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TOGETHER FOR YOUTH WELL-BEING
MENHELP VYTE

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Men Help VYTE

Research form

Questions	Answers
CONTEXT	
How many young people, identified as NEETs are in your country/ region/ county (the latest figure)?	<p>In 2023, 15.8% of Romania's population was aged between 15 and 29, according to data from Eurostat, the European statistics office. This puts Romania in 17th place among EU member states. Overall, the EU average was 16.2%, and the highest share of young people in the total population was in Cyprus, at 19.8%, followed by Denmark with 19.1% and the Netherlands with 18.8%.</p> <p>With a population after domicile of 991,882 people, Iasi is the largest county in Romania, after Bucharest. At county level, Iasi municipality recorded a total of 409,409 inhabitants.</p> <p>The municipality of Iași, with its large number of inhabitants, dominates the county demographically and economically, with the potential to attract investment and become a regional pole of development. The presence of a significant population in emphasizes the importance of developing infrastructure and public services to support these areas communities and reduce disparities with urban areas.</p> <p>In terms of the average age of the county of Iasi, compared to the average age across the country (of 42.4 years), at Population and Housing Census in 2021, it was lower by 3.2 years. In the hierarchy of counties by average age, Iași county ranked second (after Ilfov County). Within the North-East Region, the average age was 40.8 years, Iasi county ranked first as the county with the lowest average age.</p> <p>Of the total resident population of Iași county, 39.1% had an average level of education (post-secondary, high school, vocational, complementary or apprenticeship), 44.7% low level (pre-school, primary, secondary or no schooling at all) and 16.2% higher. In terms of the share of the resident population with a higher level of education, Iași county ranked ninth in the hierarchy counties.</p> <p>From statistical data published by County Directorate of Statistics Iasi, in the Statistical Yearbook of Iasi county for the year 2023, shows that the young population of the county - aged between 15 and 28 years (29 years in 2024) is 156,844 persons, of which 80,773 men and 76,071 women.</p> <p>Of the total, 61,891 young people lived in urban areas and 94,953 in rural areas. Iasi County's young population of 156,844 represents valuable human capital, but its distribution between urban areas (39.5%) and rural areas (60.5%) shows disparities significant disparities. Investments in education, infrastructure and economic opportunities are essential to realize the potential of this age group and to bridge the gaps between the two environments of</p>

	<p>residence. Targeted support actions can contribute to a higher quality of life and to the development balanced development of the county.</p> <p>Observations and implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Urban-rural imbalance: the majority of young people live in rural areas, which emphasizes the need for specific programs and policies to support this group. These can include improved access to education, infrastructure and jobs, to reduce the exodus rural exodus and encourage local development. - Education and employability: Urban youth are more likely to access higher education and career opportunities. In contrast, young people in rural areas face difficulties integrating into the labor market, especially in non-agricultural fields. Programs and continuing training programs are essential for this group <p>Demographic sustainability: The young population is crucial for the sustainability and economic development of the county. Programs that encourage staying in County and local business development could decrease out-migration and in-migration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to resources and services: In rural areas, lack of infrastructure, transportation and services can discourage youth from integrating into local communities. Investing in these areas are essential to ensure adequate living conditions.
	<p>According to the 2024 Country Report for Romania (Commission Staff Working Document), published by the EC, the Romanian labour market is characterized by low participation of young people, women, people with disabilities, low-skilled people and Roma. Romania has one of the lowest labor force participation rates in the EU (at 68.7% in 2023, still below the EU average of 75.3%), its working-age population has steadily declined since 2008, while labor shortages and shortages of skilled labor have increased. Youth unemployment (21.8% in 2023) has decreased, although it remains significantly higher than the EU average (14.5%), and the rate of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) remains among the highest in the EU (19.3% compared to 11.2% in 2023). The labor participation rate (among 15-64 year olds) is still among the lowest in the EU, especially among women (54.3% in 2023 compared to 71.7% among men) and the low educated (36.9% in 2023 compared to 89.8% among the highly educated), cf. data from the NSI Report, 04/2024. The inactivity gap between young people with a low level of qualification and those with a high level of qualification remains high (52.9 pp). In the 20-64 age group, family and care responsibilities are often the main reasons for not looking for a job (23.6% of the inactive population). The rate of unemployed young people not in any form of education or training (calculated for the 15-24 age group) was 16.5% in 2023, higher for females (19.6% compared to 13.6% for males) and for those residing in rural areas (22.4% compared to 10.2% for urban youth).</p> <p>For the 25-29 age group, the rate in 2023 was 25.3%, higher for females (36.1% vs. 15% for males) and for those residing in rural areas (33.2% vs. 17.1% for those in urban areas). As for young NEETs, more than a third of young NEETs were discouraged workers, short and long-term unemployed. Despite the positive results of some outreach measures, more than 65% of young NEETs remain inactive. In addition, an equal percentage of NEETs fell into this category due to family responsibilities, illness or disability, with the remainder citing other undeclared reasons. A very large and growing percentage of young people are leaving the country. The gender gap in labor force activity and employment remains high. With a value of 19 pp in 2019, the gender gap in activity has increased further, exceeding the EU average (10.7 pp). In 2023, the share of active women (aged 15-64) was 54.3% (EU average of 68.7%). The lowest activity rates were among younger women (aged 15-24) and older women. Around 12% of women were inactive due to personal and</p>

	<p>family responsibilities. In 2018, the gender gap in employment among people with a child under six years of age was 29 pp. High early school-leaving rates and insufficient childcare facilities and services affect women's labor market participation, especially in rural areas.</p> <p>In 2023, of the total registered unemployed, 70.8% were from rural areas. The share of early school leavers in 2022 was 15.6 %, in rural areas 24.5 % and among Roma 75 %) (Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2022). In rural areas in 2023, the share of young people and NEETs (15-24 years old) was almost twice as high as in urban areas (27. 8 %, compared to 13. 65 %). As regards the population of Roma ethnic Romanian citizens, only 41 % of Roma were in paid employment in 2021, and 59 % of young Roma were not employed and not attending any educational or training program. The gender gap in employment among Roma is very high, with only 23% of women in paid employment and 36% reporting that they are looking for a job. If they do have a job, they do unskilled work, with the majority of Roma employees having no formal qualifications. The Roma population generally has a lower level of educational attainment compared to the majority population, which limits their access to the labor market at a time of increasing demand for skilled labor. In Romania, from the analysis of the data from the Statistical Bulletin on Labor and Social Protection in the first quarter of 2024, carried out by MMPS, the unemployment rate among young people aged 15-30 years, reached 14.83% at the end of March 2024.</p> <p>As regards Iasi county, at the end of September 2024, 9,901 unemployed persons (4,213 women) were registered in the PES registers (4,213 of them women), the unemployment rate being 5.3%. Of these, a total of 1003 were under 30 years of age (10.2%).</p> <p>In conclusion, young people, and especially NEET young people, are one of the most affected by the economic, social and political context.</p>
<p>How many of these young NEETs have real challenges?</p>	<p>Most of them, especially those residing in rural areas, where the access to services (education, training, work, infrastructure etc) is very limited.</p>
<p>What characterizes the challenged youth?</p>	<p>There is a wide range of factors that can contribute to young people falling into the NEET category, such as low or average educational attainment, living in a low-income household, coming from a family where one parent was unemployed, being brought up by a single parent, living in a rural area, being born outside an EU country or having a disability.</p> <p>Young people with low educational attainment are three times more likely to become NEET compared to those with higher education, and young people with from immigrant backgrounds have a 70% higher risk of becoming NEET than the residents of the country.</p> <p>Young people with a disability or health problems are 40% more likely more likely to become NEET than those in good health. Environment also has a crucial influence. NEET status has consequences serious consequences for the individual, society and the economy. Time spent in NEET category can lead to numerous social disadvantages, such as isolation, insecure and low-paid employment, criminality and physical and mental health problems. NEET young people are at risk of risk of political and social alienation. Compared to young people who are not NEET, NEETs show significantly lower levels of political interest, political and social engagement and lower levels of confidence.</p> <p>There are several types of NEETs identified according to their problems:</p>

	<p>Re-entering This category includes those young people who will soon re-enter employment, education or training.</p> <p>Discouraged workers his group contains young people who have stopped looking for work because they believe there are no job opportunities for them. They are mostly vulnerable young people at high risk of social exclusion, who may experience poor employment outcomes throughout their working lives.</p> <p>Short-term unemployed This category is made up of all unemployed young people who are looking for work and are available to start within two weeks and who have been out of work for less than a year.</p> <p>Unavailable due to illness or disability This category includes all young people who are not looking for a job or who are not available to start a job due to illness or disability. This group includes those who need more social support.</p> <p>Long-term unemployed This category is made up of all young people who are unemployed, looking for work and available to start within two weeks and who have not been in employment for more than a year. Long-term unemployment damages young people's employability and future employment outcomes, and in some cases the damage can last for the rest of their lives.</p> <p>Unavailable due to family responsibilities This group includes those who are not looking for work or are not available to start a new job because they are caring for children or adults who are unable to care for themselves.</p>
<p>What are the national political agenda and tools/programs that address them?</p>	<p>Law no. 350 of 21/07/2006 Youth Act National Strategy for Youth Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Education and Employment Program 2021-2027 - 880 million EU euro to tap the potential of young people on the labour market; it is proposed to develop a youth network to offer personalized quality services for young people; funding flexible packages of measures to help identify young people and enrol them in one of the forms of support (reintegration in school, training, integration into the labour market).</p> <p>Erasmus+ Program 2021-2027 In 2024, the Erasmus Plus program places particular emphasis on strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation enabling greater synergies in different fields of action that matter to young people, promoting youth participation at different levels and formats and support active citizenship of young people, especially those at risk of exclusion social exclusion. In addition to promoting active citizenship, priorities include supporting young people's initiative in the field of entrepreneurship, in particular social entrepreneurship, recognizing youth work and increasing quality and innovation in this field, strengthening the relationship between youth policies, research and practice, increasing youth employment.</p>

European Solidarity Corps Program 2021-2027

The European Council has reached a provisional agreement on the "Corpus European Solidarity Corps (ESC) program for the period 2021-2027. With a dedicated budget of more than €1 billion, the new European Solidarity Corps offers opportunities for around 350,000 young people from the EU and partner countries to get involved in voluntary actions, falling into two areas: solidarity activities that aim to respond to societal challenges, such as helping children and the elderly or assisting in asylum seekers' centers, among others, and solidarity actions related to humanitarian aid. The activities carried out under the European Solidarity Corps contribute to strengthening cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe, with a focus on promoting social inclusion. The new program will give more access to young people in need of assistance, people with disabilities or health problems, as well as people from remote areas or migrant families, through three types of projects - voluntary, occupational (work experience) and solidarity.

Youth Guarantee reinforced

The new Youth Guarantee is aimed at young people under the age of 30 and aims to set up national programs whereby young people can be offered a job, study, internship or apprenticeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. At the same time, better inclusion of people from vulnerable groups such as NEET young people, young women and people with disabilities is foreseen. The new Guarantee scheme will be implemented through support measures at national, regional and local level, following four phases:

Mapping - identifying target groups, available services, skills needs and young people at risk of NEET;

Communication - targeted information campaigns among young people and building bridges with NEET young people;

Preparation - better profiling to match needs and responses, offering advice and guidance, and improving digital and other key skills;

Supply - employment incentives, ensuring quality and equity and post-recruitment support.

The measures under the new Youth Guarantee are funded by the European Social Fund Plus ("ESF+") and Member States' investments.

Law no. 76/2002 Art. 63 - Vocational training

Jobseekers (young people/adults) can participate in free vocational training programs to increase and diversify their professional skills in order to ensure their mobility and integration into the labor market.

Art. 85

Subsidies for hiring young NEETs

The employer receives, on request, for a period of 12 months, 2.250 lei/young NEET/month;

Art. 80

Subsidies for hiring graduates

The employer receives, on request, for a period of 12 months, 2.250lei/employee/month, regardless of the type of education completed;

Law no. 76/2002 ART. 93^1

Young people at risk of social marginalization

Employers who hire young people at risk of social marginalization and who benefit from personalized social accompaniment on the basis of a solidarity

contract, called insertion employers, receive a monthly amount equal to the basic rate set at the date of employment of the young person, but not more than four times the social reference indicator in force at the date of employment, until the expiry of the duration of the solidarity contract.

- If on the expiry of the period for which the solidarity contract was concluded, the integration employer maintains the employment relationship with the young person who has been employed, then he shall receive monthly, in accordance with the legal provisions, for that person, from the unemployment insurance budget, an amount equal to 50% of the unemployment benefit due under the law, which the young person would have received if the employment relationship had ceased on that date for reasons not attributable to the person.

Law no. 76/2002 Art. 73¹ - Insertion bonus

Graduates of educational institutions and graduates of special schools, aged at least 16 years, who, within 60 days of graduation, register with employment agencies and take up full-time employment for a period of more than 12 months, are entitled to an integration premium equal to 3 times the value of the social reference indicator in force at the time of employment.

Law No 279/2005 - Apprenticeship in the workplace

Apprenticeship is vocational training carried out on the job on the basis of an apprenticeship contract.

The employer who signs an apprenticeship contract, under the conditions of this law, benefits, upon request, for the entire duration of the apprenticeship contract, from an amount of 2.250 lei/month, granted from the unemployment insurance budget within the limit of the funds allocated for this purpose.

LAW no. 176/2018 on internship

The internship is one of the most successful ways of collaboration between a company and its young potential future employees, being a practical experience, learning by doing.

- The duration of an internship program is a maximum of 720 hours over a maximum of 6 consecutive months, no more than 40 hours per week, and for interns under the age of 18, no more than 30 hours per week.

- The intern has the right, and the host organization the obligation, to pay an allowance of at least 50% of the guaranteed minimum gross basic national guaranteed basic salary in proportion to the number of hours of work performed.

- The period of the internship shall be considered as seniority in employment and, where appropriate, seniority in a specialist field, depending on the type of activity.

- Host organizations that, within 60 days after the end of the internship program, conclude an individual employment contract with the person who has carried out the internship program shall receive, upon request, a job promotion bonus of 4,586 lei/person, after fulfilling the obligation to maintain the employment relationship for a non-interrupted period of at least 24 months.

Public events dedicated to young people

Job fairs for graduates, unemployed, students

Other projects:

Construction of 159 day care centers - Project worth 50 million euro, financed by PNRR, which will benefit at least 4,500 children from vulnerable communities. Services provided: hot meals, hygiene services, homework support, psychological counseling.

"Ready for Life" campaign - The aim of the project is to develop independent living skills for young people at risk of marginalization and social exclusion by organizing weekend camps where the 5,000 beneficiaries had support activities aimed at developing their skills and preparing them for life, as well as games and psychological counseling for personal development.

Dual education - vocational education that is carried out exclusively at the request of partner economic operators, with a view to employing students after graduation. Dual education is completed with a level 3 vocational qualification certification examination, recognized both in the country and in the European Union. The Ministry of Education and Research grants all students a state vocational scholarship. Economic operators partners in DUAL can grant all students the following benefits: private scholarship, meals, accommodation, transportation, incentives and other forms of support.

Electronic social vouchers for disadvantaged mothers with newborns.

Start-Up Nation 2024, 4th edition - The Romanian Government has decided to allocate a record amount of over 446 million euro this year. The program will have 2 pillars: The first is dedicated to young people under the age of 30 and will involve the selection of around 5,250 future business plans, and a minimum of 10% of the individuals in this pillar must belong to the Roma minority. The second pillar will target 3,864 young people aged 30-35, disabled, disadvantaged, rural, employed or unemployed.

The White Charter for Young People in Rural Areas aims to contribute to the development of young people and the entire rural youth ecosystem in Romania. It was adopted in August 2022 at the third Rural Youth Summit following a consultation process that lasted approximately one year and was coordinated by the European Youth Village Governance. It is designed as a decalogue with 10 strategic priorities, 10 implementation principles, 10 strategic areas containing 100 strategic directions. For illustration, the ten priorities are available below:

1. Rural youth development in rural areas;
2. Accessible and responsible participation for all young people in rural areas;
3. Strategic programs that give visibility to young people in rural areas and support the initiative their initiative;
4. Facilities, resources and opportunities for development, learning and leisure of a quality for all young people in rural areas;
5. Strengthening the rural youth sector and supporting youth work;
6. Increasing an active civil society in rural areas and increasing the representativeness of rural young people in decision-making;
7. Address rural youth challenges strategically through inclusive youth policies and continuously encouraging dialog between young people in rural areas and public authorities local, county, central and European authorities;
8. Connect local, county, national and European public policies to the real needs of rural young people and the local context;
9. Inclusion, diversity, equity, European identity and respect for the rights of all young people;
10. Youth-friendly villages and a European Union connected to young people in rural areas.

**PARTNERS'EX
PERTISE**

<p>How does your institution work with these young people?</p>	<p>FEG is an NGO whose main aim is to support young people, including NEET. FEG is committed to supporting the integration of young NEETs into the labor market by providing tailored services and innovative programs designed to address their specific needs. With years of experience in implementing European Social Fund (ESF) projects, FEG has developed a deep understanding of the challenges faced by this vulnerable group and the strategies needed to overcome them.</p> <p>3 of the ESF projects implemented addressed young NEETs:</p> <p>“Integrated services for the unemployed, jobseekers, inactive people and people with low educational level”, project implemented between 2010 and 2012, whose aim was to create a network of local centres to provide integrated services (counselling, professional training and labor mediation) to its target group, mainly made up by young people.</p> <p>“Investing in young people, investing in our future!”, project implemented in partnership with the Ministry of labor, social solidarity and family and other 2 partners, between 2013 and 2015, during which the Youth Guarantee was tested in the North part of the country.</p> <p>"For the Future You Want" project (POCU/909/2/4/150184), available at tineriangajati.ro, implemented between 2021 and 2023, during which FEG organised a comprehensive range of activities aimed at improving the employability and social inclusion of young NEETs. These activities included personalized career counseling, skills assessment, and the development of individual action plans tailored to each participant's strengths and aspirations. The project also provides access to certified vocational training programs, ensuring participants acquire the qualifications and competencies demanded by the labor market.</p> <p>Additionally, FEG collaborates closely with local employers to facilitate job placement opportunities and on-the-job training, fostering direct connections between participants and potential employers. The project emphasized practical, hands-on experiences and mentorship, equipping young NEETs with the tools and confidence they need to secure stable employment.</p> <p>FEG is also a member of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships since 2019, dedicating part of its activity to organizing apprenticeships for young people.</p>
<p>GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FIELD</p>	
<p>What inspiration/ good practices in working with the young NEETs can be found nationally? (3 examples from each project party)</p>	<p>https://www.anfp.gov.ro/R/Doc/2020/Proiecte/Ghiduri/Bune%20practici%20in%20domeniul%20incluziunii%20sociale.pdf Compendium of good practices in the field of social inclusion</p> <p>Platform for young NEETs- https://www.neets.ro/ It is an initiative mapping all the projects targeting NEETs running all over the country with links and information for the counties mapped.</p> <p>https://neets-romania.ro/ The first platform designed to increase the employment rate of NEET young people in Romania. It aims to help young people discover innovative programs for those aged between 16-29 years old, unemployed and low educated, from rural areas in Romania.</p> <p>https://www.culturadata.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Tinerii_si_creativitatea_web.pdf Young people and creativity- study meant to provide a picture of young people's relationship with creativity and to highlight the ability to develop a business based on products or creative services.</p>

<p>Can inspiration be drawn from neighboring countries or the rest of the EU? (3 examples from each project partner)</p>	<p>https://www.crpe.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CRPE-Policy-Memo-77_YG.pdf</p> <p>The study maps best practice cases under the umbrella of Youth Guarantee program that proved efficient in implementing specific measures that target vulnerable groups, including the Roma community. It refers to programs concerning education and vocational education, training, apprenticeship, job opportunities, but also fostering social inclusion or psycho-pedagogical support.</p> <p>https://www.interregeurope.eu/atwork4neets/good-practices</p> <p>atWork4NEETs is a project which aims to identify and exchange good practices to improve the current policy tools to facilitate young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) to access meaningful opportunities to improve their skills and find suitable jobs in seven European regions.</p> <p>Lead partner JOBSPLUS Malta, partners Anci Toscana, Ministries and Employment Service Agencies from Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, Luxembourg and Lithuania and Associated Authority Region of Tuscany have joined their forces to conduct an analysis on the NEETs' conditions and policies and discuss possible solutions to enhance them with their relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>https://alaturidevoi.ro/o-colectie-de-bune-practici-din-intreprinderile-sociale-de-insertie-din-ue/</p> <p>A collection of good practices from social enterprises in the EU</p>
<p>What does the experience show in terms of mentors' profiles, skills, etc.?</p>	<p>A professional working with young NEETs plays a critical role in supporting their reintegration into education, training, or the workforce. This specialist combines expertise in career counseling, social inclusion, and project management to address the unique challenges faced by vulnerable youth.</p> <p>The following specific competences are, in our opinion, required to carry out specific activities for the youth worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the social context in which young people live - Using methods and tools to analyze needs and interests of young people - Effective use of knowledge of youth psychology and motivational psychology in order to positive interaction with young people - Involving young people in planning, carrying out and evaluating youth work - Managing group dynamics - Creating a safe learning and working environment for young people - Building a positive peer-to-peer relationship with young people - Managing diversity - Managing conflicts - Informing beneficiaries - Skills to discuss personal or emotional issues with young people when they arise in the context of youth work - Leading the learning process - Support young people in identifying their learning needs, wishes and styles taking into account special needs - Planning activities by and for young people - Support young people to identify and take responsibility for the role they wish to play in their community and society - Supporting the development of young people's self-confidence - Implementing activities and managing available resources (human, material, financial) - Skills for implementing plans and projects - Skills for monitoring activities by and for young people

	<p>Profile Skills and Competences: Interpersonal Skills: Empathy, patience, and the ability to build rapport with vulnerable youth. Counseling Skills: Proficiency in career counseling, motivational interviewing, and conflict resolution. Training and Facilitation: Experience in delivering workshops and organizing vocational training sessions. Networking: Ability to establish partnerships with employers, NGOs, and educational institutions. Cultural Awareness: Sensitivity to diverse backgrounds, including socio-economic and cultural differences.</p> <p>Knowledge Areas: -Labor market trends and vocational training opportunities. -Barriers faced by NEETs, including socio-economic challenges and systemic inequalities.</p> <p>Personal Attributes -Passionate about social inclusion and youth empowerment. -Flexible and adaptable, capable of working in dynamic environments. -Results-driven, with a strong focus on achieving measurable outcomes.</p>
<p>How can we use this inspiration in Men Help VYTE?</p>	<p>We think that starting from the partners' expertise in the field and the good practices identified at both national and EU level, an effective training program can be designed for the staff and the young people to be involved in the project. Together we can improve not only the quality of the tools used in working with young NEETs and the knowledge of the staff involved, but also the intervention process in itself.</p> <p>The project and the inspiration from the good practices will also determine us to reflect on our own practices and decide for different solutions and actions, if the case.</p>