above, of what Norway do or plan to do for prevention and to meet the needs and challenges related to young NEETs in Norway.

8.5.3.1 Early intervention for vulnerable children and young people

In January 2022, the **Child Welfare Reform**, also called the upbringing reform, came into force. The child welfare reform is rooted politically in Prop. 73 L (2016–2017) in the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, as well as Innst. 354 L (2016-2017) from the Family and Culture Committee in the Parliament (Stortinget, 2022).

The purpose of the child welfare reform is to improve child welfare services in Norway by strengthening the work on early intervention and preventive work for vulnerable families, as well as better adapting the help that provides to the individual child and the family's needs. The focus areas of the child welfare reform are as follows: the child's needs should be in focus, has to be a clear division of labour between central and local government, and strengthening the competences of the employees in order to better meet the needs of the children and the family. Early efforts to improve children's upbringing, as well as providing necessary and adapted assistance to families are an important contribution to preventing future exclusion for this group of children and young people. (Bufdir, 2022)

8.5.3.2 Preventing child poverty and exclusion for children and young people

To prevent exclusion for children and young people due to socioeconomic conditions, in Norway there are various government grant schemes in which voluntary organisations, municipal services and private actors can apply for funding. The grants are to be used to ensure that vulnerable children and young people, regardless of their parents' finances and social situation, can be included in leisure activities and to participate in meeting places on an equal footing with other children and young people. (Ministry of Children and Family Affairs)

In 2021, NOK 436.6 million was allocated in the national budget to the item "National grant scheme to include children and young people" (Bufdir, 2022). The grant scheme supports a wide range of measures. In particular is given priority to holiday and leisure activities, lending centres, and qualifying measures such as summer jobs and job training for vulnerable children and young persons. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs administers the scheme.



8.5.3.3 Strengthening mental health for children and adolescents

In the spring of 2020, the Storting adopted the **"Escalation Plan for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (2019-24)"**, which is anchored in Prop. 121 S (2018–2019). The plan includes several health-promoting, preventive and treatment-oriented measures aimed at children and adolescents between 0-25 years. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that more children and young people experience good mental health and quality of life, and to help ensure that all children and young people who need health-oriented treatment receive this.

The main objectives of the planning period (2019-24) include:

- Family support measures for children and young people with mental health problems and disorders must be implemented at an early stage.
- More young people with mental health problems and disorders must quickly come into education, activity and work when exclusion is discovered.
- Children and adolescents with mental health problems and disorders should receive help adapted to their own needs and wishes, and their voices in the treatment should be heard and emphasized.

8.5.3.4 Preventing school dropouts and dropouts from upper secondary education

Parliament No. 21 to the Storting (2020–2021) "The completion reform – with open doors to the world and the future" (Ministry of Education and Research (2021)) was presented to the Storting in the spring of 2021 and aims for 9 out of 10 students to complete and pass upper secondary education in Norway by 2030. In this way, future exclusion for young people must be prevented.

Some of the proposals proposed in the notification include:

- To introduce a duty for county authorities to work more systematically and preventively with students who are at risk of failing subjects in upper secondary school than is currently the case, and in this connection provide more resources, in the form of financial resources and increased competence, to schools.
- To introduce a duty for the county authorities to have a transitional service aimed at students who have immigrated and who have weak language skills or academic challenges, with the aim of getting them to complete and pass upper secondary education.
- To provide more training for students who fail, which means that students who fail in subjects are entitled to more training in the subjects they fail, which they do not have today.



- To introduce the right to an apprenticeship or an equal offer to students who do not get an apprenticeship in a company to ensure progression in the training course.
- To continue the "**social contract for more apprenticeships**" (KS), which is a systematic collaboration between the labour market, county authorities and national authorities to increase the number of approved apprenticeships for apprentices in public and private enterprises. In a press release dated 28.03.22, the Ministry of Education and Research announces that they are allocating NOK 370 million in the period 2022-26 to the county municipality to facilitate a continuation of the collaborative project for more apprenticeships in the years to come. (Ministry of Education, 2022).

8.5.3.5 Including young people in working life and society

In 2017, the government introduced a **strengthened youth effort** in the Labour and Welfare Administration, abbreviated NAV, with the goal of getting more young people under the age of 30 into education, work, or other activity. This meant that the local NAV offices in Norway were strengthened with expertise and financial resources to be able to establish interdisciplinary youth teams and youth contacts that would work exclusively with young people under the age of 30 (Meld. St. 32 (2020-2021)).

An evaluation conducted by Fafo (2020:19) shows that the NAV offices after the youth initiative work more systematically to activate young people who contacted NAV, and that 93 percent of young people today receive an offer from NAV within 8 weeks.

Measures that the government has so far implemented as a result of increased youth efforts include:

- Training measures to include young people in training or working life.
- Digital follow-up measures, including a digital activity plan that both the supervisor and the young person use as a work tool in the process towards activity.
- Grants for employers who offer summer jobs to young people under the age of 30.
- Work training in combination with a mentor.
- Inclusion grants for employers hiring young people under the age of 30.

A press release dated 06.10.22 (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, 2022) informs that the Government will give priority to young people who are out of work and education in the national budget for 2023. The Government will therefore propose an allocation of NOK 175 million to introduce a new youth guarantee under the auspices of NAV. Among other things, the grant will be used to hire significantly more supervisors at NAV offices, to ensure that young



people under the age of 30 who need help to get into work receive early intervention and close follow-up as long as necessary.

To stimulate private organisations to develop new measures and methods for activating and training people with little or no connection to the labour market, as well as to contribute to increased social entrepreneurship in order to create new solutions to a social problem, there are currently the following **government grant schemes** (the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion) from which organisations and enterprises can apply for financial support:

- **Grants for activation and work training under the auspices of voluntary organisations**
- **Grants for social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs**

In 2021, NOK 60 million was set aside in the national budget for "Grants for activation and job training" (NAV, 2022), and NOK 17 million for "Grants for social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs". The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV, 2022) administers the scheme on behalf of the state.

The target group for **grants for activation work training** is people who are very far from the labour market, and who in some cases are socially excluded. These include refugees and immigrants, at-risk youth, single parents, the homeless, people with substance abuse problems and people with mental health problems.

For "**Grants for social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs**", the main goal is to create and develop new solutions to social problems. The solutions are intended to benefit socially and disadvantaged people in Norway, thereby preventing exclusion and exclusion from society.

8.6 Summary

In Norway there is a widespread spirit of volunteerism and will to contribute, also when it comes to vulnerable young people, both in public organisations and in many private companies.

There is an unusually extensive network of NGOs in Norway, and quite many of them finds meaning in providing various services to young people as part of their activities.

The broad cooperation between different organisations in the public sector (including between authorities and Research institutions), the private sector and among different kinds of NGO's

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in Norway, are altogether an important key to understand the relatively low level of NEET's in Norway.

Micro level

The measures on different levels should reflect a diversity of different needs, preferably from an early age as some of the risk factors will be known and observed from an early age.

Mezzo level

NAV has developed into the authorities' representative in meetings with young people, so that they have a place to go and are entitled to individual follow-up from one person (this person also brings them into contact with others when needed). The NAV person the youth meet, is specially trained for supervision, guidance and help on a broad level, and she / he has a network inside and outside NAV to cooperate with, including health personnel, employers, NGO's and social entrepreneurs.

NAV offers employers compensation for accepting young people for employment who would otherwise have had difficulty finding work. The rule is that the employer should not have expenses for wages while the cooperation with NAV is in progress.

Macro level

The purpose of the child welfare reform was to improve child welfare services in Norway by strengthening the work on early intervention and preventive work for vulnerable families, as well as better adapting the help that provides to the individual child and the family's needs. This is considered preventive and an important measure in Norway, and socio-economically profitable.

There is broad research in Norway in relation to health and welfare, work and learning when it comes to children and youth also including NEETs. This is financed by the Norwegian authorities and the results of the research are used to obtain input to the formulation of strategies and actions, and then the realization of them on a national as well as on a municipal level.

Plans for the future in Norway

Measures to prevent future exclusion for children and young people in Norway must not be too general whether they are meant to be directed towards the individual child or the family, as characteristics and needs varies. Measures to prevent



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future exclusion, as well as to help young people who fall outside school and work, must be put in place at different levels within individual, group and community level. There are needs for tailormade and creative measures.

Over time, legislation has been developed in Norway that gives rights to young people who are out of work and education, and that ensures them adapted assistance. New measures are now being planned to give young people the right to apprenticeships or similar opportunities to avoid falling outside the scope by not being offered an apprenticeship upon completion of their vocational education.

"This document was created with the financial support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism. The University of Maribor and NOSCO are solely responsible for the content of this document, and in no case is it considered to reflect the state of the Programme holder – Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship."



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