



NEET Census

Analysis of the needs, realities and circumstances of NEETs in Malta

MALTA

Title of the practice (in original language)

Census on Youth NEET (NEET Census)

Who is/was implementing the practice?

The Ministry for Education and Employment

Which other organisations are/were involved in the practice?

Jobsplus – Maltese Public Employment Service (PES)

What are/were the main objectives of the practice?

To provide a comprehensive picture of Maltese NEETs (15-24-year olds) including their:

- personal and socio-demographic characteristics,
- education and skills achievements,
- work experience,
- aspirations,
- awareness and views of the Youth Guarantee scheme,
- suggestions on how they could be motivated to participate in Youth Guarantee initiatives.

The census aimed to provide policy makers in Malta with better information on Maltese NEETs. This would enable policy makers to reduce the NEET rate through initiatives tailored to the NEETs' circumstances:

- by identifying the needs, aspirations and challenges of Maltese Youth NEETs; and
- encouraging greater enrolment in the Youth Guarantee scheme in part as a result of better tailored initiatives.

When was the practice implemented?

The NEET census was conducted between July and September 2015. A series of follow-up interviews were conducted in October 2015.

Who is/was targeted by the practice?

The population of 6 749 young people identified as NEETs (aged 16-24) on the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) database, as of April 2015.

What activities are/were carried out?

- Each young person registered on the ETC database received an invitation to participate in a 20-minute face-to-face interview.
- Interviewers were trained prior to the data collection and both interviewer and interviewee were required to sign a consent form.
- Whilst conducting the census, 4 035 young people from the target group claimed that they did not meet the Youth Guarantee eligibility criteria set out by the ETC.
- Further investigation into the 4 035 young people who identified themselves as not being NEET, was conducted to identify/explore:
 - whether there are any issues in relation to the parameters used when including a young person on the NEETs database;
 - the current situation of individuals in relation to employment, education, and training;
 - future plans in relation to employment, education, and training.
- Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of 745 young people from the 4 035 who claimed not be NEETs. The aim of the interviews was to obtain more information on their current status (in relation to employment and education).
- Findings of the research allowed for the profiling of NEETs in Malta, the design of tailored services for this target group, as well as recommendations focused on preventative and activation measures.
- A new database was built based on three sub-categories of NEETs: Core, Floating and Transition (see explanations below).
- Identification of the three sub-categories of NEETs led to the redesign of Malta's NEETs Activation Scheme (NAS) I to NAS II¹, with more in-depth interventions targeted at 'Core NEETs'.

What are/were the sources of funding?

The NEET Census was co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) (85%) and National Funds (15%) with an estimated budget of EUR 60 000

What are/were the outputs: people reached and products?

- 279 successful interviews from the initial census of 6 749 young people.
- 531 successful telephone interviews from a sample of 745 young people who claimed not be NEETs.
- The research identified three sub-categories of NEET:
 - Transition NEETs: young people who have taken time out before progressing onto further or higher education. The majority (45.8%) of study participants were identified as Transition NEETs
 - Floating NEETs: young people that lack direction and motivation. They tend to have NEET spells in-between further education or employment. 15% of study participants were identified as Floating NEETs.
 - Core NEETs: young people with social and behavioural issues, including those from families where unemployment is a norm and not much importance attached to further education. 3.4% of study participants were identified as Core NEETS.
- 35.8% of participants did not fit into a precise NEET category, as they could not be clearly associated to the described criteria. This indicated potential fluidity within the three NEET categories
- A new database was created based on the NEET sub-categories.

What are/were the outcomes: medium-term results or effects?

The research took place towards the end of 2015, leading to a revision of NAS I and changes to the management of information and identification of NEETs. As a result, NAS II was implemented with more in-depth interventions targeting 'Core NEETs'.

¹ See separate Youth Guarantee promising practice

What are/were the lessons learnt and success factors?

Lessons learnt:

- Research highlighted Malta's Youth Guarantee was mostly targeting Floating and sub-segments of Core/Floating and Floating/Transition, NEETs. A one-size-fits-all approach to activation, employment and upskilling measures might not work or produce desired results.
- Through the research, issues with the NEETs database were identified. These issues include:
 - Parameters for inclusion or exclusion from the database were rigid, whilst the target group is highly fluid and subject to variance and change (e.g. a youth may only be a NEET for a few months).
 - The parameters did not seem to cater for particular variables, such as; private universities/schools, studying or working abroad. This indicates possible fragmentation of Government databases, and thus centralisation of a youth database with input from all relevant stakeholders is a potential way forward to mitigate this risk.
- There is a need for a more active awareness campaign of the Youth Guarantee as over two-thirds of NEETs were unaware of the scheme.

Success factors:

- The methodological approach for data collection was successful in providing a clearer picture of the status of NEETs registered on the ETC database. This led to new understanding and knowledge that Maltese NEETs are a heterogeneous group made up of different subcategories.
- The questionnaire for the interviews used a mix of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. This generated a clearer picture of the characteristics of, and challenges faced by, Maltese NEETs, as well as allowing for deeper and further understanding of key issues concerning Youth NEETs.
- Through face-to-face interviews and open questions, the research has provided a comprehensive picture of Maltese NEETs which include: reasons for stopping education and training; their work experience and interests; future plans for education, employment and training; and, feedback on the Youth Guarantee. This information can support policy makers and relevant stakeholders (support counsellors, career services), to implement preventative and activation measures for young people becoming NEETs.

What are key sources of information?

http://education.gov.mt/en/youthguarantee/Documents/Neets%20FINAL%20REPORT_ETC.pdf

<http://education.gov.mt/en/resources/News/Documents/Youth%20Guarantee%20Implementation%20Plan%20-%20Malta.pdf>