



Establishing a Partnership to Set up a Youth Guarantee Scheme in Veneto

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Approaches and Policy Responses Addressing Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

A Brief International Benchmark on Finland, England and New Zealand

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Establishing a partnership to set up a Youth Guarantee Scheme in Veneto – YGV VP/2012/012/0175

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Foreword

This report investigates – by using a comparative approach – some main policy addressing young people not engaged in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), adopted at international level.

Chapter 1 proposes an overview on NEET phenomenon, by taking into consideration especially its social impact increasingly relevant, the meaning of the terminology employed and a brief analysis of main trends at international level.

Chapter 2 outlines the scheme of a framework for the comparative analysis, by using as a starting point - and adapting them to an also extra European overview - the *Conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETS)*, adopted by the European Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council in 2013. At the end of this step, a general framework for the comparison is identified, structured in four main areas of policy.

Chapter 3 summarises the results of the analysis at international level. The countries we selected for the comparative analysis are United Kingdom, Finland and New Zealand. The reason why they have been identified for the aims of research are basically two. On one hand, they were first in the list of countries that promoted policies addressed to NEET people, so, if compared to others, they have acquired a relevant level of experience so far. On the other hand, some of them are reported at international level for promoting and setting up policy measures characterized by a systemic approach and proved an high grade of efficacy. The investigation takes into account two different aspects. On one hand, an overview of main policies addressing NEET people is offered by country, including a definition of NEET, policy promoted by the Government and key data on the phenomenon. On the other hand, the four areas of policy previously selected, underpinning the general framework for comparison, are looked into, by comparing – for each area - the three national scenarios.

At the end, some brief final remarks are introduced, in order to emphasize what is common to national policy approaches to issues raised by NEET people.

1. Overview on NEET

1.1. Increasing impact of NEET phenomenon on social policies

In the last ten years young people who are not in education employment or training – so-called NEET – became an issue of concern in the international arena. Evidence shows that NEETs are at serious risk of social exclusion and more likely to experience marginalization and worse employment opportunities during adult life.

The transition from school to work is a crucial step in life. For many youths however the move is problematic and not successful, for a variety of factors that appear as an obstacle to a smooth transition. The general economic situation has a very significant role in determining the conditions for young people, as well as the institutional characteristics of the education system, that of the labour market and the links between them. The lack of connections between school and work are often the reason for failures in transition. Unemployment is a result of these failures. This is a serious social problem in general and for young people in particular, since long-term unemployment makes the transition to adulthood more difficult, might result in poverty and increases the risks of developing problematic behaviours. Further, unemployment decreases the likelihood of social inclusion and involvement (LSN, 2009). Deficiencies in building social and human capital characterise those who are neither in the educational system nor in the labour market.

In short, NEETs tend to be poor, lack the capability to engage socially and to participate in political life, and are at risk of critical behaviours. Youth unemployment causes negative economic effects, and provokes also psychological distress, such as feelings of loneliness, powerlessness, restlessness, anxiety and depression (Nelson and O'Donnell, 2012). As a matter of fact, youth unemployment has negative consequences for individuals and for society, because it requires additional social expenditures to address issues resulting by this condition. Therefore, unemployment should be dealt with as a multifactor social issue.

Young NEETs are an heterogeneous social category, and yet they share some fundamental characteristics: they are more likely to have a low educational level and a difficult family environment or immigration background.

Evidence shows that NEETs include several groups, ranging from the most disadvantaged and disengaged to those who become NEET by virtue of dropping out of a course or losing a job. The different causes behind becoming a NEET and the fact that these circumstances are often rooted in local factors require authorities and civil society organisations to develop strategies tailored to local conditions.

Research reinforces the understanding that the NEET problem is complex, embedded in a complex mix of social networking, alternative life-styles and shadow economic activities available in a locality. It is of note that the range of issues associated with the NEET condition includes low educational attainment, homelessness, gang membership, early criminalisation, drug culture and dependency, care needs, teenage pregnancy, prostitution and, in many or even most cases, multiple and overlapping disadvantages (Eurofound, 2012a).

Other research also found that intergenerational or educational factors were associated with the NEET status. Because of the lack of financial and educational resources, poor families make limited investments in the education of their children. As a result, young people from poor background are more likely to find low-paid jobs in poor working conditions, which might negatively impact on their motivations to work. Early failure in the job market might discourage young people, preventing them from experiencing the value of work. As a result, they would become permanently disengaged from employment (Eurofound, 2012b).

As a consequence of the crisis, the number of NEETs increasingly has grown in recent years. In Europe, according to Eurostat, in 2012 almost 7.8 million young people aged 15–24 were not in employment, education or training. This is equivalent to 13.2% of the total population of young people in this age group, and it is up from 12.9% recorded in 2011. In addition, 6.8 million among those aged 25–29 have been categorised as NEET. On the whole, in 2012 more than 14.6 million people under 30 in Europe were not in employment, education or training, equivalent to 15.9% of the overall youth population of that age.

At European level, the launch of a Youth Guarantee (Council of European Union, 2013a), that represent the umbrella that includes a wide range of measures and actions, has been accompanied by a set of initiatives taken by European Commission (2012, 2013a, 2013b,

2013c) and by European Council (2013,b). That program is in the early stages and the first assessment signalled it proved of a high potential that will be expressed in the next years (Eurofound, 2012c). In the case of Italy, the implementation of Youth Guarantee represent a crucial opportunity non just to set out a comprehensive policy for NEET people, but even to renew in depth its more general policy framework addressing youth unemployment.

1.2. NEET: an heterogeneous category differing across nations

It is important to note that the definitions and measures of youth unemployment and NEET differ significantly across nations. The term NEET is widely used to define both disengagement and social exclusion, as well as levels of unemployment among young people.

The term NEET was first utilised in Britain in the late 80s, as a contribution to the identification of new evaluation criteria of young people's vulnerability in the labour market. The acronym was coined to follow changes to unemployment benefit entitlement regulations, which essentially removed young people under the age of 18 years from the unemployment statistics.

NEET entered an official document for the first time in 1999, in the report *Bridging the Gap*, where authorities tried to identify individuals who were most at risk of not taking part neither in the school system, nor in the labour market. The report's had a main goal in the estimation of the economic and social costs induced by young people living in the NEET status, and in the identification of possible courses of action to support them in the transition from school to work. At that time, the NEET category comprised people between 16 and 18 not holding a job, not involved in the educational system, nor in any other form of training. Later, the term NEET has been adopted in EU and OECD countries and it is now commonly applied to a broad group age, typically 15–24 or 15–29 year olds.

In contrast, the *youth unemployment rate* is a different and narrower definition, meaning a percentage of all young people (aged 15 to 24) who are unemployed compared to the total labour force in that age group. This measure does not take into account those who are studying or who are training, who may or may not be seeking employment or those who are not registered in the unemployment statistics.

Furthermore, the category of *early school leaving* is widely used, in addition to those “at risk” of becoming NEET. The definition of early school leavers for EU Commission is “those aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary level education who have not progressed to any further education or training”. It is of note that, while in the UK the NEET group is the focus of policy initiatives and interventions, much of the attention in the international literature is on those who are in the education system but are perceived to be in danger of dropping out before they complete the statutory period, with damaging personal consequences. It could be construed that concentrating on this latter group is an attempt to reduce the likelihood of their becoming ‘disengaged’ by intervening earlier. In contrast, the focus on those who are already NEET seeks to introduce measures to re-engage those individuals.

In this context the NEET group was considered a broad and heterogeneous group with differing needs. Young people were distinct into three main categories, each of which was being addressed specific policy measures to:

- **core NEET** –those with social and behavioural problems including those who come from families where worklessness and unemployment is an accepted norm;
- **floating NEET** – comprising young people who lack direction, motivation and tend to have spells of being NEET in between further education courses or employment with no training. This group also contributes to NEET churn, which is an issue that policy makers are increasingly trying to address.
- **transition/gap year NEET** – those young people who have often chosen to take time out before progressing onto further or higher education opportunities and are likely to return to education, training or employment, but it is not always clear when this will occur.

1.3. The international scenario

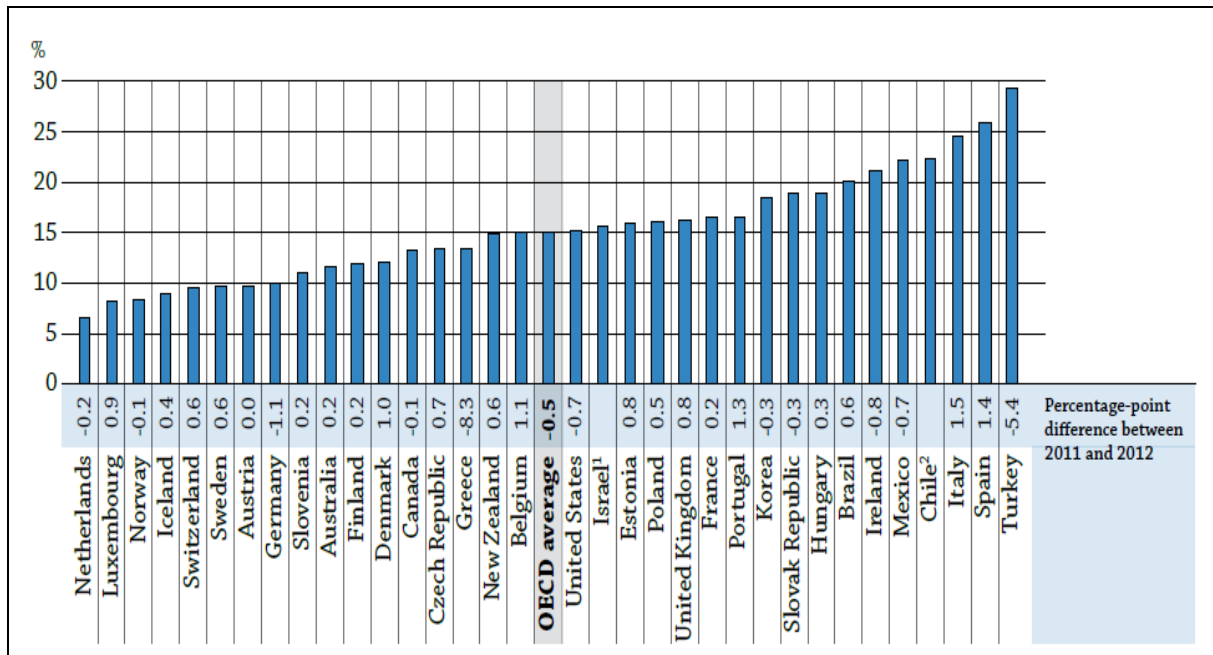
According to OECD (2014a), during recessionary periods, fewer job vacancies make the transition from school to work substantially more difficult for young people, as those with more work experience are favoured over new entrants into the labour market. When labour-market conditions are unfavourable, younger people often tend to stay in education longer, because high unemployment rates drive down the opportunity costs of education.

At the same time, most countries are adopting policies that raise the age of retirement. Delaying retirement slows job rotation, what tends to lead to a decrease in job vacancies. This may account for differences in the number of young people (entrants) and older people (leavers) in the labour market.

More in details, in 2012, 15% of individuals between the ages of 15 and 29 were neither employed nor in education or training (the NEET population), on average across OECD countries. Across OECD countries between 2011 and 2012, the percentage of 15-29 year-olds who were neither employed nor in education or training fell by a slight 0.5 percentage point (Fig.1). However, in many countries, there was no such improvement. In Italy, for example, there was a 2.5 percentage-point increase in this population during the period, while the increase in Portugal was about 4.0 percentage points.

Moreover, it is of note that to note that unemployed or inactive are included in the proportion of young people neither in employment nor in education or training (Fig. 2). The group called “inactive” is of particular importance since it comprises young people who are discouraged and gave up looking for a job. If we take into account all levels of education combined, we note that in countries like Chile, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Spain and Turkey, more than 20% of 15- 29 year- olds are classified as NEET. In Spain, 19% of 15-29 year-olds are unemployed NEET youth and 7% are inactive.

Fig. 1 - NEET population 15-29 year-olds in 2012 and change between 2011 and 2012. OECD Countries



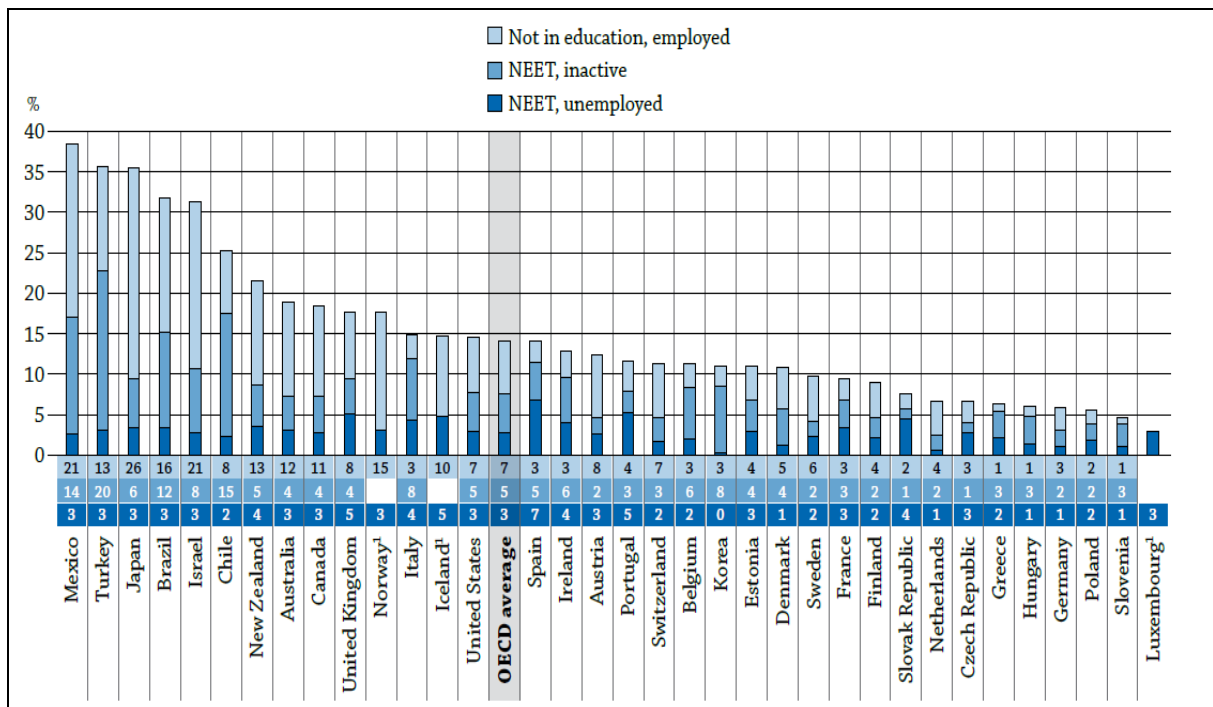
1. 2011 and 2012 data are not comparable

2. Year of reference 2011

Countries are ranked in ascending order of the 2012 percentage of NEET population among 15-29 year-olds with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education.

Source: OECD, 2014

Fig. 2 - Percentage of 15-19 year-olds not in education, by labour market status (2012). OECD Countries



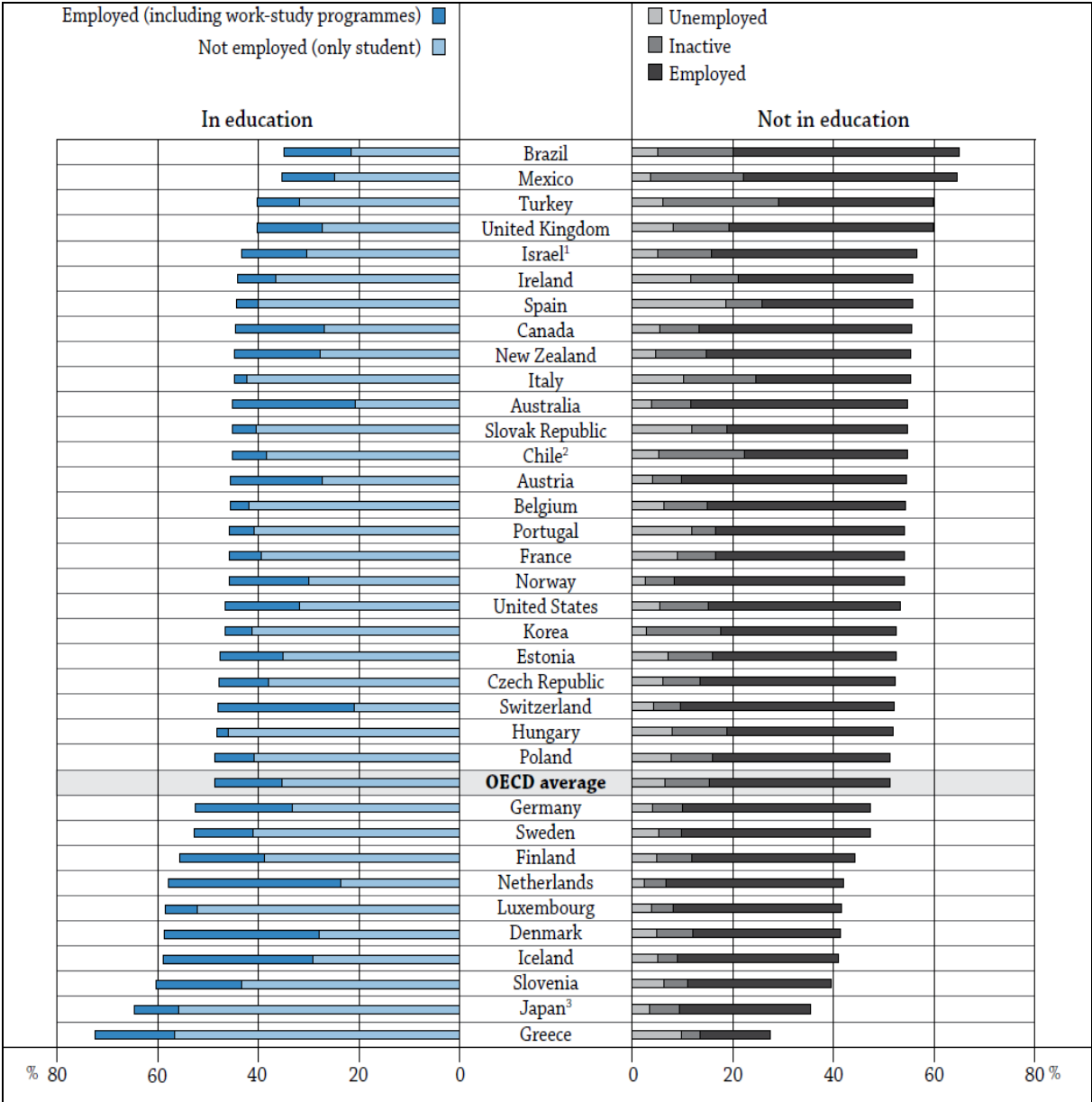
1. Total NEET population (unemployed + inactive)

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 15-19 year olds not in education

Source: OECD, 2014

In Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Turkey the reverse pattern is seen: around 15% of NEET youth are inactive while 6% or fewer are unemployed. In Austria, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, fewer than 10% of 15- 29 year-olds were neither in education nor employed.

Fig. 3 - Percentage of 15-19 year-olds not in education, by labour market status (2012). OECD Countries



1. The low proportion of population in education at these ages is due to mandatory military service for 18-21 year-olds.

2. Year of reference 2011.

3. Data refer to 15-24 year-olds.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 15-29 year-olds not in education.

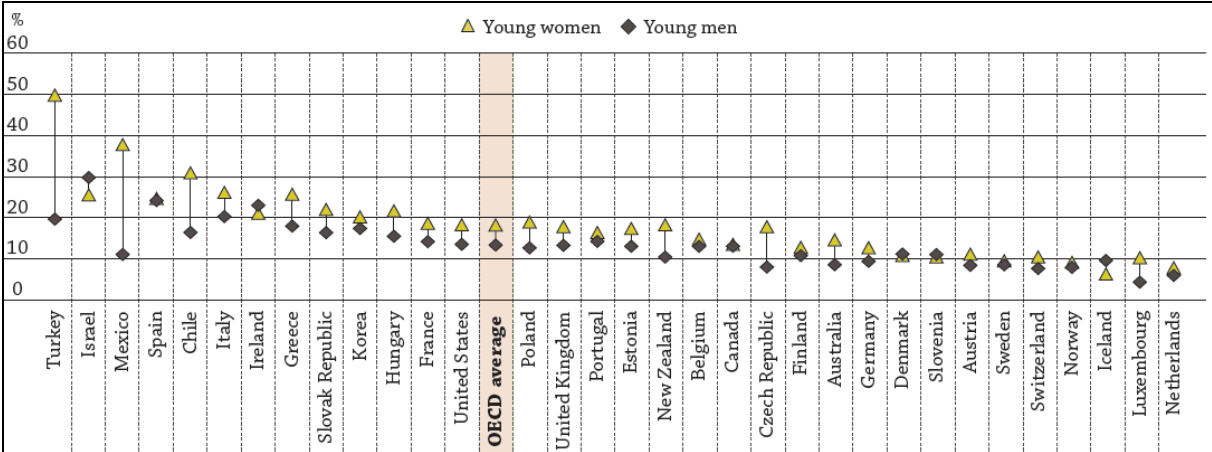
Source: OECD, 2014

In addition (Fig. 3), people aged 15-19 who are in the transition from education to work are more vulnerable when labour market conditions deteriorate. This is because they usually have lower qualifications, and face competition for the few jobs on offer from more experienced workers. A number of countries are more successful than others in providing job opportunities for 15-19 year-olds (shown as “not in education, employed”).

Across OECD countries, around 50% of young people aged 15-19 not in education is working; this is different in countries like Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Spain, where less than 20% is employed. The proportion of NEET and inactive in the category 15-19 years-old is about 5% in OECD countries. These youths are considered to be at risk of exclusion because they are not studying and not looking for a job. The percentage of these young people who are not studying and not searching for a job increase up to 15% in Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Turkey.

Eventually, in average, across OECD countries, young women are more likely to be NEET than men: 18% of 15-29 year-old women, compared to 13% of men (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 - Percentage of 15-29 year-olds neither in employment nor in education (NEET), by gender (2011). OECD Countries



Countries are ranked in descending order of the proportion of 15-29 year olds neither in employment nor in education (NEET) in 2011.

Source: OECD, 2013.

2. General framework for comparative analysis

2.1. European Council conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training

In order to set up a framework for the comparative analysis, a first factor we should take into account are the *Conclusions on enhancing the social inclusion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETS)*, the European Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council adopted on November 26th 2013. The Conclusions seek to address the problem of NEETs in a more systematic way, by including a series of policy measures covering prevention, education, training and non-formal learning, voluntary activities, the transition from education to employment, and employment itself.

The Council invited, therefore, the Member States and the Commission to establish, implement and further develop, where appropriate, national, regional and / or local strategies or programmes, such as Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans, for enhancing social inclusion of young people in a NEET situation.

More specifically, the Council identified *a set of priority areas of policy* and a series of related specific aims, as follows.

In the area of prevention

- *Promote access to adequate, affordable, accessible and high quality services, such as early childhood education and care, housing, health and social services to prevent young people getting into or remaining in a NEET situation.*
- *Promote and invest in youth work and ease the access for young people in a NEET situation to its services through strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation among relevant stakeholders.*
- *Pursue a comprehensive approach to reduce early school leaving, encompassing prevention and intervention measures.*
- *Develop and implement new and individually tailored approaches, such as detached and/or outreach youth work, for better social inclusion of young people in a NEET situation. Make full use of the potential of youth work to provide self-confidence and self-development to young people and to contribute to the reduction of early school leaving.*
- *Encourage and support high quality guidance including career information, information on rights at work, employment and education prospects, free movement possibilities and*

more comprehensive advice and support for all young people, especially for those at risk of getting into a NEET situation, and their families.

- *Strengthen the capacity of youth organisations, youth work and other forms of inclusion as a means of participation and use their potential to foster the social inclusion of young people in a NEET situation.*
- *Encourage local initiatives and social cohesion plans to develop specific actions targeted to young people in a NEET situation in order to (re)integrate them in the local communities.*
- *Use the European Youth Portal as an information platform to inform young people about social inclusion related issues.*

In the area of education, training and non-formal learning

- *Widen access to second-chance education and support the acquisition and/or development of skills and competences that meet the needs of the labour market.*
- *Promote and increase the availability of professional counselling and guidance adapted to the needs of socially excluded young people at all stages of their life.*
- *Have in place, no later than 2018, in accordance with national circumstances and specificities, and as Member States deem appropriate, arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning which enable individuals to make use of that learning for their careers and further learning.*
- *Increase access to and the quality of early childhood education and care. Additional support should be provided to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.*
- *Implement the Erasmus + programme as a supportive instrument to acquire social and civic competences and skills, and strengthening the mobility and employability of young people.*

In the area of transition from education to employment

- *Develop partnerships among public and private employment services, career guidance services, other specialised youth services (NGOs, youth centres and associations) that help to smooth the transition from unemployment, inactivity, education or training into work.*
- *Promote high quality work-based learning, such as apprenticeships, internships and traineeships, as an effective measure to improve sustainable transitions from education and training to work, notably by fostering skills that are relevant to the labour market and improving skill matches, in the context of, inter alia, the Council declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.*
- *Implement measures to tackle youth unemployment, in particular to improve transitions, taking account of the Council Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee, inter*

alia by building up partnership based approaches (including those involving youth support services), early intervention and activation, supportive measures for labour market integration (including enhancing skills and labour market-related measures), use of European Union funds and assessment and continuous improvement of schemes.

In the area of employment

- *Enhance full and active participation in the labour market with the help of active inclusion measures, promote creativity and innovation of young people in pursuing self-employment, support entrepreneurship and first work experience.*
- *Eliminate barriers, including age and other forms of discrimination, to (re)entering the labour market, address different forms of precarious work and, where relevant, analyse possibilities to reduce non-wage labour costs in order to boost recruitment prospects amongst young people.*
- *Enable employment services, together with youth organisations and other partners supporting young people, to provide personalised guidance and individual action planning, including tailor-made individual support schemes, based on the principle of mutual obligation at an early stage.*
- *Involve youth policy stakeholders and young people, as well as youth and other civil society organisations, in designing and implementing appropriate policies, including the Youth Guarantee, in particular paying specific attention to the potential of youth work to identify young people at risk of getting into a NEET situation and establish bridges between them and service providers. Empower youth stakeholders to promote and advertise the possibilities provided by the Youth Guarantee and other employment and training initiatives.*
- *Contribute fully to the development of EURES into a true pan-European job placement and recruitment network focused on addressing labour market needs in individual Member States, including vacancies in both public and private employment services, as well as apprenticeships and traineeships, where appropriate.*
- *Support reconciliation between work, private and family life in order to prevent and avoid obstacles to integration into the labour market.*

2.3. Identifying a set of policy areas and key aspects to compare policy measures adopted at national level addressing NEET population

Moving from the scheme underpinning the Conclusion approved by Council, as reported above, it is possible to define a further *set of priority areas of policy* and a series of related specific aims on which to carry out a brief comparative analysis among national scenarios.

The purpose of this research is to take into consideration some best performer countries with respect to their policy measures addressing young people not in Education, Employment and Training. Therefore we propose below a more general scheme, that, even though maintaining the general priority areas of policy previously mentioned, can be applied also to non European member states.

The set of policy areas and key aspects to compare policy measures adopted at national level, addressing NEET population are listed below.

1. Dealing effectively with early school leaving

- Promote and increase the availability of professional counselling and guidance adapted to the needs of socially excluded young people
- Improving innovative learning environments and innovative teaching methods
- Enhancing personalisation and individualisation of learning pathways
- Fostering innovative use of evaluation processes
- Improving peer learning
- Financial incentives
- Improving the role of parents
- Easing access to second-chance education
- Supporting reintegration of early school leavers into the school

2. Making education, training and non formal learning outcomes of young people more consistent with the labour market needs

- Making apprenticeships and vocational training an effective learning opportunity to acquire skills and competence consistent with the labour market needs
- Making the recognition of non formal and informal learning a real opportunity
- Improving work-based learning through work experiences, internships and in general dual-system-based skills development

3. Supporting education - to employment transitions

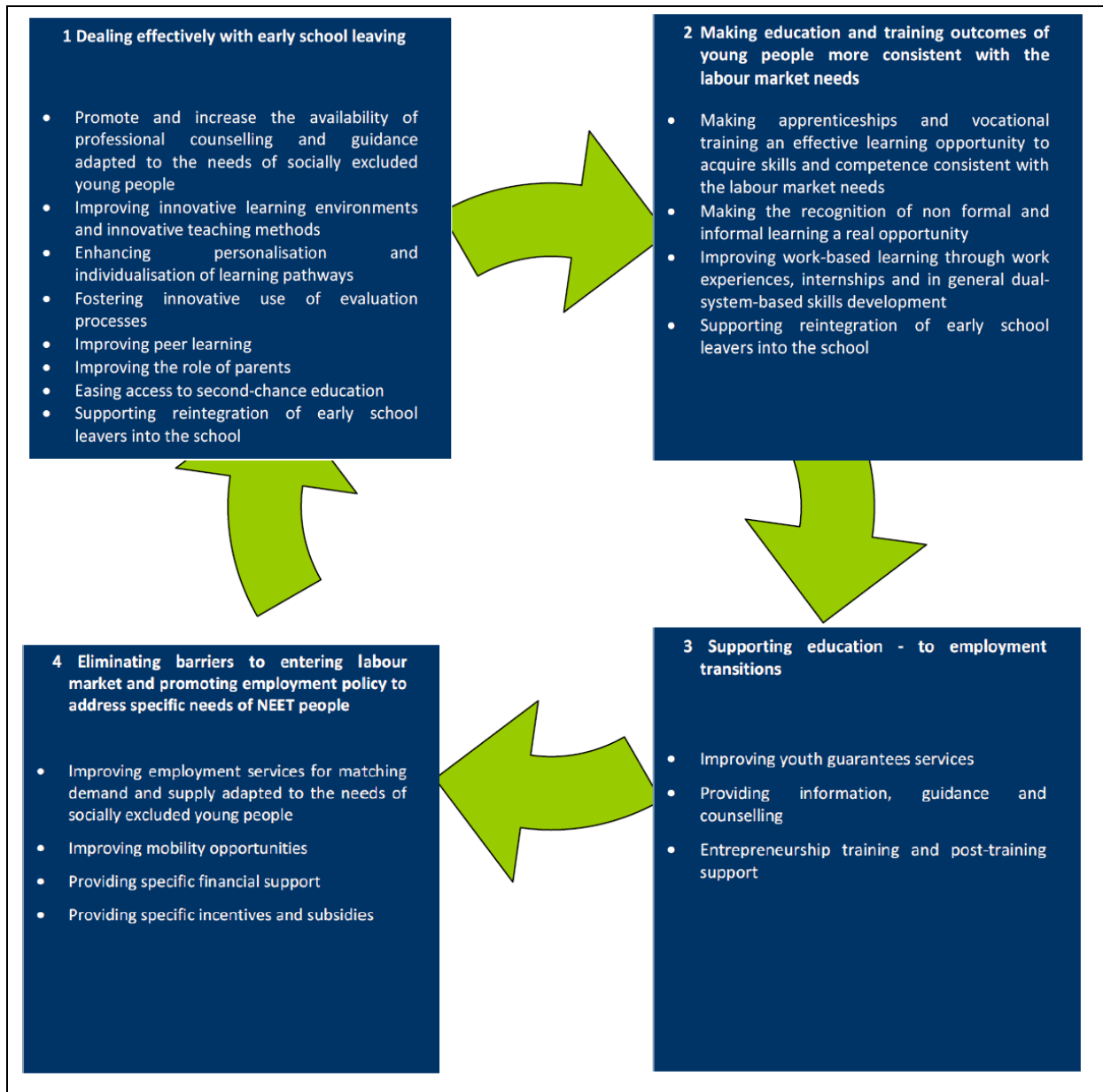
- Improving youth guarantees services
- Providing information, guidance and counselling
- Entrepreneurship training and post-training support

4. Eliminating barriers to entering labour market and promoting employment policy to address specific needs of NEET people

- Improving employment services for matching demand and supply adapted to the needs of socially excluded young people
- Addressing special support needs
- Improving mobility opportunities
- Providing specific financial support
- Providing specific incentives and subsidies

The framework for the comparative analysis can be outlined as follows (Fig. 4).

Fig. 5 – Framework for the comparative analysis



3. National cases

The countries we selected for the comparative analysis are United Kingdom, Finland and New Zealand. The reason why they have been identified for the aims of research are basically two. On one hand, they were first in the list of countries that promoted policies addressed to NEET people, so, if compared to others, they have acquired a relevant level of experience so far. On the other hand, some of them are reported at international level for promoting and setting up policy measures characterized by a systemic approach and proved an high grade of efficacy.

3.1. Overview of policy addressing NEET people in examined countries: definition of NEET, policy promoted by the Government and key data

3.1.1. New Zealand

A. Definition of NEET

In New Zealand the terms *NEET* is used to mean a person aged 16 to 24 neither holding a paid job nor studying towards a qualification. This is consistent with the most commonly used international definition. It includes people who were unemployed and searching for work, discouraged job seekers who had given up searching for work and people who were not working or looking for work for other reasons, such as being ill or disabled, having children or other family members to look after, being on holiday or devoting their time to unpaid activities. A *short-term NEET spell* is defined as one that lasted for at least one week but for less than 26 weeks, whereas a *long-term NEET spell* is defined as a continuous spell lasting for at least 26 weeks.

B. Policy promoted by the Government

New Zealand is committed to adopt policies to reverse dropout trends in higher secondary education. Data shows that the completion rate is significantly below the average in OECD countries (-18%) (OECD 2014a). Students have the opportunity to make a choice about

subjects of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) on the basis of their interests at the age of 16 (year 11). To get access to post-secondary or tertiary education it is required to either achieve NCEA 3 level of qualifications or passing exams. Alternately after age 21 direct entry is allowed. A dedicated service called Careers New Zealand provides support and guidance services for individuals and schools; further schools employ specialist career advisers. Vocational education and training (VET) offers various options in post-compulsory education. The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) gives students the opportunity to earn credits towards vocational qualifications in both schooling and tertiary contexts. Workers can gain vocational qualifications related to their jobs through industry training, which is part of the tertiary not academic education system in New Zealand. Industry training covers apprenticeships, in cooperation with providers for low-skilled workers and continuing VET.

More in detail, the Ministry of Education's priorities for 2010-15 focus on lifting achievement for every learner across the education sector. The priority III, Every young person has the skills and qualifications to contribute to their and New Zealand's future, focuses on the fact that In 2008, about 29% of school leavers (15,837 young people) left school without achieving NCEA Level 2. This level of underachievement has implications for both individuals, who are not equipped for skilled employment, and for the productivity of the broader workforce. According to the Government purposes, education system must meet the needs of all students including those who want to move into study at a tertiary institution (HE VET), those who are seeking an apprenticeship or other industry qualification, and those students for whom school is not the best learning environment and need preparation to enter the workforce. The general aim it to have every 16 and 17-year-old to be in education, training or work to ensure we have more young people with the skills and qualifications.

Implementing the Youth Guarantee programme

Youth Guarantee is a programme with the aims of improving achievement across the schooling and tertiary sector as well as improving transitions between school, tertiary and work. The term "tertiary education" here refers to all post-school education and training, and includes work-based learning, institutes of technology, polytechnics, universities and

adult and community education. The programme plans to achieve better educational results for people aged 16 and 17 by increase the share of young people in education and learning and by providing access to tertiary education institutions who provide school-level qualifications at no cost. The priorities for Youth Guarantee focuses on the creation of favourable conditions across the system in order to improve learning outcomes. This is made by providing 16-17 years olds more opportunities to get access to integrated education pathways leading to skilled and sustainable employment. It recognises that not all students want, or are able to, follow the traditional academic pathways through school, and provides options and support for those who want to explore alternative vocational pathways including progressing to work-based training. Moreover, it recognises that improved support could help young people to make better-informed decisions on subject and career choices. To establish clear pathways for students to follow to attain their goals Government sets out a set of strategic aims:

- review all programmes that enable students aged 17 and under to access tertiary education, and review current practice to identify successful models
- support the development of Trades Academies and Service Academies. These will deliver trades and technology programmes to secondary students based on partnerships between schools, tertiary institutions, industry training organisations and employers. Trades Academies will provide students with an integrated pathway into a trade through closer alignment of schools, the tertiary sector and industry.

To improve the way the system operates, it is crucial:

- align funding and regulatory settings to remove barriers to students studying where needs and interests are best met;
- increase the flexibility of the resourcing system, and ensure funding incentivises improved performance;
- improve the accountability system for education for 16 to 18-year-olds;
- create greater coherence in the qualifications system across the schooling and tertiary sectors.

To ensure greater coherence in curriculum and qualifications systems across the schooling and tertiary sectors are considered to be achieved the following aims:

- implement the senior secondary curriculum project to provide secondary schools with the information and options needed for students to access learning programmes and pathways between school, tertiary and work. This will assist schools to build partnerships with other schools, tertiary providers and employers;
- continue to work with the interagency transition group to improve current policy and practice around transition from school to post-school life for young people with disabilities.

Targeted student engagement programme

Government promotes policies that require schools, both primary and secondary, to implement a range of programmes in accordance with the New Zealand Curriculum. These have to facilitate the transition to adulthood by providing young people with life skills and employment skills. Schools may hire careers or transitions advisors, as well as other professionals who can encourage students to enrol into employment transition programmes, like STAR and Gateway. This broad, long-term programme aims to enable secondary schools to maximise student attendance and engagement. First, it seeks to ensure that students are enrolled in and attend school. Secondly, it assists students to develop positive education relationships with teachers and peers, and supports schools to work closely with parents, family to establish their children's education goals.

In order to lift student achievement, Government sets out stronger and more proactive measures to reduce truancy rates, including:

- providing additional funding to support schools to use electronic attendance registers;
- enabling schools to quickly identify casual truants before they become regular truants;
- encouraging more schools to implement the Early Notification System, which automatically sends a text message to parents whose children are missing from school without explanation;
- providing additional resources to the Non-Enrolment Truancy Service to reduce the time it takes to get non-enrolled students back into school.

Moreover, Government consider as crucial the implementation of a more targeted student and school support programme focusing on student engagement in schools, including

professional development for teachers to better understand how they can support the achievement disadvantaged students. A further priority is the improvement of teacher education and professional development. This will emphasise early identification and early support to address behaviour issues which impact negatively on student engagement and achievement. This involves training facilitators and Ministry regional staff to deliver programmes to students with the most severe behavioural difficulties.

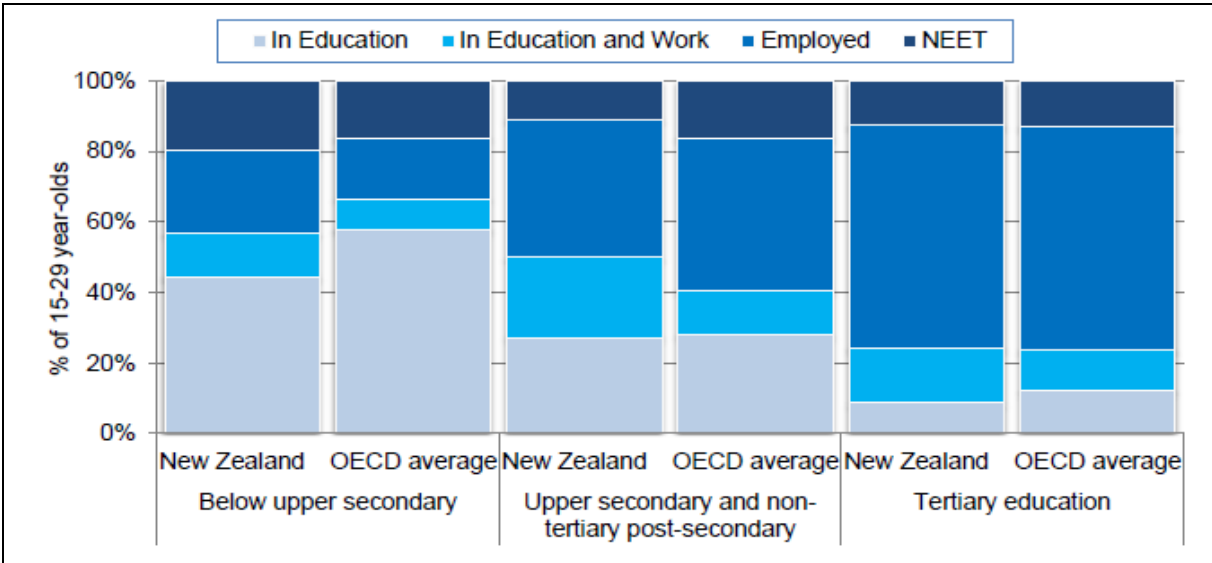
Framework for Youth and Transitions

Framework for Youth and Transitions proposes a selective and focused approach to achieve the youth-related priorities in the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and the Government’s new educational achievement targets for the public sector.

C. Data on NEET population

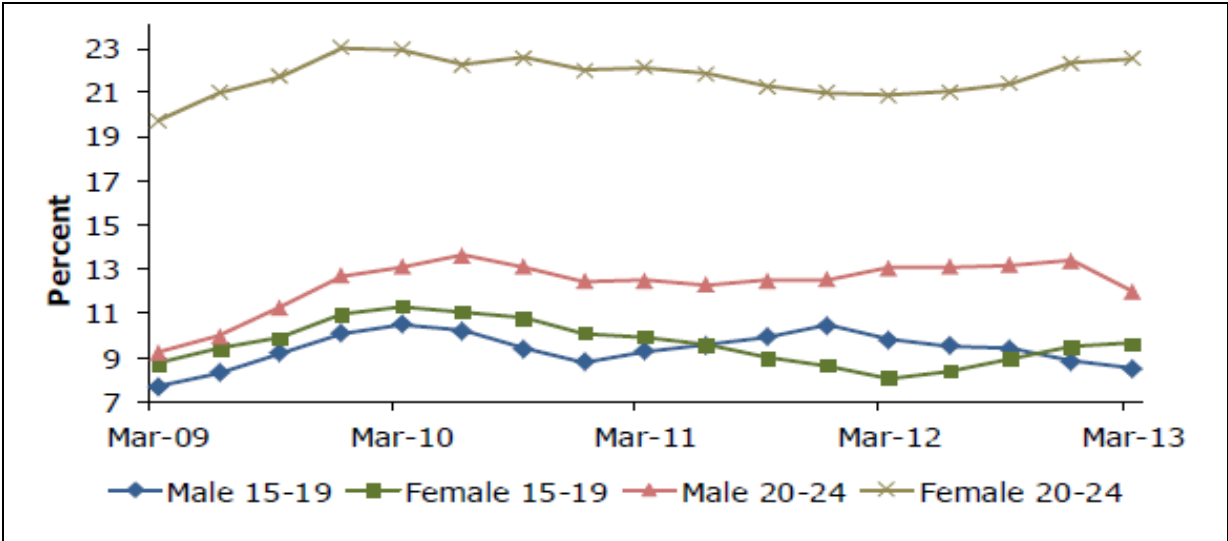
In New Zealand, unemployment rates across education levels are below the OECD average (OECD 2014a). More youth combine school with work than in the OECD average. However, in 2011, the proportion of 15-29 year-olds not in education and not employed (Fig. 8) was 14.3%, below the OECD average (15.8%), but evidencing difficulties in finding a job or returning to education.

Fig. 6 - New Zealand. Percentage of 15-29 year-olds in education and not in education, by educational attainment and work status (2011)



Source: OECD, 2013

Fig. 7 - New Zealand. NEET rates by age-group and gender (2009-13)



Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2013)

Among 15-24 year olds, in the year to March 2013, 8.6% of males and 9.6% of females were NEET in the year to March 2013. In the 20-24 years age group, 12.1% of males and 22.5% of females were NEET.

3.1.2. United Kingdom

A. Definition of NEET

In May 2013, the Office for National Statistics published the first edition of a new release showing quarterly estimates of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). This release, for the first time, provided estimates of young people who are NEET for the entire United Kingdom. The Department for Education (DfE), Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Welsh Government and Scottish Government, each have been published statistics on young people who are NEET. These were based partly or solely on estimates from the Labour Force Survey or from the Annual Population Survey. Each department had published estimates using different age groups and for different areas within the UK. This has meant it was not possible for users to calculate the number and percentage of young people that were NEET for the UK as a whole based on existing data.

Applying the new framework adopted in 2013, a person is NEET if they are aged 16 to 24 and not in education, employment or training. Within the Office for National Statistics estimate, a person is considered to be in education or training if they:

- are doing an apprenticeship;
- are on a Government employment or training programme;
- are working or studying towards a qualification;
- have had job-related training or education in the last four weeks; or
- are enrolled on an education course and are still attending or waiting for term to (re)start.

Therefore, anybody aged 16 to 24 who is not in the above forms of education or training and who is not in employment, is considered to be NEET. The definition of “in employment” follows that used for the official labour market statistics.

B. Policy promoted by the Government

Alongside creating the conditions for balanced and sustainable growth in the wider economy, Government has five priorities for action to maximise the proportion of 16-24 year olds who are participating in education, training and work (UK Government, 2011).

- Priority 1: Raising educational attainment in school and beyond to ensure that young people have the skills they need to compete in a global economy;
- Priority 2: Helping local partners to provide effective and coordinated services that support all young people, including the most vulnerable, putting us on track to achieve full participation for 16-17 year olds by 2015;
- Priority 3: Encouraging and incentivising employers to inspire and recruit young people by offering more high quality Apprenticeships and work experience places;
- Priority 4: Ensuring that work pays and giving young people the personalised support they need to find it, through Universal Credit, the Work Programme and our Get Britain Working measures;
- Priority 5: Putting in place a new Youth Contract worth almost £1 billion over the next three years to help get young people learning or earning before long term damage is done.

The age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training is being increased by the Government. From 2013, young people will be required to continue in education or training until they turn 17 and from 2015 they will be required to continue in education or training until they turn 18.7 Post-16 options include:

- Full-time education (e.g. school, college or home education).
- An apprenticeship.
- Part-time education or training if employed, self-employed or volunteering full-time.

The Government differentiated its policy on this issue into four main sectors (UK Government, 2011).

A. Plans for achieving full participation of 16-17 year olds in education and training, so that all young people have the opportunity to build the experience and qualifications they need for successful employment and adult life.

- Raising the participation age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015;
- Targeting greater investment on Apprenticeships for young people so that they can gain skills and qualifications through a real paid job, while making it quicker and easier to take on an apprentice, and ensuring every Apprenticeship consistently delivers high quality training;
- Reforming vocational education through new coherent 16-19 programmes of study, including work experience;
- Enabling local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties to support young people to participate, including disadvantaged young people, by implementing the proposals in the Special Educational Needs Green Paper;
- Addressing financial barriers to participation through better targeted support;
- Introducing a new programme, as part of the Youth Contract, to support disengaged 16-17 year olds to participate in education, an Apprenticeship or a job with training.

B. Plans for helping 18-24 year olds to engage in education and training, by:

- Launching the National Careers Service, which will provide information, advice and guidance about careers and learning, covering further education, Apprenticeships, other forms of training and higher education;
- Introducing a new approach to public information so that from September 2012, each university will publish a Key Information Set on its website, providing easily comparable information on a course by course basis;
- Reforming the Apprenticeship programme, maximising the number of Apprenticeships for 18-24 year olds as well as 16-17 year olds and promoting the uptake of Advanced Level and Higher Apprenticeships;
- Providing further education and training opportunities focused on the needs of young people, and those seeking work;
- Fully funding 18-24 year olds to gain their first Level 2 or 3 qualification;
- Supporting the development of progressive routeways to jobs and Apprenticeships, looking particularly to promote the effective use of flexibilities in the skills system and the Work Programme to best meet the needs of young people;

- Ensuring that qualifications meet the needs of both employers and young people;
- Continuing to widen participation in higher education.

C. Plans for supporting 18-24 year olds into employment, by:

- Creating the conditions for growth within the economy and the labour market, including through getting remuneration levels right for young people;
- Working with employers to make a clear case for the benefits of recruiting young people, and jointly investing in projects to create opportunities;
- Strengthening partnership between Jobcentre Plus, colleges, training organisations and employers to offer young people coordinated support;
- Helping those who are ready to work through Universal Credit and our Get Britain Working measures, including Work Experience;
- Supporting those who are at risk of long term unemployment through the Work Programme; and
- Helping young disabled people, including those with the most complex needs, back to work through the Work Choice Programme and Access to Work.

D. Plans to support 18-24 year olds on inactive benefits and those in disadvantaged groups.

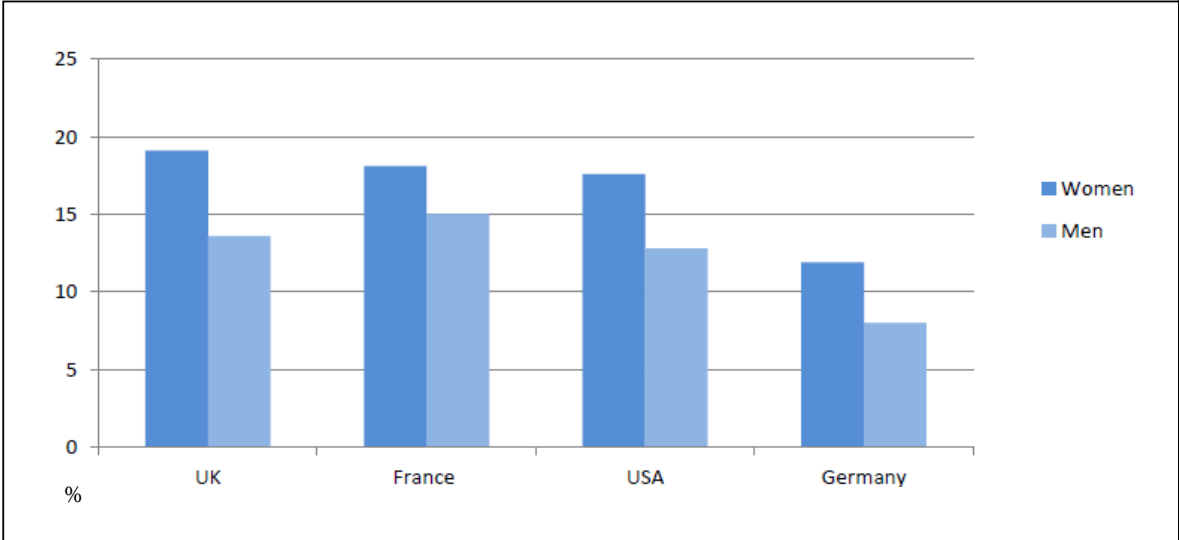
These plans include:

- Where appropriate, supporting young people on inactive benefits towards education, training and employment;
- Working with the voluntary and community sector to provide additional support to young people to move into productive activity through the Innovation Fund, giving providers a real chance to develop innovative solutions through social investment models;
- Empowering the staff who run services to set up public service mutuals to take over the services they deliver by exercising new Rights to Provide across the public sector;
- Improving data sharing between agencies, particularly at transition points, to ensure individuals' needs are best met; and
- Providing targeted support for specific groups of young people such as lone parents, those with health problems, disabled people including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young carers, offenders, substance misusers and care leavers.

C. Data on NEET population

According to OECD (2014a), in 2012 16.3% of 15-29 year-olds in the United Kingdom were NEET (Figures 5 and 6). This places the UK slightly above the OECD average (15.0%), Germany (9.9%) and the United States (15.2%). More in detail, the UK figure comprises 9.5% of 15-19 year-olds, 20.2% of 20-24 year-olds, and 18.3% of 25-29 year-olds. The proportion of NEETs in the United Kingdom decreases the more the level of education rises: among 15-29 year-olds NEET among those who achieved below upper secondary education are 25.2%; NEET among those with upper secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary education are 14.9%, and NEET among tertiary-educated people of the same age are 9.5%.

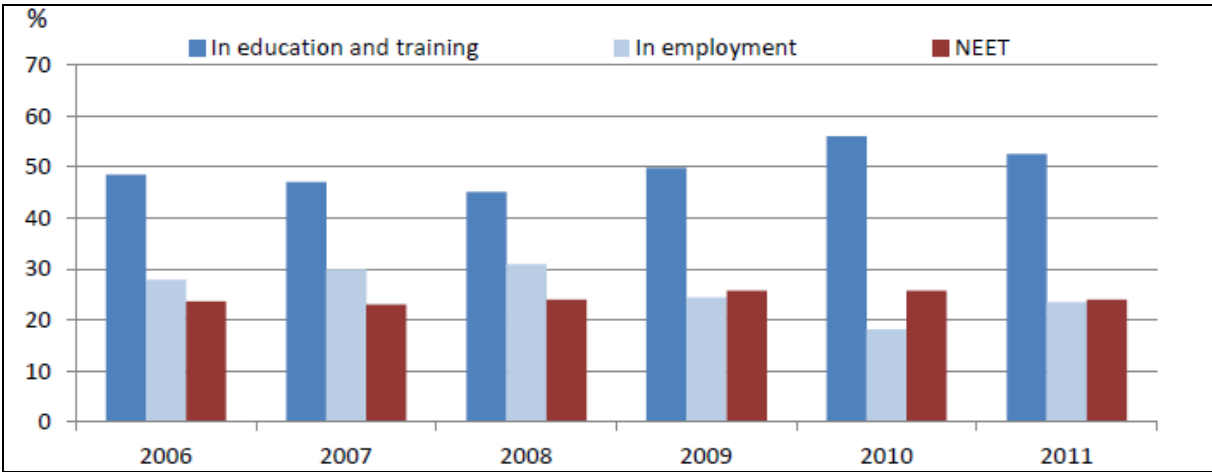
Fig. 8 - United Kingdom. Percentage of 15-29 years-old men and women neither employed nor in education or training (2012)



Source: OECD, 2014

In terms of gender differences, it is of note that the proportion of women aged 15-29 who are NEET is of 19.1% (among them, 5.8% are unemployed and 13.2% are inactive), while in the same age group the proportion of male NEET is 13.6% (of which about 9.2% are unemployed and 4.3% are inactive). The difference is larger among people aged 25-29: the proportion of female NEET is 25% (6.2% unemployed and 18.6% inactive), while among men the proportion is 12% (7.8% unemployed and 4.1% inactive).

Fig. 9 - United Kingdom. Percentage of 15-29 years-old with below upper secondary education as highest level of attainment that are in education, employment or NEET (2006-2011)



Source: OECD, 2013

3.1.3. Finland

A. Definition of NEET

The "share of young people not working, studying or performing compulsory military service" used by Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey describes the share of young people aged 15 to 24 who are not working, studying for a degree or qualification, attending course training or performing military or non-military service compared to the entire age group. The figure of Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey differs slightly from the almost corresponding NEET rate used by Eurostat. The figure published by Eurostat is based on data where the population does not include young people performing military or non-military service.

B. Policy promoted by the Government

Youth Guarantee

Government has highlighted the prevention of social exclusion of young people as one of its spearhead projects. The objective is to provide all young people with realistic opportunities to pursue and complete a post-basic qualification and find employment while paying attention to not allowing young people to become stuck in a period of non-activity for too long. The Government Programme addresses the trend of social exclusion among young people by means of a Youth Guarantee. Firstly, each young person under 25 and recently graduated people under 30 will be offered a job, work-place training, a study place, or a period in a workshop or rehabilitation *within three months of becoming unemployed*. Moreover, the definition of youth guarantee is supplemented and specified in the Government's development plan *Education and Research 2011-2016*. The plan's introduction of an educational guarantee defines the concept as follows: every school-leaver will be guaranteed a place in upper secondary school, in vocational education and training, in apprenticeship training, in a youth workshop, in rehabilitation, or by other means.

According to the Government policy priorities, changes to society and the labour market have affected the capacities and opportunities of young people to act as active citizens. Rapid economic fluctuations, structural change of the Finnish economy, high competence requirements in the labour market, and intensifying competition have increased

unemployment amongst young people and affected their commitment to work. At the same time, it has become even more important that all young people are provided with access to upper secondary education and complete some form of vocational qualification.

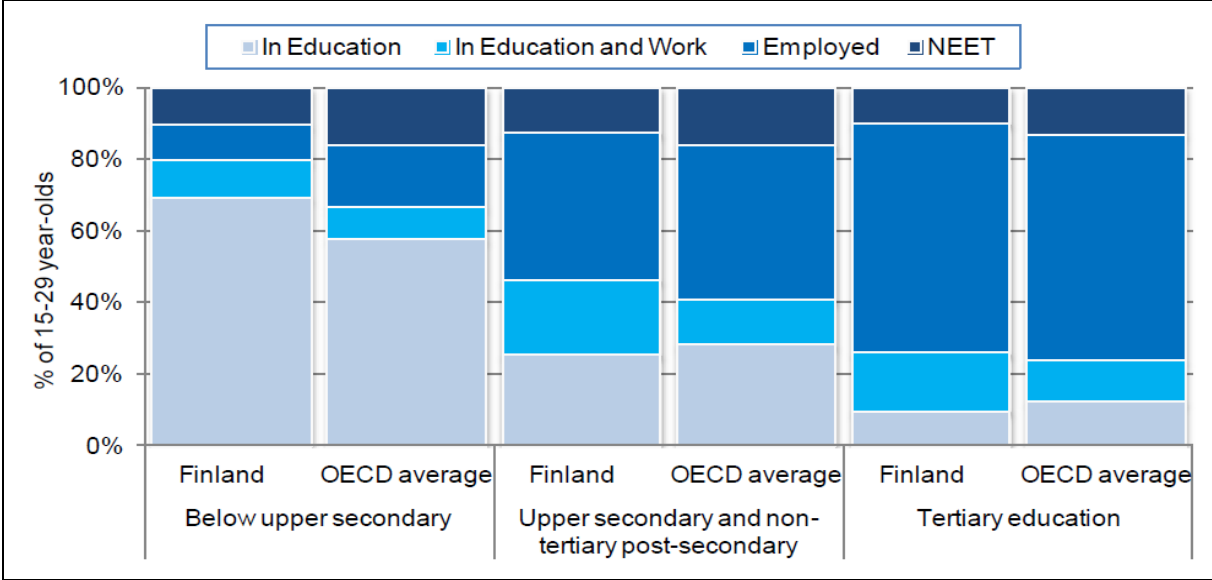
The social exclusion of young people has a human as well as an economic dimension. If the social malaise of individuals multiplies, it may cause a tendency toward social segregation, which in turn results in unwanted phenomena, such as substance misuse and increased criminal activity. The impact on Finland's national economy is linked to both direct and indirect costs arising from social exclusion. According to the Government figures, the cost of a single person excluded from working life is estimated at approximately 750,000 euros over a period of 40 years – not counting other possible social benefits and costs arising from social exclusion, as well as lost tax income and added value from work input. At the level of the national economy, social exclusion of young people also has an impact on the availability of workforce and length of careers. Completing an upper secondary education qualification or higher has therefore a significant impact on employees' length of career.

C. Data on NEET population

Finland has one of the highest levels of educational attainment among the OECD (OECD 2014a): in 2013 84% of 25-64 year-olds had at least completed upper secondary education (against an OECD average of 75%) and 39% hold a tertiary degree (OECD average: 32%).

In Finland the 2011 proportion of NEETs at all levels of education for the age group 15-29 is 12%, below the OECD average (16%). In the period 2008-2011, the percentage increased by 1.9%, in line with the average increase across the OECD countries (+2.1%). It is relevant to distinguish the trend for people with upper secondary and tertiary education from the trend for people with lower qualification. For the former the percentage peaked in 2009 and 2010 and then started to decrease, while for the latter the percentage is still on the rise. In 2011, 41% of people aged 15-29 who were not in education and had an upper secondary qualification resulted in employment, while among those with a lower qualification the percentage fell to 10% (OECD average: 43% and 17%, respectively).

Fig. 10 - Finland. Percentage of 15-29 year-olds in education and not in education, by educational attainment and work status (2011)



Source: OECD, 2013

3.2. The national scenarios in relation to each policy area

3.2.1. Dealing effectively with early school leaving

3.2.1.1. Main findings

If we compare the policy addressed to early school leaving adopted in New Zealand, Finland and United Kingdom matched with the framework we proposed above (for a scheme see Fig. 11), a first factor to note refers to many similarities in terms of general approach. In all three countries, in fact, models based on a multi-level and multi-actor approach are privileged. The reference point is given by a structured and comprehensive legislative umbrella, that addresses many policy areas we identified as central for dealing with NEET issues. To the NEET phenomenon is recognized a cross-cutting impact on different policy measures, from education to labour market, passing through social and healthcare policies.

A further factor has to be emphasized lies on the role that in all examined countries is given to individual responsibility. Against a wide and qualified range of action, tools and guidance a youngster is addressed, the state expects every youngster in a NEET condition responds positively and actively to the actions he/she benefits. In this regard, all measures and actions addressed to NEETs are based clearly on an active and proactive approach.

Yet several specific and differentiated aspects can be examined. New Zealand has both in the develop of a career management system and a qualification framework very flexible and modularized as many strengths. The Finnish approach is historically more oriented to recognize an high level of autonomy to local authorities, as well a crucial role attributed to individualisation and personalisation of guidance and education provision. Both in New Zealand and in Finland the Youth Guarantee represent the mainstreaming channel through which many different actions adopted by the Government find a common ground. In UK, instead, over the recent years, the Government preferred to employ a set of tools already existing, by integrate them and making them suitable to an even more effective deployment, when used to face NEET issues. All these measures are unified under the umbrella of the

Youth Contract. Furthermore, in 2012, a new model has been introduced, underpinning the NEET policy, the so called payment-by-results.

Fig. 11 – Framework for the comparative analysis - Policy area 1. Dealing effectively with early school leaving

- Promote and increase the availability of professional counselling and guidance adapted to the needs of socially excluded young people
- Improving innovative learning environments and innovative teaching methods
- Enhancing personalisation and individualisation of learning pathways
- Fostering innovative use of evaluation processes
- Improving peer learning
- Improving the role of parents
- Easing access to second-chance education
- Supporting reintegration of early school leavers into the school

3.2.1.2. New Zealand

Career management

According to policy adopted by the Government, students are responsible for the management of their own career and accordingly they must learn substantive knowledge and lifelong learning skills, as well as develop the capability to make sensible and informed choices at different crucial stages.

The transition into work starts when students are 14, i.e. when they develop their interests and have to make choices about courses. This is crucial since their learning choices will determine their training for many years: up to eight years for advanced vocational and bachelors' degrees, possibly longer if education is combined with periods of work or unemployment. Career choices are becoming more frequent now that both lifestyles and career paths are more varied and fluid than in the past. The so-called "knowledge economy" is a concept inspiring the policies in the sector of guidance and career. It is based on a model assuming a constant flux of knowledge and technology. In this context "learning to learn" is a key skill to be acquired at young age and continually adopted in subsequent junctures. The knowledge economy also requires that the career advisors and guidance counsellors update their function, particularly in secondary school. Traditionally teachers without professional

training and relations with employers and tertiary providers were in charge with career advice. In the new context advisors need to acquire specialization and independence. For example, information about career are abundant on the web and career advisors must be able to find and interpret them, to build connections with employers, to gather information about skill needs and opportunities.

Careers advice is particularly effective when it is embedded in the curriculum – and this occurs currently in New Zealand - as an integrated part of students’ secondary schooling curriculum, and the careers advisor are expected to interact closely with teachers and students throughout the school year. The Ministry of Education and Careers (and independent agency) developed guidelines and benchmarks and provides information on careers directly on the website. Secondary schools receive funds to enrol careers advisors. These supporting tools and incentives might be may strengthened to make sure that careers advice is truly professional and independent. In this light, careers information, advice, guidance and education (CIAGE) is reviewed on regular basis. To help students make informed choices, sector-specific reports on career options are published.

Vocational Pathways

Vocational Pathways provide innovative ways to achieve NCEA Level 2. They help students to clarify the relevance of their learning for different types of jobs and study options, with a focus on five main occupational sectors: manufacturing and technology; construction and infrastructure; primary industries; social and community services; and services industries.

The Vocational Pathways have been developed through a partnership between industry and employer representatives, the industry training sector, secondary and tertiary education providers, Government agencies, and were officially launched in April 2013.

The tools available to implement the Vocational Pathways are:

- the *Vocational Pathways documents* including the Recommended Assessment Standards can now be used to plan and develop curriculum and programmes of learning. Many standards are recommended across multiple sectors so it is easy for students to transition their study across pathways.
- the *Profile Builder* is the new online tool to create a Vocational Profile. The profile is a graphic representation of learning achievement (and future study options) which students, parents, and employers can easily understand. It shows a student’s learning

and achievement, or planned achievement, links to future study options and careers. It is also a very useful tool for school and tertiary curriculum planning.

- the *Job Profiles* provide a large number of roles and occupations available in each industry sector, ranging from entry level through to high levels.

Project K

Project K is a mentoring initiative that inspires young people to reach their full potential through building self-confidence, teaching essential life skills such as goal setting and team work, promoting good health and a positive attitude. It provides young people with outdoors experiences and mentors from within their communities. Project K is delivered by the Foundation for Youth Development, who also deliver a range of other youth programmes.

Careers New Zealand

Careers New Zealand is a Government agency tasked with leading careers development for all New Zealanders. They work with clients of all ages and liaise with the education, social and economic sectors as well as with industry, businesses and unions. Its services are meant to improve the ability of New Zealanders to manage their careers. This helps people to be more engaged and make well-informed career decisions, and contributes to employers accessing the right skills at the right time. Careers New Zealand plays an important role in connecting education and employment by improving the quality of career programmes in schools and tertiary education organisations (TEOs), and developing the career development capability of key influencers. This supports young people to choose career pathways that lead to good employment outcomes, meeting the workforce requirements of employers.

Justice Transitions

Young Offenders aged 17-19 who are in prison are offered a range of programmes to support their reintegration to the community. These include programmes to reduce reoffending (e.g. a short motivational programme, young offenders' programme, individual treatment by a psychologist) and other life skills type programmes such as parenting, living skills, foundation skills and employment skills. Education is also provided, and the Department of Corrections has recently approved a new Education Strategy to improve how

education is designed and delivered in prisons. Young people may access community-based reintegration services for support with living skills (for instance through Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society/Trust). Young people can be referred to these services by Corrections staff or can self-refer.

3.2.1.3. United Kingdom

Youth Contract

The Youth Contract consist in a set of different interconnected measures, a package of schemes aimed at helping young people be re-integrated into studies and sustain employment, launched in April 2012, combining existing schemes with new ones. The Youth Contract measures are outlined below.

- *Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds (AGE 16-24)*: Payments of £1,500 are available to employers with less than 1,000 employees that take on young apprentices.
- *Work experience*: Placements are available for 16-24 year olds, through Jobcentre Plus who have been claiming JSA for at least 13 weeks.
- *Support for 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET*: Payments of £2,200 are made to providers who take on 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training and who have low or no qualifications, and those from other disadvantaged backgrounds.
- *Sector-based work academies*: Some 18-24 years-old jobseekers allowance (JSA) claimants will be offered a mixture of training, work experience, and a job interview at a local firm through Jobcentre Plus.
- *Extra support at Jobcentre Plus*: 18-24 year old JSA claimants will be offered weekly rather fortnightly signing on meetings at the Jobcentre Plus.
- *Funding for localised Youth Contracts*: Localised Youth Contracts are available in Leeds City Region, Liverpool and Newcastle. The cities designed their own local schemes using national funding.
- *Wage incentives*: Payments of up to £2,275 were available to employers who take on young people (aged 18-24) claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for more than six months. Enrolments for this scheme ended on 6 August 2014.

Activity Agreement Pilots

The Activity Agreement is a personally negotiated contract between the young person and their Personal Adviser / Keyworker, focusing on specific steps the young person should take to progress to education, employment or training. Young people receive continuous support from their Adviser throughout the process. Activity Agreements were piloted in eight high - NEET areas of England, covering around 50 local authority areas, to test ways of re-engaging 16 and 17 year olds who were NEET. The pilot ran in 2006 and was extended for a further five years, testing its effectiveness on different groups young people, with an increasing focus on those falling into one of the recognised vulnerable groups. Discretionary funding was made available to cover the cost of activities, which were focused on:

- personal development – to help cope with personal difficulties and/or boost confidence and motivation. This might include anger management, dealing with money or help to travel independently
- skill development – either filling existing skill gaps or more proactively seeking to acquire skills that are necessary to progress to further training or employment - for example, literacy/numeracy
- work-related activities – including work tasters, workplace behaviour, CV and interview skills. These activities were particularly popular with participants but could be difficult to source.

The pilots were based on a ‘something for something’ model in which non-means tested financial incentives per week were offered but were conditional upon young people fulfilling their agreement. The Activity Agreement was designed to reflect the young person’s individual needs; young people could begin and finish their agreement at any time of the year and it could last from anything for 6 to 20 weeks, with the average length of stay around 12 - 15 weeks. Management Information shows that over the period April 2006 - March 2010, approximately 25,000 young people took part in an Activity Agreement. Using Management Information data from the first two years of the pilots the costs are estimated at £2,122 per participant.

Support for 16 and 17 year old NEETs

In February 2012, a scheme was launched to help at least 55,000 disengaged 16-17 year olds in England. The scheme is delivered by provider organisations who will receive payments for each 16-17 year old that they place in employment or education. Provider contracts were awarded to successful bidders in June 2012.

Unlike any past schemes for this age group, *payment will depend on results*. Organisations will receive an initial payment for taking young people on, followed by subsequent payments when they show progress - including remaining in education, undertaking apprenticeships, or holding down a job. To achieve the best results, the scheme will give total freedom to those providing support - as long as the end result is success for the young person. Payment-by-results, according to Government, frees the charities to do what they know works for young people. Tightly controlled schemes are less effective with lower success rates. The package of support offered will be encouraged to be innovative, to use new methods, to do whatever is right to get that 16- or 17-year-old earning or learning again.

Local authorities are meant to be central to the success of the programme. They work with providers to target those young people in their area who will benefit most, fitting this programme with other provision on offer locally.

Those eligible include 16-17 year olds who are not in education employment or training (NEET) and who have one or less GCSE grade A-C, and those who are or were in care or who have been released from custody. Initially, payments were only for 16-17 NEET and with no grades A-C. In January 2013, the Department for Education extended eligibility to include around 15,500 additional 16-17 year olds.

Providers receive an initial payment for each 16-17 year old that they assist, with further payment when the young person enters education or employment, followed by the remainder once the young person has been in employment or education for a minimum of five months. Providers receive payments for outcomes including: apprenticeships, full-time education and full or part-time employment. How the providers secure education or employment for the young people is at their own discretion.

Tracking young people's participation

To enable NEETs to fulfil their duties, local authorities need to be able to identify young people who are not participating, and assess their needs. Local authority services maintain a database – known as CCIS (Client Caseload Information System) of 16-19 year olds resident in their area on which they record young people's current activity. They draw heavily on information from education and training providers, youth services and Jobcentre Plus to keep this database up to date. According to Government, this is challenging, especially at age 18+ when more young people begin to live independently. As a result, there are a significant proportion of 18+ year olds whose current situation is not known and who may be missing out on the services to which they are entitled.

CCIS also provides a range of statistical information that shows the number and characteristics of young people NEET which is available from local authorities.

Local authorities (LAs) in England collect and record information on young people's participation in education or training, which the Department for Education uses to estimate the number and proportion of young people not in education, work or training (NEET) in each LA area in England.

3.2.1.4. Finland

MAST – Regional Guidance Model for addressing youth at risk

The main purpose of MAST project, which was implemented in broad-based collaboration between educational organisations and all the public and private actors in the region facing with the NEET phenomenon, was to set out a regional guidance model for young people. A further aim was to develop and tune up a network of experts responsible for the steering of young people under the age of 25 who were at risk of social exclusion formed in Southwest Finland. This model was developed by counting on close cooperation between educational institutions (basic education and upper secondary education) and social actors addressing youth. The MAST project benefited also from teachers and counsellors at educational institutions, work-based course personnel, various authorities, representatives of employer and employee organisations, as well as entrepreneurs.

The regional guidance model developed by the MAST project also includes the

implementation of a regional monitoring system for young people and of new pedagogical guidance models, alongside the improvement of cooperation between the various actors addressing NEET population. A multiplicity of actions, methods and tools set out in the model can be used in order to support young people - throughout their career within education system - to prevent them from interrupting their studies and to support the completion of school courses. The range of project actions can be subdivided into three different strategic areas: 1) enhancing cooperation between schools and work-based training institutions; 2) putting under observation the first school transition phase, by adopting a preventive and proactive approach; 3) improving the completion of upper secondary level studies and school to work transitions.

The regional guidance model for the Southwest Finland region started with the development of an agreement between the educational institutions and work-based training providers. This agreement is focused on the possibility - offered to young at risk of early school leaving - to complete upper secondary vocational studies by attending work-based courses, as long as the outcomes achieved at the end of training are the same that are defined in the Finnish curriculum. Accordingly, work-based training institutions involved in the MAST project developed their own curricula - by vocational branch – by ensuring that the learning outcomes matched the assessment criteria expected in the national curriculum. In this regard, a close cooperation between educational institutions and the work-based training providers has been more and more developed throughout the project cycle of life. In this way, teachers and trainers belonging to VET providers are currently more informed not only about work-based courses, but also they acquired expertise on practically-oriented learning environments and methodologies employed.

To prevent early school leaving during the first transition between primary and secondary school, as well as to create individual guidance and learning paths, the project set out a variety of models to support young people in their career, when they stay in the last grade of comprehensive school. These models include the development of trial days in schools, the combination of work-based training studies with school-based learning, as well as preparatory training for vocational education or working life for those in need of specific support. While attending work-based training, students can devote themselves to individual assignments, take exams or even complete a larger part of their studies through the work-based training, counting on support and evaluation ensured by teachers.

In addition, the project carried out the development of a process description for providing guidance to students who did not proceed successfully into upper secondary education. The project also developed the concept of *home municipality responsibility*, which means that persons responsible for guidance were appointed in all municipalities within the region. In order to enhance the attainment of expected results and the completion of studies in upper secondary education, as well as to make easier the school to work transition, the project developed models and tools to improve a more individualized education at upper secondary level. At the same time the project promoted the set out of a specific operational model and a related action plan for contrasting early school-leaving. In addition, a specific information is being disseminated to municipalities, highlighting their responsibilities with respect to employing fresh graduates.

Eventually, most best practices developed at upper secondary level include work-based training studies for completing courses toward a qualification, group support, enhancements in the quality of guidance system. This form of work-based training, therefore, offer students at risk an integrate model, on the basis of which they are supported in completing their courses and obtain the expected attainment, while they are offered a customized guidance service.

3.2.2. Making education and training outcomes of young people more consistent with labour market needs

3.2.2.1. Main findings

If we analyse the policy for aligning education and training outcomes of young people (especially NEETs) and labour market needs, as they are set out in New Zealand, Finland and United Kingdom, by taking into account the framework we proposed (for a scheme see Fig. 12), the common aspects seem to prevail over national differences.

In particular, the apprenticeships plays a central role in all three national scenarios, although differently regulated and funded. Alongside the apprenticeships, can be observed many other training arrangements, all of them having in common a substantial reference to dual

system, by alternating training attended through formal learning (classroom, lab, etc.) and work-place learning.

A lot of measures throughout countries have in common the purpose of promoting and exploiting workplace learning integrated with formal learning. Several projects are intended to promote a more extensive, versatile utilisation of workplace learning in developing the professional skills of students in basic vocational education. The purpose is to increase and provide more-versatile, individual opportunities for work-oriented and practical vocational studies, by taking account of their individual needs and plans. Moreover, the measures aim at increasing applications to engage in vocational education, achievement of the professional skills required, as well as facilitating the completion of basic vocational qualifications and supporting the transition from vocational education into work.

Moreover, a crucial role is played by the structure of qualifications. In all cases, qualifications are organized on the basis of defined outcomes covering knowledge and skills. In the case of United Kingdom, a typical apprenticeship framework includes not just a set of outcomes, but a set of framework: a National Vocational Qualification which examines the apprentices' work-based skills, a Technical Certificate which examines the apprentices' theoretical knowledge, Key Skills which examine the apprentices' transferrable skills - for example, numeracy and literacy - and employer rights and responsibilities.

As a direct consequence of the flexible structure of qualifications, in all countries some programmes have the common aim to guarantee training to help gain some recognised skills and qualifications to help you progress in chosen career (for example Training for Success, Skills for your life or Skills for Work in UK). These measures help address personal and development needs and gain skills and qualifications to get a job or progress to higher level education or training. Level 1 and 2 help gain skills and vocationally related qualifications to be able to gain employment or progress to the next level of training provision or to further education. Skills for Work Level 3 help work towards the achievement of level 3 qualifications. Participants in the programs are required to achieve targeted qualification in some specific areas. Each participant agrees on the basis of a Personal Training Plan.

Fig. 12 – Framework for the comparative analysis - Policy area 2. Making education, training and non formal learning outcomes of young people more consistent with labour market needs

- Making apprenticeships and vocational training an effective learning opportunity to acquire skills and competence consistent with the labour market needs
- Making the recognition of non formal and informal learning a real opportunity
- Improving work-based learning through work experiences, internships and in general dual-system-based skills development
- Supporting reintegration of early school leavers into the school

3.2.2.2. New Zealand

The 1989 school reform decentralised a significant amount of decision-making to the individual school level (e.g. appointment and management of staff, allocation of resources, curriculum implementation, pedagogy, assessment, enrolment, etc.). Thus, schools have been given freedom to teach and made accountable to parents through local boards of trustees, whose local knowledge presumably make them the best judges of teacher quality.

New Zealand Qualification Framework

A new qualification framework based on outcomes (NZQF) has been created by the Government in 2013. In the context of NZQF outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skills as well as their application. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is in charge with the administration of NZQF, which is intended as the most important source for information about certified qualifications, including senior secondary school and tertiary education qualifications as well as qualifications available to international students. The NZQF provides information about what knowledge and experience, holders of qualifications can be expected to have, and about what further education and/or employment opportunities the qualification leads to. The NZQF is designed to optimise the recognition of educational achievement and its contribution to New Zealand's economic, social and cultural success. Specifically, the NZQF:

- conveys the skills, knowledge and attributes a graduate has gained through completing a qualification
- requires the development of integrated and coherent qualifications

- enables and supports the provision of high-quality education pathways
- enhances confidence in the quality and international comparability of New Zealand qualifications
- contributes to Māori success in education by recognising and advancing mātauranga Māori represents value for money, is sustainable and robust.

Apprenticeships

Until 2014, Modern Apprenticeships provided workplace based industry training. Apprentices - young people aged 16 to 21 – were able to earn income while working and studying towards a qualification recognised by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). Implementation of Modern Apprenticeships was governed by the Modern Apprenticeship Training (Act 2000) and the scheme was administered by the Tertiary Education Commission.

The aim of Modern Apprenticeships was to encourage employers to hire more and younger apprentices. Ensuring employers are prepared to hire young people was seen as the largest barrier to increasing the number of young people in industry training. The Modern Apprenticeship programme sought to do this through a brokerage scheme, which would overlay the industry training subsidy. The role of Modern Apprenticeship brokers (now called co-ordinators) was to:

- screen potential apprentices and arrange work placements with employers
- work with employers and apprentices to produce an individual training plan
- manage training arrangements and ensure that training leads to assessment for credits towards a national qualification
- ensure systems are in place to guarantee training quality
- support the apprentice by providing advice and resolving problems as they arise, and if necessary, arrange for the apprentice to complete a national qualification with another employer.

Government recently promoted a complete industry training reforms that remove the modern apprenticeship and create a single apprenticeship programme for youth and adults under the “New Zealand apprenticeship”, which: provides the same level of support, and subsidy, for all apprentices regardless of age; boosts apprenticeship funding, education

content and status; sets clear performance criteria in terms of completion and qualification attainment rates; and increases competition by allowing employers direct access to apprentices.

There are some key differences between the old and new apprenticeship schemes:

- unlike Modern Apprenticeships, which were designed for people between the ages of 16 and 21, New Zealand Apprenticeships is available to anyone over the age of 16;
- under the Modern Apprenticeships scheme one could work towards a Level 3 national certificate, but under the New Zealand Apprenticeships programme one must work towards a minimum of a Level 4 national certificate.

More specifically, NZ Apprenticeships:

- provide an entry point into an occupation setting a person up for a career in an industry;
- meet any regulatory requirements for entry into an occupation;
- contain a strong theoretical component to support further learning, as well as a practical element.

The detailed criteria for New Zealand Apprenticeships are that:

- an apprentice must be employed in the occupation for which they are training;
- throughout the apprenticeship, an apprentice must be supported by a training plan agreed by the apprentice, the employer and the organisation arranging the training;
- all NZ Apprenticeships will result in (at least) a level 4 New Zealand qualification comprising a minimum of 120 credits (ensuring a strong theoretical component).

It is expected that on completing a NZ Apprenticeship, the apprentice will be 'work competent' for the occupation in which they have been training, and that industry will determine the standard of competency to be met.

The NZ Apprenticeship improves the school-to-work transition by putting potential employees and employers in contact with each other. This is especially true of youth apprenticeships in technical skills that are hard to convey in conventional classroom settings (e.g. welding, glazing, plumbing, electrical and building trades), yet have value in the market.

3.2.2.3. United Kingdom

Sector-based work academies

Sector-based work academies are addressed to claimants who are considered relatively ready for employment, with no basic skills needs. Claimants are offered sector-specific training and work experience placements for a period of up to six weeks, followed by a job interview with an employer.

The training element of the academy is fully funded by the Skills Funding Agency in England and by the Scottish Government and partner organisations in Scotland. The job interview may also lead to apprenticeship places, and the training element of the academy may be used as the foundation of apprenticeship training.

Sector-based work academies are offered in England and Scotland and provision is based around actual job vacancies. Claimants may be referred at any point in their claim prior to referral to the Work Programme. Whilst engaged in the academies, people will continue to claim benefits. Any travel and childcare costs associated with taking up a place in an academy is covered. Claimants' decision to participate is voluntary, but attendance becomes mandatory once a claimant has accepted a place.

Between August 2011, when the scheme started, and May 2013, 61,720 claimants commenced sector-based work academy pre-employment training. Claimants aged 18-24 comprised around half of all starts (49%).

Apprenticeships

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has responsibility for apprenticeships in England. The NAS was created in April 2009 and is responsible for promoting apprenticeships to employers and learners, supporting employers through the process of recruiting and training an apprentice, and maintaining the national online apprenticeship vacancies system which allows employers to post vacancies for aspiring apprentices.

There are 170 different apprenticeships known as *apprenticeship frameworks* available in 13 broad sector subject areas. A typical apprenticeship framework includes: a National Vocational Qualification which examines the apprentices' work-based skills, a Technical Certificate which examines the apprentices' theoretical knowledge, Key Skills which examine the apprentices' transferrable skills, for example, numeracy and literacy, and employer rights

and responsibilities.

Apprenticeship frameworks can be studied at different qualification levels:

- Intermediate Apprenticeships are Level 2 qualifications, equivalent to 5 GCSE passes;
- Advanced Apprenticeships are Level 3 qualifications equivalent to 2 A-Level passes;
- Higher Apprenticeships lead to Level 4 qualifications and above.

Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs) are organisations directly employing apprentices. The business hosting the apprentice operates as the apprentice's day-to-day workplace and manager. The ATA coordinates the apprentice's training and pays associated training costs. The host employer pays the ATA a fee based on the apprentice's wage and training costs.

ATAs provide an incentive for businesses to take on apprentices because they will deal with any additional administration associated with hiring or employing an apprentice. The apprentices will require no more administration than a normal employee, and ATAs will also take on responsibility for National Insurance and tax administration and in some cases performance management, reducing the administrative burden further.

ATAs are able to offer flexible assistance to businesses. If a business wants just part of the administration associated with taking on an apprentice dealt with by an ATA (for example, recruitment), then ATAs can offer this.

The *Statement on Apprenticeship Quality*, published in May 2012, summarises the aspects of apprenticeships subject to minimum standards:

- *The minimum apprenticeship length is 12 months.* Some apprentices aged over 19 are able to complete an apprenticeship in a shorter time period, if they demonstrate prior attainment of certain relevant qualifications. In these cases, the minimum length is six months.
- *280 hours guided learning.* Apprentices must spend at least 280 hours in 'guided learning' in their first year. 100 hours or 30% (whichever is greater) of all guided learning must be delivered off-the-job. Clear and verifiable evidence must be provided of all learning undertaken.
- *Employed for 30 hours a week.* Apprentices must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week, including time training away from the workplace. If an apprentice's personal circumstances or if the nature of employment in a given sector make it impossible to work these hours, then an absolute minimum of 16 hours a week must

be worked. In these exceptional cases, the total duration of the apprenticeship is extended accordingly.

- *Training to level 2 in Maths and English.* Apprenticeships must offer training to Level 2 in Functional Skills or English and Maths, if the apprentice does not already have these or equivalent qualifications.

Training for Success guarantees training up to 104 weeks to help gain the recognised skills and qualifications to help progress in a chosen career. Training for Success is delivered across four strands:

- Skills for your life
- Skills for Work Level 1
- Skills for Work Level 2
- Skills for Work Level 3

Skills for your life will help address personal and development needs and gain skills and qualifications need to get a job or progress to higher level education or training. Skills for Work Level 1 and 2 will help gain skills and vocationally related qualifications to be able to gain employment or progress to the next level of training provision or to further education.

Skills for Work Level 3 will help work towards the achievement of level 3 qualifications. This is aimed at those who have gained a level 2 qualification through Training for Success, have not yet secured paid employment and who still possess training entitlement.

Participants in the program are required to achieve targeted qualification in each of the four areas outlined below:

- personal and social development
- employability skills
- professional and technical skills
- essential skills in communication, application of number and ICT

Each participant agrees on the basis of a Personal Training Plan (PTP) with a Training Supplier detailing the targeted outcomes, progression routes and associated milestones. In addition he/she receives job experience and job sampling based on specific needs and the opportunity to experience different workplaces and decide what sort of work suits him/her best.

3.2.2.4. Finland

The national trial project for expanded “work-place learning”

The trial project for expanded work-place learning is intended to promote a more extensive, versatile utilisation of work-place learning in developing the professional skills of students in basic vocational education. The purpose is to increase and provide more-versatile, individual opportunities for work-oriented and practical vocational studies, by taking account of their individual needs and plans. Moreover, the project aims at increasing applications to engage in vocational education, achievement of the professional skills required, as well as facilitating the completion of basic vocational qualifications and supporting the transition from vocational education into work.

The national trial project for expanded work-place learning is part of the Development Plan for Education and Research, approved by the Government. According to such a Government Programme, have to be supported and increased more effective connections between education and the world of work, and employment has to be promoted and developed by enhancing training in the workplace. This goal is being pursued by expanding training done in the workplace, by experimenting innovative ways to do that. The trial project is being implemented through state funds, provided by the Finnish National Board of Education.

In terms of content, key objectives for expanding work-place trials are the follows:

- increasing practical orientation in teaching;
- increasing alternation between studies and work in teaching;
- supporting individual learning paths;
- supporting teachers in work-place learning;
- supporting the introduction of new curriculum requirements;
- developing quality management for work-place learning;
- supporting areas of vocational education that face difficulties in attracting students;
- supporting vocational education, where it is difficult to provide the training within an educational institution;
- developing support measures and guidance services for work-place learning.

By considering the trial project for expanded work-place learning, the main aims refer specifically to: a) expanding the amount of work-place learning and the time spent on it, b) expanding guidance and support, c) expanding learning environments, or d) expanding education content to be taught in the workplace. Attention is paid to enhancing the guidance of students and support in the workplace, alongside the expansion considered just in terms of time and quantity. During the trials, in addition to the learning environments belonging to the working life, were set up and used in massive way both on-line guidance environments and the social media. As the project has proceeded, all of these areas have gained in importance in the expansion of work-place learning.

During the trials have been developed and tested both group-specific models and models based on individual guidance of students, alongside other models, methods and tools supporting work-place learning. These activities have increased the workplace orientation of basic vocational education and made it more work-based, while improving the motivation of students and supporting their employment in jobs that match their training.

Operating models aimed at expanding learning in the workplace and rendering it more versatile have been created and tested throughout the project implementation. In terms of time, the trial includes between 1 and 52 weeks of workplace learning, added to the minimum amount of workplace specified in the curriculum requirements. On average, workplace learning ends out to account for as much as 70% of the entire basic qualification. In most cases, workplace learning is spread throughout the entire study period, so that the first year includes introductory work-place learning periods, while longer periods to be attended in the firms are undertaken during the second and third year of the course. Further models include longer, more extensive traditional work-place learning periods, alternating studies carried out in the educational institution (class-based) and at the workplace.

Open Vocational College

This project addressed 15-24-year old unemployed or outside the education living in North Karelia region and is part of the labour policy addressing education. The project aims at enhancing the engagement of young people, who are currently not in education or employment, in studies or work (NEET) and improving their life management skills. More specifically, the main purpose of Open Vocational College is to provide students with study

modules of vocational training and familiarize them with different sectors of vocational education. NEET people are offered to complete their studies in Open Vocational College, according to North Karelia Municipal Education and Training Consortium's curriculum, that is based on the relevant Finnish core curriculum.

The training offer addressed to young person include firstly compulsory subjects and common studies, such as mother tongue and literature, second national language, foreign languages, mathematics. In addition to compulsory and common subjects, a student can choose to attend optional studies, modules of vocational studies or, as an alternative, may complete unfinished vocational studies.

In short, Open Vocational College makes it possible to reduce the steps towards an upper secondary vocational qualification and, at the same time, makes the graduation of vocational qualification shorter. The purpose of work-place learning is to help young people choose their profession and learn the rules of working life. Vocational studies can be completed in order to obtain either partial qualifications or a full qualification. In many cases, education aimed at obtaining a qualification is arranged in a work-oriented form. Young people who aim at attending studies towards a qualification are steered towards vocational colleges and institutes of adult education.

Functional and alternative learning methods add flexibility to the learning process and to the personal study plan. With Open College studies youth can familiarize with interesting sectors of vocational education and work-place-training. During their studies they are helped with personal guidance and support. The content and duration of education are tailored separately for each student. At the Open Vocational College, it is possible to complete either preparatory training or studies towards a qualification as labour market training. In preparatory training, young people can complete modules common to all basic vocational education, improve the marks they earned from their basic education and receive career counselling and guidance in taking care of their own wellbeing, improving their social skills and study techniques.

The Counselling and Guidance Office of the Nuorten Tuki project get and manage the applications for the Open Vocational College, while the selection process is carried out by the Employment and Economic Development Office. Counselling and Guidance Office provides counselling services that are specifically accessible and addressed to young people. The service includes information and support on different alternatives of education and

work life and counselling for developing an individual professional plan, through different sessions of individual counselling and support. More specifically, a career counsellor helps a young person plan his/her own professional and occupational development, gives vocational guidance, helps him/her apply employment services e.g. a work and training try-outs or various forms of financial aid and grants from the labour administration. The aim of the service offered is to find adapted chances that best match to youth life situation. Young people can receive support a such kind of support and guidance also in a group-based setting of service.

In addition to face-to-face services, the Counselling and Guidance Office provides information, guidance and counselling services that are most indicated for young people also via internet (e-Counselling). In this case, career counsellors can be contacted by young people easily via Facebook, Messenger or Skype. A further kind of service, the Summer Counselling and Guidance Office, is addressed to young people who didn't find out a study place within the joint application system. In this particular case, career counsellors help young person through vocational guidance and career planning during the summer time.

Eventually, Open Vocational College helps young people access and commit to education and work, by exploiting a range of different tools such as preparatory training and qualification-oriented education, support and career guidance, social skills training and activities addressing well-being. In this way, work carried out within the project prevents the social exclusion of young people. During the development of personal project, students are allowed to add the maintenance allowance - while attending training or education - to supplemented support offered by Counselling and Guidance Office.

3.2.3. Supporting education - to employment transitions

3.2.3.1. Main findings

As young people enter the labour market for the first time, employers may be reluctant to hire them on permanent contracts or on a full-time basis and entry wages are likely to be lower to account for time spent on training in the first job. In addition, as young people lack previous experience, employers who cannot fully observe their productivity and skills may hire them on jobs that require less than their qualifications. There may even be a link

between the availability of temporary, part-time and low-pay jobs for young people and their employment rates. In other words, there could be a trade-off between accepting a job with these characteristics or remaining unemployed much longer.

If we compare the approach employed in New Zealand, Finland and United Kingdom on this issues, by taking also into account our segment of framework for comparative analysis (see Fig. 13), some interesting findings can be outlined.

Firstly, in New Zealand and Finland the Youth Guarantee plays the role of umbrella for various policy measures and action. In United Kingdom a higher role of autonomy is recognized to different policy measures and a function of connection among them is attributed to Job Offices, Youth Services and guidance system.

Moreover, modularity-based-model underpinning the training system played a central role in all cases examined. In that sense, some activities served as preliminary and preparatory actions towards further and additional forms of training. Also personalization and individualization of training emerged as an essential factor for the success of the intervention. NEETs have, in fact, a tendency to abandon the training which they are involving in. Therefore it is very important a provider can count on a guidance service that can get out a tailored training program for each NEET, as far as possible.

An increasingly relevant field is represented, in all three cases, by entrepreneurial training. These kind of programmes prevent social exclusion by reinforcing an entrepreneurial attitude in young people and encouraging them to work in an active way, taking the initiative and shouldering responsibility for their own actions.

A further example of innovative tool – experimented in Finland – is the so called intermediate labour market, that is particularly effective when addressed to at risk youngsters. Intermediate labour market means transferring an employee hired in wage-subsidised employment to another employer, i.e. the user company. Under this model, the employer, who is the actual recipient of the wage subsidies, and the user company that arranges the work, can agree on any fees related to the placement and employment of the employee.

Fig. 13 – Framework for the comparative analysis - Policy area 3. Supporting education-to employment transitions

- Improving youth guarantees services
- Providing information, guidance and counselling
- Entrepreneurship training and post-training support

3.2.3.2. New Zealand

Policies that support young people moving from education into employment are largely overseen by the Ministry of Education, the Tertiary Education Commission, and the Ministry of Social Development.

The New Zealand Curriculum provide guidance to schools around the direction of their teaching. It specifies eight learning areas: English, the arts, health and physical education, learning languages, mathematics and statistics, science, social sciences, and technology. It is anticipated that the programmes provided within this curriculum will equip most young people with the knowledge and skills required to move into further education or employment.

Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee Scheme is the Ministry of Education’s key policy targeting young people at risk of becoming disengaged from education, employment and training (NEET). It aims at providing young people with a flexible range of opportunities to achieve NCEA Level 2 or equivalent - seen as the minimum qualification for job entry - and to thereby improve transitions from school to tertiary education and employment. It enables young people to participate in a range of hands-on tertiary courses free of charge.

The scheme provides information and planning tools for five vocational pathways, and offers a range of programmes through partnerships with tertiary institutes, employers, industry training organisations and employers. These include trades academies (delivering trades and technology programmes in and outside of schools), service academies (military style programmes delivered within schools) and apprenticeships. Programmes are delivered by schools, tertiary sector providers and industry organisations and are linked to Levels 1-3 on

the National Qualifications Framework.

When first implemented in 2010, 2,000 Youth Guarantee places were available. In 2012, the scheme received extra Government funding and increased the number and range of groups who can provide training. In 2013, 12,500 fees-free places will be offered to 16-17 year olds, 15 year olds with early leaving exemptions, and 18 year old teen parent beneficiaries²⁶.

Gateway

Students in years 11-13 complete work-place *learning* (in industries including building, health, media, animal care etc.) which counts towards recognised qualifications. It is administered by the Tertiary Education Commission and usually overseen by the student's secondary school with training provided through the tertiary sector.

Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR)

STAR aims at encouraging young people – in particular students who are at risk of dropping out- to achieve qualifications and facilitate their transition to further education and/or career pathways. STAR is available within some secondary schools and it is funded courses provide the opportunity to try out non-national curriculum courses that better match their personal needs and interests. At the same time they can experience a very real sense of achievement as they work towards credits in unit standards. STAR programmes can also be delivered by tertiary education providers.

New Zealand Skills Strategy

New Zealand Skills Strategy was developed by the Government, the Council of Trade Unions, Business New Zealand and the Industry Training Federation. Its goals include developing workplace skills, creating responsive training and education, unified approaches to valuing and measuring skills, and supporting everyone into work. One of the key priority areas of the strategy is young people who it aims at supporting by:

- increasing skills and learning opportunities;
- advising employers and training providers on how to support young people in work;
- improving provision of information, careers advice and life long learning.

The strategy targets young people who are in work, with a view to retaining them in

employment.

Within mainstream schools there are several initiatives designed to assist young people to transition into employment.

Youth Service and other MSD Initiatives

A new Youth Service has been introduced by the Ministry of Social Development in August 2012. The service is an element of the Youth Package, and replaces the former Youth Transitions Services. Both services have been created to respond to concerns raised by the high percentage of NEETs in the country. The goal of Youth Services is to help young people find the best option for education, training or work-based learning that will help them build their skills and find a job. Youth Services caters to:

- at risk youth aged 16 and 17 years (and some of 15 years) who are not engaged in education, employment or training;
- 16 to 18 year old young parents;
- 16 and 17 year old youth who can't live with their parents or guardians or be supported by them or anyone else;
- 16 or 17 year old youth who have no dependent children and are the partner of a specified beneficiary;
- 16-18 year old youth who have dependent children and are the partner of a specified beneficiary.

3.2.3.3. United Kingdom

Work experiences

Work Experience involves placements of between two and eight weeks and it targeted at 18-24 year olds who have little or no experience of work. Participants on the scheme do not receive a wage but continue to receive benefits and must continue to look for permanent work. Participation on the scheme is voluntary.

Mandatory Work Activity comprises work placements lasting for four weeks, for up to 30 hours per week. Jobcentre Plus advisers can refer claimants to the scheme where the claimant may benefit from establishing disciplines associated with employment. Benefit

sanctions may be imposed on those who fail to participate.

Young people can participate in the scheme after they have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for three months but before they join the Government's main welfare-to-work scheme, the Work Programme (typically after claiming for nine months). Entry on to the scheme is voluntary and individuals can choose to leave the placement before it is complete.

Work experience placements last between two and eight weeks and for between 25 and 30 hours a week. Some participants may have their placement extended by up to four weeks if an employer offers to take them onto an Apprenticeship. The scheme is administered by Jobcentre Plus, which matches individuals with suitable placements. Participants on the scheme do not receive a wage but continue to receive benefits and must continue to look for permanent work. Jobcentre Plus will cover travel and childcare costs if required.

There have been 238,210 starts on work experience placements between January 2011 and May 2014 and there are expected to be around 350,000 Work Experience places in total from January 2011 until March 2015.

Mandatory Work Activity

Mandatory Work Activity is addressed to individuals in need of developing good work habits and discipline, such as working under supervision and attending on time.

Jobcentre Plus advisers can refer claimants on a mandatory basis to a work placement lasting for four weeks, for up to 30 hours a week. Benefit sanctions may be imposed on those who fail to participate. The scheme is intended for individuals who have been claiming JSA for at least thirteen weeks, although it is possible for referral to be made at any point in an individual's claim prior to their joining the Work Programme.

The scheme was introduced in April 2011 and operates across Great Britain. It is delivered by contracted providers who are responsible for sourcing placements and arranging for individuals to start the placement with the employer. Placements are required to be of benefit to the local community and to be additional to existing or expected staffing needs. Providers are responsible for participants' costs of travel, childcare and other costs that may be reasonably incurred as a result of an individual's participation in the scheme

Work trials

Work Trials involve a jobseeker working with a prospective employer for up to 30 days, at the end of which period the employer will decide whether or not to employ them. The employer must have a genuine vacancy to be filled. Individuals participate on a voluntary basis and continue to receive benefit (Job Seekers Allowance) while on the Work Trial.

Work program

Government's main welfare-to-work scheme, the Work Programme, offers support to the long-term unemployed and some disabled benefit claimants. It is designed to allow service providers, who run the programme, freedom to introduce and implement their own ideas and schemes intended to help unemployed participants find work. Providers may decide to place people in work-related activities, such as work experience placements.

3.2.3.4. Finland

Intermediate Labour Market via further placement model

This project, carried out in the region of Southern Pirkanmaa, is intended to support and facilitate the transition to employment for people with a longer history of unemployment, including young people (NEETs). More in detail, the intervention aimed at providing employers with a more-comprehensive employment, by supporting the development of an intermediate labour market and by boosting social enterprises operating in the region.

The most relevant aspect characterizing the operating model set out in the project is the creation of a *local intermediate labour market* that allows a "further placement" of employees in wage-subsidised employment. Further placement, within the logic adopted in the project, means transferring an employee hired in wage-subsidised employment to another employer, a sort of "user company". Under this model, the employer, who is the actual recipient of the wage subsidies, and the user company that arranges the work, can agree on any fees related to the placement and employment of the employee.

In order to protect the rights of the person who is the subject of this transition from a first employer to a second employer – under the same umbrella represented by wage-subsidised employment, such further placement requires, in every case, the employee's consent. In

addition, the public employment services (TE Office) must be notified before the further placement begins. Some of the employer obligations always remain with the first employer. In other words, a person - hired under wage-subsidised employment by a municipality, organisation, foundation or a social enterprise - can be addressed – with his/hers permission - into a further company, organisation, foundation or to a private person.

The specific requirements for a wage-subsidised employee who accepts such a program are that he or she must be long-term unemployed (one year continuously), have reduced working capacity. Otherwise, he or she must have had experienced difficult to employ, as defined under the Act on the Public Employment Service. The first employer and the user company providing the placement (second employer) strike an agreement between them. This model for further placement can also be used in the wage-subsidised employment of young people, specifically youngsters at risk of social exclusion.

The customers (in this case, the employees) are steered towards the project by Labour Force Service Centres, TE Offices or the municipal social welfare services. According to scheme adopted in the project, the *further placement model* and process starts with a first assessment step, including individual guidance and, in case of a lack of basic skills, a short training path. When an employer is found, the customer's possibilities of completing work-place training or preparatory training within the company are negotiated with the employer, as well as possible further placement included in a period of wage-subsidised employment with the municipality. Customers begin with a 1–2 month period of preparatory training for working life. During this time, the project remains regularly in touch with the employer and employee. If the preparatory training period is successful, it is directly followed by wage-subsidised employment and further placement. The customer, municipality and company draw up an agreement on a further placement. The duration of employment through further placement is approximately four months. During this time, the project remains in touch with the employer and employee. At the end of the further placement period, the customer may be employed by the company. During the further placement period, the employee, works in the company under the company's direction and supervision, but has an employment contract with the municipality. Working time of the employee varies between 85%– 100%. Under the project operating model, the municipality enters into an employment contract with the employee and is responsible for the payment of salaries, occupational health care and insurance matters. The employees' payment is determined in

accordance with the collective agreement for the local government sector. The municipality can collect a fee from the company for the further placement of the employee. Companies assign work tasks to the employee and are responsible for matters related to occupational safety and induction to the work. They also have the right to direct and supervise the work.

The Young Entrepreneurship Programme

This Programme - named JA-YE Finland – aimed at bridging educational institutes and the world of work, by promoting young people's knowledge of and skills on entrepreneurship, working life and the management of their personal finances. More in detail, the project developed educational programmes addressed to young people between 17 and 25 years old, underpinned by methodological approach of learning by doing. The training provision focuses on a wide spectrum of subjects, from self responsibility and individual initiative to specific and more technical contents. The main purpose underpinning that project is to familiarise young people with an entrepreneurial, proactive way of approach current and future professional and individual life, by promoting civic skills, skills for working life and the management of personal finances, through everyday examples.

The approach adopted - very hand-on – is intended to make students more able to transfer the information they have learnt at school into practical life, by enhancing their skills addressing entrepreneurial plans. Moreover, JA-YE programmes prevent social exclusion by reinforcing an entrepreneurial attitude in young people and encouraging them to work in an active way, taking the initiative and responsibility for their own actions.

The JA-YE educational programmes consist in a set of learning activities the school can adopt as part of curriculum. In this regard, JA-YE Finland provides specific and differentiated training for teachers in connection with the programme and promote its operating models in order to make them enter in the school's objectives, for instance by integrating in all programmes a section or exercise in financial management.

JA-YE programmes strengthen the connections between education and the world of work, by including in all learning activities an active role for a school teacher and a representative of the world of work. Representatives of the world of work can be employed as experts or sparring partners, as well as they can hold classes or arrange visits to their workplace/company. They engage students in order to promote a deeper knowledge of the

rules of working life and the skills required. A further expected result has to do with boosting the benefit gained from local community in terms of competences for the territorial development. At the same time, the future entrepreneurs are given the opportunity to network with experts and local actors.

3.2.4. Eliminating barriers to entering labour market and enabling employment policy to address specific needs of NEET people

3.2.4.1. Main findings

The last policy area we take into account refers to measures aimed at eliminating barriers to entering labour market and enabling employment services to address specific needs of NEET people, as defined in our segment of framework for comparison (see Fig. 14). In this regard, most of the measures outlined below have in common the purpose of sustaining, through specific founts, an easier access of NEET people into the labour market.

Some of these measure are addressed to youngsters, and consist in financial sustain in order to support their study or work activities, as well wage incentives. Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for post-16 young people is perhaps the most well known of all the financial incentives to participate in education. This has highlighted the positive role that the offer of a financial incentive can have on continued participation in employment with training, education or training for some young people eligible for EMA payments. Education Maintenance Allowance is a financial scheme applicable to students and those undertaking unpaid work-based learning in Wales and Scotland.

Otherwise, the financial support is addressed both to employers and to trainees, particularly in the case of apprenticeships.

A further mechanism widely used is the minimum wage, especially in the apprenticeships. A minimum wage is the lowest hourly number, daily or monthly remuneration that employers may legally pay to workers. This measure is controversial. The positive aspects of the minimum wage consist in increasing the standard of living of workers, reduces poverty and reduces inequality, by preventing abuses in the labour market, specifically towards

disadvantaged people. In contrast, some studies appoint out that the minimum wage increases poverty and unemployment particularly among unskilled or inexperienced workers.

Fig. 14 – Framework for the comparative analysis - Policy area 3. Eliminating barriers to entering labour market and promoting employment policy to address specific needs of NEET people

4 Eliminating barriers to entering labour market and promoting employment policy to address specific needs of NEET people

- Improving employment services for matching demand and supply adapted to the needs of socially excluded young people
- Improving mobility opportunities
- Providing specific financial support
- Providing specific incentives and subsidies

3.2.4.2. New Zealand

Main initiatives led by Government to assist young people moving into education or employment are summarized below.

Minimum wage

Prior to 2008, New Zealand’s minimum wage legislation included an adult minimum wage rate that applied to workers aged 18 and over; and a youth minimum wage rate, set at 80% of the adult minimum wage, that applied to 16-17 year-old workers. In April 2008, the youth minimum wage was abolished and replaced with a *new entrants* minimum rate, set at 80% of the adult minimum wage, that applies to 16-17 year-olds for their first three months or 200 hours of employment, following which the adult minimum applies.

Currently, minimum wage in New Zealand can take three forms: the adult minimum, a youth or new entrants minimum and a training minimum wage. The latter targets specifically trainees and apprentices.

Minimum wages have been reformed at different points in time. The youth minimum wage has been reformed in 2008 and in 2013. Previously the youth minimum wage (for people aged from 16 to 19) was set at 60% of the adult level. In 2008 Government abolished the

youth minimum wage and replaced by a new tool called “new entrants” minimum wage for 16 to 17 year-olds. It is set at 80% of the adult minimum wage but it is valid for a period of three months or 200 hours of employment. After this period the adult minimum applies. As noted the “new entrants” minimum wage has been replaced in 2013 by a minimum Starting Out wage, which gives young people the opportunity to be paid 80% of the adult minimum wage for the first six months of their employment. Categories of young people benefitting from the Starting Out wage have been defined as follow: a) 16 and 17 year-olds in their first six months of work with a new employer; b) 18 and 19 year-olds who have been paid a benefit for six months or longer, and who have not completed six months of continuous work with any employer since starting on benefit; and c) 16 to 19 year-olds who undertook a minimum of 40 credits a year of a recognised industry training programme.

Youth activation measures

When in the late ‘80s the labour market has been reformed, the “mutual obligations approach” has been adopted, meaning that subsidies come in exchange for job training or training. In so doing employment services have been integrated with benefit administration. In recent years, the employment schemes have been substituted by educational programmes for upgrading labour-market forces. This new approach – called “investment approach – aims at bringing unskilled and unemployed young people into education – either training or work-based learning. The emphasis is therefore placed on the long-term investment made through education rather than on short term job placement. Furthermore, the recent welfare reform guarantees to teen parents individualised and intensive support, giving them incentives to enrol in education, training or work-based learning. This approach aims at reducing their dependence from benefits and to improve their life opportunities in the long term.

The Youth Services

Youth Services is a new community-based tool funded by the central government to target people 16-18 years old and help them avoid educational and job failures. A wide range of actors including NGOs, private sector and iwi (tribes) with strong links to the community, are funded by the Ministry of Social Development to support youths at risk of becoming NEET.

They can be either identified by the Ministry or by the local provider. To facilitate this and to enhance cooperation among the education system and social services, students have been given identification numbers. In so doing students who move with families in other parts of the country can be found and their achievements traced back. In addition, specific services as coaching and mentoring are provided to complement training programmes and to address potential attitudinal problems. All these services – including training, counselling and job-placement are contracted out by the Government to providers following a tendering procedure that includes follow-up and monitoring. To enhance efficiency, beneficiaries and providers are required to meet a set of conditions:

- youth payment is available to youth aged 16-17 with no dependents. Recipients must participate in education, training or work-based learning, and complete a budgeting course. Those pursuing studies may additionally receive a student loan and a grant to cover living expenses.
- There is also a young parent payment available to parents aged 16-18. Recipients face the same obligations as the above once their youngest child reaches the age of one and are additionally required to complete a parenting course and ensure regular medical check-ups for their children. Those pursuing education, training or work-based learning with children under five may receive a Guaranteed Childcare Assistance Payment to cover the cost of childcare.
- Providers are engaged on outcome-based contracts. Funding will be renewed on condition of youth completion of their training programmes and of subsequent sustained employment. Payment levels are directly proportional to the level of “risk assessment” that is attached to the client based on his/her profile. These risk ratings can be reviewed at the request of providers.

Job Streams

The Ministry of Social Development has reformulated a set of its employment assistance programmes to make them more in line with the “investment approach”. The so-called “Job Streams” refocuses Government interventions on three key programmes that have been evaluated as the most effective in terms of results and long-terms cost efficiency. These programmes are:

- *Flexi-Wage*, a wage subsidy for people considered to be at highest risk of long-term

benefit dependency;

- *Skills for Industry*, short job-focused training;
- *First Step Apprenticeships*, for apprenticeships and other trades training, to assist with employers' training costs and other types of support such as pastoral care.

Job Ops with Training

This initiative encourages employers to take on unskilled young people who have been unemployed for three or more months. Employers are subsidised to employ young people giving them work experience for a six month period. During this time the employer must develop a training plan with the young person that enhances their skills.

Support awards for vulnerable young people

In October 2012, the White Paper for Vulnerable Children, developed by Ministry of Social Development, announced that it would help vulnerable young people pursue their dreams and aspirations by looking at setting up an independent trust to support awards and educational grants for vulnerable young people to succeed in school, and go on to tertiary study or vocational training.

3.2.4.3. United Kingdom

Wage incentive

A subsidy of up to £2,275 was available to businesses hiring young unemployed people. The scheme ran from April 2012, with the last enrolment on the scheme 6 August 2014. Young people, aged 18-24, were eligible after claiming JSA (Jobseeker's Allowance) for over 6 months, from December 2012. Initially, eligibility was restricted to individuals aged between 18 and 24 who had entered the Work Programme (typically after claiming JSA for nine months). For the business to get the full payment of £2,275, jobs were required to be over 30 hours a week and last for at least 26 weeks, with 50% payments for part-time jobs lasting between 16 and 29 hours a week.

Payment were made after the 26-week period, although partial payments were available to

small firms and employers where employees left between 13 and 26 completed weeks. Government made funding available for 160,000 job subsidies over a three-year period beginning April 2012. Between April 2012 and December 2013, payments were made for 10,030 individuals with 4,140 payments to employers for individuals who had completed the full 26 weeks employment. 65,470 claim forms were submitted for wage incentive eligible job starts, by December 2013

Education Maintenance Allowance

For post-16 young people, the government's Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is perhaps the most well known of all the financial incentives to participate in education. This has highlighted the positive role that the offer of a financial incentive can have on continued participation in employment with training, education or training for some young people eligible for EMA payments. Education Maintenance Allowance is a financial scheme applicable to students and those undertaking unpaid work-based learning in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and aged between sixteen and nineteen whose parents had a certain level of taxable income. It is no longer paid in England. It applies to those doing, or applying to do, at least 12 hours of guided learning on further education courses in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and Further Education colleges. This includes a wide range of courses up to and including level 3, such as A-levels, GCSEs, BTECs GNVQs, NVQs and other vocational qualifications. Those partaking in an Entry to Employment (E2E course, formerly known as Work based Learning) must do at least 16 hours a week of guided study. Any missed lessons except for extenuating circumstances voids payment for that week.

3.2.4.4. Finland

Campaign addressing employers to promote apprenticeship

Apprenticeship represents one of the most accredited way for young people to gain a nationally recognised qualification, by alternating training and employment. In particular, it is proved specially effective when addressed to school-leavers, or those re-entering the workforce or those wishing to change career, by exploiting a concrete connection between school an world of work. In this regard, apprenticeship training and work-place learning are

among the most popular routes through which to obtain professional qualifications among unemployed young people.

In September 2011, the apprenticeship offices in Southwest Finland launched a common campaign for employers in the region, aiming at promoting employment of young people between 17 and 24 years old in Southwest Finland, through apprenticeship training.

Apprenticeships in Finland are an optional way of achieving a vocational qualification, a further vocational qualification or a specialist qualification, and provides the trainee with the access to higher education. It refers to a system of studies arranged in the workplace in connection with practical work assignments, which are supplemented with theoretical training provided in the vocational institution. Apprenticeship training is arranged for both young people and adults, but in Finland, differently from many other European countries, apprentices are mainly adults.

In Finland, the apprenticeship training is based on a working contract. In apprenticeship training, the employers pay the student a wage for the apprenticeship period. The theoretical training provided in a training institution is free of student's fees and funded by the state. The apprenticeship contract is a work contract of finite duration. However many trainees are already employed when starting an apprenticeship training. Differences in training duration may take place according to previous work experience of an apprentice. Qualification-oriented apprenticeship training normally takes from 1 to 3 years, while a vocational further education preparing for a qualification takes from 1 to 2 years.

According to Finnish legislative framework, employers who strike an *apprenticeship training agreement* with an unemployed young person between 17 and 24 years of age receive a specific financial incentive for training costs, equal to EUR 300 per month in case of a basic vocational qualification and EUR 150 per month in case of a further vocational qualification.

Personnel at the apprenticeship offices provided employers with information on employing young people through apprenticeship training. This campaign offered companies in the area a way of training employees to have just the right skill set, while contributing to the prevention of social exclusion among young people. At the same time, the campaign was aimed at securing the retention of expertise in the Southwest Finland region and improving the operating conditions for businesses.

According to the results of the project, if we consider young people participating in the campaign, the largest age group was 21-year-olds (25%), while the age group of 17–

19-year-olds had the fewest participants. Women accounted for 40% and men for 60% of the young people who found employment through the intervention. Among these, 30% had previously obtained a vocational qualification and 47% had completed the matriculation examination, while 23% had completed only basic education.

It is to note that in Southwest Finland about half of the companies are small ones, containing less than ten employees. The next largest group of companies are those between 10 and 49 employees. The findings emerging from results of the project suggest that the expected possibilities in employing a young person are higher if the company knows this person in advance, for example by having tested him/her as apprentice. In general, it can be argued that, the smaller the company, the more important it is for it to know the young person in question. Moreover, in Finland the numbers of under 18-year-olds employed through apprenticeship training are small, in comparison to over 20-year olds. Companies find that young people just out of school lack practical knowledge of how the labour market works, as well as professional skills. Nevertheless, companies were not highly familiar with apprenticeship training as a means for recruiting employees. Despite this, they responded in a very positive way to apprenticeship training as a new tool for exploiting the employees they need most.

Promoting employment and preventing social exclusion of young immigrants

A specific success project operating in the Finnish Lahti region aimed at promoting employment and preventing social exclusion of young immigrants, both youngsters and women. More specifically, the intervention had the purpose to provide the target group with Finnish language training, guidance in the management of everyday lives and in handling personal administration, and support for becoming an entrepreneur.

The key objective underpinning the project was to support the employment of immigrant women and young immigrants in the open labour market, through preparatory training for working life, work-place training and work try-outs, alongside the planning of education paths.

The operating model set out during the project specified a set of consecutive steps. In the first phase applicants were expected to be interviewed by an career counsellor, in order to assess the educational level and the work background, as well as check out their current

preferences regarding employment and, accordingly, some specific training needs. After this, an individual training and employment plan was prepared and discussed.

Where possible, the applicant began with one month of work-place training first, by a co-operative firm. During the work-place training period, the trainee was provided with coaching and supporting activities offered by a counsellor. Later, if necessary, a personalised Finnish language training, or preparatory vocational training or even a qualification programme was proposed. At this stage, beneficiary is hired, by either a cooperative firm or partner companies, on the basis of specific employment subsidies. A final step consisted for counsellor to find out an employment in the labour market, or to steer trainee towards further training courses, to make him/her to run an individual company or cooperative. The project counted of a close collaboration within a large network of partners, including public and private organisations and companies located in the region, the municipality of Lahti and its public employment services (TE Office), as well as the Lahti Region Enterprise Agency.

Final remarks

So far we conducted our analysis taking into account especially the differences between national contexts, in order to underline the range of different approaches adopted by countries to deal with NEET issues. Now we would like to conclude this report by introducing some brief final conclusions to emphasize what is common to national policy approaches to issues raised by NEET population. At the same time, we propose some recommendations that emerge from the analysis carried out above.

First of all, a good working partnerships between public and private actors seems to represents a key factor in adding value to policy dealing with NEET issues, especially if their commitment is based on a coherent and long-term plan. This involves the capacity to develop wide and articulated networks that can improve the efficacy of interventions in all territorial contexts, in order to ensure that it continues to evolve with all needed professional skills and an appropriate financial support. That means that It should be improved co-operation between public and private actors, in a perspective of integrated local development. Co-operation between education/training providers, key actors and stakeholders (public and private) and local authorities located in the regional contexts, should be reinforced, as it is a necessary starting point for the formulation of a coherent policy directed at both prevent and contrast the NEET phenomena.

Moreover, the examined good practices show the need for improving quality of NEET policies, services and intervention, paying attention to well-defined and precise standards. It means that it is necessary to delineate precise quality standards for the services put in place, both in terms of products and processes (logistic and technological infrastructures, professionalism, etc.), to which organisations involved in policies implementation have to conform.

Furthermore, the impact of the policies dealing with the prevention of early school leaving - both in education and vocational training systems - requires a change in different aspects of

the curriculum. It is important to proceed with a substantive change in curricula and in qualification standards, in order to make them more feasible and modular-based. On one hand, such a integration involves the curriculum components, i.e. the planning of curriculum (change in content and goals), the enacting of curriculum (student and teacher activities, change in curriculum organization), the experiencing curriculum (assessment practices, students and teachers outcomes). Secondly, such integration involves the curricular focus (single-subject curricular focus, thematic curricular focus, school wide curricular focus). The aim is to introduce new goals that were considered relevant in preparing students for lifelong learning; to create environments that foster students' responsibility for their own learning; to help them improve their ability to deal with a labour market more and more unpredictable and in a continuing and accelerated process of changing.

In addition, some lessons learnt from the good practices examined above show how central structural and organizational issues are to develop services that meet NEET people specific needs. For this reason, a previous analysis of structural and organizational issues surrounding the implementation of an intervention addressing NEET population is a preliminary step that may facilitate the work of development and avoid failure. In this respect, there is an incentive to monitor and assess interventions, in order to identify the best solutions and approaches in relation with the specific and multi-factorial needs.

Eventually, the technological development is improving the quality of interaction between actors engaged in the implementation of policy addressing NEET population and users. Most best practices based their excellence on the innovative quality of means of communication, methodologies and tools they used. This is the reason why holistic and integrated approaches seem to be the most successful way of addressing the issues of the quality of interventions and sustainability of the benefits produced. In particular, communication tools and channels should be attractive, stimulating and above all relevant to the individual's everyday personal experience.

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