

WE NEET YOU



WE NEET YOU!

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“WE NEET YOU!”

D1 –"Bridging the Gap: Effective Approaches for NEETs and ELETs"

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Abstract	This booklet addresses the challenges faced by NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training). It explores their social, emotional, economic, and academic barriers, and presents key skills for reintegration. Through best practices, case studies, and policy insights from Turkey, Belgium, and Spain, it offers practical, inclusive strategies to support their return to education and employment.
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Chapter 1: Understanding NEET and ELET Concepts

1.1 What is NEET?

- Definition and Characteristics: Detailed definition and characteristics of NEET.
- Impact on Young People's Lives: Social, emotional, and economic impacts of being NEET.
- Reasons for Becoming NEET: Socio-economic, cultural, and personal reasons.

Definition and Characteristics:

NEET, an acronym for "Not in Education, Employment, or Training," refers to young individuals, typically aged 15-29, who are disengaged from both the education system and the labor market. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the NEET category reflects young people who are not involved in any form of employment, education, or vocational training (OECD, 2019). NEET youth are often vulnerable to social exclusion and face significant barriers in their transition to adulthood.

Key characteristics of NEET individuals include low levels of educational attainment, long-term unemployment, and a lack of practical work experience. They often come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, which exacerbates their exclusion from education and employment (Eurofound, 2016). NEET youth are also more likely to experience a range of personal challenges, including poor mental health, substance abuse, and disengagement from civic life.

Impact on Young People's Lives:

The social, emotional, and economic impacts of being NEET are significant. Socially, NEET individuals often feel isolated from their peers and communities. This isolation can result in low self-esteem and a diminished sense of purpose (Bynner & Parsons, 2002). Emotionally, NEET youth are at a higher risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues (Henderson, Hawke, & Chaim, 2017).

Economically, NEET individuals face reduced earning potential over their lifetimes, contributing to long-term financial instability and dependence on welfare systems (Eurofound, 2016). High NEET rates have far-reaching consequences for national economies as well, reducing productivity and increasing the social costs of unemployment and social exclusion (European Commission, 2019).

Reasons for Becoming NEET:

The reasons behind becoming NEET are complex and multidimensional. Socio-economic, cultural, and personal factors are often intertwined in the NEET phenomenon:

Socio-economic factors: Poverty, lack of access to quality education, and economic instability are common drivers of NEET status. Research shows that young people from low-income families are disproportionately represented in the NEET group (Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2017).

Cultural factors: Cultural norms and societal expectations can also influence young people's trajectories. For example, traditional gender roles and ethnic disparities may limit opportunities for education and employment, particularly in certain regions (Yates & Payne, 2006).

Personal factors: Personal circumstances such as poor mental health, disabilities, or a lack of motivation can contribute to disengagement from education and employment. Additionally, young people with negative experiences in school or from minority groups are more likely to face barriers in accessing opportunities (Hodgson, 2014).

1.2 What is ELET?

- Definition and Characteristics: Detailed definition and characteristics of ELET.
- Impact on Young People's Lives: Challenges faced by early school leavers.
- Reasons for Becoming ELET: Academic, social, and personal reasons.

Definition and Characteristics:

ELET, or Early Leaving from Education and Training, refers to students who leave formal education before completing secondary education. According to the European Union, early school leavers are defined as individuals aged 18 to 24 who have not completed upper secondary education and are not engaged in further education or training (European Commission, 2019). These young people face multiple challenges, including limited job prospects and social exclusion.

ELET youth often come from low-income or minority backgrounds and may have struggled academically or socially during their schooling. The lack of qualifications and skills makes it difficult for them to enter the labor market or continue their education. ELET is a critical issue in many countries, as it significantly reduces the long-term employability and social mobility of affected individuals (De Witte et al., 2013).

Impact on Young People's Lives:

The academic and social consequences of early school leaving are profound. Without completing secondary education, ELET individuals are at a disadvantage in the labor market. They are often confined to low-wage jobs with little job security, and many face long periods of unemployment (OECD, 2019).

Socially, early school leavers may experience stigma and social exclusion, which can lead to low self-esteem and disengagement from societal participation. In some cases, early school leaving is associated with higher risks of criminal activity and substance abuse (Fergusson, Swain-Campbell, & Horwood, 2002). The long-term impact on their health, well-being, and socio-economic status is also severe (Bäckman & Nilsson, 2016).

Reasons for Becoming ELET:

Various academic, social, and personal factors contribute to early school leaving:

Academic factors: Poor academic performance, disengagement from school, and a lack of support for learning difficulties often drive students to leave school early. Schools with fewer resources may struggle to provide individualized attention or interventions for at-risk students (De Witte et al., 2013).

Social factors: Bullying, negative relationships with peers or teachers, and difficult family circumstances can also influence students' decisions to leave school prematurely. Low parental involvement or family instability can make it difficult for students to stay on track (Bynner & Parsons, 2002).

Personal factors: Mental health challenges, substance abuse, and a lack of motivation or direction often play a role in early school leaving. In many cases, personal issues that remain unaddressed during early adolescence contribute to later disengagement from education (Hodgson, 2014).

Chapter 2: Challenges Faced by NEETs and ELETs

2.1 Social and Emotional Challenges

- Explanation: Detailed exploration of social and emotional challenges.
- Case Studies: Real-life examples from various contexts.

Explanation: NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training) often face significant social and emotional challenges that can compound their difficulties in re-engaging with society. These challenges are often interlinked and can arise due to the disruption in the traditional support systems provided by schools, workplaces, or structured communities. For many NEETs and ELETs, the absence of routine or a sense of purpose can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression.

One prominent social challenge is the feeling of exclusion from mainstream societal activities. Being a NEET or ELET can result in a loss of social identity, as individuals no longer identify as students or workers. This can impact their social relationships, leading to a sense of disconnection. Without the structure provided by employment or education, many feel they lack opportunities to interact meaningfully with others, exacerbating loneliness and creating a cycle of social withdrawal.

Emotionally, many NEETs and ELETs grapple with low self-esteem and confidence. The inability to secure employment or complete education often leads to feelings of failure and hopelessness. This emotional burden can affect their willingness to pursue opportunities, as they may feel that further attempts to reintegrate will only result in further disappointment. Research suggests that these emotional challenges are particularly severe among young people, who often face high societal pressure to "succeed" in traditional milestones of life.

Case Studies: A study conducted in the UK highlighted this is the story of Sarah from UK, an 18-year-old NEET. Sarah left school at 16 without qualifications, largely due to anxiety and bullying. Isolated from friends who had stayed in education or moved into employment, Sarah experienced severe social withdrawal. She found it difficult to access support services because of feelings of shame and inadequacy. Her experience is representative of many young people who face both social exclusion and emotional distress.

In contrast, Miguel, from Spain, dropped out of school to care for his ill mother. His family situation demanded emotional resilience, but the combination of caregiving responsibilities and the lack of formal education left him feeling trapped. He was unable to access meaningful support for his dual role as a caregiver and NEET, contributing to increased emotional stress.

2.2 Economic Challenges

- Explanation: Economic hardships and employment difficulties.
- Case Studies: Real-life examples illustrating economic challenges.

Explanation: Economic hardship is a defining characteristic for many NEETs and ELETs. The lack of access to employment, training, or education directly limits the earning potential of these individuals, pushing them into cycles of poverty. NEETs, particularly those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, face barriers to accessing job markets. Employers often view gaps in employment or education unfavorably, making it harder for NEETs to break into the labor force.

Many NEETs find themselves in precarious economic positions, reliant on family or government welfare. Without the skills and qualifications that come from formal education, their ability to secure stable, well-paid jobs is severely limited. Even when NEETs are able to find work, it is often low-paid or part-time, with few opportunities for advancement. This economic insecurity leads to further marginalization and often discourages individuals from seeking training or education that could improve their circumstances.

ELETs, on the other hand, frequently face immediate economic challenges as their decision to leave school early often stems from the need to support their families or find work. However, early school leavers are often trapped in low-skilled, low-paying jobs without opportunities for development. Research shows that NEETs and ELETs are at a higher risk of long-term unemployment or underemployment, as employers increasingly demand higher qualifications and specialized skills.

Case Studies: A case study from Italy highlights Giovanni from Italy, a 20-year-old who left school at 15 to work in a family-owned small business that eventually closed due to economic downturn. Without qualifications or relevant work experience, Giovanni struggled to find a job. He was often rejected for even entry-level positions due to the gaps in his education and work history, illustrating how economic challenges and lack of qualifications reinforce each other.

Another example is Marie from France, who left school at 17 to enter the labor market early but found herself in a cycle of short-term, temporary jobs. These jobs provided little stability and, over time, her lack of formal qualifications hindered her chances of finding permanent, well-paid employment. The precariousness of her economic situation prevented her from pursuing further education, as she could not afford to take time off work for training.

2.3 Academic Challenges (for ELETs)

- Explanation: Academic hurdles for early school leavers.
- Case Studies: Real-life examples highlighting academic challenges.

Explanation: For Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELETs), academic challenges are often both a cause and consequence of early school leaving. Many ELETs leave formal education due to difficulty keeping up with academic demands, lack of interest in the curriculum, or perceived irrelevance of their education to future job prospects. Inadequate support for learning difficulties, lack of engagement, or failure to connect classroom learning to real-life skills often contribute to early dropout rates.

ELETs often come from backgrounds where academic success is not highly valued or supported, leading to further disengagement from school. Moreover, early school leavers are less likely to re-enter the education system later due to a variety of obstacles, including fear of failure, financial constraints, or feeling too far behind to catch up. This lack of academic qualifications makes it challenging for ELETs to secure stable, well-paying jobs, which increasingly require formal certification or training.

Additionally, educational institutions often struggle to provide sufficient intervention strategies that cater to students at risk of leaving early. Schools may lack the resources to identify and support students who are falling behind, both academically and socially, leading to an exacerbation of these challenges.

Case Studies: Consider the case of Ahmed, a student in Denmark, who struggled with undiagnosed dyslexia. Due to the lack of support from his school and a curriculum that did not accommodate his learning challenges, Ahmed left school at 16. With no formal qualifications, he found it difficult to re-enter education or obtain training in a technical field. His story highlights the critical role that academic challenges play in early school leaving and the difficulties in overcoming them.

Similarly, Irini, from Greece, left school at 15 after repeated academic failures. The traditional classroom environment did not engage her, and she felt disconnected from the curriculum. Without the necessary support structures, Sophia fell further behind and eventually dropped out. Her case illustrates how early school leavers often face steep barriers to re-entry into education due to a combination of academic failures and lack of personalized support.

Chapter 3: Competencies and Skills Needed for NEETs and ELETs

3.1 Competencies for NEETs

- a) Basic Skills: Communication, problem-solving, time management, etc.
- b) Social Skills: Teamwork, leadership, empathy, etc.
- c) Workplace Skills
- d) Study Skills

To help NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) successfully reintegrate into education or the workforce, specific competencies and skills are required. These include basic life skills, social and emotional competencies, and workplace skills that enable NEETs to thrive in a variety of contexts. This chapter outlines key competencies and how they contribute to the personal and professional development of NEETs.

a) Basic Skills

1. Communication Skills

Effective communication is essential for navigating both personal relationships and professional environments. NEETs often need to develop strong verbal and written communication skills to express themselves clearly, whether in job applications, interviews, or social interactions.

● Examples of Communication Skills:

- Writing clear and concise emails or messages.
- Speaking confidently in interviews or group settings.
- Listening actively and responding appropriately in conversations.

2. Problem Solving Skills

Problem-solving is critical in education and the workplace, enabling individuals to overcome obstacles and make decisions effectively. NEETs benefit from learning how to identify problems, evaluate potential solutions, and take action to resolve issues.

- **Examples of Problem-Solving Skills:**

- Identifying and defining the problem.
- Developing multiple potential solutions.
- Evaluating the pros and cons of each option.
- Implementing a chosen solution and assessing its effectiveness.

3. Time Management

NEETs often need to improve their time management skills to balance personal responsibilities, job searches, and learning opportunities. Effective time management involves planning, prioritizing tasks, and setting achievable goals.

- **Examples of Time Management Skills:**

- Creating schedules or to-do lists to organize tasks.
- Prioritizing important tasks over less urgent activities.
- Setting short-term and long-term goals with clear deadlines.

b) Social Skills

1. Teamwork and Collaboration

Working well with others is essential for success in both educational and professional environments. NEETs must develop the ability to collaborate effectively in teams, sharing responsibilities and contributing to group success.

- **Examples of Teamwork Skills:**

- Respecting others' opinions and working towards a common goal.
- Taking responsibility for assigned tasks in a team setting.
- Offering constructive feedback and accepting feedback from others.

2. Leadership and Initiative

Developing leadership skills allows NEETs to take initiative, make decisions, and guide others when necessary. Even in entry-level positions, leadership and initiative demonstrate a proactive attitude and a willingness to contribute.

- **Examples of Leadership Skills:**

- Taking responsibility for projects or tasks and leading others.
- Motivating peers or team members to stay focused and work efficiently.
- Demonstrating a willingness to solve problems without waiting for others to take the lead.

3. Empathy and Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills, including empathy, enable NEETs to understand and connect with others. These skills foster positive relationships, reduce conflicts, and promote a supportive environment in both personal and professional settings.

- **Examples of Interpersonal Skills:**

- Showing empathy by understanding others' feelings and perspectives.
- Building rapport with colleagues, classmates, or mentors.
- Managing conflicts peacefully through active listening and negotiation.

c) Workplace Skills

1. Adaptability and Flexibility

The ability to adapt to new situations and environments is crucial for NEETs, especially as they transition into education or employment. Being flexible means adjusting to different roles, work environments, or expectations without resistance.

- **Examples of Adaptability Skills:**

- Adjusting to new job roles or educational environments.
- Embracing changes in work tasks or schedules.
- Learning new skills or technologies to meet evolving job demands.

2. Digital Literacy

In today's digital age, NEETs must possess basic digital skills to succeed in both education and employment. These include using computers, navigating the internet, and understanding software programs essential for job searches, communication, and task management.

- **Examples of Digital Literacy Skills:**

- Using email, word processing software, and spreadsheets for daily tasks.
- Conducting online job searches and submitting digital applications.
- Navigating learning platforms or digital training tools for skill development.

3. Professionalism and Work Ethic

NEETs need to develop a strong work ethic and understand professional expectations, such as punctuality, responsibility, and reliability. These traits are highly valued by employers and can set individuals apart in competitive job markets.

- **Examples of Professionalism:**
 - Demonstrating punctuality by arriving on time for work or appointments.
 - Completing tasks with attention to detail and a commitment to quality.
 - Being reliable and following through on responsibilities consistently.

3.2 Competencies for ELETs

- a) Study Skills: Note-taking, study techniques, etc.
- b) Time Management: Planning, prioritization.
- c) Motivation: Sources of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

For Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELETs), developing key competencies is crucial for their successful reintegration into education or employment. These competencies are not only academic but also extend to personal management and motivation. The competencies that ELETs often need to acquire or enhance include study skills, time management, and the ability to foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These skills serve as the building blocks for lifelong learning and personal growth, empowering ELETs to overcome past obstacles and engage productively in their future endeavors.

a) Study Skills

Explanation: Study skills form the foundation for effective learning and academic success, especially for individuals returning to education after an interruption. ELETs often face the challenge of re-engaging with the academic environment, which requires specific tools and techniques to optimize their learning processes. Essential study skills include note-taking, organization, memory retention techniques, and the ability to synthesize and apply information.

- **Note-taking:** Good note-taking skills are essential for absorbing and retaining information from lectures, readings, or other educational content. For ELETs, who may have been out of a structured learning environment for some time, mastering various note-taking methods can help them actively engage with the material. Techniques like the Cornell Method or mind mapping encourage better organization and understanding of key concepts, which can aid in the retention of knowledge. Studies have shown that students who effectively organize their notes perform better in assessments compared to those who do not use a structured approach to note-taking.
- **Study techniques:** Different study techniques, such as spaced repetition, summarizing, and active recall, are crucial for improving long-term memory retention. ELETs may benefit from developing a tailored study plan that includes breaking material into manageable sections and reviewing it regularly over time, rather than cramming before exams. Research by Cepeda et al. (2006) indicates that spaced repetition can significantly improve memory retention, helping learners store information in long-term memory.
- **Critical thinking and analysis:** Beyond memorizing facts, ELETs need to develop critical thinking skills, which enable them to question, analyze, and apply what they have learned. Encouraging active engagement with materials—such as asking questions, comparing perspectives, and forming personal conclusions—builds deeper understanding. Critical thinking is essential in modern educational contexts, where rote learning is less valued than the ability to apply knowledge in problem-solving scenarios.

Case Study: An example of the successful application of study skills comes from the experiences of a youth support center in Denmark. ELET participants were introduced to specific note-taking and memory techniques as part of a bridging program. Over a six-month period, students who actively applied these methods in their studies reported better retention of information and improved academic confidence, leading to increased attendance in their courses and greater likelihood of completing their qualification.

b) Time Management

Explanation: Time management is one of the most crucial competencies for ELETs as they navigate educational or vocational training while often juggling other responsibilities such as part-time work or caregiving. Effective time management involves planning, prioritization, and balancing commitments in a way that maximizes productivity without overwhelming the individual. Research by Macan et al. (1990) suggests that time management skills are closely linked to lower stress levels and greater academic success.

- **Planning:** Developing the ability to plan out study sessions, assignments, and deadlines is essential for ELETs who may struggle to regain their footing in a structured academic environment. This could include using tools like planners, digital calendars, or task management apps to break tasks into smaller, manageable steps and set realistic deadlines. Creating a weekly or monthly schedule can also help in visualizing the time available for studies and other responsibilities, allowing ELETs to allocate time effectively and avoid last-minute stress.
- **Prioritization:** For many ELETs, prioritization is challenging, particularly if they have competing demands outside of their education. Prioritizing tasks based on importance and deadlines can help manage workloads more effectively. Techniques such as the Eisenhower Matrix (which divides tasks into four categories based on urgency and importance) can guide ELETs in deciding which tasks require immediate attention and which can be postponed or delegated. Prioritizing educational commitments over less essential activities ensures that learning stays on track, which is particularly important when time is limited.
- **Avoiding procrastination:** Procrastination can be a significant barrier to effective time management. ELETs who are not accustomed to a regular study schedule may find themselves putting off tasks until they become unmanageable. Identifying the causes of procrastination, whether they stem from fear of failure, lack of motivation, or poor planning, is the first step toward addressing the issue. Setting small, achievable goals can break down large, daunting tasks, making them feel more approachable. Research by Steel (2007) highlights that individuals who set specific, short-term goals are less likely to procrastinate, as they can see progress more immediately.

Case Study: In Germany, a vocational training program for ELETs incorporated time management workshops as a core part of its curriculum. Participants learned to use digital tools for scheduling and received guidance on how to prioritize tasks and manage their time effectively. Over the course of the program, students who actively engaged in these time management strategies reported a 30% improvement in assignment completion rates and a noticeable reduction in stress levels, as measured by post-program surveys.

c) Motivation

Explanation: Motivation is a critical factor for ELETs as they attempt to re-engage with education or training. Motivation can be divided into two categories: intrinsic (driven by internal satisfaction) and extrinsic (driven by external rewards or pressures). ELETs often face unique challenges in both types

of motivation, which need to be addressed to facilitate sustained engagement in learning or vocational programs.

- **Intrinsic Motivation:** Intrinsic motivation arises from an individual's internal desire to achieve, learn, or master a skill for its own sake. Many ELETs, however, may struggle with low intrinsic motivation due to past negative experiences in school or feelings of inadequacy. Rebuilding intrinsic motivation requires helping ELETs rediscover the joy of learning, find personal meaning in their studies, and set long-term goals. Goal-setting theory suggests that when individuals set clear, achievable goals, they experience a sense of accomplishment that reinforces their internal drive to continue working towards future successes.
- **Extrinsic Motivation:** Extrinsic motivation is fueled by external factors such as rewards, recognition, or avoidance of negative consequences. For ELETs, extrinsic motivation may come from the desire to improve their economic situation, gain qualifications that lead to better job opportunities, or receive praise from family and peers. Support systems such as mentors or peer groups can be valuable in maintaining extrinsic motivation by providing encouragement, accountability, and positive reinforcement when milestones are achieved. Programs that offer tangible rewards for completion, such as certificates or stipends, have also been shown to increase extrinsic motivation among ELETs
- **Building a growth mindset:** One effective strategy for enhancing motivation is developing a growth mindset. ELETs who have experienced failure in the past may believe their abilities are fixed and that further effort is futile. Carol Dweck's (2006) research on the growth mindset shows that when individuals believe their abilities can be developed through hard work, they are more likely to persevere in the face of setbacks. Encouraging ELETs to view challenges as opportunities for growth, rather than insurmountable obstacles, can significantly improve their motivation to learn and succeed.

Case Study: A youth re-engagement program in the Netherlands introduced motivational workshops designed to help ELETs build both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Participants were encouraged to set personal goals and were rewarded with certificates of achievement upon reaching milestones. Over time, these students reported increased motivation, with many attributing their progress to a clearer sense of purpose and the external validation provided by the program.

Chapter 4: Best Practice Approaches to Support NEETs and ELETs



4.1 Best Practices for NEETs - TURKEY

Differentiated Instruction and Personalized Learning

Supporting NEETs effectively requires understanding their diverse backgrounds and tailoring educational interventions to their individual needs. Best practices in this area focus on creating flexible and personalized learning environments that cater to each learner's unique circumstances.

- **Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs):**

According to the European Education Commission report (2007), ILPs essentially consist of plans that students generate to align high school courses with career aspirations while some states require students to develop postsecondary action plans, and/or use the ILP to identify avenues for early graduation. Euro NEETs commission indicate that ILPs were perceived by parents, educators, and students as having the intended outcome of creating a more personalized education environment, facilitating better and more

rigorous course planning, and engaging in a wide range of career exploration activities (Budge et al., 2010), this should only be considered a promising result and an indication that ILPs are an especially ripe area for career and vocational research. With respect to research, Gore et al. (2006) have demonstrated the tremendous potential of career information systems to evaluate career intervention efforts, such as engaging in ILPs.

ILPs are customized roadmaps that outline a NEET individual's learning objectives, the steps to achieve them, and the resources required. These plans typically include:

- **Skills Assessment:** Evaluating the learner's current knowledge, competencies, and gaps.
 - **Learning Preferences:** Identifying the best ways for the individual to learn (visual, auditory, kinesthetic).
 - **Career Aspirations:** Setting goals based on long-term career interests and aligning educational content with these goals.
 - **Progress Monitoring:** Regular check-ins to track progress, adapt strategies, and ensure the learner remains engaged. By providing a clear, structured pathway, ILPs help reduce the overwhelming nature of re-entering education or training after a gap, making it more manageable and relevant to NEETs' needs.
- **Flexible Curricula:**
- Many NEETs face personal circumstances—such as financial hardship, caregiving responsibilities, or mental health challenges—that make traditional educational settings difficult. Higher education institutions are increasingly faced with student diversity, with respect to age, domicile, cultural background, personal and professional experiences, motivation, approach to studying, digital literacy, and/or prior education (Severiens, Wolff, & Van Herpen, 2014). This increased student diversity calls for a curriculum that adapts to and is accessible for students with different needs and capabilities (Rao & Meo, 2016) – what is often called a flexible curriculum. Flexible curricula offer:
- **Modular Learning:** NEETs can take courses one module at a time rather than committing to full-time education, allowing them to learn at their own pace.
 - **Online and Blended Learning:** This approach enables NEETs to learn from home or on the go, providing more accessibility for those with geographical or time constraints.
 - **Alternative Credentials:** Micro-credentialing and competency-based education allow NEETs to gain practical skills and qualifications without following conventional academic timelines, making learning more outcome-focused and adaptable to real-world demands.
- **Career Pathway Development:**
- Connecting education to clear career pathways can help NEETs see the tangible benefits of learning. Career development strategies should:
- **Vocational Training:** Provide hands-on experience in trades, technical fields, or creative industries, ensuring that learning is directly linked to job market needs.
 - **Work-Based Learning Opportunities:** Collaborating with local businesses and industries to offer internships, apprenticeships, or job shadowing experiences.
 - **Career Guidance:** Offering personalized counseling to help NEETs navigate career choices, understand labor market trends, and develop long-term career goals.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Well-being

NEETs often experience social, emotional, and psychological challenges, including low self-esteem, mental health issues, and feelings of isolation. Addressing these barriers is critical to their successful re-engagement in education or employment.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in addressing the complex challenges faced by NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). According to Weissberg et al. (2015), SEL encompasses five key competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These competencies are essential for individuals to navigate personal and social challenges effectively. For NEETs, who often face barriers such as social exclusion, economic instability, and psychological distress, SEL can provide the foundational skills necessary to overcome these obstacles. The integration of SEL into interventions for NEETs not only supports their emotional and social development but also enhances their capacity for resilience, which is crucial for re-engagement in education and the workforce.

Research indicates that NEETs are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem compared to their peers in education or employment (Yates & Payne, 2006). SEL-based programs aimed at NEETs can therefore play a pivotal role in mitigating these mental health challenges. By fostering emotional regulation and stress management, SEL helps NEETs develop coping mechanisms that are essential for mental well-being. This is particularly relevant given that emotional distress can act as a significant barrier to re-entering education or employment (Bynner & Parsons, 2002). Interventions that incorporate SEL not only improve emotional well-being but also promote a sense of agency and self-efficacy, empowering NEETs to pursue future opportunities with confidence.

Furthermore, the social dimensions of SEL are particularly beneficial for NEETs, who often experience social isolation and disconnection from community networks. As suggested by Kahn et al. (2016), social skills such as empathy, communication, and collaboration are essential for reintegration into educational or employment contexts. SEL-based interventions for NEETs can help them rebuild social connections and improve their interpersonal relationships, which are crucial for successful transitions into the workforce or further education. Group activities, peer support systems, and mentoring are common components of SEL programs that encourage the development of these social competencies, fostering a sense of belonging and community.

In addition, SEL is closely linked to long-term positive outcomes, including improved academic and employment success. A meta-analysis by Durlak et al. (2011) demonstrates that students who participated in SEL programs showed significantly higher academic performance, as well as better attitudes and behaviors, compared to those who did not. Applying this framework to NEETs suggests that enhancing social and emotional skills can contribute to their academic and career success. For instance, by improving decision-making and problem-solving skills, SEL prepares NEETs to navigate the complexities of the labor market and make informed career choices. This connection between SEL and employability underscores the importance of integrating SEL into strategies for addressing the NEET population.

In conclusion, Social and Emotional Learning provides a robust framework for supporting the well-being and prospects of NEETs. By addressing both the emotional and social dimensions of their challenges, SEL-based programs offer a holistic approach to helping NEETs reintegrate into society. The emphasis on emotional regulation, social connectedness, and decision-making equips NEETs with the necessary tools to pursue education and employment opportunities, thereby improving their overall quality of life.

Universal social emotional learning programs typically involveschool-wide activities to create more supportive school climateand school settings, as well asclassroom activities thatenhance children’s abilities to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems, appreciate others’ perspectives, anddevelop interpersonal skills (Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger&Pachan, 2008; Zins, Walberg & Weisberg (2004). Indicated SELincludes interventions that are focused on targeted social, emotional or behavioral problems for groups or individual children in schools (Payton, et al., 2008).

o **Emotional Support Programs:**

These programs aim to provide a safe and supportive environment where NEETs can process their feelings and build emotional resilience. Common elements include:

- **Mental Health Services:** On-site or referral-based access to therapists, counselors, or psychologists who specialize in youth mental health.
- **Peer Support Groups:** Creating groups where NEETs can connect with peers facing similar challenges, providing mutual support and reducing feelings of isolation.
- **Resilience Training:** Workshops or modules focused on stress management, self-care, and coping strategies to help NEETs navigate setbacks or challenges in their learning journey.

o **Mentoring and Coaching:**

Mentors and coaches play a crucial role in providing guidance, encouragement, and accountability. They help NEETs set realistic goals, overcome personal and educational barriers, and build confidence. Effective mentoring programs for NEETs may include:

- **One-on-One Mentorship:** Assigning a dedicated mentor who regularly meets with the NEET, providing advice, encouragement, and feedback on their progress.
- **Peer Mentoring:** Pairing NEETs with slightly older individuals who have successfully completed similar pathways, offering relatable guidance and inspiration.
- **Life Coaching:** Offering more structured coaching focused on developing soft skills such as time management, goal setting, and communication.

- o **Promoting SEL:** Incorporating SEL into educational programs for NEETs focuses on building essential life skills like emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and self-awareness. Key components of effective SEL initiatives include:

SEL Curriculum: Structured lessons that teach NEETs how to identify and manage their emotions, set personal goals, and establish positive relationships.

Interactive Learning: Activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and problem-solving scenarios help NEETs practice social and emotional skills in real-world situations.

Mindfulness and Reflection: Incorporating mindfulness exercises and reflective journaling can improve NEETs’ emotional self-awareness and reduce anxiety or stress.

Behavioral Support Systems: Providing structured systems for rewarding positive social behavior and guiding NEETs through difficult situations, helping them learn how to make better decisions and handle challenges.

By focusing on both personalized educational approaches and emotional well-being, these best practices create a holistic support system that empowers NEETs to succeed academically, socially, and professionally. This combination of tailored learning, career-focused support, and emotional guidance helps NEETs overcome personal challenges and re-enter education or employment with confidence.

Student-Centered Pedagogy and Project-Based Learning

Student-centered pedagogy is an instructional approach where the focus shifts from teacher-led lectures to active student engagement. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding students as they take ownership of their learning. This pedagogy is essential for NEETs and ELETs as it empowers them to become active participants, fostering a sense of autonomy and motivation.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a method where students learn by engaging in real-world, meaningful projects. Instead of passively absorbing information, students collaborate, research, and problem-solve to create a tangible outcome. This experiential learning fosters critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration—skills essential for both academic and professional success.

Implementation Strategies

1. **Inquiry-Based Learning:** Encourage students to ask questions and explore solutions, leading to deeper engagement with the material.
2. **Real-World Projects:** Design projects that relate to students' communities or future career aspirations, such as addressing local social issues or working on industry-relevant tasks.
3. **Peer Collaboration:** Implement collaborative projects where students must rely on each other's strengths to complete a task, thus developing teamwork and communication skills.
4. **Reflective Practices:** Include opportunities for students to reflect on their learning process and outcomes, fostering metacognition and self-regulation.

Examples of Successful Projects

In a project-based learning program for early school leavers in the UK, students worked on community service projects, such as creating sustainable urban gardens. The hands-on experience and real-world relevance led to a significant increase in student engagement, self-efficacy, and retention in the program.

Collaborative Learning and Peer Mentoring

Collaborative learning is an instructional approach where students work together in groups to achieve a shared goal. This method encourages active participation, fosters interpersonal skills, and builds a sense of community among students. Peer mentoring, on the other hand, involves older or more experienced students supporting their peers through academic, social, or emotional challenges. Both collaborative learning and peer mentoring are valuable for NEETs and ELETs, as they provide a support system that encourages continued engagement in education.

Best Practices for Facilitating Collaborative Learning

1. **Structured Group Work:** Assign roles and responsibilities within the group to ensure all members participate and contribute equally.

2. **Peer Assessment:** Encourage students to evaluate each other's contributions, which fosters accountability and reflective thinking.
3. **Cooperative Problem-Solving:** Set up tasks that require students to collaborate and find solutions to complex problems, promoting critical thinking and teamwork.

Examples of Effective Peer Mentoring Programs

A successful peer mentoring program in Canada for high school dropouts paired at-risk students with mentors who had previously faced similar challenges. The mentors provided academic guidance and emotional support, helping their mentees to re-engage with their education. This program saw a significant reduction in dropout rates and an improvement in students' emotional well-being.



Best practices for addressing the needs of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)

Best practices for addressing the needs of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) typically focus on holistic, multi-dimensional approaches that integrate career guidance, emotional and social support, and community engagement. The goal is to help NEETs overcome barriers to re-engagement in education and the labor market. Below are some specific practices and case studies that have proven effective in different contexts:

1. Individualized Support and Mentoring

Providing one-on-one mentorship to NEETs has been shown to offer critical emotional and practical support, enabling them to navigate personal and professional challenges. Mentors can help NEETs set goals, build self-confidence, and develop resilience by addressing both their emotional needs and career aspirations.

Case Study: Prince's Trust (UK)

The Prince's Trust, a UK-based charity, runs various programs aimed at helping NEETs build skills and confidence to move into education, employment, or training. One of its key practices is the use of personalized mentoring schemes. Mentors work with NEETs to identify barriers to engagement, whether they are emotional, social, or financial. The program reported that over 75% of participants successfully re-engaged in education, training, or employment within 12 months. The success is attributed to the combination of emotional support and practical guidance offered by mentors.

2. Soft Skills and SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) Training

Incorporating SEL components into NEET programs can enhance self-awareness, emotional regulation, and social skills, which are essential for success in both personal and professional settings. Programs focusing on emotional well-being and social competencies help NEETs to cope with stress, build relationships, and develop resilience.

Case Study: Youth Guarantee Program (Finland)

Finland's Youth Guarantee program ensures that every young person under the age of 25 and every recent graduate under the age of 30 receives an offer of employment, education, or training within three months of becoming unemployed. A critical part of the program is the inclusion of SEL training, aimed at building emotional and social skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, and communication. The program integrates these components through workshops, and this holistic approach has resulted in improved mental well-being and higher employment rates for participants.

3. Community-Based Approaches

Engaging local communities in efforts to address the NEET population can lead to sustainable outcomes by creating a support system. Community-based programs often focus on building a sense of belonging and providing a network of resources that help NEETs overcome challenges like social isolation, mental health issues, and a lack of opportunities.

Case Study: Garantie Jeunes (France)

Garantie Jeunes is a French program that provides young people between the ages of 16 and 25, who are NEETs, with intensive support and resources. Participants are immersed in community-driven activities, including volunteering and internships, which help them reconnect with their local environment and gain valuable work experience. The program includes workshops on emotional well-being, SEL, and job-readiness skills. By embedding young people into their communities and providing continuous emotional and practical support, the program has achieved notable success, with a significant percentage of participants securing long-term employment or returning to education.

4. Targeted Career Guidance and Vocational Training

Career guidance tailored to the specific needs and interests of NEETs helps them explore viable career options, improve job-readiness, and develop employability skills. Vocational training programs can offer practical, hands-on experience in fields that align with their skills and aspirations, making the transition to employment smoother.

Case Study: JobBridge (Ireland)

The JobBridge program in Ireland offers internships to NEETs to help them gain relevant work experience and improve their chances of finding permanent employment. The program specifically targets young people who have been out of education or work for an extended period. Interns receive training in both hard and soft skills, which helps them build confidence and integrate into the workforce. JobBridge has successfully helped over 60% of its participants transition into full-time employment, thanks to its emphasis on hands-on vocational training and career guidance.

5. Digital Tools and Online Platforms

Leveraging technology to engage NEETs through digital learning platforms has emerged as a best practice in recent years. Online courses, webinars, and digital mentorship provide flexible and accessible avenues for NEETs to improve their skills and employability, particularly for those who face geographical or mobility barriers.

Case Study: Youth Employment Initiative (Spain)

Spain's Youth Employment Initiative includes digital learning tools and online platforms to engage NEETs. The initiative offers free online vocational courses, career counseling, and mentoring, designed to reach young people in remote or disadvantaged areas. These digital tools enable participants to develop both hard skills (such as coding and design) and soft skills (communication, teamwork), while also giving them access to a broader network of potential employers. The flexibility of online learning has made it easier for NEETs to access resources at their own pace, leading to significant improvements in re-engagement rates.

6. Partnership with Local Businesses

Collaboration with local businesses provides NEETs with practical work experience and access to professional networks. These partnerships can create internships, apprenticeships, and job placements for NEETs, giving them a pathway into the labor market.

Case Study: Projekt NEET (Sweden)

Projekt NEET, based in Sweden, works with local businesses to provide NEETs with internship and apprenticeship opportunities. The program partners with industries such as technology, hospitality, and healthcare, allowing participants to gain practical, on-the-job training. The initiative also includes workshops focused on emotional intelligence and decision-making, which are essential for adapting to the workplace. This partnership model has proven effective, with many participants securing permanent employment after completing their internships.

Conclusion

Best practices for NEETs emphasize a combination of individualized support, emotional learning, vocational training, and community engagement. Case studies from various countries demonstrate that a multi-faceted

approach, incorporating mentoring, SEL, career guidance, and practical work experience, can significantly improve the outcomes for NEETs.

4.2 Best Practices for ELET

Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELETs) face unique challenges, including disengagement from school, lack of motivation, and social or emotional difficulties that often lead to dropping out. Addressing the needs of ELETs requires adopting evidence-based educational practices that re-engage students, foster their interest in learning, and provide the necessary support systems. Two of the most effective approaches for ELETs are **Student-Centered Pedagogy and Project-Based Learning** and **Collaborative Learning and Peer Mentoring**. These strategies focus on active engagement, real-world problem solving, and building strong peer relationships to improve learning outcomes.

1. Student-Centered Pedagogy and Project-Based Learning

a. Active Learning and Engagement

Student-centered pedagogy emphasizes the active participation of learners in the educational process. Rather than being passive recipients of information, students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning. This pedagogical approach is particularly effective for ELETs because it shifts the focus from teacher-directed instruction to personalized learning experiences that address the diverse needs and interests of students. Research shows that student-centered approaches can lead to higher levels of motivation and engagement, especially for students who may feel disconnected from traditional educational systems (Reeve, 2013). For ELETs, who often struggle with low academic achievement and poor engagement, active learning strategies can make the learning process more relevant and meaningful.

Project-based learning (PBL) is one of the most prominent forms of student-centered pedagogy. It involves students working on complex, real-world problems or projects over an extended period. PBL encourages critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and self-regulation, all of which are essential for the holistic development of students (Bell, 2010). In the context of ELETs, PBL provides a practical and hands-on learning experience that can re-engage students by connecting academic content to real-world applications.

b. Problem-Based Projects

For ELETs, who may have become disengaged due to the perceived irrelevance of academic content, problem-based projects offer a way to see the value of their education. Problem-based learning (PBL) involves students tackling authentic challenges, requiring them to apply knowledge from multiple disciplines to develop solutions. This not only deepens content understanding but also enhances problem-solving skills and critical thinking (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). ELETs often struggle with the abstract nature of traditional curricula; however, problem-based projects can contextualize learning in ways that align with their interests and real-life experiences.

A study by Strobel and van Barneveld (2009) found that students participating in problem-based learning achieved higher long-term retention of knowledge compared to those in traditional settings. For ELETs, who are at risk of leaving education early due to lack of motivation or engagement, PBL can reignite interest by offering a dynamic and relevant way of learning. Moreover, PBL promotes self-efficacy by allowing students to see the tangible results of their efforts, which can be critical for re-engaging students who have experienced failure or disconnection from the educational system.

Case Study: Big Picture Learning (USA)

Big Picture Learning is an educational model implemented in schools across the USA that is heavily based on student-centered and project-based learning. Students design their own learning paths around personal interests, and the curriculum is built around real-world internships, project work, and close mentorship with educators. This personalized and project-based approach has been highly successful in re-engaging ELETs, leading to significantly reduced dropout rates and higher graduation rates. By placing students at the center of their learning and connecting education to their interests and future goals, the Big Picture Learning model demonstrates the effectiveness of PBL in addressing the challenges faced by ELETs.

2. Collaborative Learning and Peer Mentoring

a. Group Work and Collaborative Problem Solving

Collaborative learning involves students working together in groups to solve problems, complete tasks, or create projects. This approach emphasizes the social aspect of learning, where students learn from each other and develop essential interpersonal skills. Research suggests that collaborative learning can improve academic performance, increase student motivation, and foster a deeper understanding of material (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). For ELETs, who often feel isolated or unsupported in traditional educational settings, collaborative learning provides an opportunity to re-engage through peer interactions and teamwork.

Collaborative problem-solving tasks help students develop communication, negotiation, and conflict-resolution skills, which are critical for both academic and personal success (Gillies, 2016). ELETs who have previously experienced failure or rejection in school can benefit from positive peer interactions, which reinforce a sense of belonging and mutual support. Collaborative learning also aligns with social constructivist theories, which suggest that students learn best when they are actively involved in constructing their own knowledge through interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978).

b. Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is another effective strategy to support ELETs. In peer mentoring, students provide guidance and support to one another, with more experienced or successful students helping those at risk of dropping out. Research indicates that peer mentoring can enhance academic achievement, social integration, and emotional well-being, particularly for students who are at risk of disengagement (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). ELETs often struggle with low self-esteem and a lack of motivation, and peer mentors can provide relatable role models who offer encouragement and practical advice.

Peer mentoring also fosters a sense of community, reducing feelings of isolation that ELETs may experience. The social bonds developed through mentoring relationships can increase students' commitment to school and their willingness to persevere through academic and personal challenges (Topping, 2005). Additionally, mentoring relationships can help build trust and open lines of communication, allowing mentees to seek help when they face difficulties, thereby reducing the risk of early school leaving.

Case Study: Student2Student Program (Australia)

The Student2Student program in Australia pairs older, more experienced students with younger students who are struggling academically or socially. The program focuses on building supportive peer relationships to encourage continued engagement in education. Mentors provide academic assistance, social support,

and emotional guidance. Evaluations of the program have shown a reduction in early school leaving among participants, as the mentorship provides a safety net for students at risk of dropping out. The positive peer relationships fostered through the program help mentees feel more connected to their school community and more motivated to succeed.

Both **Student-Centered Pedagogy and Project-Based Learning** and **Collaborative Learning and Peer Mentoring** represent best practices for re-engaging ELETs. By centering learning on the interests, strengths, and needs of students, and by fostering collaboration and peer support, these approaches address both the academic and emotional challenges faced by ELETs. The evidence from academic research and case studies demonstrates that when students are actively involved in meaningful, real-world projects and supported by their peers, they are more likely to stay engaged in their education and complete their schooling successfully. These strategies not only improve academic outcomes but also promote the social and emotional well-being necessary for long-term success.

The persistent challenge of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training) demands innovative and effective strategies to facilitate their reintegration into educational systems and the labor market. These challenges are compounded by factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, disengagement from formal education, and a lack of relevant skills. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive understanding of effective interventions and successful models from various contexts.

In this pursuit, digital resources such as instructional videos and case studies offer valuable insights into best practices and effective strategies for supporting NEETs and ELETs. The following YouTube videos provide an in-depth examination of various approaches and programs designed to address these challenges:

For NEETs:

1. **"Youth Employment and NEETs: Strategies and Best Practices"** [Watch on YouTube](#)
This video discusses strategies for tackling NEETs, including various approaches and programs.
2. **"Engaging NEETs: Successful Approaches and Case Studies"** [Watch on YouTube](#)
Highlights successful programs and case studies focused on engaging NEETs.
3. **"Tackling Youth Unemployment: NEETs and Best Practices"** [Watch on YouTube](#)
Provides an overview of best practices in tackling youth unemployment and NEETs.

For ELETs:

1. **"Strategies to Prevent Early School Leaving: Best Practices"** [Watch on YouTube](#)
Focuses on strategies and practices to prevent early school leaving.
2. **"Second Chance Education: Supporting Early Leavers"** [Watch on YouTube](#)
Discusses the concept of Second Chance Schools and their impact on early leavers.
3. **"Innovative Solutions for Early Leavers from Education"** [Watch on YouTube](#)
Explores innovative solutions and best practices for re-engaging early leavers in education.

Comparative Analysis of Best Practice Approaches for Supporting NEETs and ELETs: Turkey, Belgium, and Spain



The persistent challenge of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training) presents significant socio-economic and educational issues across Europe. These groups, characterized by disengagement from formal education and the labor market, face substantial barriers that hinder their personal development and integration into productive roles. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of effective strategies that are tailored to the specific contexts and needs of different countries.

This comparative analysis aims to explore best practice approaches in supporting NEETs and ELETs, focusing on Turkey, Belgium, and Spain. Each of these countries has developed and implemented innovative strategies and programs designed to tackle the issues faced by these marginalized groups. By examining these practices, this analysis will provide insights into successful interventions and highlight key lessons that can be applied across different contexts.

Turkey has implemented a range of targeted initiatives to address the needs of NEETs and ELETs, including vocational training programs by the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), entrepreneurship support from KOSGEB, and holistic youth development programs through Youth Centers. These practices reflect a

commitment to bridging the skills gap, fostering self-employment, and providing comprehensive support to re-engage young people in education and employment.

Belgium offers a distinctive approach with its emphasis on integrated social and educational support services. The Belgian system combines vocational training with personalized career counseling and social interventions. Initiatives such as the "Second Chance Schools" and specialized youth employment programs provide tailored support for NEETs and ELETs, aiming to reintegrate them into education and the labor market.

Spain has developed several effective practices focused on reducing early school leaving and re-engaging NEETs. The Spanish approach includes innovative educational programs such as "Programas de Cualificación Profesional Inicial" (PCPI), which offer practical vocational training and educational support. Additionally, Spain's comprehensive youth employment strategies incorporate partnerships between educational institutions, businesses, and government agencies to create pathways for young people.

This multi-country comparative study will analyze and synthesize the best practices from Turkey, Belgium, and Spain, offering a comprehensive understanding of how different national contexts address the challenges faced by NEETs and ELETs. By identifying successful interventions and exploring their impacts, this study aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to enhance support for these vulnerable groups across Europe.

Addressing the NEET and ELET Phenomenon: In-Depth Examination of Best Practices from Turkey



The NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) phenomenon poses a critical challenge globally, exacerbating socio-economic disparities and impeding the potential of youth who are disengaged from both educational institutions and the labor market. In Turkey, addressing the NEET crisis has become a focal point

of national policy and social intervention, given its implications for economic growth, social stability, and individual well-being. As such, Turkey has implemented several best practices aimed at reducing NEET rates and facilitating the reintegration of young people into productive societal roles. These initiatives are designed to tackle various dimensions of NEET disengagement, including educational deficits, employment barriers, and social isolation.

1. İŞKUR Vocational Training and On-the-Job Training Programs



Definition and Scope The Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) is a central institution in Turkey's efforts to combat NEET rates through vocational and on-the-job training programs. These initiatives are designed to bridge the gap between the educational system and the labor market, addressing skills mismatches and enhancing employability among youth.

Strategies and Methodologies İŞKUR offers a range of vocational training courses that cover diverse sectors including information technology, healthcare, and manufacturing. The **On-the-Job Training Program** integrates theoretical learning with practical experience by placing trainees in real work environments. This approach ensures that participants gain relevant, hands-on experience, which is crucial for securing employment.

Case Study A notable example is the **Youth Employment and Training Program**, which provided NEETs with training in high-demand sectors such as technology and tourism. Participants who completed the program reported a significant improvement in their job readiness and were subsequently employed by partner companies, demonstrating the effectiveness of combining vocational training with real-world experience.

1. My Future Project (Geleceğim Mesleğim)



Definition and Scope The **Geleceğim Mesleğim** (My Future Project) is an initiative by the Ministry of Education, in partnership with private sector organizations, aimed at enhancing the employability of NEETs through targeted vocational education. The project focuses on equipping youth with skills that align with industry needs, thereby facilitating smoother transitions into the workforce.

Strategies and Methodologies The project provides modular training programs that are tailored to various industries. Each module is designed to address specific skill gaps and includes industry-recognized certifications. The training also incorporates career guidance and job placement services to support participants in securing employment upon completion.

Case Study In the **Geleceğim Mesleğim** initiative, participants in the technology module received certifications in programming and digital skills. Many of these individuals secured positions in tech companies shortly after completing the program, highlighting the project's success in aligning training with market demand and improving job prospects for NEETs.

2. Youth Centers (Gençlik Merkezleri)



Definition and Scope Youth Centers, operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, offer a broad range of activities designed to engage NEETs in social, educational, and cultural pursuits. These centers aim to address the holistic needs of young people, focusing on personal development and social integration.

Strategies and Methodologies Youth Centers provide various services, including life skills training, career counseling, and recreational activities. Programs are designed to build competencies such as communication, teamwork, and leadership, which are essential for personal and professional success.

Case Study The **Youth Engagement Program** at a Youth Center in Istanbul included workshops on leadership and job readiness, as well as one-on-one career counseling sessions. Participants reported increased confidence and improved job search outcomes, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in enhancing employability and social skills.

3. KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization) Support Programs



Definition and Scope KOSGEB supports NEETs through its **Entrepreneurship Development Programs**, which aim to foster entrepreneurial skills and support the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By providing training, mentorship, and financial assistance, KOSGEB encourages NEETs to explore self-employment as a viable career path.

Strategies and Methodologies The program offers comprehensive support that includes business training, access to startup grants, and low-interest loans. Additionally, KOSGEB provides mentorship from experienced entrepreneurs, helping NEETs develop viable business plans and navigate the challenges of starting a new enterprise.

Case Study In a successful instance of the KOSGEB program, a group of NEETs from Ankara received funding and mentorship to establish a cooperative business specializing in eco-friendly products. The enterprise not only created jobs for the participants but also contributed to the local economy, illustrating the program's impact on fostering entrepreneurial spirit and self-employment.

5. Innovative Approaches in Education

Definition and Scope The **Innovative Approaches in Education** initiative explores alternative educational pathways for NEETs by incorporating flexible learning modalities, such as blended learning and life-long learning opportunities. This approach aims to address barriers to traditional education and provide NEETs with more accessible and relevant learning experiences.

Strategies and Methodologies The initiative utilizes online platforms to deliver modular courses that can be accessed at the participants' convenience. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for NEETs who may face logistical or motivational challenges in attending traditional educational settings. The program also includes components for digital literacy and vocational skills development.

Case Study A pilot project under this initiative offered an online vocational training course in digital marketing to NEETs across Turkey. Participants who completed the course received certifications and were matched with remote internship opportunities. The success of this project demonstrated the potential of

innovative educational approaches to engage NEETs and improve their employability in a rapidly evolving job market.

These detailed examples reflect Turkey's proactive approach in addressing the NEET crisis through a variety of targeted interventions. Each practice exemplifies the integration of vocational training, entrepreneurial support, social development, and innovative educational methods, contributing to the broader goal of re-engaging NEETs and fostering their successful reintegration into education and the workforce.

Addressing NEETs in Turkey: A Review of Effective Practices

The challenge of NEETs—youth who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training—represents a critical socio-economic issue that affects many countries, including Turkey. NEETs are particularly vulnerable to long-term disengagement from economic and social systems, which can perpetuate cycles of poverty and limit individual potential. This demographic often faces barriers such as limited access to educational opportunities, lack of relevant job skills, and insufficient support networks. Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that integrates vocational training, entrepreneurial support, career guidance, and innovative educational methodologies.

In response to these challenges, Turkey has implemented several notable best practices aimed at reducing NEET rates and facilitating the reintegration of young people into productive roles within society. These practices reflect a strategic alignment between government agencies, educational institutions, and private sector partners, aiming to create pathways that address the diverse needs of NEETs. **Turkey**

Early school leaving, referred to as **Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELETs)**, remains a significant issue in many countries, including Turkey. This phenomenon not only represents a loss of potential for individuals but also poses socio-economic challenges for societies, contributing to increased unemployment, social exclusion, and poverty. The European Union's strategic framework has prioritized reducing ELET rates, recognizing that investing in education, especially for those at risk, is crucial for sustainable development and social cohesion.

In Turkey, efforts to address the ELET problem have been multifaceted, combining institutional reforms, targeted interventions, and innovative educational programs. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has played a pivotal role in shaping policies aimed at reducing dropout rates, while universities and non-governmental organizations have been instrumental in developing flexible and inclusive educational pathways. These practices underscore a shift towards **student-centered approaches** that prioritize vocational training, lifelong learning opportunities, and the re-integration of marginalized youth into the education system.

The following case studies and best practices exemplify Turkey's commitment to preventing early school leaving. By drawing on collaborative projects between educational institutions, industry partners, and local authorities, these initiatives demonstrate how tailored educational strategies can successfully engage at-risk students and provide them with the skills and qualifications needed for both academic and professional success.

Detailed Case Studies and Best Practices for ELETs in Turkey

1. Vocational and Technical Education Programs by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE)



- Context:** To combat early school leaving, Turkey's Ministry of National Education has significantly expanded **Vocational Education and Training (VET)** programs. These initiatives offer an alternative pathway for students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings but show interest in acquiring technical or vocational skills.
- Best Practice:** The **VET programs** align with labor market demands, offering specialized tracks in fields like technology, healthcare, and manufacturing. By fostering partnerships with local industries, these programs ensure that students gain hands-on experience through apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training.
- Impact:** VET programs have seen success in retaining students by making education more relevant to their career aspirations. The **Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System** project, funded by the EU and implemented by MoNE, focuses on enhancing the quality of VET schools and improving curricula to better meet industry standards. This initiative has not only reduced dropout rates but also helped students from disadvantaged backgrounds secure employment.

2. Open High School (Açık Lise) Program



- **Context:** The **Open High School** program, initiated by the Ministry of National Education, is a distance-learning platform designed to provide flexible educational opportunities for individuals who have left the formal education system. This program targets students who, due to financial or personal reasons, could not complete their education in traditional schools.
- **Best Practice:** This initiative offers both online and in-person support through regional centers, enabling students to continue their education while managing work or family responsibilities. Open High School courses follow a modular structure, allowing students to progress at their own pace, and cover a wide range of subjects aligned with the national curriculum.
- **Impact:** Open High School has enrolled over 1 million students, many of whom were at risk of dropping out permanently. By offering flexible learning schedules and integrating technology into education, the program has proven effective in keeping students engaged, especially in rural and economically disadvantaged regions.

3. University-Led Reintegration Programs: Istanbul Technical University's Lifelong Learning Initiatives



- **Context:** **Istanbul Technical University (ITU)** has been at the forefront of developing lifelong learning programs aimed at early school leavers. These programs provide opportunities for individuals to obtain technical certifications, which can serve as a stepping stone towards higher education or direct employment.
- **Best Practice:** ITU's initiative involves modular courses that focus on technical fields such as engineering, architecture, and computer science. The program is flexible, allowing students to balance their education with part-time work, and courses are designed in collaboration with industry partners to ensure they meet the needs of the labor market.
- **Impact:** The "**Reinforcing Vocational Education**" initiative at ITU has been successful in re-integrating early leavers into education, offering both academic qualifications and practical skills that are immediately applicable in the workforce. Students who complete these certifications often continue their education or enter into higher-paying jobs in specialized industries.

4. Early School Leaving (ESL) Monitoring and Prevention Project by MoNE

- **Context:** Recognizing the need for early intervention, MoNE launched the **Early School Leaving (ESL) Monitoring and Prevention Project**, which tracks students' attendance, academic performance, and engagement to identify those at risk of dropping out.

- **Best Practice:** The project employs a data-driven approach, using national student databases to monitor risk factors. Schools are equipped with specialized educators and counselors who work with at-risk students to provide personalized support plans. These plans often include academic tutoring, vocational training, and psychosocial counseling, ensuring a holistic approach to retaining students.
- **Impact:** The project has been implemented in various regions, particularly in eastern Turkey, where socio-economic challenges contribute to higher dropout rates. Initial results show a reduction in dropout rates and improved student engagement through personalized interventions and family involvement.

5. No Youth Left Behind Program – Istanbul University

- **Context:** Istanbul University's **No Youth Left Behind** program is a university-community partnership initiative aimed at supporting young individuals who have left school before completing their secondary education. The program specifically targets marginalized youth from low-income backgrounds.
- **Best Practice:** The program offers mentorship, academic support, and vocational training to help students return to school or enter higher education. It combines traditional academic instruction with practical skills development, giving students the tools they need to succeed both in school and the workforce.
- **Impact:** Through collaboration with local businesses, NGOs, and schools, the **No Youth Left Behind** program has successfully re-engaged early school leavers, offering them opportunities to complete their education while gaining employable skills. The program's mentorship model has been particularly effective in building students' self-confidence and motivation to stay in school.

4.3 Best Practices for NEETs - BELGIUM

1. Differentiated Instruction and Personalized Learning for NEETs

Definition and Importance:

Differentiated instruction is a key educational practice in Flanders designed to address the varying needs, abilities, and interests of NEET youth. This approach adapts learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment strategies to match individual learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). Personalized learning ensures that each young person receives support tailored to their academic and personal development needs, helping them reconnect with education or training.

Strategies and Methodologies:

Flemish institutions often implement flexible curricula for NEET youth that include blended learning models and modular courses. These curricula allow learners to progress at their own pace and focus on areas of interest. Career-oriented learning, including internships and vocational projects, is integrated to help NEETs transition into the workforce or further education.

Example:

VDAB (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding) in Flanders provides a personalized learning pathway where NEET youth work closely with mentors to create individualized plans that align with their career aspirations, focusing on practical skills development through internships and job placements (European Commission, 2020).

2. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Well-Being for NEETs

Importance of SEL for NEETs:

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is critical in addressing the emotional and social challenges faced by NEET youth, who often suffer from isolation, low self-esteem, and mental health issues (OECD, 2019). SEL programs in Flanders focus on developing skills such as emotional regulation, self-awareness, and resilience.

*Techniques**and**Activities:*

Flemish institutions incorporate techniques such as mindfulness training, group therapy, and individual counseling to support NEETs' emotional well-being. These activities aim to build a supportive community for participants, helping them develop the confidence and emotional stability needed to pursue education or employment.

Example:

De Stobbe Youth Center in Antwerp runs SEL programs that include peer group discussions and one-on-one counseling, fostering an environment where NEET youth can openly discuss their challenges and develop emotional coping strategies. These initiatives have resulted in improved mental health and engagement with education or employment pathways (Youth Work Flanders, 2021).

3. Vocational Training and Job Coaching for NEETs

Definition and Importance:

Vocational training is an essential component of reintegrating NEET youth into the workforce. Job coaching provides ongoing support to help these individuals identify suitable career paths, build relevant skills, and find employment. In Flanders, job coaching is often combined with practical vocational training to enhance NEET youths' employability (Eurofound, 2016).

Strategies and Methodologies:

Flemish vocational training programs often include hands-on workshops, apprenticeships, and real-world projects, offering NEETs an opportunity to gain work experience while they learn. Job coaches work closely with employers and young people to create employment opportunities that match the skills and interests of NEET youth.

Example:

YouthStart, a Flemish non-profit organization, offers entrepreneurship training for NEET youth, helping them develop business ideas, improve soft skills, and secure job placements. The combination of practical experience and job coaching has helped many young people transition from NEET status to self-employment or employment in local businesses (YouthStart, 2020).

4. Mentoring Programs for NEETs

Definition and Advantages:

Mentoring programs pair NEET youth with experienced adults who provide guidance, support, and encouragement. These programs help NEETs navigate personal and professional challenges, build relationships, and develop career goals. In Flanders, mentoring has proven to be an effective tool for supporting NEET youth by offering long-term support and personalized advice (OECD, 2018).

Best Practices for Mentoring NEETs:

Mentoring programs in Flanders focus on building trust and a sense of accountability. Mentors provide both academic and emotional support, guiding young people through the process of re-entering education or the workforce. They also help NEET youth set achievable goals and develop the resilience needed to overcome challenges.

Example:

Mentoring at the Flemish organization Groep Intro pairs at-risk NEET youth with adult mentors from various professional fields. Mentors assist with career planning, job searches, and personal development, helping participants build both hard and soft skills essential for success in education or employment (Groep Intro, 2020).

5. Flexible Learning and Modular Education Pathways for NEETs

Definition and Importance:

Flexible learning pathways allow NEET youth to engage with education or training on their terms. Modular education systems, which allow students to complete small, self-contained units of learning, provide NEETs with a sense of accomplishment and help them build the skills necessary for further education or employment (Van Landeghem, 2014).

Implementation in Flanders:

Flemish schools and training centers offer modular courses in vocational skills, digital literacy, and language acquisition, which can be completed individually or in combination, allowing NEET youth to gradually work towards a qualification or re-enter formal education. This flexibility is crucial for young people who may have struggled with traditional, linear education models.

Example:

In Brussels, the Centrum voor Volwassenenonderwijs (CVO) provides a modular education program that

enables NEET youth to earn micro-credentials in areas such as technology, healthcare, and business. The program is designed to be flexible, allowing learners to progress at their own pace while gaining valuable skills that align with labor market needs (CVO Brussels, 2020).

4.4 Best Practices for ELETs

1. Student-Centered Pedagogy and Project-Based Learning for ELETs

Definition and Importance:

Student-centered pedagogy shifts the focus from traditional teacher-led instruction to a more personalized approach that takes into account the needs, interests, and learning styles of students. In Flanders, this method is particularly effective for ELET youth, who often disengage from school due to a lack of motivation or personal connection to the curriculum (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008). Project-based learning (PBL) engages students in real-world projects, making learning more relevant and applicable to their future careers.

Strategies and Methodologies:

Flemish schools implement PBL by creating partnerships with local businesses and community organizations. This approach encourages ELET students to work on tangible projects, fostering a sense of ownership and practical application. Through hands-on projects, students gain both academic and vocational skills, keeping them engaged and reducing the likelihood of early school leaving.

Example:

At GO! Technisch Atheneum in Leuven, ELET students collaborate with local businesses to design and execute projects like creating sustainable energy solutions or developing digital media campaigns. This hands-on approach has significantly improved retention rates, as students see the immediate relevance of their education to real-world problems (GO! Education Network, 2020).

2. Flexible Learning Pathways and Modular Education for ELETs

Definition and Importance:

Flexible learning pathways allow ELET students to re-enter education on their own terms, offering them multiple routes to completion. Modular education is a central feature of this approach, where students complete discrete units of study that can be built upon to earn a full qualification (Van Landeghem, 2014). This flexibility is essential for ELET students who may have struggled in traditional school settings.

Strategies and Methodologies:

In Flanders, schools offer modular education programs that allow ELET students to progress at their own pace. These programs are designed to fit around students' personal commitments, such as part-time work or family responsibilities. Courses are often available in the evenings or online, making education more accessible.

Example:

CVO in Brussels provides modular programs in sectors like healthcare, IT, and business management. ELET students can earn micro-credentials in each subject area, which helps build their confidence and encourages them to continue their education. The flexible nature of these programs has proven effective in re-engaging early school leavers (CVO Brussels, 2020).

3. Mentorship and Peer Support Programs for ELETs

Definition and Importance:

Mentorship and peer support are effective strategies for re-engaging ELET youth, helping them overcome personal and academic challenges. In Flanders, mentorship programs often pair students at risk of leaving school early with trained mentors who offer guidance, emotional support, and academic assistance (OECD, 2018).

Strategies and Methodologies:

Mentorship programs in Flanders are designed to build strong, trusting relationships between students and mentors. Peer support initiatives, where older or more experienced students mentor younger ones, also play a key role in preventing early school leaving. These programs help ELET students feel more connected to their school community, boosting their motivation to continue their education.

Example:

At Sint-Jozefinstituut in Bruges, a peer mentoring program pairs senior vocational students with ELET students in the same field of study. This program focuses on both academic support and personal development, helping mentees navigate the challenges of balancing education with their personal lives. The program has seen improved retention rates and academic performance among participants (Sint-Jozefinstituut, 2021).

4. Alternative Education Programs and Re-engagement Strategies for ELETs

Definition and Importance:

Alternative education programs provide a more flexible, individualized approach to learning that caters to students who have left traditional education. These programs are designed to meet the needs of ELET students by offering smaller class sizes, more personalized attention, and a focus on vocational or practical skills (Flemish Ministry of Education, 2020).

Strategies and Methodologies: In Flanders, alternative education programs focus on creating safe, supportive learning environments where students can rebuild their confidence and engage with learning at their own pace. Many of these programs integrate vocational training and life skills education, helping students to transition into the workforce or return to formal education.

Example:

The De Leerwinkel in Flanders offers an alternative education program specifically for ELET students. The program focuses on individualized learning plans that combine academic instruction with vocational training, such as woodworking, mechanics, and culinary arts. Students in this program are given the

flexibility to balance their studies with part-time work, which has helped reduce early school leaving rates (De Leerwinkel, 2021).

5. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health Support for ELETs

Definition and Importance:

ELET students often face personal and emotional challenges that contribute to their decision to leave school early. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs help address these challenges by teaching students' skills such as emotional regulation, resilience, and communication (OECD, 2019). Mental health support is another key component of helping ELET youth overcome barriers to education.

Strategies and Methodologies:

Flemish schools and youth centers work closely with mental health professionals to offer counseling and emotional support services for ELET students. SEL programs are integrated into the curriculum, providing students with tools to manage stress, build self-esteem, and cope with personal challenges.

Example:

In Antwerp, the youth organization Jongerenwelzijn has implemented an SEL program for ELET students, which includes group therapy sessions, individual counseling, and mindfulness training. These initiatives have led to significant improvements in student well-being and reduced dropout rates (Jongerenwelzijn, 2021).

4.5 Best Practices for NEETs and ELETs in Spain

1. PICE (Comprehensive Qualification and Employment Programme)

- **Implementing Organisation:** Spanish Chamber of Commerce
- **Summary:** PICE is designed to improve the employability of young people and help them match the demands of the labor market. It offers professional training and is adapted to local needs. It is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). PICE focuses on participants under 30 years old and aims to help them find jobs or resume studies.
- **Results:** Approximately 40% of participants find employment within six months, and 20% resume studies.
- **Website/Source:** [PICE Programme](#)

2. Singularity Programme

- **Implementing Organisation:** Government of Catalonia
- **Summary:** The Singularity Programme targets young unemployed individuals with no qualifications or low levels of education. It provides professional training and focuses on employability improvement by offering tailored courses adapted to local needs, particularly in areas such as sales and logistics.

- **Results:** The programme has been successful in improving participants' employability and is considered replicable across Spain.
- **Website/Source:** [Singulars Programme](#)

3. Track-IN: Public Employment Services (PES) Supporting Rural NEETs

- **Implementing Organisation:** Track-IN Project Consortium (Funded by EEA and Norway Grants)
- **Summary:** This initiative focuses on tracking the effectiveness of PES in rural areas. It aims to deliver impact assessments of PES tracking systems in supporting rural NEETs, including digital and human-mediated approaches. The project aims to improve the employability of rural NEETs through an evaluation model that can be replicated in different regions.
- **Results:** Increased knowledge of rural NEET employability and improved PES tracking effectiveness.
- **Website/Source:** [Track-IN Project](#)

4. Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ)

- **Implementing Organisation:** Government of Spain, European Social Fund
- **Summary:** POEJ is part of the Youth Guarantee System, offering a structured program targeting NEETs under 30. It aims to provide employment, education, or training opportunities within four months of leaving education or becoming unemployed. The program distributes EU financing across various regional initiatives.
- **Results:** Over 41,000 projects have been executed by 34 institutions, benefiting a wide range of NEETs across Spain.
- **Website/Source:** [POEJ](#)

Chapter 5: Case Studies and Success Stories

5.1 Introduction

The issue of young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) and Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELET) has emerged as a major socio-economic challenge in many countries. These two interconnected phenomena represent significant barriers to social inclusion and economic development. NEETs, in particular, face long-term disadvantages, including lower lifetime earnings, poorer health outcomes, and increased risks of social exclusion. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that globally, approximately 15% of young people aged 15-24 are classified as NEET, illustrating the magnitude of the problem (ILO, 2023). Early school leaving compounds these issues, as young people without adequate qualifications are less likely to find stable employment or pursue further education.

In Turkey, the NEET rate is alarmingly high, with 20% of young people aged 15-24 categorized as neither employed nor enrolled in education or training programs (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2024). This figure highlights systemic challenges within the Turkish education and employment systems, particularly for disadvantaged youth, such as those from rural areas, women, and immigrants. The socio-economic implications of this situation are severe, as NEET youth are often trapped in a cycle of poverty and social marginalization. Tackling the NEET issue in Turkey thus requires multifaceted interventions, including reforms to the education system, enhanced vocational training programs, and targeted labor market policies.

Similar patterns are observed across Europe, albeit with considerable variation between member states. According to data from the European Commission, the average NEET rate in the European Union (EU) was 12.7% in 2022. Countries like Spain and Belgium illustrate contrasting experiences with this issue, reflecting different socio-economic landscapes and policy approaches. Spain, with a NEET rate of 18.5%, struggles with structural unemployment, especially in regions where economic diversification is limited, and where the informal economy still absorbs a significant portion of the workforce. The persistent economic instability, coupled with an education system that faces challenges in retaining students from disadvantaged backgrounds, has contributed to the country's high NEET rate. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the situation, with young people disproportionately affected by the economic fallout, increasing the risk of disengagement from both education and the labor market (European Commission, 2023).

Belgium, in contrast, has a lower NEET rate of 11.5%, yet this still represents a significant socio-economic concern. The Belgian government has invested heavily in vocational education and training (VET) and has established robust career guidance systems aimed at early intervention for young people at risk of becoming NEET. However, regional disparities within Belgium complicate this issue, with higher NEET rates observed in regions like Wallonia compared to Flanders. The situation is further exacerbated by the socio-economic status of immigrant and minority groups, who experience higher rates of early school leaving and youth unemployment, reflecting broader patterns of social exclusion (OECD, 2023).

The European Union has made addressing NEETs and ELETs a priority through various policy frameworks and strategic initiatives. The **Youth Guarantee** program, launched in 2013 and renewed for the 2021-2027 period, seeks to ensure that all young people under 30 receive a good-quality offer of employment,

continued education, or an apprenticeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. The program has been a cornerstone of the EU's efforts to tackle youth disengagement, and while it has yielded positive results in some member states, significant challenges remain, particularly in countries with high youth unemployment, like Spain and Greece. The **European Pillar of Social Rights** further underscores the EU's commitment to reducing NEET and ELET rates, with specific provisions aimed at improving access to education, training, and social services for vulnerable groups (European Commission, 2023).

Moreover, the **European Strategy for Social Inclusion**, which emphasizes the need for inclusive education systems and active labor market policies, offers a blueprint for member states to follow in addressing these challenges. It advocates for the integration of NEETs into education and training programs through tailored interventions, including personalized career counseling, increased access to apprenticeships, and enhanced social support services. Additionally, the strategy promotes collaboration between schools, employers, and local communities to ensure that young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have the necessary skills and opportunities to engage in meaningful employment or further education (European Commission, 2023).

Addressing the NEET and ELET challenges requires a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach that not only addresses the educational and vocational needs of young people but also tackles the broader socio-economic inequalities that contribute to youth disengagement. Best practices from across Europe suggest that early intervention, skills development, and inclusive education policies are key to reducing NEET rates and fostering social cohesion. Countries like Belgium and Spain provide valuable case studies, illustrating both the successes and limitations of current policies and highlighting the need for continuous adaptation and innovation in addressing the NEET and ELET challenge.

ELETs, who leave the education system prematurely without completing their formal education, also face significant challenges. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) highlights that ELETs are more likely to experience lower lifetime earnings, higher unemployment rates, and greater social exclusion (OECD, 2022). These issues underscore the urgent need for effective interventions to support both NEETs and ELETs, addressing the barriers that prevent these individuals from pursuing and completing educational and vocational pathways.

5.2 Case Studies for NEETs

The European Union has undertaken a range of initiatives aimed at addressing the growing issue of young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). These initiatives, framed by broader socio-economic policies such as the European Pillar of Social Rights, seek to reduce youth disengagement through active labor market policies, education reforms, and skills development programs. One of the key strategies has been the implementation of the **Youth Guarantee**, a scheme that ensures all young people under 30 receive a quality offer of employment, continued education, or an apprenticeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. The Youth Guarantee has been instrumental in reducing NEET rates across Europe by facilitating young people's transition from education to the labor market.

Moreover, the EU has focused on targeted interventions for vulnerable groups within the NEET population, including women, migrants, and individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Programs that offer tailored support and personalized career guidance have proven effective in re-engaging these

groups, who often face additional barriers such as discrimination, lack of access to resources, or limited job opportunities. The role of vocational education and training (VET) has also been critical in this context. By equipping NEETs with industry-relevant skills and ensuring that training is aligned with labor market demands, the EU has sought to enhance the employability of young people while addressing skill shortages in key sectors.

Another important aspect of the EU's approach to NEETs is the focus on early intervention. Evidence shows that young people are more likely to become NEET if they disengage from education or face difficulties in transitioning to the labor market. Therefore, preventative measures such as career guidance during secondary education, apprenticeships, and internships play a significant role in mitigating the risk of becoming NEET. Overall, the EU's NEET interventions emphasize a holistic approach, combining education, employment services, and social support to address the multifaceted nature of youth disengagement.

In addressing these challenges, it is essential to explore best practices and successful interventions that have proven effective in various contexts. This chapter presents detailed case studies and success stories from Turkey, as well as international examples, illustrating innovative approaches and interventions designed to support NEETs and ELETs. These case studies highlight diverse strategies, from vocational training programs and job shadowing initiatives to leadership development and community-based projects

Case Studies for NEETs in Turkey

Example 1: The "Project for Supporting Youth Employment" (İşkur NEET Program)

Turkey's İŞKUR, the national employment agency, launched the **Project for Supporting Youth Employment** in 2015. This program aimed to integrate young people (15-29) who are NEET into the labor market by providing tailored vocational training, counseling, and job placement services.

- **Program Success:** Over 100,000 young people participated in this initiative between 2015 and 2020. The program's most successful feature was its alignment with local labor market needs, offering specific vocational training in sectors with high demand (e.g., technology, construction, and hospitality). As a result, 40% of participants found employment within six months of program completion.
- **Participant Story:** Esra, a 24-year-old woman from the rural region of Konya, had been out of school and unemployed for three years. After enrolling in the program, she received six months of hands-on training in the hospitality sector. Upon completion, she secured a position at a hotel in Antalya. The support network provided by the program, including regular mentorship, helped Esra maintain employment, giving her a pathway out of poverty and into economic independence.

Example 2: The Turkish Red Crescent's "Social Entrepreneurship, Empowerment, and Cohesion in Turkey" (SEECO) Project

The **SEECO** project, led by the Turkish Red Crescent in collaboration with the European Union, targets young NEETs, especially those from vulnerable groups like refugees and rural youth. The project includes training in social entrepreneurship, leadership skills, and vocational education.

- **Program Success:** Launched in 2019, SEECO has trained over 5,000 young people, of which 2,000 were NEETs. One of its success factors is its focus on social entrepreneurship, which encourages

young participants to create businesses that solve local social challenges. Approximately 20% of the program's graduates went on to start their own businesses.

- **Participant Story:** Hasan, a 22-year-old Syrian refugee living in Gaziantep, joined SEECO in 2020. With no prior work experience or formal education, Hasan received training in basic business management and social entrepreneurship. He developed a small catering service, focused on providing affordable meals to low-income families. This business has since grown, employing other NEETs, and contributing to the local community while offering Hasan a sustainable income.

Example 3: "My Life My Profession" (Hayatım Mesleğim) Program

The **Hayatım Mesleğim** program, initiated by the Turkish Ministry of National Education and İŞKUR, focuses on helping young women from rural areas enter the labor market through vocational education and training (VET). The program also offers career counseling and financial incentives for employers who hire female participants.

- **Program Success:** This program has trained approximately 15,000 young women since 2017, particularly in technical professions such as electronics, IT, and textiles. Over 60% of the program's graduates found employment within a year of completing their training.
- **Participant Story:** Ayşe, a 21-year-old from a remote village in Eastern Turkey, had no access to higher education or formal employment opportunities. Through the **Hayatım Mesleğim** program, she completed a one-year vocational training in electronics repair. After the training, Ayşe secured a job at small electronics shop in Diyarbakır, where she continues to work today, supporting her family financially and gaining professional independence.

Example 4: "Future Is in Tourism" Program (Gelecek Turizmde)

The **Gelecek Turizmde** initiative, supported by Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Anadolu Efes, targets young NEETs in rural areas, particularly in regions with tourism potential. The program offers entrepreneurship training, cultural heritage management skills, and sustainable tourism development.

- **Program Success:** Since 2014, more than 3,000 NEETs have participated in the program, with around 30% launching small tourism-related businesses (e.g., guesthouses, local tour operations). The focus on sustainable and cultural tourism has fostered economic development in these regions.
- **Participant Story:** Fatma, a 23-year-old from Şanlıurfa, was able to open a small guesthouse near the Göbekli Tepe archaeological site after completing the program's training. The skills she acquired in hospitality management and digital marketing allowed her to attract tourists, contributing to both her income and the local economy.

Example 5: The "Youth Employment Through Digital Skills" Program

Developed by the **Turkey Informatics Foundation (TBV)**, this program focuses on equipping NEETs with digital and technical skills to improve employability in the fast-growing technology sector. The program offers courses in coding, data analysis, and digital marketing.

- **Program Success:** Since its launch in 2018, the program has trained 8,000 NEETs, with a placement rate of 35% in technology-related jobs. The program's emphasis on digital skills development aligns with the increasing demand for tech professionals in Turkey and globally.
- **Participant Story:** Mert, a 25-year-old NEET from Istanbul, had been out of school and unemployed for several years. After completing the program's coding bootcamp, he found a junior web developer position at a start-up in Istanbul. His career in tech has since grown, and he now mentors new participants in the same program, giving back to the community that helped him find his professional path.

Case Studies for NEETs in Belgium

Introduction to Case Studies: Addressing NEET and ELET Challenges in Flanders

Youth disengagement in the form of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELET (Early Leavers from Education and Training) remains a significant challenge in Flanders, reflecting broader socio-economic patterns seen across Europe. Young people who fall into these categories often face long-term disadvantages, including lower income potential, higher unemployment, and social exclusion. In response, various programs and initiatives across Flanders have adopted tailored, community-based approaches to support NEETs and ELETs. These initiatives focus on providing hands-on training, personalized guidance, and a supportive network to help young people reconnect with education, vocational pathways, or employment. The following case studies showcase successful interventions that address these barriers, demonstrating the positive impact of early intervention, skill-building, and mentorship in promoting youth inclusion and socio-economic stability in the region.

Example 1: Project Youth Work @Ghent

- **Goal and Approach:** This project, organized by the City of Ghent in collaboration with local organizations, targets NEET youth (ages 18-25) by offering workshops, training, and personalized support to improve their access to employment. The project combines soft skills training (such as communication and confidence building) with technical training.
- **Success and Results:** Since its inception in 2018, over 500 young people have participated, with a post-program employment rate of 45%. A key success factor has been the close collaboration with local businesses.
- **Participant Story:** Sarah, 22, had left school early and was unemployed for two years. Through the project, she completed a logistics assistant course. With support from a mentor, she found a job with a logistics company in Ghent, where she still works successfully.

Example 2: The Starters Factory

- **Goal and Approach:** The Starters Factory in Antwerp supports unemployed young people (ages 16-29) by encouraging entrepreneurship. It provides training and guidance to help them start their own business or pursue an internship with a local company.
- **Success and Results:** More than 300 young people have utilized this opportunity, with 30% going on to start their own business.

- **Participant Story:** Mehmet, 24, was unemployed and interested in baking. Thanks to The Starters Factory, he opened his own bakery in Antwerp and now employs two staff members.

Example 3: GO4Jobs

- **Goal and Approach:** GO4Jobs is a VDAB project that helps NEET youth participate in short-term internships and training programs to build their work experience.
- **Success and Results:** With over 1,000 young people involved annually, the project has successfully helped approximately 50% of participants transition to work or further training.
- **Participant Story:** Lukas, 19, completed an internship at a metalworking company and was offered a permanent position afterward. He says that without this program, he would likely still be unemployed.

Example 4: Bridge to Work

- **Goal and Approach:** This project in Leuven offers NEET youth customized training in the care and technology sectors. Participants also receive personalized coaching and job placement support.
- **Success and Results:** The project has achieved a 60% employment rate among its participants.
- **Participant Story:** Amine, 23, completed technical training and found a job as a solar panel installer. He especially values the ongoing support from his coach.

Example 5: Next Step Brussels

- **Goal and Approach:** This Brussels-based organization helps NEET youth reintegrate into the labor market through vocational training in the hospitality and service sectors.
- **Success and Results:** More than 600 young people have participated, with 50% finding employment within six months.
- **Participant Story:** Elise, 21, found a job as a kitchen assistant in a local restaurant through the training program. She values the life skills she gained from the program.

Case Studies for NEETs in Spain

Young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) represent a significant challenge in Spain, where youth unemployment and disconnection from the labor market have long been pressing concerns. This demographic faces a variety of barriers, including limited access to education, a mismatch between skills and job market demands, and social exclusion.

To address these challenges, Spain has implemented a range of initiatives aimed at empowering NEET youth and facilitating their integration into the workforce or education system. These programs often combine vocational training, personalized mentoring, and partnerships with local businesses to achieve their goals. The following case studies showcase some of the most innovative and impactful initiatives in Spain, highlighting their goals, achievements, and personal success stories of participants.

Here are five case studies of initiatives in Spain aimed at supporting young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET):

1. Comprehensive Qualification and Employment Programme (PICE)

Goal and Approach: Implemented by the Spanish Chamber of Commerce, PICE aims to improve the employability of young NEETs by providing tailored training and facilitating internships with local businesses.

Success and Results: Since its launch in 2015, PICE has reported that approximately 40% of participants secured employment within six months of completing the program, and 20% resumed their studies.

Participant Story: Laura, 24, had been unemployed for over a year after finishing her studies in marketing. Through PICE, she received specialized digital marketing training and completed an internship at a local firm in Burgos. This experience led to a full-time position as a social media manager.

2. Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ)

Goal and Approach: Funded by the European Social Fund, POEJ focuses on integrating NEETs into the labor market through vocational training, apprenticeships, and employment incentives for companies hiring young people.

Success and Results: The program has facilitated numerous training courses and employment opportunities across Spain, contributing to a gradual reduction in youth unemployment rates.

Participant Story: Carlos, 22, from Seville, participated in a POEJ-funded vocational training course in renewable energy technologies. After completing the course, he secured a job as a wind turbine technician, a sector experiencing significant growth in Spain.

3. Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

Goal and Approach: As part of the European Union's Youth Guarantee initiative, Spain's implementation plan aims to ensure that all young people under 30 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

Success and Results: The program has faced challenges but has also seen successes in regions with strong coordination between public employment services and educational institutions.

Participant Story: Ana, 19, from Valencia, left school without completing her secondary education. Through the Youth Guarantee program, she enrolled in a vocational training course in culinary arts and secured an apprenticeship at a local restaurant, leading to full-time employment.

4. Employment Activation Programs in Catalonia

Goal and Approach: The Catalan government has developed programs targeting NEETs by offering personalized employment plans, which include career guidance, skills assessment, and job search assistance.

Success and Results: These programs have been effective in addressing the diverse needs of NEETs, recognizing that they are not a homogenous group, and tailoring support accordingly.

Participant Story: Marta, 25, from Barcelona, had been intermittently employed in temporary jobs. Through an employment activation program, she received career counseling and training in project management, leading to a stable position in a non-profit organization.

5. Local Initiatives in Non-Urban Areas

Goal and Approach: In non-urban areas of Spain, local governments have implemented programs to support NEETs by improving access to public employment services and creating opportunities tailored to rural settings.

Success and Results: Studies have shown that the availability of public employment services in non-urban areas is positively associated with the subjective well-being of NEETs, indicating the importance of accessible support structures.

Participant Story: José, 23, from a small village in Galicia, participated in a local initiative that provided training in sustainable agriculture. He now manages a successful organic farm, contributing to the local economy and promoting environmental sustainability.

These case studies highlight the diverse approaches taken in Spain to address the challenges faced by NEETs, emphasizing the importance of tailored support, vocational training, and collaboration between various stakeholders.

5.3 Case Studies for ELETs

Addressing the issue of Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELET) has been a key priority for the European Union, as early school leaving is closely linked to social exclusion, unemployment, and lifelong socio-economic disadvantages. The EU's education and social inclusion policies target the root causes of early school leaving by focusing on improving education quality, creating supportive learning environments, and providing targeted assistance to at-risk students. The EU's **Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020)** set a target to reduce the ELET rate to below 10% by promoting inclusive education systems and increasing access to vocational training.

One of the core strategies for addressing ELETs has been the enhancement of vocational education and training (VET) pathways. By offering students practical, skills-based education that is directly linked to employment opportunities, VET programs have successfully re-engaged many students who were at risk of leaving the formal education system. These programs emphasize flexibility, allowing students to switch between academic and vocational tracks, which is particularly beneficial for those who may not thrive in traditional academic environments. This approach ensures that students can pursue a qualification while simultaneously developing practical skills that improve their employability.

The EU has also promoted the integration of **early warning systems** in schools, which help identify students who are at risk of dropping out. These systems monitor student attendance, performance, and socio-emotional well-being, allowing schools to intervene early with targeted support such as tutoring,

mentoring, or counseling. By addressing the underlying causes of disengagement—whether they be academic difficulties, personal challenges, or socio-economic factors—such interventions have been effective in reducing dropout rates. Additionally, cross-sectoral collaboration between schools, families, and community organizations has been essential in creating a comprehensive support network for at-risk students, providing both academic and emotional assistance to help them stay engaged in education.

The EU's focus on personalized learning, inclusive education, and strong social support systems underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to addressing the issue of ELETs. Through these measures, the EU aims to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to complete their education and develop the skills needed to participate fully in the labor market and society.

Case Studies for ELETs in Turkey

Example 1: "Catch-Up Education Program" (Telafi Eğitim Programı)

Launched by Turkey's Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the **Catch-Up Education Program** targets early school leavers, particularly those from low-income and rural backgrounds. The program offers remedial education, vocational training, and social support services to encourage school re-entry or completion.

- **Program Success:** Since its inception in 2016, the program has helped more than 50,000 early leavers return to school or transition into vocational education. The program's success lies in its community-based approach, with outreach teams working closely with families to remove socio-economic barriers.
- **Participant Story:** Mehmet, a 16-year-old who left school to work in agriculture, was encouraged by local program representatives to return to his education. After joining the program, Mehmet completed his secondary education and enrolled in a vocational school focused on agricultural technology. He now works part-time while continuing his education.

Example 2: "Girls in Secondary Education" (Kızlar İçin Ortaöğretim Programı)

This initiative, supported by the MoNE and UNICEF, focuses on reducing the dropout rate among girls, particularly in rural areas. It provides financial incentives for families, counseling, and scholarships to support girls' continued education.

- **Program Success:** Since its launch in 2015, over 100,000 girls have been supported, and the program has significantly reduced dropout rates among girls in targeted regions by up to 40%.
- **Participant Story:** Zeynep, a 15-year-old girl from a village in Van, was at risk of leaving school due to financial difficulties. With the scholarship and support from the program, Zeynep was able to continue her studies, and she plans to pursue a career in teaching, becoming a role model for other girls in her community.

Example 3: The "Second Chance Education" Program

The **Second Chance Education** initiative is a nationwide program that provides early school leavers with an alternative route to complete their formal education through flexible schooling hours, evening classes, and distance learning options.

- **Program Success:** Between 2016 and 2022, more than 70,000 students who had dropped out of formal education completed their secondary schooling through this program. The flexibility it offers has been crucial in reaching young people who need to balance work and family responsibilities.
- **Participant Story:** Ahmet, a 17-year-old from a low-income family in Istanbul, left school at age 15 to work. The **Second Chance Education** program allowed him to take evening classes while continuing his job. He eventually completed his high school diploma and now plans to attend university.

Example 4: "Back to School" Campaign by UNICEF and MoNE

This collaborative campaign aimed to reduce school dropout rates by focusing on areas with the highest rates of early school leaving, such as the southeast of Turkey. The campaign worked on awareness-raising, building infrastructure, and providing financial support to families.

- **Program Success:** More than 30,000 students have re-enrolled in school as a result of the campaign, which also focuses on removing social and economic barriers to education for disadvantaged groups.
- **Participant Story:** Yasemin, a 14-year-old girl from Şırnak, was unable to continue her schooling due to the remote location of her village. Through the campaign, transportation services were arranged, allowing her and other students from her village to attend secondary school regularly.

Example 5: The "Vocational Education and Training Reform" (VET Reform) in Turkey

The Vocational Education and Training Reform (VET Reform) in Turkey was initiated as part of broader efforts to modernize the country's education system and align it with European Union standards. Launched in the early 2000s and continuously updated, this reform specifically targets both NEETs and Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELETs). The VET Reform aims to provide alternative educational pathways for young people, particularly those who are at risk of leaving formal education without qualifications, by strengthening vocational education, technical schools, and apprenticeship opportunities.

Key Components of the VET Reform:

Expanded Vocational and Technical Education: The reform seeks to integrate vocational training into secondary education, offering students who are disengaged from traditional academic routes an opportunity to develop industry-relevant skills. By collaborating with industries, the program ensures that the curricula are aligned with labor market needs, thus increasing the employability of graduates.

Apprenticeship and Dual Education Systems: Turkey has emphasized the dual education system, where students split their time between formal education and on-the-job training. This system allows students to gain practical skills in real-world work environments while continuing their education, reducing dropout rates and enhancing job readiness.

Career Counseling and Mentoring: A critical aspect of the reform is the introduction of career guidance services at an early stage in education. These services provide young people, particularly ELETs, with advice on available vocational tracks and future career opportunities. Mentors are assigned to at-risk students, offering continuous support to prevent early school leaving.

Increased Access to Vocational Education: The program particularly focuses on disadvantaged regions and groups, including young women, rural populations, and students from low-income families. Scholarships, transportation support, and other financial incentives have been introduced to encourage participation in vocational education.

Success and Impact:

The VET Reform has been largely successful in reducing dropout rates and providing alternative pathways for students who might otherwise have disengaged from education altogether. According to the Turkish Ministry of National Education, enrollment in vocational education programs increased by over 30% between 2010 and 2020, with a significant reduction in the number of students classified as ELET. Additionally, the employability of vocational education graduates has risen steadily, with a growing number of students securing apprenticeships and full-time employment upon completion of their programs.

Participant's Story:

Fatma, a 17-year-old from the rural province of Şanlıurfa, was at risk of dropping out of school due to financial hardships and a lack of interest in traditional academic subjects. Through the VET Reform initiative, she enrolled in a technical high school specializing in textile production. With the help of her school's career counselor, Fatma participated in a dual education program, where she spent three days a week at a local textile factory, gaining hands-on experience while continuing her studies. The combination of practical skills training and financial support through a government-sponsored stipend enabled her to stay in school. Upon graduation, Fatma secured a full-time job at the same factory, allowing her to support her family and continue her education at a higher level.

The VET Reform demonstrates how vocational education and apprenticeships can act as effective interventions for both NEETs and ELETs, offering viable alternatives to academic routes while meeting the needs of the labor market. The program continues to evolve, with the Turkish government expanding its scope to include newer sectors such as information technology and renewable energy, ensuring its relevance to future workforce demands.

As emphasized by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Services, "Targeted interventions and personalized support are critical in addressing the complex needs of NEET and ELET youth and facilitating their reintegration into education and employment" (Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2024). The following case studies provide a detailed examination of successful strategies and their outcomes, offering

valuable insights for stakeholders working to address the NEET and ELET issues both within Turkey and internationally.

Case Studies for ELETs in Belgium

Example 1: “Back on Track” Project

Goal and Approach: This project targets early school leavers by offering intensive guidance, tailored education, and internships to help them return to school or work.

Success and Results: Of the participants, 70% have earned their diploma or transitioned to employment.

Participant Story: Mo, 17, left school at age 15. Through Back on Track, he earned his secondary diploma and is now pursuing a career in ICT.

Example 2: School of the Future

Goal and Approach: In collaboration with schools in Ostend, this program provides hands-on work experience and a vocational pathway for students with learning difficulties, reducing early school leaving.

Success and Results: The program has lowered dropout rates by 25%.

Participant Story: Lara, 16, completed a work placement and chose a vocational training program, which greatly improved her motivation for school.

Example 3: Learning Works!

Goal and Approach: This project in Kortrijk offers alternative learning methods and practical training paired with work experience for ELET youth.

Success and Results: More than 80% of participants complete their training and transition to work or further studies.

Participant Story: Ben, 18, left school due to a lack of motivation. Through this project, he discovered a passion for auto mechanics and now works in a garage.

Example 4: Youth Support Bruges

Goal and Approach: This organization offers intensive guidance to early school leavers and supports them in returning to education or employment.

Success and Results: 60% of participants return to school or pursue a vocational path.

Participant Story: Emma, 20, chose a healthcare training program through Youth Support and now works as a care assistant.

Example 5: New Opportunities Antwerp

Goal and Approach: This Antwerp project offers personal coaching and flexible learning pathways to early school leavers, with particular attention to youth with migrant backgrounds.

Success and Results: Over 65% of participants resume education or find employment.

Participant Story: Ahmed, 19, left school without a diploma. Thanks to New Opportunities, he returned to education and is now studying to become an electrician.

Case Studies for ELETs in Spain

Early Leavers from Education and Training (ELET) Case Studies in Spain

Early leaving from education and training (ELET) poses a significant challenge in Spain, with substantial social and economic implications. To address this issue, various initiatives have been implemented to help young people return to the education system and improve their career prospects. Below are five case studies highlighting these efforts:

1. Second Chance Program

Goal and Approach:

This program targets young people who have left school early, offering them a pathway to resume their academic or vocational education. Through personalized plans, the program adapts the education to the individual needs of participants.

Success and Results: According to OECD reports, second-chance programs have proven effective in reducing early school leaving in Spain.

Participant Story: Tania, a 16-year-old, struggled academically and left school. Thanks to the Second Chance Program, she was able to return to education and is now pursuing vocational training in administration.

2. Second Chance Schools (E2O)

Goal and Approach: Second Chance Schools (Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad, E2O) cater to young people aged 15–29 who have left the education system without qualifications. These schools use tailored methodologies and practical learning approaches, working closely with businesses to facilitate students' entry into the labor market.

Success and Results:

A report by the Spanish Association of Second Chance Schools highlights that a significant proportion of participants reengage in education or find employment after attending these schools.

Participant Story:

Luis, 17, left secondary school without completing his degree. After enrolling in an E2O, he discovered his passion for carpentry and, after completing his training, secured a job at a local furniture company.

3. Training and Apprenticeship Program

Goal and Approach:

This initiative combines theoretical education with practical work experience, targeting young people who have dropped out of formal education. It aims to equip participants with specific skills needed in the job market, enhancing their employability.

Success and Results:

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has reported that these programs help reduce dropout rates by offering flexible, employment-oriented educational alternatives.

Participant Story:

María, 18, left school to take on temporary jobs. Through the Training and Apprenticeship Program, she trained as an auxiliary nursing assistant and now works at a private clinic.

4. "Reincorpora-T" Project

Goal and Approach: This initiative by the Ministry of Education facilitates young people's return to education through personalized guidance, tutoring, and psychological support. It focuses on identifying and addressing barriers preventing educational continuity.

Success and Results: Since its launch, "Reincorpora-T" has helped many young people return to their studies, significantly reducing dropout rates in the regions where it operates.

Participant Story: Javier, 20, had abandoned his high school education due to personal challenges. With support from "Reincorpora-T," he returned to his studies and is now pursuing a university degree in social work.

5. Exit Foundation

Goal and Approach: The Exit Foundation works to reduce early school leaving among vulnerable youth by bridging the gap between the corporate world and educational centers. It provides programs combining training, mentoring, and workplace experiences.

Success and Results: The foundation has successfully engaged hundreds of participants, many of whom have reentered education or secured internships and jobs.

Participant Story: Pablo, 19, had been out of school for a year. Through the Exit Foundation, he participated in a mentorship program and gained an internship at a tech company, where he now works full-time.

Chapter 6: Tools and Resources for Supporting NEETs and ELETs

6.1 Educational Materials

Sample Materials:

Educational materials are crucial for equipping NEETs and ELETs with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in both education and employment. These materials are typically designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing educators to customize them according to the needs of individual learners.

- **Life Skills Lesson Plans:**
These lesson plans focus on building essential life skills such as time management, communication, financial literacy, and problem-solving. For example, a module on *budgeting and personal finance* can teach participants how to manage their income and expenses, a critical skill for transitioning to independence.
- **Vocational Training Resources:**
Hands-on vocational training materials, such as guides for practical skills like plumbing, carpentry, or digital marketing, are vital for ELETs seeking to enter the job market. These resources are often paired with real-world tasks that help learners apply their knowledge in professional settings.
- **Online Learning Platforms:**
Platforms such as Coursera, Khan Academy, and Udemy provide a range of courses that allow NEETs and ELETs to develop new skills or reinforce existing ones. These platforms can be used to offer training in digital literacy, basic IT skills, and industry-specific technical skills.
- **Work Readiness Toolkits:**
These toolkits provide a comprehensive set of resources to prepare young people for the workforce. They typically include modules on interview techniques, résumé writing, and job search strategies. These resources help NEETs and ELETs transition from education or training to meaningful employment.
- **Personalized Learning Plans:**
Educational materials that can be adapted into personalized learning plans are highly effective. These plans are tailored to the strengths, weaknesses, and interests of individual learners, making it easier for educators to provide targeted support.

6.2 Assessment Tools

Sample Tools:

Assessment tools are essential for evaluating the educational and vocational needs of NEETs and ELETs, allowing for tailored interventions. They can be used to identify gaps in skills, monitor progress, and measure readiness for employment or further education.

- **Skills and Competency Assessments:**

These assessments help educators determine the current skill levels of NEETs and ELETs, especially in areas like literacy, numeracy, and technical skills. Tools such as skills inventories and competency checklists allow for a clear evaluation of an individual's strengths and areas for improvement.

- **Surveys and Self-Assessments:**

Surveys that assess a participant's motivation, confidence, and barriers to engagement can provide valuable insights into their readiness to re-enter education or the workforce. Self-assessment tools enable NEETs and ELETs to reflect on their personal development, helping them identify areas where they may need additional support.

- **Learning Style Assessments:**

Understanding how participants learn best is key to creating effective education or training programs. Tools like the VARK (Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, Kinesthetic) questionnaire can help educators design lessons that cater to different learning preferences, ensuring that each learner engages with the material in a meaningful way.

- **Workplace Skills Assessment:**

This tool is specifically designed to measure a participant's employability. It includes evaluating soft skills like communication, teamwork, and adaptability, as well as job-specific technical abilities. Employers can use these assessments to determine whether a candidate is ready for the workplace.

- **Progress Tracking Systems:**

Digital tools like learning management systems (LMS) can be used to track the progress of NEETs and ELETs as they complete courses or training programs. These systems allow educators and mentors to monitor attendance, performance, and skill acquisition over time.

6.3 Mentorship Programs

Sample Programs:

Mentorship programs are an invaluable resource for supporting NEETs and ELETs as they transition into education, training, or employment. Mentors provide guidance, encouragement, and practical advice, helping participants overcome obstacles and stay on track.

- **One-on-One Career Mentorship:**

This type of mentorship connects NEETs and ELETs with experienced professionals in their desired career fields. Mentors provide personalized advice on career paths, help participants develop skills, and guide them through the job search process. This mentorship is critical for building confidence and offering a real-world perspective on employment opportunities.

- **Peer Mentorship Programs:**

Peer mentoring involves older or more experienced participants helping their younger counterparts navigate the challenges of re-entering education or the workforce. This approach fosters a supportive community where NEETs and ELETs can share experiences, challenges, and strategies for success.

- **Long-Term Mentorship Relationships:**

Programs that emphasize long-term mentor-mentee relationships tend to see higher success rates. These mentors support their mentees over months or even years, helping them set and achieve personal and professional goals. The continuity of support is key in maintaining motivation and accountability.

- **Group Mentoring Workshops:**

Group mentoring programs bring together small groups of NEETs or ELETs to work with a mentor on developing specific skills. These workshops focus on areas like interview preparation, job search strategies, or personal development, creating a collaborative environment where participants can learn from one another as well as from the mentor.

- **Online Mentorship Platforms:**

In today's digital world, online mentorship platforms allow mentors and mentees to connect remotely. Platforms such as MentorCity or LinkedIn's mentorship feature offer flexible, accessible options for NEETs and ELETs to receive guidance from mentors who may be located in different regions.

Chapter 7: Policy and Practice Approaches for NEETs and ELETs

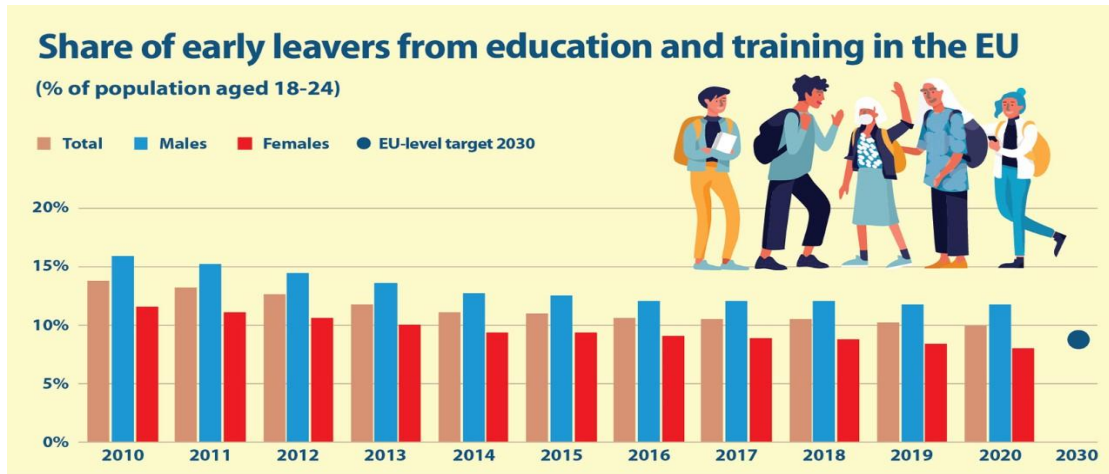
7.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the local and national policies and practices of Turkey, Belgium and Spain, providing a detailed analysis of how these countries address NEET and ELET challenges. Each country has developed specific strategies informed by its unique socio-economic context and educational landscape. The persistent challenges of youth disengagement from education, employment or training (NEET) and early school leaving (ELET) are critical issues that impact socio-economic stability and individual life outcomes across Europe. NEETs—youth who are neither engaged in education nor the labor market—face considerable barriers to long-term economic stability and social integration. Similarly, early school leavers are at an increased risk of social exclusion and unemployment. Addressing these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach that encompasses targeted policy interventions and innovative practices tailored to the specific needs of these groups.

The European Union has increasingly focused on tackling NEET and ELET issues through a range of policies and strategic frameworks, including the Youth Guarantee and the European Pillar of Social Rights. These initiatives aim to ensure that all young people receive a quality offer of education, training or employment opportunities. However, the implementation and effectiveness of these policies can vary significantly across member states, influenced by local contexts and existing infrastructures.

Turkey has approached the NEET and ELET issues through its comprehensive Vocational Education and Training (VET) system and the National Youth Employment Strategy (2017-2023). The VET system is designed to offer alternative educational pathways by integrating vocational training with industry needs, thereby enhancing employability for youth who might otherwise disengage from traditional academic settings. The dual education system, which combines classroom learning with practical work experience, is a key feature aimed at reducing dropout rates and improving job readiness. Additionally, Turkey's National Youth Employment Strategy includes job placement programs, entrepreneurship support and targeted interventions for vulnerable youth groups, demonstrating a multifaceted approach to tackling youth disengagement.

Belgium has adopted a range of policies to address NEET and ELET challenges, characterized by a strong emphasis on educational reform and inclusive practices. The Belgian approach integrates personalized learning plans and supportive interventions for at-risk students within its educational system. Key initiatives include the development of individualized educational paths that cater to the diverse needs of students, including those who are at risk of dropping out. Belgium's approach also involves active collaboration between schools, local authorities and community organizations to provide holistic support services. The focus on inclusivity and the integration of career guidance services are central to Belgium's strategy for reducing early school leaving and re-engaging NEET youth.

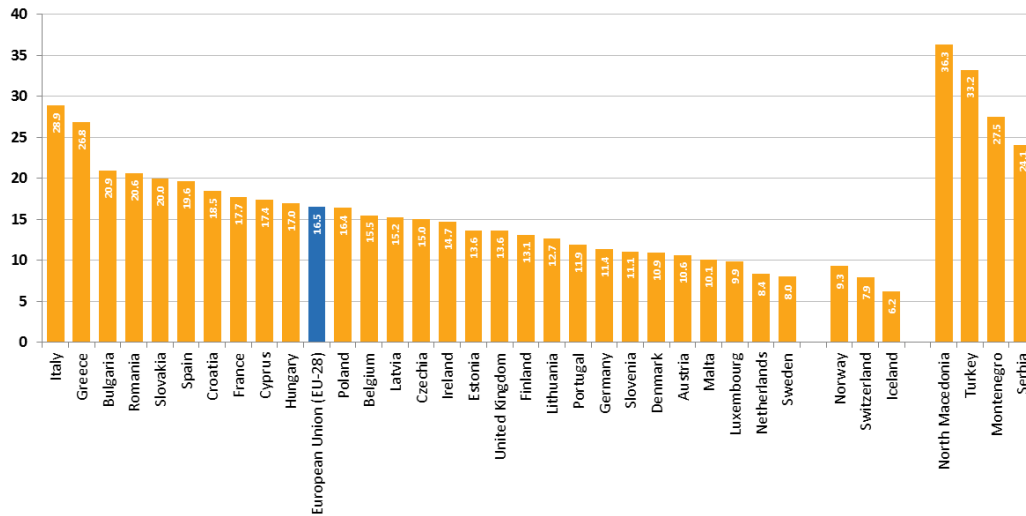


ec.europa.eu/eurostat

Spain has implemented several comprehensive measures to combat NEET and ELET issues, driven by its commitment to the Youth Employment Initiative and various national reforms. Spain's approach includes targeted support programs such as job training and placement services which aim to connect young people with employment opportunities and reduce unemployment rates among NEETs. Additionally, Spain has focused on improving educational outcomes through reforms that enhance vocational training and support early school leavers. The integration of support services, including career counseling and financial assistance, plays a crucial role in preventing early school leaving and promoting continued engagement in education and training.

Implementation Recommendations for addressing NEETs and ELETs involve both policy and practical dimensions. Policy recommendations emphasize the need for innovative approaches to address emerging challenges, such as integrating new technologies into vocational training and expanding collaborative efforts between educational institutions and employers. Practical applications focus on in-class strategies that support personalized learning and community-based support mechanisms that provide holistic assistance to at-risk youth.

Young people aged 20-34 neither in employment nor in education and training, 2018 (%)



ec.europa.eu/eurostat

The European Union (EU) has developed a comprehensive strategy and policy framework to address the challenges faced by NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training). This framework aims to reduce youth disengagement and improve educational and employment outcomes across member states. Here is an overview of the EU's strategy and policy for NEETs and ELETs:

European Union Strategy and Policy for NEETs and ELETs

1. EU Youth Strategy

The **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027** outlines broad objectives to enhance the quality of life for young people across Europe. It includes several key areas relevant to NEETs and ELETs:

- **Education and Training:** Promotes access to high-quality education and training opportunities to prevent early school leaving and support the transition from education to employment. The strategy emphasizes the importance of inclusive education systems that cater to diverse needs.
- **Employment and Entrepreneurship:** Supports policies that increase youth employment opportunities and foster entrepreneurship. It includes initiatives to improve job readiness and provide pathways into the labor market for NEETs.
- **Social Inclusion:** Focuses on reducing inequalities and supporting marginalized youth, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to ensure equal opportunities and prevent disengagement.

2. Youth Guarantee

The **Youth Guarantee** is a significant EU initiative aimed at ensuring that all young people receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. Key components include:

- **Early Intervention:** Provides timely support to young people at risk of becoming NEET by offering personalized guidance and access to tailored opportunities.
- **Funding and Support:** Allocates EU funding to member states to implement youth employment measures, including job placement services, training programs, and support for entrepreneurship.
- **Collaboration:** Encourages collaboration between national governments, regional authorities, and stakeholders to create effective local solutions for youth employment challenges.

3. Erasmus+ Program

The **Erasmus+ Program** is a cornerstone of the EU's strategy for education and training. It includes several aspects relevant to NEETs and ELETs:

- **Mobility and Exchanges:** Supports student and youth mobility across Europe, providing opportunities for learning and skill development through study, training, and volunteering abroad.
- **Skills Development:** Funds projects that enhance vocational training, improve digital skills, and promote lifelong learning, contributing to better employment prospects for NEETs.
- **Inclusivity:** Focuses on increasing participation from disadvantaged groups, including NEETs and ELETs, in Erasmus+ activities.

4. European Social Fund (ESF)

The **European Social Fund** is a key financial instrument that supports employment, education, and social inclusion projects across the EU. It aims to:

- **Support Educational Attainment:** Fund initiatives that improve access to education and reduce early school leaving, including targeted interventions for at-risk youth.
- **Enhance Employment Opportunities:** Finance programs that provide training, job placements and support for NEETs, helping them transition into the workforce.
- **Promote Social Inclusion:** Invest in projects that address social exclusion and support marginalized groups, including programs that tackle the root causes of NEET status.

5. Council Recommendations

The **Council of the European Union** issues recommendations to member states on effective practices for reducing early school leaving and improving youth employment outcomes. Key recommendations include:

- **Improving Education Systems:** Reforming education systems to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse student populations, including early intervention and personalized support.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** Encouraging partnerships between schools, employers and community organizations to create more effective pathways for education and employment.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at NEETs and ELETs.

6. European Pillar of Social Rights

The **European Pillar of Social Rights** sets out principles and rights to support fair and inclusive societies. Relevant to NEETs and ELETs are:

- **Quality Education and Training:** Ensures access to high-quality education and training opportunities for all young people, including those at risk of becoming NEET.
- **Equal Opportunities:** Promotes equal opportunities and support for disadvantaged youth, aiming to reduce disparities and improve social mobility.

In summary, the EU's strategy and policy framework for NEETs and ELETs encompasses a range of initiatives aimed at improving education, training, and employment outcomes for young people. Through the Youth Guarantee, Erasmus+ Program, European Social Fund, and other measures, the EU provides a comprehensive approach to addressing youth disengagement and supporting the transition from education to employment.

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the policies and practices employed by Turkey, Belgium, and Spain to address NEET and ELET challenges. By analyzing the successes and limitations of these approaches, the chapter seeks to offer valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving educational and employment outcomes for vulnerable youth populations across Europe.

7.2 Local and National Policies

Turkey: Existing Policies and Practices

1. Vocational Education and Training (VET) System

In Turkey, the **Vocational Education and Training (VET) system** plays a pivotal role in addressing the challenges faced by NEETs and ELETs. The VET system is designed to offer practical and industry-relevant education to students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings. Key aspects of Turkey's VET system include:

- **Curriculum and Industry Alignment:** The VET curriculum is developed in collaboration with industry stakeholders to ensure that the skills taught are aligned with current labor market needs. This alignment helps improve employability prospects for students and reduces the likelihood of disengagement.
- **Dual Education Model:** Turkey has implemented a dual education system, wherein students alternate between classroom instruction and on-the-job training. This approach provides students with practical experience and enhances their job readiness, which is crucial in preventing early school leaving and improving employment outcomes.
- **Vocational High Schools:** Vocational high schools offer specialized programs in fields such as information technology, engineering, and health sciences. These schools aim to provide students

with both academic knowledge and vocational skills, making them more competitive in the job market.

2. National Youth Employment Strategy (2017-2023)

The **National Youth Employment Strategy** outlines Turkey's comprehensive approach to improving employment opportunities for young people. Key components include:

- **Job Placement Initiatives:** Programs aimed at facilitating job placements for young people through collaborations with employment agencies, job fairs, and direct employer engagements. These initiatives are designed to help NEET youth transition into the labor market effectively.
- **Internship and Apprenticeship Programs:** Expanding opportunities for internships and apprenticeships, particularly in collaboration with vocational education institutions, helps provide practical experience and improves employability. These programs are integral to bridging the gap between education and employment.
- **Entrepreneurship Support:** Encouraging youth entrepreneurship through training programs, financial support, and mentoring. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, Turkey aims to create new employment opportunities and reduce NEET rates.

3. Youth Services and Support Programs

To support NEETs and ELETs, Turkey has developed several targeted programs:

- **Career Guidance and Counseling:** Providing career counseling services in schools and community centers to help students make informed decisions about their future. These services include career assessments, individualized counseling, and information about educational and employment opportunities.
- **Financial Assistance and Scholarships:** Offering scholarships and financial aid to students from low-income families to mitigate financial barriers to education. This support is critical in preventing early school leaving due to economic hardship.
- **Social Support Services:** Implementing social services to address broader issues such as mental health, family support, and educational assistance. These services aim to tackle the underlying causes of disengagement and support at-risk youth.

4. EU-Supported Initiatives

Turkey's engagement with **EU-supported initiatives** has further enhanced its policies:

- **Youth Guarantee:** Participation in the EU's Youth Guarantee scheme provides Turkey with additional resources and frameworks to improve youth employment services and educational opportunities. The initiative supports the development of targeted interventions for NEET youth.
- **Erasmus+ Program:** Through Erasmus+, Turkey benefits from funding for projects aimed at improving vocational training, promoting student mobility, and enhancing youth employability. The program supports collaborative projects and capacity-building activities.

Implementation Recommendations in Turkey

Policy Recommendations

1. **Strengthen the Integration of Technology in VET:** Incorporate digital skills and emerging technologies into vocational training programs to better align with modern labor market demands. This would help prepare students for the evolving job market and improve their employability.
2. **Expand Support for Vulnerable Groups:** Develop targeted policies to support specific groups within the NEET and ELET populations, such as migrants, youth with disabilities, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Tailored interventions can address the unique challenges faced by these groups.
3. **Enhance Collaboration Between Stakeholders:** Foster greater collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and government agencies to ensure that vocational training programs are responsive to labor market needs and provide clear pathways to employment.
4. **Increase Funding for Youth Employment Programs:** Allocate additional resources to youth employment programs, including job placement services, internships, and entrepreneurship support. Increased funding can enhance the effectiveness and reach of these initiatives.

Practical Applications

1. **In-Class Strategies:**
 - **Personalized Learning Plans:** Implement individualized learning plans in vocational schools to cater to the diverse needs of students. Personalized approaches can help keep at-risk students engaged and on track to complete their education.
 - **Career Exploration Activities:** Integrate career exploration and planning activities into the curriculum to help students understand potential career paths and the skills required for various occupations.
2. **Community Support:**
 - **Mentoring and Tutoring Programs:** Establish mentoring and tutoring programs that connect at-risk youth with professionals and educators who can provide guidance and support. These programs can help improve academic performance and provide career insights.
 - **Community Partnerships:** Develop partnerships with local businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups to provide additional support and resources for NEET and ELET youth. Community-based initiatives can offer practical assistance and create opportunities for engagement.

By focusing on these policy and practical recommendations, Turkey can further enhance its efforts to address the challenges faced by NEETs and ELETs, ultimately supporting better educational and employment outcomes for its youth population.

Belgium: Existing policies and practices

Belgium, and specifically the Flemish community, has developed a range of policies and practices aimed at addressing the issues of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training). Flanders, the northern, Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, has established a robust education and training system that focuses on early intervention, vocational education, and social inclusion to prevent youth disengagement.

1. Youth Guarantee Program

One of the most significant policies addressing NEETs in Flanders is the Youth Guarantee Program, a European Union initiative aimed at ensuring that young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, further education, an apprenticeship, or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. In Flanders, the implementation of the Youth Guarantee is supported by the Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (VDAB), which plays a central role in connecting young people with the labor market.

- Youth Guidance and Career Counseling: The VDAB provides tailored career counseling and individual action plans for NEET youth. Through one-on-one coaching sessions, young people receive support in finding suitable job opportunities or pursuing vocational training.
- Active Labor Market Policies: The Youth Guarantee encourages NEET youth to engage in vocational training programs aligned with labor market needs. This ensures that participants acquire relevant skills for sectors facing labor shortages, such as technology, healthcare, and construction.

2. Dual Learning System

The Dual Learning System is another critical policy initiative that supports young people, particularly those at risk of becoming NEET or ELET. This system allows students to combine part-time education with part-time work, providing an alternative pathway for those who may not thrive in traditional academic settings. The program is aimed at reducing the number of early school leavers and increasing youth employability by offering a more practical, work-based approach to education.

- Structure and Implementation: Students participating in the Dual Learning System spend part of their week in school and part of their week working in a real-life job placement. The system is particularly popular in vocational and technical education, where students gain hands-on experience while earning qualifications.
- Success and Impact: The Dual Learning System has been successful in reducing early school leaving rates by providing a more flexible and engaging approach to learning. It ensures that young people acquire practical skills that meet the demands of the job market, improving their chances of long-term employment.

3. Early School Leaving Prevention Program

Flanders has also introduced specific measures to combat early school leaving through the Early School Leaving Prevention Program. This policy focuses on early identification of at-risk students and providing them with targeted interventions to ensure they stay in school.

- Student Monitoring Systems: Schools in Flanders use digital monitoring systems to track students' attendance, academic performance, and overall engagement. This data allows schools to identify students at risk of leaving school early and to intervene with personalized support strategies, such as tutoring, mentorship, or social services.
- Targeted Support: The program offers psychological and social support for students facing challenges such as family issues, mental health problems, or financial instability. Schools work in collaboration with local welfare services and community organizations to ensure that at-risk students receive the necessary support.

4. Second Chance Education

For those who have already left the education system, Flanders offers Second Chance Education programs designed to help young people re-enter education and complete their qualifications. These programs are part of the Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs (CVO), or Adult Education Centers, which provide flexible learning opportunities for young people and adults.

- Flexible Learning Paths: Second Chance Education offers flexible schedules, including evening and weekend classes, as well as distance learning options. This flexibility allows young people who may have work or family responsibilities to continue their education at their own pace.
- Vocational and General Education Tracks: Participants can choose between vocational training programs or general education courses that lead to a secondary education diploma. The goal is to provide both academic and practical routes to re-entering the education system or gaining meaningful employment.

5. Flemish Action Plan on Early School Leaving

The Flemish Action Plan on Early School Leaving aligns with the European Commission's target to reduce the early school leaving rate to below 10%. This plan integrates various educational, social, and economic policies to ensure that fewer young people drop out of school.

- Cross-Sector Collaboration: The plan promotes collaboration between schools, vocational training centers, local governments, and welfare organizations to provide a comprehensive support network for young people. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures that early intervention occurs not only in schools but also in the broader community.
- Re-engagement Strategies: The action plan includes re-engagement strategies such as alternative learning environments and programs for youth who struggle in traditional school settings. These programs use individualized learning paths, mentorship, and project-based learning to re-engage students and prevent them from becoming NEET.

6. Social Integration and Inclusion Policies

Flanders has recognized the importance of social inclusion in addressing the NEET and ELET challenges. Immigrant youth and those from low-income backgrounds are particularly at risk of leaving school early or becoming NEET. Policies in Flanders emphasize the need for inclusive education and equal access to opportunities.

- **Language Support for Immigrant Students:** Schools provide additional language support to immigrant students who may face language barriers in Dutch-speaking schools. This support helps them integrate more easily into the education system and reduces their risk of dropping out.
- **Financial Support for Disadvantaged Students:** The Flemish government offers financial assistance to students from low-income families, helping to cover school fees, transportation, and other education-related costs. This reduces the financial burden on disadvantaged youth and encourages them to stay in school.

Implementation Recommendations

Although Flanders has made significant progress in addressing the challenges faced by NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training), there are areas for further improvement. The following implementation recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness of existing policies and practices, ensuring that all young people have access to education, training, and employment opportunities.

1. Strengthen Early Intervention and Prevention Programs

Recommendation:

While Flanders has developed strong early identification systems for at-risk students, it is essential to enhance early intervention and prevention measures further. More resources should be dedicated to supporting students identified as at risk of becoming NEET or ELET at an earlier stage, ideally in the final years of primary education or early secondary education.

- **How to Implement:** Provide additional funding and training for teachers and school counselors to implement early warning systems more effectively. Schools should collaborate closely with families and community organizations to address the root causes of disengagement, such as socio-economic challenges or mental health issues, before they lead to school dropout.

2. Expand Vocational and Technical Education Pathways

Recommendation:

Although the **Dual Learning System** and vocational education have proven successful, expanding these pathways further is critical to accommodate the evolving labor market. More flexible vocational education and training options should be offered to engage students with diverse interests and learning styles, particularly in sectors like technology, renewable energy, and healthcare.

- **How to Implement:** Work closely with industries to co-design curricula that meet current labor market needs, ensuring that vocational training programs align with future job opportunities. Additionally, introduce more flexible schedules, allowing students to balance work placements and learning with personal commitments. Strengthening partnerships between vocational schools and businesses will ensure that students receive both the technical and soft skills needed for employment.

3. Strengthen the Focus on Mental Health and Wellbeing

Recommendation:

A significant number of NEETs and ELETs face mental health challenges that contribute to their disengagement from education and employment. Mental health support should be further integrated into schools, vocational centers, and community services to provide holistic support to at-risk youth.

- **How to Implement:**

Increase funding for school-based mental health services, such as counseling and psychological support. Implement mental health awareness programs within the education system to reduce stigma and promote mental health literacy. Additionally, provide training for teachers, mentors, and employers to identify and address mental health issues among NEET and ELET youth, ensuring they receive appropriate professional help.

4. Promote Inclusive Education and Equal Opportunities

Recommendation:

Although Flanders has made strides in promoting inclusivity, more targeted efforts are needed to ensure that vulnerable groups, such as immigrant youth and students from low-income families, have equal access to educational and vocational opportunities. Addressing educational inequality will help reduce both NEET and ELET rates among disadvantaged groups.

- **How to Implement:**

Expand language support services for non-Dutch-speaking students to ensure they can fully engage with the curriculum. Strengthen initiatives that promote equal access to vocational training and education by offering additional financial support, scholarships, and mentorship programs tailored to immigrant youth and disadvantaged families. Furthermore, ensure that schools and vocational institutions adopt culturally responsive teaching practices to create inclusive learning environments.

5. Foster Better Coordination Between Stakeholders

Recommendation:

A more integrated approach involving schools, local governments, businesses, and community organizations is essential to addressing the complex challenges faced by NEETs and ELETs. Stronger coordination between these stakeholders will allow for the creation of comprehensive, individualized support systems for at-risk youth.

- **How to Implement:**

Develop regional or local task forces that include representatives from education, social services, employment agencies, and community organizations. These task forces should meet regularly to discuss best practices, share resources, and develop coordinated intervention plans for NEETs and ELETs. Additionally, create digital platforms where these stakeholders can collaborate more effectively, tracking the progress of young people in education or vocational training.

6. Improve Career Guidance and Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Recommendation:

Enhance career guidance services to ensure that NEETs and ELETs receive ongoing support, not only during their initial job search or re-entry into education but throughout their career progression. This will help them navigate transitions and adapt to changes in the labor market.

- **How to Implement:**

Expand career guidance programs in schools and vocational institutions, offering personalized counseling services that help young people identify career paths aligned with their interests and strengths. Create opportunities for lifelong learning, such as offering modular courses, short-term certifications, and upskilling programs. Strengthen partnerships between businesses and educational institutions to ensure that young people are aware of emerging job opportunities and the skills required to succeed in these fields.

Spain: Existing policies and practices

Spain has implemented a comprehensive range of policies and practices to address the challenges faced by NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training) at both local and national levels. At the national level, initiatives like the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, funded by the European Union, aim to ensure that young people under 30 receive offers of employment, education, or training within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. The plan includes measures such as vocational training, apprenticeships, and financial incentives for businesses to hire young workers. On the local level, programs like Second Chance Schools (E2O) provide tailored education and vocational pathways for young people who have left the formal education system, combining academic support with hands-on skills training. Regional governments, such as those in Catalonia and Andalusia, have launched targeted interventions like employment activation programs and community outreach initiatives to connect NEETs and ELETs with resources and support. These policies often emphasize public-private partnerships, with collaboration between schools, businesses, and non-profits playing a critical role in their success. Together, these multi-faceted approaches reflect Spain's commitment to reducing youth unemployment and educational disengagement while addressing regional disparities and the diverse needs of its young population.

1. Vocational Education and Training (VET) System

Spain has placed significant emphasis on its Vocational Education and Training (VET) system to address the needs of NEETs and ELETs. The system aims to provide practical and market-oriented education to students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings. Key aspects include:

- Curriculum and Industry Collaboration: The Spanish VET curriculum is developed in partnership with businesses and industry associations, ensuring alignment with labor market demands. This alignment boosts the employability of students by equipping them with relevant skills.

- Dual Training Programs: Spain's dual training model integrates theoretical education with on-the-job experience. Students alternate between classroom learning and paid internships, fostering practical skills and enhancing their transition to full-time employment.
- Vocational Training Centers: These centers, distributed across the country, offer specialized programs in fields such as information technology, hospitality, healthcare, and renewable energy. The practical focus of these centers helps young people build skills that are directly applicable in the job market.

2. Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and Youth Guarantee

The European Union-funded Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and Spain's Youth Guarantee Scheme aim to provide young people under 30 with opportunities for employment, further education, or training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. Key components include:

- Job Placement Programs: Collaborations with local employment agencies and private sector companies help young people find suitable job placements.
- Training and Apprenticeships: The YEI promotes training programs tailored to young people's needs, offering apprenticeships and internships in high-demand industries.
- Entrepreneurial Support: The Youth Guarantee Scheme provides resources for aspiring young entrepreneurs, including financial assistance, workshops, and mentorship programs.

3. Local-Level Initiatives

Regions and municipalities in Spain have implemented innovative programs tailored to their specific demographic and economic conditions. Examples include:

- Second Chance Schools (Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad): These institutions offer flexible education pathways for students aged 15–29 who left the education system without qualifications. The curriculum emphasizes practical skills and close collaboration with local businesses for internships and job opportunities.
- Employment Activation Programs: Regional governments, such as those in Andalusia and Catalonia, have introduced targeted employment programs focusing on NEETs and ELETs. These initiatives include career counseling, subsidized training, and partnerships with companies for entry-level jobs.

4. Social and Financial Support Programs

Spain has implemented support measures to address the socio-economic barriers that contribute to early school leaving and youth unemployment. These include:

- Scholarships and Financial Aid: Low-income families can access scholarships and grants to keep students engaged in education and alleviate financial pressures.

- Social Services and Mentoring: Programs offering psychological counseling, mentoring, and family support aim to address the root causes of disengagement. Community outreach teams work to identify at-risk youth and provide tailored interventions.

5. EU-Supported Initiatives

Spain has actively engaged with EU initiatives to combat youth unemployment and early school leaving. Key programs include:

- Erasmus+ Program: This initiative funds vocational training projects, facilitates student mobility, and enhances employability through international exchanges and partnerships.

- European Social Fund (ESF): The ESF supports long-term projects focused on training, job placement, and social inclusion for NEETs and ELETs.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Expand Digital Skills Training in VET: Incorporate emerging technologies and digital competencies into vocational programs to meet evolving market demands.

2. Support Vulnerable Groups: Develop tailored interventions for marginalized populations, such as migrants, disabled youth, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

3. Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships: Foster greater collaboration between educational institutions, government agencies, and employers to ensure vocational training programs align with workforce needs.

4. Increase Investment in Youth Employment Programs: Allocate additional funding to expand the reach and effectiveness of training, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurial initiatives.

Practical Applications:

In-Class Strategies:

- Implement personalized learning plans to cater to the diverse needs of at-risk students.
- Introduce career exploration activities to help students identify pathways that match their skills and interests.

Community Support:

- Establish mentoring programs to connect students with role models who can guide them academically and professionally.
- Form partnerships with local organizations and businesses to provide practical assistance and resources for NEETs and ELETs.

7.3 Implementation Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

1. Adopt a Holistic Approach to Youth Engagement

To effectively address the challenges associated with NEETs and ELETs, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach that integrates educational, social, and economic dimensions. Policies should focus on creating a cohesive framework that addresses the multifaceted nature of youth disengagement. This approach involves:

- **Integrated Support Systems:** Develop comprehensive support systems that include educational guidance, career counseling, mental health services, and financial assistance. These systems should be accessible through schools, community centers, and online platforms.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between educational institutions, employers, social services, and government agencies to create a unified strategy for engaging NEETs and ELETs. Collaborative efforts can lead to more effective interventions and streamlined support services.

2. Enhance Vocational and Technical Education

Strengthening vocational and technical education is essential for providing alternative pathways to traditional academic routes. Policies should focus on:

- **Curriculum Development:** Ensure that vocational curricula are regularly updated to reflect current industry needs and technological advancements. Collaboration with industry stakeholders can help align training programs with labor market demands.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Expand work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships, to bridge the gap between education and employment. These programs provide practical experience and improve job readiness for youth.

3. Promote Inclusive Education

Policies should aim to make educational environments more inclusive and supportive of diverse learning needs. This involves:

- **Specialized Programs:** Develop specialized programs and interventions for students with disabilities, language barriers, and those from marginalized communities. These programs should address the specific challenges faced by these groups and provide tailored support.
- **Early Intervention:** Implement early intervention strategies to identify and support at-risk students before they disengage from education. Early identification and targeted support can prevent early school leaving and reduce NEET rates.

4. Support Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

Enhancing employment opportunities and fostering entrepreneurship can provide viable pathways for NEET youth. Key policy recommendations include:

- **Job Creation Initiatives:** Support job creation initiatives that target youth unemployment, such as incentives for businesses to hire young people and programs that encourage youth entrepreneurship.
- **Entrepreneurship Training:** Offer entrepreneurship training programs that equip youth with the skills and resources needed to start and sustain their own businesses. This can be particularly effective in regions with high NEET rates.

Practical Applications

1. In-Class Strategies

- **Personalized Learning Plans:** Implement personalized learning plans to address the diverse needs of students. Tailoring educational experiences to individual strengths and challenges can help maintain engagement and improve academic outcomes.
- **Career Exploration and Guidance:** Integrate career exploration and guidance activities into the curriculum. Providing students with opportunities to explore various career options and receive guidance on career planning can help them make informed decisions about their future.
- **Engagement Through Technology:** Utilize technology to enhance learning experiences and engagement. Interactive digital tools, online resources, and virtual learning environments can make education more accessible and engaging for students.

2. Community Support

- **Mentorship and Peer Support Programs:** Establish mentorship and peer support programs that connect at-risk youth with mentors and role models. These programs can provide guidance, motivation, and a sense of belonging, which are critical for maintaining engagement in education and training.
- **Community-Based Partnerships:** Develop partnerships with local businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups to provide additional resources and support for NEETs and ELETs. Community-based initiatives can offer practical assistance, such as job placement services, skill-building workshops, and financial support.
- **Family and Caregiver Involvement:** Engage families and caregivers in supporting youth education and career development. Providing resources and support for families can help create a supportive environment that encourages continued education and participation in training programs.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies to address the challenges faced by NEETs and ELETs. A comprehensive approach that integrates policy, educational practice, and community support can lead to improved outcomes and greater opportunities for young people around the world.

Conclusion

Chapter 7 explores the diverse policy and practice approaches used to address the challenges faced by NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training) in Turkey, Belgium, and Spain.

In Turkey, policies focus on integrating vocational training with industry needs through a dual education model, supported by the National Youth Employment Strategy, which includes job placement and entrepreneurship programs. Belgium emphasizes inclusive educational reforms and personalized learning to prevent early school leaving and re-engage NEET youth. Spain's strategy includes comprehensive measures under the Youth Employment Initiative, offering job training, placement services, and educational reforms aimed at supporting early leavers.

The chapter also provides practical recommendations, advocating for a holistic approach that integrates educational, social, and economic support systems. Key recommendations include enhancing vocational education, promoting inclusive education, and supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship. Practical applications involve personalized learning plans, community-based support, and family engagement.

Chapter 8: Contributions and Experiences of Partner Institutions

In the context of addressing complex educational and social challenges such as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training), collaborative efforts among institutions across different regions are essential. Partner institutions bring diverse perspectives, methodologies and innovations that are tailored to their local contexts, enriching the collective approach to these issues. This chapter explores the unique contributions and experiences of various partner institutions with a focus on their methodologies, success stories and their role in promoting social inclusion, educational innovation and professional development.

Each partner institution's contribution is rooted in the specific socio-economic and educational challenges of their respective regions. By developing tailored approaches, these institutions have been able to implement targeted interventions that address both local and global educational priorities. Through shared knowledge, collaborative projects and practical applications, these partnerships have facilitated the cross-border exchange of best practices and innovative solutions. This has not only strengthened local educational systems but also contributed to a broader understanding of how educational reforms and social inclusion efforts can be optimized for marginalized and vulnerable populations.

The following sections provide a detailed account of the methods and approaches used by partner institutions, along with the impact of these initiatives in creating more inclusive and innovative educational environments. Through the examination of methods, success stories and the experiences of partner institutions, this chapter aims to highlight the importance of collaborative and context-sensitive approaches in addressing NEETs and ELETs. The insights gained from these contributions not only enrich our understanding of effective practices but also provide a foundation for developing scalable and adaptable solutions to educational challenges on a global scale.

8.1 Contributions from Turkey

Methods and Approaches: Practices in Turkey

YAG-DE, an NGO affiliated with the Yenışehir District Directorate of National Education, implements a range of practices aimed at promoting social inclusion and educational innovation. The organization's methods and approaches reflect a commitment to enhancing both social and digital skills among diverse populations through creative and arts-based elements.

1. Innovative Methodologies and Curriculum Development

YAG-DE employs a distinctive approach to teaching by integrating creativity and arts into educational methodologies. This involves the development of innovative curricula that incorporate artistic and creative activities, which serve to engage students more effectively and foster a dynamic learning environment. The curricula are designed to be flexible and adaptable, catering to various educational needs and learning styles.

2. Professional Development and Training

The organization prioritizes the professional growth of educators through a structured training program. YAG-DE offers annual training activities for intern teachers and continuous in-service training for current teaching staff. These programs are aimed at equipping educators with modern pedagogical skills,

enhancing their ability to implement innovative teaching practices and addressing the diverse needs of their students.

3. Educational Activities Focused on Social Inclusion

YAG-DE organizes and implements a variety of educational activities centered on social inclusion and innovation. These activities are designed to promote equitable access to education and support the integration of marginalized groups, including refugees. By focusing on social inclusion, YAG-DE ensures that educational opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of background or circumstances.

4. Support for Refugees

A key aspect of YAG-DE's approach is its commitment to integrating refugees into the educational system and broader community. As an organization affiliated with the Yenisehir District Directorate of National Education, YAG-DE has a responsibility to facilitate the inclusion of refugees. This includes developing targeted educational programs and support services that help refugees adapt to their new environment and succeed academically.

Success Stories: Impactful Initiatives and Outcomes

1. The Creative Curriculum Initiative

YAG-DE's **Creative Curriculum Initiative** has significantly impacted student engagement and learning outcomes. By incorporating arts and creativity into the curriculum, the initiative has fostered a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment. The approach has led to improved academic performance and higher levels of student participation, demonstrating the effectiveness of creative methodologies in education.

2. Professional Development Programs

The annual training programs for intern and in-service teachers have yielded positive results in enhancing teaching practices across the region. Educators who have participated in these programs report increased confidence and competence in using innovative teaching methods. The success of these training programs is evident in the improved quality of education and the positive feedback from both students and teachers.

3. Inclusive Education Programs

YAG-DE's **Inclusive Education Programs** have had a measurable impact on reducing educational disparities among marginalized and refugee students. These programs provide tailored support and resources, leading to increased school attendance and academic achievement among disadvantaged groups. The successful implementation of these programs highlights YAG-DE's effectiveness in promoting social inclusion within the educational system.

4. Refugee Integration Efforts

The organization's targeted efforts to support refugee integration have been highly successful. By offering specialized educational programs and support services, YAG-DE has facilitated smoother transitions for refugees into the educational system. These efforts have contributed to higher levels of academic success and social integration for refugee students, demonstrating the importance of dedicated support in addressing the needs of displaced populations.

5. Regional Collaboration Models

YAG-DE's collaboration with local educational institutions and community organizations has led to the development of effective regional models for addressing educational challenges. These models have demonstrated the benefits of localized, collaborative approaches in improving educational outcomes and supporting at-risk youth.

In summary, YAG-DE's contributions reflect a comprehensive and innovative approach to education and social inclusion. The organization's methods and practices have not only enhanced educational experiences but also significantly improved outcomes for marginalized and refugee populations. Through creative curricula, professional development, and targeted support initiatives, YAG-DE has made notable strides in addressing key educational and social challenges in Turkey.

8.2 Contributions from Belgium

Belgium, and specifically Flanders, has made significant contributions to addressing the challenges faced by NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELETs (Early Leavers from Education and Training). Focusing on educational innovation, social inclusion and professional development, Flanders has implemented a range of policies and programs that reflect the region's commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable youth. This section explores the key methodologies, practices and success stories that highlight Belgium's contributions in this area.

Methods and Approaches: Practices in Belgium

Flanders has employed several innovative practices and approaches to address NEET and ELET challenges, with a focus on early intervention, vocational education and inclusive learning environments.

1. Early Intervention and Monitoring Systems

Overview:

Flanders has developed comprehensive early warning systems to monitor students at risk of becoming ELETs. Schools use digital platforms to track student attendance, academic performance and social behaviors, allowing for timely intervention when students show signs of disengagement. These systems are supported by a collaborative effort between educators, social workers and local authorities.

Approach:

The **Early School Leaving Prevention Program** identifies at-risk students and provides them with personalized support, including tutoring, counseling and mentorship. This proactive approach is designed to prevent early school leaving by addressing academic, social, and emotional challenges early on.

2. Dual Learning System

Overview:

The **Dual Learning System** is a cornerstone of Belgium's efforts to re-engage NEET youth. It combines formal education with practical work experience, allowing students to split their time between school and

the workplace. This system has been particularly effective in vocational and technical fields, where students gain hands-on experience while continuing their education.

Approach:

In collaboration with local businesses and industries, vocational schools offer students the opportunity to participate in apprenticeships or part-time employment. This model not only enhances students' employability but also strengthens their commitment to education by providing a clear connection between their studies and future career paths.

3. Second Chance Education

Overview:

For those who have already left the formal education system, Belgium offers **Second Chance Education** through adult education centers known as **Centra voor Volwassenenonderwijs (CVO)**. These centers provide flexible learning opportunities for youth who need to complete their secondary education or acquire vocational qualifications.

Approach:

Second Chance Education programs are tailored to the individual needs of learners, offering a variety of pathways, including evening classes, distance learning and vocational training. These programs provide a lifeline for NEETs and ELETs, helping them gain the qualifications needed to re-enter the labor market or continue their education.

4. Youth Guarantee Program Implementation

Overview:

Belgium has effectively implemented the **Youth Guarantee Program**, an EU initiative designed to ensure that young people under 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, further education or training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. In Flanders, the VDAB (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding) is responsible for coordinating the program and ensuring that young people have access to the necessary resources.

Approach:

The VDAB provides tailored support to NEETs, including career counseling, skills assessments and job placement services. The program also promotes vocational training in sectors with high labor market demand, ensuring that young people are equipped with relevant skills.

5. Inclusive Education Policies

Overview:

In Flanders, inclusive education policies aim to provide equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background or language proficiency. This is particularly important for immigrant youth, who face additional challenges in accessing education and employment.

Approach:

Flanders offers specialized language support programs for non-Dutch-speaking students, ensuring that

they can fully participate in the education system. Schools also implement culturally responsive teaching practices to promote a more inclusive learning environment. In addition, financial support is available to low-income students to cover education-related expenses, reducing barriers to participation.

Success Stories: Noteworthy Achievements and Results

1. Success of the Dual Learning System

Story:

In Ghent, a young man named Sven was struggling to engage in traditional academic subjects and was at risk of dropping out. Through the Dual Learning System, Sven enrolled in a vocational program in automotive mechanics, where he spent three days a week working at a local car repair shop and two days in school. The practical experience helped Sven develop the skills and confidence needed to succeed. Upon completing the program, he was offered a full-time job at the garage where he trained, illustrating the effectiveness of the Dual Learning System in providing clear career pathways for at-risk youth.

2. Impact of Second Chance Education

Story:

Marie, a 22-year-old from Brussels, had left school without completing her secondary education due to family issues. Through the **Second Chance Education** program at a local CVO, she was able to attend evening classes and eventually earned her diploma. Marie then pursued further education in healthcare and now works as a certified nurse. Her story highlights the importance of providing flexible, accessible education opportunities for those who have left the traditional system.

3. Inclusive Education for Immigrant Youth

Story:

A school in Antwerp implemented a specialized program to support immigrant students, many of whom arrived with little or no knowledge of Dutch. By offering intensive language instruction alongside their regular studies, the school helped students integrate into the local community and succeed academically. One student, Ali, who came to Belgium from Syria, learned Dutch within a year and went on to excel in his studies, eventually securing a place in a technical college. The success of this program demonstrates the importance of language support in ensuring the inclusion of immigrant youth in education.

4. Early School Leaving Prevention

Story:

A school in Leuven implemented the Early School Leaving Prevention Program and saw a 20% reduction in dropout rates within two years. One of the students, Lotte, was struggling academically and frequently absent. The school's monitoring system flagged her as at risk, and she was paired with a mentor who provided academic support and counseling. With this personalized intervention, Lotte completed her secondary education and is now enrolled in a higher education program, showcasing the program's success in keeping at-risk students engaged.

5. Success of the Youth Guarantee Program

Story:

The Youth Guarantee Program helped a young woman named Emily, who had been out of work and education for over a year. After meeting with a career counselor at VDAB, Emily enrolled in a short-term training course in digital marketing. Within three months, she secured an internship at a local marketing firm, which later turned into a permanent position. Emily's success story highlights the effectiveness of the Youth Guarantee in providing clear pathways to employment for NEET youth.

8.3 Contributions from Spain

- Methods and Approaches: Practices in Spain.
- Success Stories: Inspiring stories of success and transformation.

Methods and Approaches from Spain to Deal with NEET and ELET

Spain has implemented various strategies to tackle the issues of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELET (Early Leaving from Education and Training). These strategies combine national policy reforms, regional programs, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. Here are some of the key methods and approaches:

1. National Youth Guarantee Program (Garantía Juvenil):

- A major European Union (EU) initiative implemented in Spain since 2013, aiming to reduce youth unemployment and early school leaving.
- The program guarantees young people (under 30) a job, education, training, or apprenticeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.
- Spain enhanced this through tailored support, providing financial incentives for companies to hire young NEET individuals, as well as creating pathways for further education.

2. Second Chance Schools (Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad - E2O):

- Second Chance Schools provide an alternative education for young people who left formal education prematurely.
- These schools focus on practical and vocational training, reintegrating students into the labor market or formal education. They target NEET and ELET individuals by offering personalized learning plans, hands-on experience, and strong links to local industries.

3. Dual Vocational Education and Training (Dual VET):

- Spain has integrated the Dual VET model, inspired by Germany and Austria, where students split their time between school and work-based training.

- This helps prevent ELET and engage NEET youth by making education more practical and career-focused. The program connects students directly with companies, increasing their employability through real-world experience.

4. Regional Programs and Initiatives:

- Different regions in Spain have implemented their own specialized programs to reduce NEET and ELET rates.

- For instance, in Catalonia, the program Programa Noves Oportunitats targets NEET youth by offering mentorship, education, and employment opportunities.

- Similarly, Andalusia has introduced Plan Aire, which focuses on providing short-term employment for young people and helping them gain work experience.

5. Customized Guidance and Mentoring:

- Spain has also strengthened guidance services in schools and local employment offices to identify at-risk youth and provide personalized support.

- Mentoring programs help NEET youth regain motivation and explore career paths they might not have considered, focusing on psychological and social factors that lead to disengagement.

6. Entrepreneurship Programs:

- To encourage NEET youth to create their own opportunities, entrepreneurship programs offer business training, mentorship, and funding.

- The Youth Employment Initiative promotes entrepreneurial skills, often with a focus on digital startups, which are seen as key areas for future growth in Spain's economy.

Success Stories from Spain: Inspiring Stories of Transformation

1. Second Chance Schools (E2O) Impact:

- Joan (21) from Barcelona: David dropped out of high school at 16 due to a lack of interest and family difficulties. After being unemployed for several years, he discovered the Second Chance School in his city. Through their vocational program, he developed carpentry skills and gained confidence. After two years in the program, David secured a full-time job with a local construction company. Now, he is studying part-time to complete his education while advancing his career.

2. Catalonia's "Programa Noves Oportunitats":

- Mireia (19) from Girona: Lucía left school at 17 due to personal issues and became disconnected from education and work. She joined the Programa Noves Oportunitats, which gave her career counseling and the opportunity to take part in a paid internship. She found a passion for digital marketing during the program and now works full-time at a local marketing firm, while continuing her education online.

3. Dual Vocational Training (VET) Success:

- Álvaro (24) from Madrid: Álvaro was part of the Dual VET program in Madrid after struggling to find direction in university. He trained part-time as an apprentice with a mechanical engineering company while completing his coursework. Upon finishing the program, Álvaro was offered a permanent position, and within two years, he advanced to a supervisory role. His success story has been used as a model by local VET promoters, inspiring more youth to consider this practical education route.

4. Youth Guarantee Program - Garantía Juvenil:

- María (22) from Valencia: María struggled with long-term unemployment after finishing her high school education. Through the Youth Guarantee Program, she accessed free training in software development. The program also helped her secure a six-month internship at a tech company, where she later became a full-time employee. Today, she is a junior developer and mentors others from similar backgrounds through the same program.

5. Entrepreneurship Support:

- Carlos (25) from Seville: Carlos was a NEET youth who lacked opportunities in traditional jobs. With support from an entrepreneurship program funded by the Youth Employment Initiative, he started a small e-commerce business selling sustainable products. With mentorship and seed funding, Carlos turned his passion into a profitable business and now employs two other young people from his community. His journey has been highlighted in local media as an example of how entrepreneurship can transform lives.

Conclusion

Spain's multi-faceted approach to addressing NEET and ELET populations involves education reform, vocational training, regional programs, and innovative entrepreneurship support. Success stories from the Second Chance Schools, Dual VET programs, and initiatives like Garantía Juvenil highlight how practical, tailored interventions can help young people transform their lives and reintegrate into society.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Successful Integration of NEET Youth through Peer Mentoring Initiatives

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Annex 1: Successful Integration of NEET Youth through Peer Mentoring Initiatives

This case study explores the role of peer mentoring initiatives in the successful integration of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth. Peer mentoring has proven to be an effective approach to re-engaging marginalized young people by providing social support, motivation, and practical guidance. The case study highlights key elements, challenges, and best practices from successful programs in Europe.

Case Study 1: The UK – Prince’s Trust Mentorship Program

The Prince’s Trust in the UK operates a nationwide peer mentoring program aimed at supporting NEET youth. The program pairs young people with trained mentors who have faced similar challenges and successfully reintegrated into education or employment.

Key Features:

- One-on-one mentoring relationships to build trust and motivation.
- Career coaching and skills development workshops.
- Networking opportunities with employers and training providers.

Outcome: Over 75% of participants successfully transitioned into employment or education within six months.

Reference: Prince’s Trust Annual Report, 2022.

Case Study 2: Germany – Joblinge Peer Mentoring Model

The Joblinge initiative in Germany combines vocational training with peer mentoring to help NEET youth develop job-readiness skills and secure stable employment. The program engages former participants as peer mentors, creating a supportive and relatable guidance system.

Key Features:

- Intensive six-month mentoring and skills training program.
- Close collaboration with local businesses for job placements.
- Social engagement activities to enhance confidence and soft skills.

Outcome: Joblinge has achieved an 80% success rate in placing participants into long-term employment.

Reference: Joblinge Impact Study, 2021.

Case Study 3: Spain – Youth-to-Youth Mentoring Program (Y2Y)

Spain's Youth-to-Youth (Y2Y) mentoring program, implemented by Fundación Telefónica, focuses on empowering NEET youth through peer support networks. The initiative pairs young people with mentors who have recently completed training and found employment.

Key Features:

- Interactive mentoring sessions that address personal and career development.
- Digital tools to facilitate remote mentoring and resource sharing.
- Strong partnerships with employers to provide internship opportunities.

Outcome: The program has helped over 10,000 NEET youth improve employability and gain workplace experience.

Reference: Fundación Telefónica Research Report, 2020.

Conclusion

Peer mentoring initiatives have demonstrated significant success in supporting NEET youth through personalized guidance, skill-building, and emotional support. By leveraging the experiences of former NEET individuals, these programs create relatable and effective pathways to education and employment. Future policies should integrate peer mentoring as a key component of youth reintegration strategies.

Annex 2: Statistical Analysis of NEET and ELET Populations Across Europe

This section presents statistical data on the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELET (Early Leavers from Education and Training) populations across Europe. The analysis covers key indicators such as NEET rates, ELET rates, educational attainment, youth unemployment, and vocational training participation. This data provides insights into the challenges faced by young people across different countries and highlights trends that influence education and employment outcomes.

Country	NEET Rate (%)	ELET Rate (%)	Higher Education (%)	Secondary Education (%)	Below Secondary Education (%)	Youth Unemployment (%)	Vocational Training Participation (%)
Turkey	24.5	7.8	18	45	37	22.3	38
Spain	15.2	13.0	25	50	25	29.1	41
Belgium	11.8	8.6	30	55	15	18.2	45
Germany	8.5	5.4	35	58	7	12.5	60
France	12.3	9.0	32	53	15	19.3	55
Italy	19.1	14.5	22	50	28	28.0	40
Netherlands	7.2	5.0	40	60	10	9.1	62
Sweden	6.8	4.5	45	62	8	8.3	65
Poland	10.5	6.2	38	55	7	12.8	50
UK	11.4	9.8	36	57	7	14.7	48

Conclusion

The statistical analysis shows that NEET and ELET rates vary significantly across Europe, with countries like Turkey, Spain, and Italy experiencing higher rates compared to Germany and the Netherlands. Youth unemployment remains a critical issue, particularly in Southern Europe. Countries with strong vocational training programs, such as Germany and the Netherlands, tend to have lower NEET and ELET rates. Addressing these disparities requires targeted policy interventions focusing on education, vocational training, and youth employment opportunities.

Annex 3: Policy Recommendations for Addressing NEET and ELET Issues

This section presents policy recommendations aimed at addressing the challenges faced by NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELET (Early Leavers from Education and Training) populations. These recommendations focus on improving education systems, expanding vocational training opportunities, enhancing labor market integration, and supporting social inclusion measures.

1. Strengthening Vocational Education and Training (VET) Systems

- Governments should expand access to vocational training programs to equip young people with market-relevant skills.
- Dual education systems, which combine classroom learning with practical on-the-job experience, should be promoted.
- Collaboration with industries and businesses should be enhanced to ensure training programs align with labor market needs.

2. Expanding Career Guidance and Counseling Services

- Schools and universities should provide comprehensive career counseling to help students make informed education and employment choices.
- Personalized support programs should be developed to assist NEETs and ELETs in identifying career pathways.
- Digital platforms should be utilized to offer remote career guidance and access to job opportunities.

3. Improving Second-Chance Education Programs

- Governments should invest in alternative education programs that allow early school leavers to re-enter the education system.
- Flexible learning options, such as evening classes and online courses, should be expanded.
- Financial incentives, including scholarships and stipends, should be provided to encourage participation in second-chance programs.

4. Enhancing Social Inclusion and Support Measures

- Targeted social policies should address the barriers faced by disadvantaged youth, such as poverty and family responsibilities.
- Mental health and well-being support should be integrated into education and employment programs.
- Community engagement initiatives should be encouraged to create a sense of belonging and support networks for NEET youth.

5. Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships

- Governments should collaborate with private sector companies to create apprenticeships and internships for NEETs and ELETs.
- Incentives should be provided to businesses that invest in training and employment programs for young people.
- International best practices should be adopted to ensure effective implementation of public-private initiatives.

Conclusion

Addressing the NEET and ELET challenges requires a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach. Policymakers should prioritize education reform, labor market integration, social support, and private sector collaboration to create sustainable opportunities for young people. By implementing these recommendations, governments can improve youth employability, reduce school dropout rates, and foster inclusive economic growth.

Annex 4: National and Regional Policy Frameworks for NEET and ELET Interventions

This section presents an overview of national and regional policy frameworks designed to address the challenges faced by NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and ELET (Early Leavers from Education and Training) populations. These policies focus on education reforms, vocational training, employment initiatives, and social inclusion measures implemented at the national and regional levels.

Turkey: National Strategies for Youth Employment and Education

- National Employment Strategy (2014-2023): Focuses on reducing youth unemployment through vocational training and apprenticeship programs.
- Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper: Aims to enhance access to flexible education pathways for early school leavers.
- Youth Guarantee Initiatives: Government-supported programs offering training and employment opportunities for NEET youth.

Spain: Regional and National Youth Employment Policies

- Spanish Youth Guarantee Program: Provides training, internships, and employment support to NEET youth.
- Second Chance Schools (E2O) : Targets early school leavers, offering alternative education and vocational training.
- Regional Initiatives in Catalonia and Andalusia : Focus on integrating NEET youth into local labor markets through specialized training programs.

Belgium: Education and Employment Policies for NEET and ELET Youth

- Dual Learning System: Combines formal education with work-based training to facilitate youth employment.
- Youth Employment Plan (Flemish Government): Focuses on reducing school dropout rates and increasing employability.
- French and Flemish Community Programs: Provide tailored interventions addressing regional disparities in youth unemployment and education.

Germany: The Dual Vocational Training System

- Dual Vocational Education and Training (VET) System: A structured program that integrates school-based education with practical training in companies.
- Federal Employment Agency Programs: Offer career counseling, training, and financial support for NEET youth.

- Regional Workforce Development Strategies: Tailored approaches to address local labor market needs.

France: Strategies for Reducing Early School Leaving

- National Plan for Combating Early School Leaving: Focuses on personalized educational support and re-engagement strategies.
- Youth Employment Initiatives: Offer subsidized employment contracts and vocational training.
- Regional Action Plans: Developed by local governments to address specific youth unemployment and education challenges.

Conclusion

The policy frameworks across different European countries reflect diverse approaches to tackling the NEET and ELET challenge. While some countries emphasize vocational education and dual learning systems, others focus on financial incentives and social interventions. Effective policy implementation requires coordination between national governments, regional authorities, businesses, and educational institutions to ensure sustainable outcomes.

Annex 5: Case Studies on Effective Interventions for Early Leavers

This section presents case studies on effective interventions for early leavers from education and training in Turkey, Spain, and Belgium. These interventions aim to reduce school dropout rates, facilitate reintegration into education, and improve employability. The case studies highlight best practices, challenges, and outcomes of targeted initiatives.

Case Study: Turkey – Open High School (Açık Lise) Program

The Open High School (Açık Lise) program, launched by Turkey's Ministry of National Education, provides a flexible learning pathway for students who have left the formal education system. This program enables early school leavers to continue their education remotely, allowing them to balance learning with work or family responsibilities.

Key Features:

- Distance learning model with modular courses.
- Blended learning approach, including online resources and in-person exams.
- Tailored curriculum for working youth and disadvantaged students.

Outcome: The program has successfully reintegrated thousands of early school leavers into education, increasing graduation rates and improving access to higher education and vocational training.

Reference: Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE), 2022.

Case Study: Spain – Second Chance Schools (E2O)

Spain's Second Chance Schools (Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad - E2O) provide an alternative educational model for early school leavers, focusing on practical skills development, personal mentoring, and workplace learning. These schools cater to students who have disengaged from traditional education and offer a more personalized learning experience.

Key Features:

- Individualized support and mentoring programs.
- Strong collaboration with businesses for vocational training.
- Combination of theoretical education and hands-on training.

Outcome: E2O programs have significantly reduced dropout rates and improved employability among young people who were at risk of long-term disengagement.

Reference: Fundación Española de Escuelas de Segunda Oportunidad, 2021.

Case Study: Belgium – Dual Learning Program

Belgium has implemented a Dual Learning Program to support early school leavers by combining formal education with hands-on work experience. The program is designed to provide young people with practical skills while keeping them engaged in the education system.

Key Features:

- Combination of in-school education and on-the-job training.
- Close partnerships between vocational schools and businesses.
- Personalized guidance and career coaching.

Outcome: The Dual Learning Program has contributed to a significant reduction in dropout rates by providing students with direct employment opportunities upon completion.

Reference: Flemish Ministry of Education, 2020.

Conclusion

The case studies from Turkey, Spain, and Belgium demonstrate the effectiveness of targeted interventions in reducing school dropout rates and reintegrating early leavers into education or employment. Flexible learning models, vocational training, and mentorship programs have proven successful in addressing the challenges faced by early school leavers.

Annex 6: Economic Impact Analysis of High NEET Rates on National Productivity

This report examines the economic impact of high NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates on national productivity. High NEET rates are associated with reduced labor market participation, lower economic growth, and increased social welfare costs. This analysis explores the financial burden of NEET youth on economies, labor market implications, and policy recommendations to mitigate negative effects.

1. Economic Costs of High NEET Rates

- **Lost Productivity:** A large portion of young people remaining out of education and employment reduces the potential workforce, leading to lower economic output.
- **Higher Public Expenditure:** Governments incur significant costs for unemployment benefits, social support programs, and retraining initiatives.
- **Lower Tax Revenues:** A smaller employed workforce results in reduced tax contributions, affecting government revenues.
- **Impact on Future Growth:** Long-term disengagement from the labor market can lead to skill depreciation, making economic recovery slower and less sustainable.

2. Case Studies on the Economic Burden of NEETs

Case Study: United Kingdom

- The UK government estimates that high NEET rates cost the economy approximately £45 billion annually due to lost productivity and increased welfare spending.
- A study by the Prince's Trust found that disengaged youth contribute to higher crime rates, mental health issues, and long-term unemployment.
- Government interventions, such as the Apprenticeship Levy, have been introduced to mitigate these costs.

Case Study: European Union

- The European Commission reports that NEET youth cost EU economies over €153 billion annually in social benefits, lost income, and reduced tax contributions.
- Countries with strong vocational training programs, such as Germany and the Netherlands, tend to have lower NEET rates and higher workforce participation.

3. Labor Market Implications

- **Skill Shortages:** High NEET rates contribute to labor shortages in key industries, particularly in sectors requiring technical expertise.

- **Wage Stagnation:** A surplus of unskilled workers can lead to downward pressure on wages and increased job competition.
- **Innovation and Economic Growth:** Countries with high youth unemployment may struggle to develop a competitive workforce, impacting innovation and economic dynamism.

4. Policy Recommendations

To mitigate the economic impact of high NEET rates, policymakers should focus on:

- **Expanding Vocational Education :** Strengthening vocational training programs to equip youth with in-demand skills.
- **Youth Employment Initiatives :** Providing financial incentives for businesses to hire and train young workers.
- **Educational Reforms :** Introducing flexible learning models to keep students engaged and reduce dropout rates.
- **Social Support Programs :** Addressing barriers such as poverty, mental health, and housing instability that contribute to NEET status.

Conclusion

The economic costs of high NEET rates are substantial, impacting productivity, labor market stability, and government finances. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that includes education reform, vocational training, and social policies that support youth employment and skill development. By implementing targeted interventions, countries can enhance workforce participation and promote sustainable economic growth.

Annex 7: Survey on the Educational and Employment Status of NEET Youth

This survey presents the latest findings on the educational and employment status of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth in Turkey, Spain, and Belgium. The data includes NEET rates, educational attainment, employment status, and the main barriers to entering education or the workforce.

Country	NEET Rate (%)	Higher Education (%)	Secondary Education (%)	Below Secondary Education (%)	Actively Seeking Work (%)	Not Seeking Work (%)	Main Barrier: Economic Issues (%)	Main Barrier: Lack of Skills (%)	Main Barrier: Family Responsibilities (%)
Turkey	24.5	18	45	37	52	48	40	30	30
Spain	15.2	25	50	25	48	52	35	33	32
Belgium	11.8	30	55	15	41	59	28	35	37

Conclusion

The survey findings indicate that Turkey has the highest NEET rate, followed by Spain and Belgium. A significant proportion of NEET youth in all three countries have at least secondary education, yet many face barriers such as economic issues, lack of skills, and family responsibilities. Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions, including vocational training, financial aid, and support programs to help NEET youth transition into education or employment.



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