



Practical guide: Creating pathways of support for vulnerable young people to enter training and the labour market

ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform

Community of Practice on Employment, Education and Skills

Written by ICF
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What is the European Social Fund (ESF) Transnational Cooperation Platform?

Mutual learning is at the core of the ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform and its four Communities of Practice (CoP): employment, education and skills; social inclusion; results-based management; and social innovation.

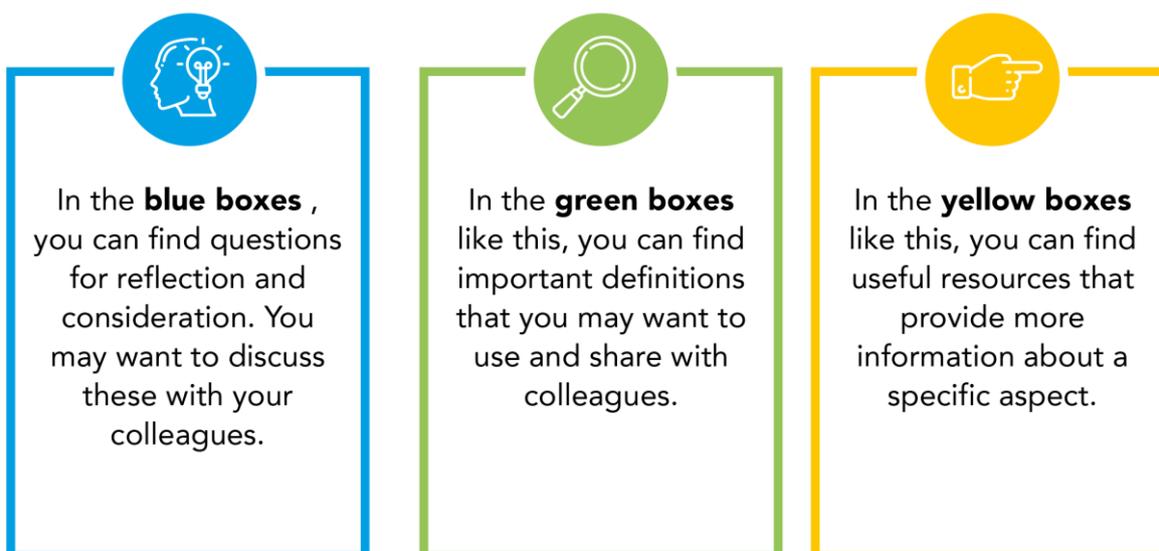
The ESF Transnational Cooperation Platform gives CoP members, including managing authorities, intermediate bodies and other ESF stakeholders, the opportunity to participate in mutual learning activities and tackle common challenges together. The CoPs were created as a place for members to share ideas and concerns, deepen knowledge and expertise, and help one another to solve problems with practical approaches.

The mutual learning activities generate hands-on outputs such as toolkits, guides, practice mapping, checklists and recommendation papers that can inspire practitioners and policymakers alike.

Introduction

This practical guide was produced following peer-to-peer training on ‘Creating pathways of support for vulnerable young people to enter training and the labour market’, which took place in February 2021. It builds on the information, tools and techniques shared by training participants.

The guide aims to provide European Social Fund (ESF) managing authorities and wider stakeholders with ideas, examples and useful pointers to develop or improve approaches to creating ways to encourage vulnerable young people neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET¹) to enter training and the labour market. The guide focuses on young people who are disengaged, not actively looking for work and/or training opportunities, and who may also experience other challenges, such as poverty, social exclusion, disability and discrimination.



1. Building blocks for creating suitable programmes for vulnerable young people

Programmes need to be designed with the needs of vulnerable young people in mind. Their needs are different to those of other groups and they may require more intensive support to make the transition to sustainable employment. For example, they may not have a stable home life or permanent address, or they may have physical or mental health issues that need to be addressed before they can consider their career prospects.

The diagram on the following page summarises the key steps commonly used to support vulnerable young people to re-enter education, training or employment.

¹ According to Eurostat, the indicator of NEET corresponds to the percentage of the population of a given age group that is not employed and not involved in further education or training.

The ESF Regulation does not provide a definition of NEET. Rather, fulfilment of this criteria is determined in accordance with national eligibility rules. The European Commission provides guidance to Member States on how the NEET status can be proven in this context.

- Putting the young person at the centre
- Working with others, where needed,
- Co-production with young people



Source: ICF

Create projects of sufficient length to allow organisations time for outreach, engagement and activation

When designing programmes, managing authorities and intermediate bodies should consider how they can create a **realistic timeframe for projects to engage and build trust with vulnerable young people**. Depending on the background and situation of the young person, this may take time or may require several attempts for the young person to trust project personnel. Flexibility within the wider programme framework is essential if projects are to react to the behaviour and needs of vulnerable young people.

Allow flexibility for project promoters in achieving their original outcomes

Pathways for vulnerable young people to enter education, training and employment depend on the person's specific situation, which may change at short notice. For project delivery, this might mean that original engagement or transition targets are not always achieved or may change mid-project. For example, a project intending to place 20 vulnerable young people in employment at the end of the project might discover part-way that some of them require education or training in order to be ready to enter employment. Programme design should allow some **flexibility in achieving specific outcomes**.

Provide time for transitions

Time must be given to allow projects to **support vulnerable young people to make successful transitions**. Adapting and adjusting to new settings takes time and their employer, education or training provider must be actively involved. Ongoing support should be the appropriate length and tailored to the specific needs of the young person. Project duration should allow for this continued support.



When designing programmes, key questions include:

- How can programme design account for projects needing to change their delivery or outcomes?
- Is the programme of sufficient length to allow projects to successfully engage with the target group?
- How can programme design facilitate projects delivering ongoing support to vulnerable young people who have transitioned to training or the labour market?

2. Programme design should recognise the core activities required to reach and activate vulnerable young people

Some core activities are essential to successfully reach out and activate vulnerable young people. **Staff must be appropriately trained**, and projects must adopt the principles of youth work.



The principles of youth work² include:

- The young person's participation is voluntary
- A non-judgemental approach – the young person's background, religion, sexuality, gender, etc. is not used against them
- No one is excluded

Build-in outreach activities

Outreach is a **key concept** in working with vulnerable young people. It can allow projects to reach out to vulnerable young people who may be 'hidden' from the authorities or may not have had positive engagement with authorities in the past.

Outreach should be a requirement for projects seeking to work with vulnerable young people.

² European Commission (2018), 'Effective outreach to NEETs: Experiences from the ground', <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8136&furtherPubs=yes>



Outreach is a broad concept with no single definition. It is often understood as informing young people - particularly those who are vulnerable and hard to reach - about supports available in their transitions from school to work and how to access those supports. Across Member States, common outreach methods include:

- Interventions that identify, approach and engage young NEETs either through grassroot-level actions (e.g. street work) and cross-agency work
- Interventions that take individualised labour market integration services and youth programmes outside of standard settings to bring them closer to young people, e.g. one-stop-shops, mobile outreach³
- A non-judgemental approach – the young person’s background, religion, sexuality, gender, etc. is not used against them

Importantly, no one is excluded at any point.

Vulnerable NEETs are those who are disengaged and not actively looking for work and/or training opportunities, and who may also experience other challenges. This group often requires special outreach activities.

Proactive outreach uses street-based outreach workers, youth outreach workers and specially trained mediators from specific groups to facilitate access. This approach effectively secures young people's trust. It is particularly useful when dealing with migrant populations, including those with limited language skills in their country of residence.

Proactive outreach allows projects to establish **one-to-one relationships between (trained) personnel and vulnerable young people** in a community setting. Using an environment in which the young person feels comfortable facilitates their engagement and reduces barriers to participation, such as lack of transport. Community setting outreach can include:

- Street counsellors to engage with at-risk youth (meeting young people in the street/areas where young people gather)
- Meeting young people in an easily accessible, non-office environment, such as a café

³ European Commission (2018), 'Effective outreach to NEETs: Experiences from the ground', <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8136&furtherPubs=yes>

Tackling early school leaving and youth unemployment through local counselling

Youth Competence Centres (YCCs) are spaces where young people in Antwerp, Belgium, can seek advice and counselling on their personal and professional development. The Centres are open to all young people aged 16 to 25, but particularly target those from migration backgrounds, who face higher risk of being unemployed or socially excluded. YCCs actively seek to build a trusting, personal relationship between counsellors and young people.

Youth workers and counsellors meet young people in both formal (e.g. youth centres) and informal (e.g. parks, events, cultural and sporting events) settings. This ensures that young people feel at ease, which supports the trust-building process. The youth counsellors have a thorough understanding of the local context, allowing them to easily reach out and connect with local young people.

Source: European Commission's Social Innovation Database website <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en>

Other useful outreach approaches in different Member States include:

- Cross-reviewing databases held by different organisations to identify at-risk youth
- Working with local grassroots organisations (youth organisations, NGOs, other community organisations) to reach out to inactive members of the NEET population. These organisations often have in-depth knowledge of the local area and sometimes have personal connections.

Outreach methods are evolving in light of young people's increased social media use. Czechia has recently seen a general decline in young people attending youth clubs or using youth counselling services, as they spend more of their free time on social media (see box below).

Delivering youth work in online environments 'Streetwork in Chat' (Czechia)

Streetwork in Chat adapts youth work to the online social media environment while maintaining the proactive outreach approach of physical youth work. Social workers use their professional accounts on Facebook to implement Streetwork in Chat through three types of intervention:

- Information-sharing and awareness raising: through public posts, the social workers clarify misconceptions that are common among young people with risky behaviours, relating to hate comments or self-harm and suicide declarations.
- Joining specific chat groups and starting conversations: social workers comment on the posts of group members, mediate conversations and provide reflections on hate comments. To identify young people in need on social media, social workers look for group titles that include words such as 'confession' or 'support'. By publicly commenting on posts, social workers hope to encourage reflection and a supportive attitude among other group members.
- Direct outreach: Streetworkers connect with the person involved in the post directly to understand how serious the problem is, assess the situation, and connect the person with social workers or psychologists in the local area, where necessary.

Source: European Commission's Social Innovation Database website (<https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en>)



When designing programmes, questions to consider include:

- How can programme design create the conditions for effective outreach?
- What information can be included in calls for proposals to understand how projects plan to undertake outreach?

Put young people at the centre of activities

Programme design - and subsequent calls for proposals - should encourage projects to demonstrate how they will **place young people at the centre of activities**. This should be appropriate to the young people in question and create the confidence that they can take control of their own pathways and create their own solutions. Trained staff and case workers provide essential guidance throughout. Similarly, youth organisations can act as advisors, outreach workers and mentors. They can also support public authorities and training providers in designing new approaches to engage and build trust with young people. By including third sector representatives in partnerships, their capacity to access funding can be developed over time, as they become more familiar with ESF delivery, reporting and administrative requirements.

Placing young people at the centre

Putting vulnerable young people at the centre means that service delivery works around the individual and their needs. Two ESF-funded projects presented at the peer-to-peer training have done this successfully.

The CatchUp – Psychological Support project in Hamburg, Germany, provides psychological support to vulnerable young people. The project first checks that the young person is seeking support because they want to, not because they have been told to. This motivation is important in ensuring that they will engage with the support. An initial meeting takes place between the individual and a trained psychologist to discuss needs and identify the supports required. Activities are scheduled at suitable times, such as early evenings. The project offers psychological advice, reviews the necessity of therapeutic intervention, assists in the search for suitable therapy methods, and provides psychological short-term advice without therapeutic indication. Young adults learn to apply problem-solving strategies, increasing their chances of successful integration into the training and employment market. ‘CatchUp’ is not a long-term programme but, rather, an accompaniment to existing advisory, placement, employment and qualification measures. The use of advisory and support services is voluntary.

The CO-MENT project in Belfast, UK, deploys trained mentors to work with young people. The initial meeting explores different areas of their life, including leisure activities, and then develops an individual programme providing access to a range of accredited level one qualifications (construction skills register assessment, essential skills, food hygiene, health and safety, personal development, security industry assessment, other vocational training).

The CO-MENT project model successfully identifies and supports participants because it starts where each young person is at. It acknowledges and accommodates their issues and challenges, providing a personal mentor to help them to design and implement their own

'journey' across four zones: Learning, Life, Leisure and Work. The mentors agree detailed individual plans with each participant across the four zones, prioritising appropriate short-term interventions and actions (e.g. weekly guidance and support sessions, access to a range of qualifications, work experience opportunities, essential skills, personal development, employability, vocational training). The regular review and support sessions focus on progressing participants towards employment and include effective and targeted job search and work preparation support.

Key themes across the two projects that are useful to consider in programme design include:

- The importance of one-to-one meetings between vulnerable young people and trained professionals
- Early identification of the young person's current needs
- Actively involving the young person in developing their future pathway.



You can read more about examples of activation in [How can we promote employability amongst the most marginalised young people? Some ESF lessons](#)

Consider co-production in the design and planning of projects



Co-production means involving young people in designing, planning and, in some cases, implementing relevant activities and treating them as equal partners.

Involving young people in designing and planning activities ensures that activities are designed around real needs. It can also prompt young people to engage with services in the longer term and to take ownership of their futures.

Advisory panels, focus groups, surveys, discussion forums or other platforms are useful in capturing young people's views in a systematic rather than ad hoc way. Support should be provided to help them to fully engage in the process.

The involvement of young people in the design and delivery of measures is crucial. The UK project Talent Match (see box below) is an example of such meaningful inclusion.

Talent Match⁴: a co-design experience in the UK

Talent Match⁵ is a programme for young people aged 18-24 who are furthest from the labour market. Financed by the Big Lottery Fund, this project is based on a EUR 118 million investment over five years to tackle youth unemployment. At the beginning of the programme, 20 young people were invited to consult 2,000 of their peers on what really mattered to them. The answer was support for young people's mental well-being and support to get a job. Beneficiaries have since been involved in all aspects of Talent Match programme design and are equal partners on decision-making boards of local partnerships. They also design and implement campaigns and services, contribute to staff training in the partnerships and at partner agencies, carry out beneficiary research, evaluate youth services and interview candidates (staff and providers) who want to work with Talent Match.

Source: European Commission (2018) '[Enhancing support to young people through integrated services](#)'



You can read more about examples of co-production and co-design in '[Co-production - Enhancing the role of citizens in governance and service delivery](#)' and '[Activation measures for young people in vulnerable situations: Experiences from the ground](#)'

Build-in activation and follow up activities to ESF programme design

Vulnerable young people need to be **supported during the transition stage** to education, training or employment so that they can adapt to the change. Case workers, mentors or other trusted individuals can **maintain contact** during the early weeks in their new setting. Open communication routes mean that young people have a trusted person to hear their concerns or issues. The case worker can also support the employer or training provider and discuss how the young person is adjusting. This is best over a longer period of time, for example several weeks after the transition. Issues and concerns are likely to arise in the first few weeks, as young people adapt to change, communicate with new people, and learn about new behaviour and performance expectations. Programme design should provide time for follow-up support activities. It is also often an effective way of facilitating sustainability of labour market outcomes.

Engaging employers in securing sustainable outcomes

Employer engagement is important in securing sustainable outcomes for vulnerable young people. Programme design should create opportunities for projects to work flexibly with employers to introduce vulnerable young people to the world of work. Employer involvement is an important starting point in (re)integrating vulnerable young people into the labour market.

⁴ Youth Guarantee – Knowledge centre: [UK-Talent Match.pdf](#)

⁵ Talent Match Evaluation: Involving young people, <https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/talentmatch/files/2018/10/talent-match-eval-involving-young-people.pdf>

Supporting people with disabilities to find work: 'Jamba'

Jamba provides training and connects jobseekers with disabilities with interested employers. It provides one-to-one support with job applications, including tailored guidance throughout the application process. Its online platform connects applicants with diverse abilities and employers.

Jamba also addresses the supply side of the disability employment gap, helping employers to create an accessible workplace for people with diverse abilities. Jamba provides practical and technical support by assessing companies' workspaces, analysing potential barriers for people with diverse abilities, testing facilities, installing new equipment, and providing relevant training. These services help companies to employ a more diverse workforce and also contribute to their corporate social responsibility strategies. Jamba has set up an alliance of companies working with people with diverse abilities, including an awards ceremony to recognise businesses and individuals contributing to a more inclusive society.

Source: European Commission's Social Innovation Database website (<https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en>)

Not all employers may be able to contribute in the same way. The Ballymun Youth Guarantee Pilot Project⁶ created a 'menu of options' for employers to choose from. This included:

- Possibilities to give a talk to a group of young people
- Host a visit or tour of their workplace
- Provide a work experience placement.

The project designed short flyers, organised breakfast meetings and undertook other activities to engage employers. The pilot project showed that collaboration with employers needs to be highly organised and prioritised. A representative of the Chamber of Commerce was seconded to support communication and engagement with employers, with a skilled team assembled to manage relationships. The Public Employment Service leading the project subsequently put in place a strategy for employer engagement and tailored its employer-focused communication materials to large, small and medium-sized employers.

Managing authorities should consider how programmes can be designed to allow specific activities targeting and engaging employers.



You can find more information about outreach and activation and examples on the European Commission's Youth Guarantee Knowledge Centre (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1327>) and the European Network of Public Employment Services PES Practice repository (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en>)

⁶ Devlin, M. (2015), 'Key Learning from the Ballymun Youth Guarantee Project', <https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/key-learning-ballymun-youth-guarantee-project.pdf>

3. Creating calls for proposals that support building partnerships

Calls for proposals must facilitate organisations in creating the conditions for young people to develop their own pathways to education, employment and training. However, a single organisation typically cannot deliver a high-quality, tailored solution for vulnerable young people. Working in partnerships builds holistic solutions to the problems experienced by vulnerable young people. Managing authorities should aim to create calls for proposals that support successful partnerships.

Identify the real need behind the call for proposals

Managing authorities should **reflect on what ‘need’ is being addressed by a call for proposals**. Is it responding to a specific challenge, needs of a target group, or an identified need on the ground?

Managing authorities should consider how they can collate information on actual, rather than perceived, needs. A systematic analysis of supply and demand can have several elements:

- A needs analysis to establish a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the needs, wishes and aspirations of vulnerable young people
- A cohort analysis⁷ to understand the scale and scope of the target group.
 - How many vulnerable young people currently belong to the target group? How many will enter this group in the coming months and years?
 - Profile of the target group - educational, employment, personal, social and health background
- A service analysis to map the breadth and depth of existing provision and the extent to which it covers the needs of vulnerable young people
- A resource analysis to assess the current level of funding dedicated to services for vulnerable young people by different service providers.



The preparation of calls can be informed by stakeholder consultation, such as those in Belgium-Flanders. Useful questions to consider include:

- Who are the organisations that work directly with vulnerable young people?
- Is anyone missing from this overview? How can they be reached?

⁷ A cohort analysis is a method to describe an aggregate of individuals with a common event in their life history, e.g. same year of birth. Cohort analyses are often used when looking at demographic trends, as they can identify trends within the general population over a certain timeframe.

- What can these organisations tell us about the need and how can we best get that information from them (i.e. questionnaires, interviews, focus groups)?
- How can organisations be encouraged to take part?
- How much time can be given to stakeholder consultations?
- How will we use the results?

Create calls for proposals that encourage projects to take a holistic approach

Vulnerable young people often face **multiple barriers** that will need to be addressed before they can successfully transition into employment or training. Calls for proposals must ask projects to show how the partnership:

- Will deliver all aspects of the work plan
- Has been put together in terms of the added value of each partner, particularly in relation to the needs of the target group
- Will work together to deliver successful outcomes.

Managing authorities may want to consider how they can **encourage the involvement of specialist organisations** with in-depth experience of working with at-risk or vulnerable young people. These types of organisations often lack the capacity to access funds and sometimes rely on voluntary contributions, including volunteer staff. They are also less familiar with the formal sector.

By supporting partnerships with **youth and grassroots NGOs**, managing authorities can encourage different organisations to share knowledge and staff with specialised skills, thereby building capacity. For example, organisations that are not used to working with vulnerable groups can develop insights into the needs and characteristics of particular groups, such as ethnic minorities or migrants, and how to deal with certain behaviours or situations (e.g. lack of social networks, discrimination, distrust of public authorities). These specialist organisations also find it easier to build trust with young people through their regular activities.

Practical steps can be taken to facilitate NGO access to ESF funding:

- Managing authorities can launch specific calls to bring partners together. These calls can encourage different organisations, or those that offer different services, to work together, sometimes for the first time. The managing authority in Belgium-Flanders uses this type of specific call;
- Communicate calls to a wider audience through umbrella organisations and existing networks;
- Ensure targeted follow-up with specialist organisations;
- Create opportunities to support small organisations to submit applications;

- Make better use of tools such as simplified cost options and community-led local development approaches.



You can find more information about partnership in the [Guidebook on How ESF managing authorities and intermediate bodies support partnership](#) and [Partnership: Exploring the methodology](#).

Ask projects how they will establish mutual trust within the partnership

Mutual trust is an important aspect of successful partnership work but it takes time to develop. Calls for proposals should ask projects to provide relevant information:

- How and when will they establish common working principles?
- How and when will they agree common objectives?
- How will the cooperation work in practice (e.g. regularity of online/face-to-face meetings, and the organisation of work)?
- How will they solve disputes?
- Has the partnership worked together in the past?

Supporting networking activities between project promoters

Once projects are funded, it can be useful to bring project promoters together to share stories, best practices and innovative approaches.

The German managing authority organises network meetings for projects providing mobility periods for disadvantaged young people, bringing together project promoters and their transnational partners. Projects can share common challenges and solutions and extend their networks, while managing authorities can build on their knowledge, relationships and understanding of the projects.

Czechia's managing authority organised a meeting for project promoters under its second call for mobility projects targeting disadvantaged young people. The meeting brought together project promoters to share experiences, foster an open collaborative culture between project promoters and encourage creative thinking. Networking activities have also contributed to building an in-country ESF community among project promoters.

Request projects to show how they will develop community-based solutions

Successful partnerships bring together different actors, including representation from the **local area**. This helps projects to stay close to the needs on the ground when developing community-based solutions.



Creating community-based solutions can usefully ask the following questions:

- How do the project lead and partners represent the local situation?
- Will the project undertake a needs analysis in the local area? When and how will this be done?
- Has the project mapped existing support provision and if/how the project will interact with this?
- How will they involve local stakeholders, when and what will be the added value?

Creating calls for proposals that bring together networks

Managing authorities can oblige projects to apply for ESF programmes as a project cooperation network involving the local or regional actors needed to achieve the objective of the project/programme. This could include the active involvement of:

- Enterprises
- Job centres/youth employment agencies
- Youth organisations
- Other relevant organisations that can facilitate access to jobs or apprenticeships at an individual level

In some countries, regional cooperation networks facilitate sustainable structural improvements, particularly in access to employment and vocational training for people with particular difficulties. Such groups include the long-term unemployed, those with a low level of education or vocational skills, and those with a migration background.

The German ESF managing authority has made this obligatory for several ESF programmes. The project applicant must submit letters of intent from the relevant partners. Upon approval of the project, the partners are required to set up a cooperation agreement setting out the tasks and contributions of each partner.

Encourage projects to provide ideas on sharing information and data

Working in partnership often raises the question of **data ownership and data sharing**. Different organisations have their own information, systems and – sometimes - data protection regulations. Project applications should provide practical ideas on overcoming issues with sharing information, while respecting European and national data protection rules, and ethical/legal standards for data collection, data sharing and data processing.

Project applications should outline how they will inform young people about:

- How their data will be used
- Who will have access to their data
- What happens if they do not want their data to be shared
- How they can withdraw consent, and what happens (i.e. no consequences for the support that they will receive)

Data protection rules are designed to protect participants' fundamental rights and these issues are likely to be heightened for young people in vulnerable situations. Where projects gain consent from vulnerable young people, that must be done in accordance with their fundamental rights, professional ethical standards, and legal frameworks such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Overcoming data protection issues: consent

The Young East project in Gothenburg, Sweden, developed a short and easy-to-understand agreement for vulnerable young people to provide consent for their data to be shared. The agreement explains how their data will be used, who will have access to it, and that they can withdraw their consent at any point. The agreement is in line with the ethical standards in place for each of the partners. That consent allows partners to share confidential information and deliver better services for each young person.



When thinking about data sharing issues, managing authorities may wish to consider the following questions:

- Can projects show that they have common agreements in place to share data, and if so, how?
- What information will be shared, when, with whom and why?
- How can projects put in place practical solutions to gain a young persons' approval for their data to be shared?
- Can projects illustrate how they will balance gaining consent with participants' fundamental rights, professional ethical standards and GDPR?
- How can projects demonstrate that they have considered what will happen if consent is not granted or is withdrawn?

4. Measuring the success of activities for vulnerable young people

Vulnerable young people may not always be ready to move to education, employment or training at the end of an intervention. 'Soft' qualitative indicators may be most appropriate to **measure the 'distance travelled' by the young person and progress towards soft**

outcomes, such as job-readiness, level of autonomy or the development of transferable skills.



The term 'distance travelled' means the progress that a young person has made in terms of achieving soft outcomes that can lead towards sustained employment, training, education or other next steps, as a result of participating in a project and against an initial individualised baseline. Measuring distance travelled involves at least two measurements on two separate occasions to understand what changed as a result of the intervention⁸.

Managing authorities can support projects to understand soft outcomes and their collection

Managing authorities should **work closely with project partners** to understand the aims and objectives of the project, nature of the target group and how soft outcomes can be captured. Definitions of success will depend on each project and the nature of the target group. By working closely with projects, managing authorities can help to steer and advise projects in measuring outcomes.

Application forms can invite applicants to demonstrate how they will monitor information, for example:

- How projects will use soft indicators and measure progress towards soft outcomes
- Methodologies and approaches that will be used to monitor and evaluate activities
- Data they will collect and by whom, why and how they will use that data in monitoring and evaluation activities
- How projects will 'follow up' with participants to assess the extent to which they have (re-)integrated into education, training or employment
- How projects will look at the impact of their interventions, including through follow-up activities.

⁸ European Commission (2019), 'The feasibility of developing a methodology for measuring the distance travelled and soft outcomes for long-term unemployed people participating in Active Labour Market Programmes', <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3315180b-9ecf-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

Self-reporting questionnaires for participants

The German managing authority experience of self-reporting questionnaires with vulnerable young people was shared during the peer-to-peer training in February 2021. During the German transnational ESF mobility programme 'IdA - Integration through Exchange' (2008-2014)⁹, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs worked together with project networks and participating job centres and/or employment agencies to develop a questionnaire design and instrument to ascertain integration outcomes. The survey targeted agencies involved in the delivering the project, job centres and employment agencies. It included assessments of participants' personal, social and occupational competence, as well as maturity to choose an occupation and successful integration.

The questionnaire included a detailed assessment of:

- Personal attributes (motivation/self-reliance, self-confidence/self-esteem appearance, behaviour, social competency)
- Social competences (ability to communicate, cooperation/team ability, ability to cope with conflicts)
- Labour market opportunities (technical occupational competences, mobility, foreign language skills)
- Labour market behaviour (ability to choose occupation/training, flexibility, application behaviour)
- These outcomes were confirmed by a survey of the participants themselves. The survey was conducted before and after their stay abroad, as part of the overall evaluation of the implementation of the Federal Operational Programme for ESF 2007-2013.

⁹ Find out more about the Integration through Exchange (IdA) programme here: <https://www.esf.de/portal/EN/Funding-period-2014-2020/ESF-Programmes/bmas/ESF-integration-directive.html>

Many tools, methods and documentation are available to projects to capture soft outcomes.

Journey to Employment (JET) framework

The JET framework is designed to help organisations to think through how their work contributes to young people's employability and to plan approaches to evaluation. The framework looks at seven groups of factors that contribute to successful job outcomes for young people. These include:

- Personal circumstances
- Emotional capabilities
- Attitudes to work
- Employability skills
- Qualifications, education and training
- Experience and involvement
- Career management skills

The framework presents a series of indicators and tools for each of these aspects. It was launched in 2013 and is accompanied by an online eight-step guide to help organisations to use the framework.

For more information: [The Journey to Employment \(JET\) framework](#)

The SOUL Record

The SOUL Record uses three main methods to collect data on soft outcome progression, such as one-to-one worksheets, observational techniques and tailored questionnaires. Individuals rate how much they agree or disagree with a statement about themselves and information can be collated in a web tool over time to create a statistical view.

For more information: [The SOUL Record](#)

Rickter Scale

This is a well-established assessment method that measures soft outcomes and distance travelled. It does, however, require payment. It uses a board with different headings (e.g. confidence, employment) on which an individual indicates their present position and where they hope to be in the future. Via in-depth discussion, the individual can explore different routes towards the future position, take responsibility for their own goals, and come up with a realistic action plan.

For more information: <http://www.rickterscale.com/>



When thinking about measuring soft outcomes, *managing authorities* may wish to consider the following questions:

- What does success look like for each project and how can this information be captured and when?
- What tools, techniques and methods are projects already using? How can this information be shared with others within the region/country?
- What can managing authorities do to support projects' understanding of measuring soft outcomes and distance travelled?
- How can managing authorities adapt their data capture process to record soft outcomes?

Further resources

Supporting outreach and identification of young NEETs

European Commission (2020). Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2020.372.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2020%3A372%3ATOC

European Commission (2018). Effective outreach to NEETs – Experience from the ground,

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20118&langId=en>

International Labour Organization (2017). Guide for developing national outreach strategies for inactive young people,

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_613351.pdf

International Labour Organization (2017). Policy brief on outreach strategies for young NEETs,

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_544350.pdf

International Labour Organization (2017). Mapping outreach practices to support inactive young people in re-entering education or gaining employment,

https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/WCMS_583571/lang--en/index.htm

European Commission (2018). Tracking and mapping young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs),

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20905&langId=en>

Supporting activation of young NEETS

European Commission (2018). Activation measures for young people in vulnerable situations – Experience from the ground,

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20212&langId=en>

European Commission (2017). How can we promote employability amongst the most marginalised young people? Some ESF lessons,

https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/871/1435

European Commission (2015). The Youth Guarantee partnerships on the ground: A report on the European Parliament Preparatory Action (EPPA) on the Youth Guarantee (*The report includes innovative ideas and approaches regarding the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes*),

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/108659f6-877d-11e5-b8b7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>

European Commission (2018). Enhancing support to young people through integrated services,

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20904&langId=en>

European Commission (2017). Integrating services to promote youth employment: Lessons from Finland. Sharing Paper No1,

https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/2557/1979

European Commission (2018). Co-production: Enhancing the role of citizens in governance and service delivery:

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fbac90e1-c6b9-11e8-9424-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

[Thematic Network on Youth Employment – Youth Practices](#) (you will need to have access to the Community of Practice Employment, Education and Skills Teams page to access the link)

Eurocities (2020). Reinforcing Youth Guarantee: Lessons learnt by cities in implementing the Youth Guarantee 2014-2020,

https://eurocities.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/EUROCITIES_contribution_to_reinforcing_Youth_Guarantee_2021-2027.pdf

Eurocities (2018). Boosting employment and social inclusion in EU cities: Lessons learned from cities experiences with the European Social Fund in 2014-2017,

http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/EUROCITIES_report_on_ESF_and_cities_FIN_AL.pdf

Eurocities (2019). Cities fight long-term unemployment through the social economy,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5a49koZQDU&feature=emb_title

Eurocities (2019). Urban skills mismatch and development of 21st century skills,

<https://eurocities.eu/latest/urban-skills-mismatch-and-development-of-21st-century-skills/>

Partnership working

European Commission (2019). Guidebook on How ESF managing authorities and intermediate bodies support partnership:

https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/1257/2461

Thematic Network on Partnership (2016): [Partnership: Exploring the methodology](#)

Examples of ways to measure soft outcomes

[The Journey to Employment \(JET\) framework](#)

Rickter Scale: <https://www.inspiringimpact.org/resource-library/the-rickter-scale/>

[The SOUL Record](#)

Useful European Commission knowledge centres and specific examples

Youth Guarantee Knowledge Centre

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1327>

Croatia: Lifelong Career Guidance Centres (CISOK)

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18449&langId=en>

France ‘Guarantee for Youth’

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18447&langId=en>

Norway ‘PES Tutors in upper secondary schools pilot project’

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15226&langId=en>

Spain (Gijon) Youth Activation Agency

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1080&langId=en&practiceId=62>

Sweden: Multi-competent team (UngKOMP)

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18455&langId=en>

PES Practice Knowledge Centre:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en>

PES Practice: Finland - One-Stop-Shop Guidance Centres for Young People:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19409&langId=en>

Devlin, M. (2015). Key Learning from the Ballymun Youth Guarantee Project,

(<https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/key-learning-ballymun-youth-guarantee-project.pdf>)

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For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

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The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.



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