



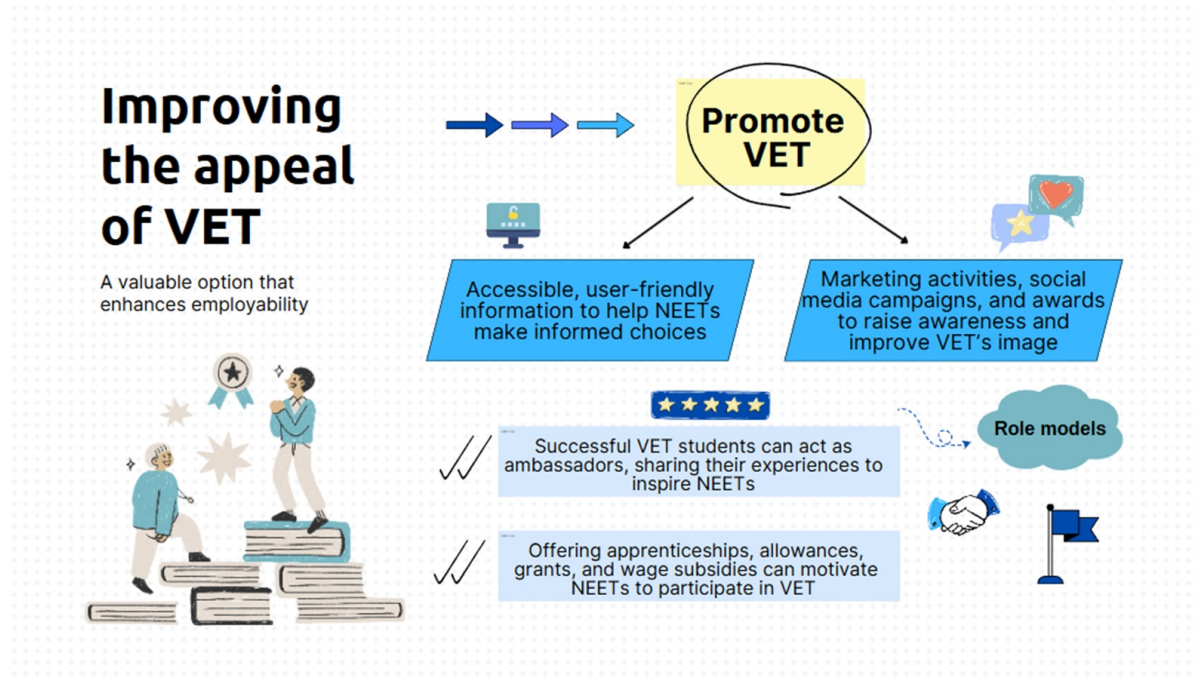
Improving the appeal of VET

Problem statement

Vocational education and training (VET) plays a strategic role in raising the skills of the workforce. While participation in VET varies substantially between Member States, it is often perceived as less attractive and less prestigious than general (university) education. A recent [Cedefop survey](#) showed most EU citizens agree that general education has a more positive image than vocational education in their country.

Perceived attractiveness of VET pathways can lead certain young people to follow general education pathways that are less well-suited to them, increasing their risk of dropping out. By contrast, others find the idea of practical learning more appealing and are interested in opportunities to earn as they learn or to work towards a specific profession. It is important that young people see VET as a valuable option that will enhance their employability and access to the labour market.

Improving the quality of VET provision is an effective way to improve its image and attractiveness. However, increasing quality is not enough in itself to change longstanding biases and perceptions of VET. Here, we focus on targeted measures to improve the appeal of VET.



Beneficiaries

 **NEETs in recent search**

 **NEETs in long-term search**

Addressing the problem

Policy makers and practitioners involved in the design and delivery of VET programmes that help NEETs to transition into employment may find useful the following tips.

Tip 1: Provide more and better information about VET programmes

The provision of accessible, user-friendly information on VET gives NEETs the possibility to make informed choices. Information on the content and level of VET programmes, learning methods (with an emphasis on practical learning) and labour market relevance can greatly improve the attractiveness of VET. For NEETs, there is particular value in promoting VET as a fast-track to gainful employment. Parents, school staff and career guidance counsellors can also be provided with relevant information that will help them to support NEETs to make informed choices. It is similarly useful to communicate VET programmes' information to employers so that they understand the skills and assets that programmes' graduates would bring to their businesses.

Tip 2: Develop actions to promote VET

Marketing and promotional activities can help to raise awareness of the value of VET. Social media campaigns, for example, are useful in improving the image of VET and making it attractive to NEETs. There is even scope to involve NEETs directly in such campaigns by giving them a platform to share their successful experiences. Competitions and awards can promote VET while simultaneously enhancing its quality. The [European Commission's Awards for VET Excellence](#) recognise and reward good practices in VET provision, creating a positive environment for organisations to develop innovative actions to raise the standards of VET. Similarly, promotional actions could celebrate the achievements of VET students who were previously NEET. Employers that actively promote VET as a route to career success (e.g. in careers fairs) use real-world evidence to improve its image among NEETs.

Tip 3: Provide role models for NEET achievements through VET

Role models are an important way of showing NEETs the potential benefits of taking up VET. Former and current VET students who share their successful experiences (e.g. on social media) can act as VET ambassadors by giving NEETs valuable, real world peer support and advice. Teachers or in-house trainers also have a role to play in promoting VET programmes by emphasising their practicality and links to the labour market.

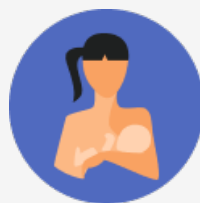
Tip 4: Provide financial incentives

Remuneration can motivate NEETs to undertake VET. Offering apprenticeships as part of VET programmes - whereby NEETs can acquire skills on the job while getting paid - can be an effective way to encourage NEETs to participate in VET. Other financial incentives for students, such as allowances, grants or training vouchers, can also be offered to VET students, and may be linked to attendance and/or performance. At organisation level, financial incentives such as wage subsidies could be offered to employers who are willing to hire, train and remunerate apprentices. Such incentives are particularly helpful for small businesses for which hiring apprentices can be costly. They can also encourage employers to consider suitable candidates that they may otherwise have overlooked.

Related risk factors



Low education level



Early motherhood



Discouragement

Related resources

Good practices

 Good practice

PLAY YOUR SKILLS

Mobile Gaming App for Identification and documentation of Skills and Competences for disadvantaged young NEETs

Getting NEETs back on track by the "VET-ification" of gaming to encourage them to take part in Vocational Education and Training (VET) or at least get in touch with VET.

 Austria  Germany  Ireland

 Italy  Portugal  Spain

 Good practice

Comprehensive pathways for the integration of young people

Programme for young people implemented by the cooperative "Jovent" offering comprehensive pathways of guidance, training, social inclusion and labour market insertion.

 Spain

Publications

 Publications

Eurofound on NEETs

Eurofound's thematic area on NEETs

The website summarizes Eurofound's extensive research on NEETs

 EU level

 Publications

European Commission: Sustainable activation of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Practitioner's toolkit

This toolkit is intended to assist you in designing and implementing your approach to activate people not in employment, education and training (NEETs). The toolkit provides concrete guidance and tools for PES to assess the NEET challenge and set priorities; draft and implement an Action Plan; and develop new tools, measures and competences from scratch.

 EU level

 Publications

 Publications

Lifelong Learning Programme: Preventing and contrasting the NEET phenomenon

How to work with NEETs - A Toolkit for local administrations

At EU level NEETs (Not in Employment Education or Training) are considered one of the most problematic groups in the context of youth unemployment. The aim of the NET not NEET project was to enhance networking and co-operation amongst public and private actors.

 EU level

Erasmus+ project: Training Materials for NEET Teachers

Work Pack of training materials, methodologies, course plans and class schedules to help deliver Effective Training for NEETs

This comprehensive document consists of training methods, schedules, core modules and effective element combinations in a toolkit style. There are themes and overviews of current training best practice, and specific case studies and examples outlining effective training. This training material pack is a 'ready to go' template for NEET teachers and training organisations. This template is made up of teaching materials which are broken down into individual modules to be completed in a 5-day course.

 EU level

 Publications

European Commission's Education and Training report

2024 edition of the annual comparative report

This report focuses on learning for sustainability, highlighting progress and gaps in teaching relevant competences for achieving the European Green Deal.

 EU level

 Publications

Concepts, consequences, and policy approaches for young NEETs

Research paper

This research paper examines the concept of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) and European Union's target to reduce NEET rates by 2030.

 EU level

 Publications

The Union of Skills

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

The European Commission's

 Publications

The role of NGOs in up- and reskilling

Exploring ESF+ supported initiatives in Austria, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain

This report explores the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in

The European Commission's communication on "The Union of Skills" emphasises the critical role of human capital in ensuring the EU's prosperity, economic resilience, and competitiveness.

 **EU level**

up- and reskilling, particularly in vocational education and training (VET) and adult learning for socially disadvantaged groups across Austria, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain.

 **EU level**

 Publications

EURES (European Employment Services) report

Report on labour shortages and surpluses in 2024

This is the seventh edition of the European Employment Services (EURES) report on labour market imbalances, exploring the status of labour shortages and surpluses in 2024 and how they developed over time.

 **EU level**

 Publications

Education and Training Monitor 2025

Report highlighting progress towards EU-level targets

The 2025 [Education and Training Monitor](#) follows the direction set out by the Union of Skills, the European Commission's overarching strategy for competitive and prosperous education and training systems.

 **EU level**

 Publications

InclusiVET Mapping Report

Characteristics, challenges & opportunities of inclusive learner engagement in VET

The report provides insights into under-represented groups of learners enrolled in VET in Europe and the extent to which VET programmes are inclusive to all. It aims to increase awareness of the barriers, challenges, and opportunities in engaging VET learners.

 **EU level**

 Publications

Impact evaluation of the projects implemented under the ALMA initiative

Final evaluation report 2026

The objective of this report is the evaluation of 28 projects under the [ALMA initiative](#), carried out with the European Social Fund Agency, and more specifically of the impact on participants and beneficiaries.

 **EU level**