



The Manual Personal Branding for N.E.E.T.s



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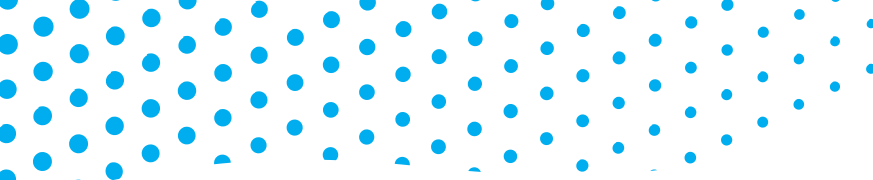
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Introduction

Introduction - Content

- Goal Setting and Planning for Success
- Understanding NEETs: Definition and Importance
- The Role of Youth Workers, Leaders, Educators, and Stakeholders
- Chapters of the Manual
- BAM Report Results



Introduction

1. Goal Setting and Planning for Success

The BAM Manual has been developed as a result of the BRAND ME project, [insert project number], by an international consortium dedicated to youth empowerment. It serves as a comprehensive resource for youth workers, leaders, educators, and stakeholders who are focused on supporting young people, particularly NEETs (those Not in Employment, Education, or Training). The primary goal of this manual is to provide practical tools, guidance, strategies, and best practices to facilitate the personal and professional development of NEETs through personal branding and career-building initiatives.

In addition to offering research-backed insights into the concept of personal branding, the manual provides actionable methods for youth workers to engage NEETs in effective career planning. It also aims to raise awareness about the significance of personal brand training as a vital element of youth development and to promote its implementation across various educational and employment contexts. The BAM Manual will play a crucial role in ensuring a holistic approach to youth engagement, fostering personal growth, and helping NEETs successfully re-enter education or the labor market.

2. Understanding NEETs: Definition and Importance

NEETs, a group of young people who are not engaged in employment, education, or training, represent a segment of the youth population that faces numerous barriers to social and economic inclusion. These young people often struggle with long-term unemployment, lack of qualifications, and disengagement from educational and societal systems. Addressing the challenges faced by NEETs is essential, as their marginalisation has an impact for both individuals and broader society, including increased economic strain and social inequality.



The BAM Manual recognizes the importance of supporting NEETs by fostering their personal and professional growth through the concept of personal branding. Personal branding empowers young people by enabling them to recognize and articulate their unique skills, strengths, and aspirations, making them more attractive to potential employers and educational opportunities. This manual will provide practical methods and exercises to help NEETs build their personal brand, develop relevant skills, and engage in active career development, thereby increasing their chances of securing employment or further education.

3. The Role of Youth Workers, Leaders, Educators, and Stakeholders

Youth workers, leaders, educators, and stakeholders play an important role in guiding young people through their journey of self-discovery and career development. They act as mentors, facilitators for NEETs, helping them navigate the challenges of entering or re-entering the labour market or educational systems. This manual is designed to equip these key actors with the tools and knowledge they need to effectively engage NEETs, using personal branding as a foundation for growth.

Through the BAM Manual, youth workers and educators will be provided with structured activities, exercises, and approaches that are adaptable to different settings and contexts. By leveraging the resources within this manual, they can create a supportive environment for NEETs to explore their interests, develop their skills, and connect with potential opportunities in education or the labour market. Stakeholders, including policymakers and NGOs, will also find value in this manual as it provides insights into the importance of personal branding and the role it can play in reducing youth unemployment and promoting social inclusion.

4. Chapters

The BAM Manual is structured into five key chapters, each designed to equip youth workers, educators, and stakeholders with the knowledge and tools necessary to support NEETs in their journey toward personal and professional development. The following chapters offer comprehensive guidance on engaging NEETs, building personal brands, developing career strategies, and preparing them for success in the job market.



1. Introduction to Engaging NEETs

This chapter provides an overview of NEETs—youth not in employment, education, or training—exploring the challenges they face and the importance of tailored support. It introduces key engagement strategies for youth workers and educators to re-integrate NEETs into educational and professional pathways.

2. Concept and Importance of Personal Branding

Here, you will learn about the power of personal branding as a tool for NEETs to recognize and promote their unique strengths. This chapter explains how building a personal brand can boost confidence, enhance employability, and foster long-term career success.

3. Active Career Development Strategies

This section delves into actionable career development strategies that can guide NEETs in exploring their interests, setting goals, and creating pathways toward meaningful employment or education.

4. Essential Skills Training for NEETs

Focused on building core competencies, this chapter offers practical approaches to help NEETs develop the essential skills—such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability—that are critical for personal and professional growth.

5. Successful Hiring Practices

In this chapter, you'll find best practices for preparing NEETs for the hiring process, from creating standout resumes to mastering interview techniques, ensuring they are well-equipped to secure meaningful employment.

5. Brand Me Report Results

The BAM Report, the first key outcome of the Brand Me Project, identifies 12 essential training needs for NEETs in employment, personal branding, professionalism, and labor market readiness. These findings will guide the creation of targeted educational materials and resources.



The report also provides insights into NEETs' education and career guidance experiences, as well as their understanding of personal branding and career development in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Austria, Romania, and Lithuania, based on national research surveys conducted in these countries.

The identified skills were grouped into three main areas: personal branding skills, digital skills, and entrepreneurial skills, covering competencies like communication, data management, creativity, and motivation and perseverance.

1. Collaboration and relationship management
2. Analytical thinking
3. Communication and writing skills
4. Networking
5. Brand management and positioning
6. Competitive analysis
7. Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content
8. Managing data, information and digital content
9. Evaluating data, information and digital content
10. Creativity
11. Vision
12. Motivation and perseverance



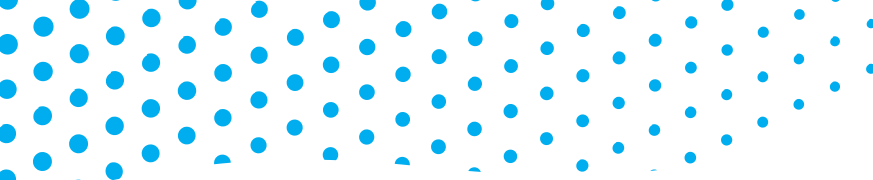


Module 1

Introduction to Engaging NEETs

Module 1 - Content

- Overview of NEETs: Definition and Characteristics
- Importance of Engagement for NEETs
- Challenges Faced by NEETs in Education and Labor Market
- Overcoming Barriers to Career Development
- Resources



Introduction to Engaging NEETs

1. Overview of NEETs: Definition and Characteristics

The acronym NEETs stands for those young people who are 'not in employment, education or training, who - regardless of their educational level - are disengaged from both work and education.

NEETs, originating from the UK in the mid-1990s, represent young people not engaged in education, employment, or training due to changes in benefits. It arose as a response to changes in benefits for 16 and 17-year-olds in 1988, which removed entitlement to income support/supplementary benefit in exchange for a youth training guarantee. Initially called "Status Zero," the term lacked clarity, leading to the adoption of "NEET" as a neutral label. It gained recognition in the UK with the publication of "Bridging the gap" in 1999 and spread across EU Member States.

The Europe 2020 strategy highlighted the importance of monitoring NEETs during the economic crisis, leading to a standardised definition as young people “neither in employment nor in any education or training.” This definition aligns with the International Labour Organization's criteria for unemployed or inactive individuals. NEETs face higher risks of poor employment outcomes and social exclusion due to disengagement from formal channels of human capital accumulation.

As a result of this disengagement, irrespective of other differences between them, all NEETs share a common status of not accumulating human capital through formal channels and therefore have a greater risk of future poor employment outcomes and social exclusion.

The NEET indicator is built each year using the EU Labour Force Survey according to the following equation:



The NEET indicator is built each year using the EU Labour Force Survey according to the following equation:

$$NEET_{Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of young people not in employment, education or training}}{\text{Total population of young people}}$$

Operationally, the NEET indicator provides a snapshot of young people not engaged in employment, education, or training. Quarterly surveys collect data on employment status and educational participation, categorising individuals as NEET if they are neither employed nor enrolled in education. This data is averaged annually to provide a broader overview.

Today young people are changing jobs more frequently and it takes longer to get established on the labour market. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the transition from education to work is smooth and also highlight the risks of being neither in employment nor in education or training. There are risks, both for the individual and in the long run for society, if young adults find themselves disengaged from both education and the labour market. While background information is provided for those aged 15-34, the main age group that is studied in this article consists of young adults aged 15 to 29. For this age group, the European Union has set an EU-level target stipulating that the share of young people neither in employment nor in education or training should be less than 9 % by 2030. In 2022, an average of 11.7 % was identified as NEET within the EU. However, there are differences between Member States as several countries have already reached the goal for 2030.

Figure 1; Source: Eurostat 2022 - [Eurostat statistics](#)

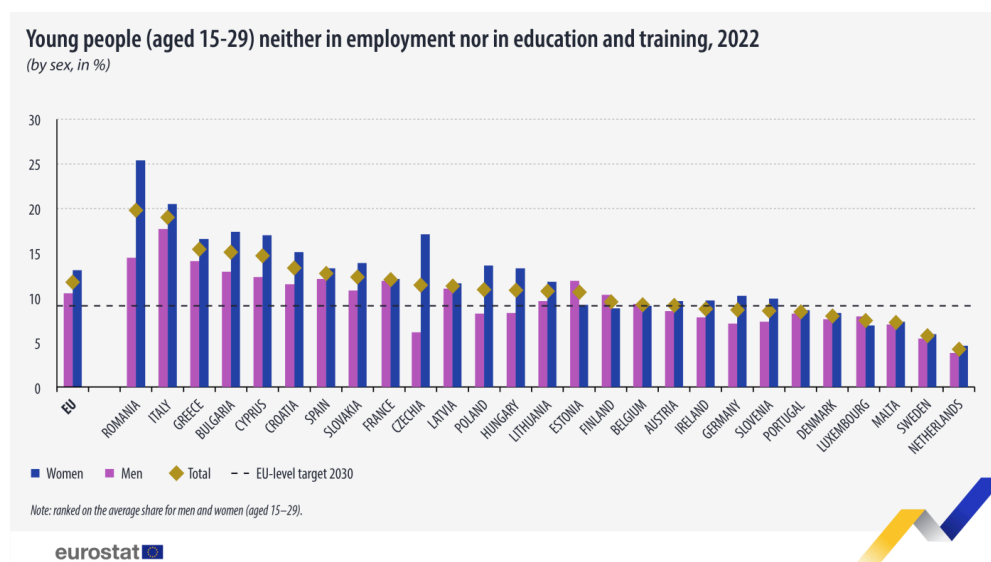
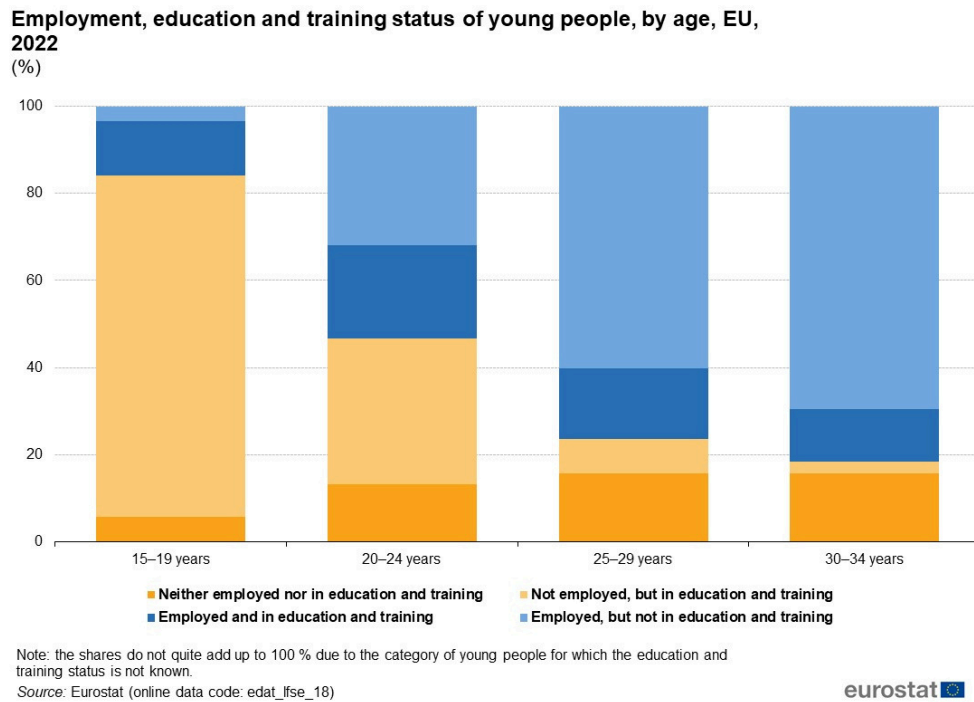


Figure 2; Source: Eurostat - [Eurostat statistics](#)



In Figure 2 the transition from education to work is illustrated by showing both the employment and the education or training status for young people aged between 15 and 34 by 5-year age groups. The figure shows that being employed (but not in education and training) increases with age, while the opposite is true for education (not employed but in education and training) where the share decreases considerably with age. Additionally, in 2022, 12.4 % of young people aged 15–19 in the EU were both employed and in education and thus made use of this more flexible transition from education to work. The share rose to 21.4 % among those aged 20–24, before falling somewhat for older age groups, 16.2 % among those aged 25–29 and 11.9 % for those aged 30–34.

An important factor when studying young adults and their transition from education to work is the risk of becoming a person neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET). In Figure 1 it is shown that the level of NEETs in the respective age groups varies and that the share increases with age. This pattern is plausible since a vast majority of young people aged 15–19 in the EU remain in education and training, either formal or non-informal. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that relatively few people in this age group (5.8 %) were NEETs in 2022.

2. Importance of Engagement for NEETs

The phenomenon of NEETs, young people not in education, employment, or training, represents a complex issue with lasting consequences. However, a crucial aspect in addressing this challenge lies in engagement.

Here's why fostering engagement is critical for NEETs:

- **Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage:** Disengagement from education and work can create a vicious cycle for NEETs, making it harder for them to find future employment. This lack of employment can lead to isolation and decreased motivation to re-engage. By promoting engagement in education, training, or volunteer opportunities, we can help NEETs develop skills and confidence, increasing their chances of securing meaningful employment.
- **Boosting Mental Well-being:** Disconnection from social circles often accompanies disengagement from traditional pathways, leading NEETs to feel isolated, lonely, and even depressed. Engaging in activities, whether educational, vocational, or social, can provide a sense of purpose, belonging, and accomplishment. This social interaction and the development of a support network can significantly improve the mental well-being of NEETs.
- **Identifying Underlying Issues:** Engagement helps identify and address underlying issues contributing to a young person's disengagement. Interactions with educators, mentors, or support workers during these activities can reveal barriers like learning difficulties or mental health challenges. Early identification allows for the implementation of support systems to address these challenges, paving the way for successful reintegration into education or employment.
- **Empowering Choice and Building Confidence:** Engagement activities empower NEETs to explore options, discover strengths, and make informed choices about their future pathways. This fosters a sense of agency and boosts confidence, motivating them to pursue fulfilling careers or educational paths.



3. Challenges Faced by NEETs in Education and Labor Market

The education system in many countries faces systemic issues such as lack of student motivation, low literacy levels, and challenges in youth career development. Additionally, there's resistance to adopting modern teaching methods. To address these issues, key stakeholders like businesses, NGOs, and educational institutions must advocate for and support structural reforms in the education system.

In the education system two key issues have been identified, which require urgent action:

- The main issue with the curriculum and teaching methods lies in their poor practical orientation, excessive content volume, and lack of interactivity. This passive approach falls short of students' expectations and hampers their learning experience. To address this, modern technologies should be integrated into learning to stimulate creative and analytical thinking. Additionally, introducing games and competitive elements across all educational levels can enhance communication, teamwork, and engagement among students.
- The second major problem area concerns the method of financing educational institutions. The formula "more students = more funding" dramatically lowers the quality of education and the confidence in educational institutions - illiterate young people acquire educational degrees and the proportion of functional illiterates becomes worryingly high.

The surveys have shown the lack or low level of education to be a major determining factors for the future of young people, and early school leaving - a key cause for the acquisition of a long-term NEET status.

NEETs pose a significant challenge in addressing youth unemployment at the EU level. There's a correlation between NEET rates and unemployment, indicating the need for territorially differentiated measures.



Top tips



Figure 3: Tips for reducing the risk of becoming a NEET;

Source: European Commission - [European Commission. Statistics](#)

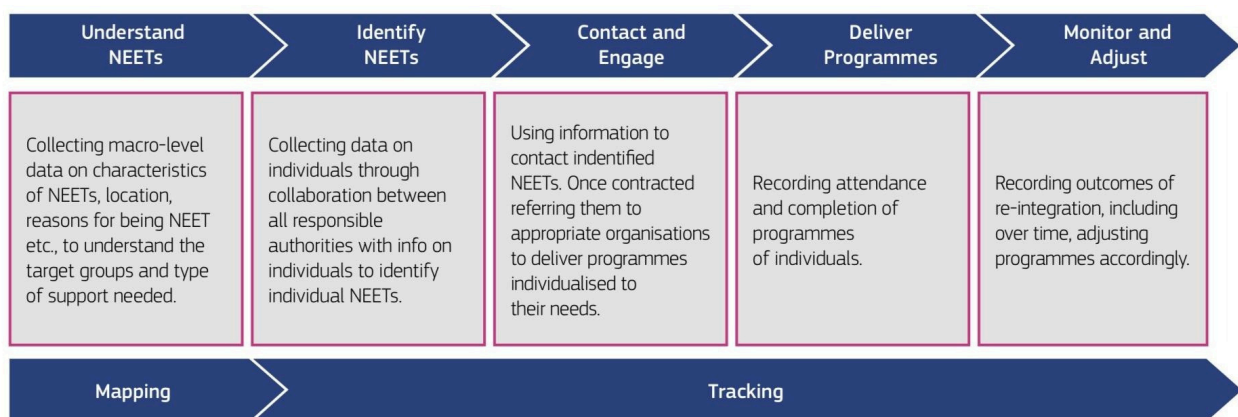
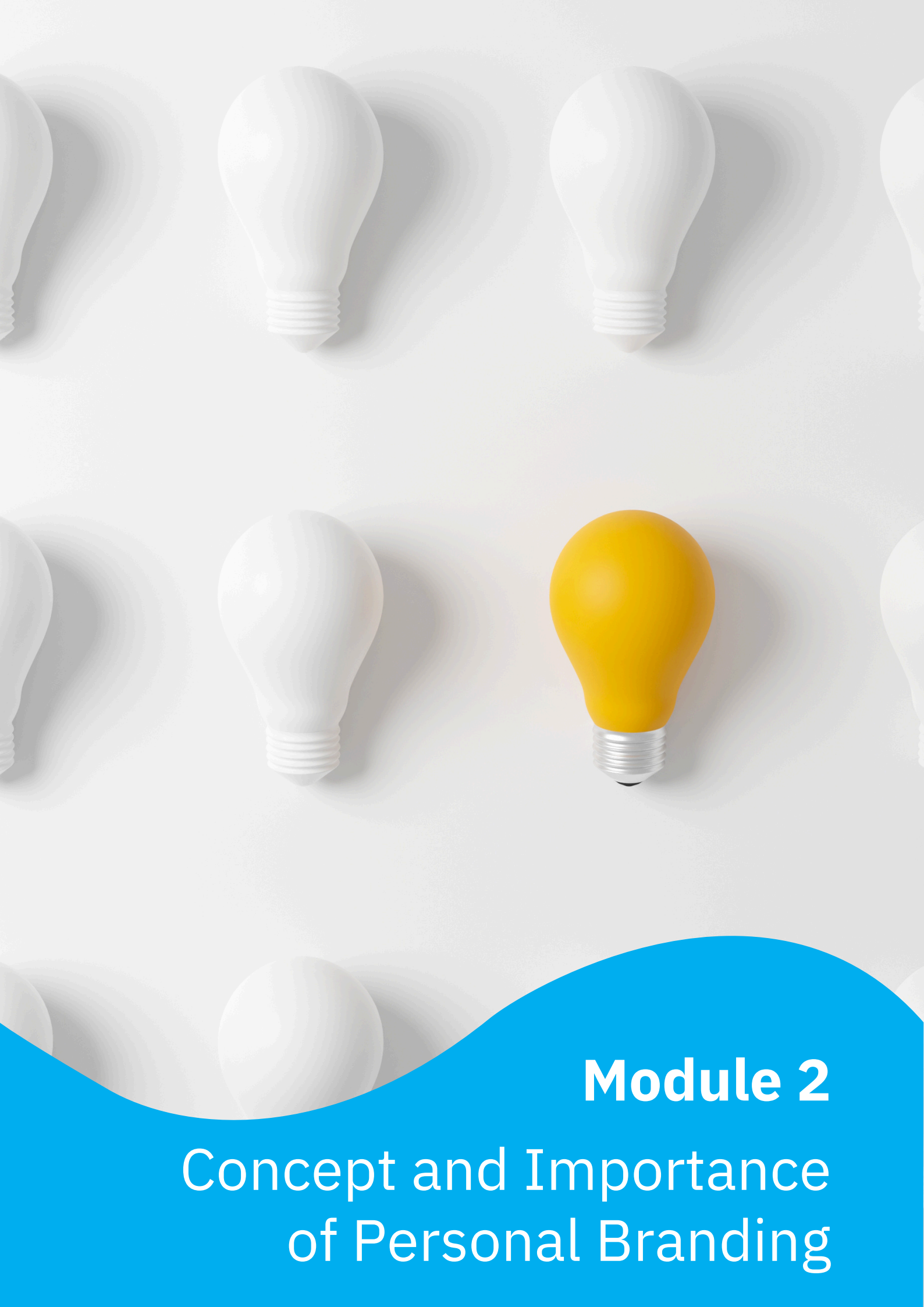


Figure 4: Mapping and tracking the context of outreach, engagement and activation;

Source: ICF - [European Commission. Statistics](#)

4. Resources

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Module 2

Concept and Importance of Personal Branding

Module 2 - Content

- Understanding Personal Branding
- Importance of Personal Branding for NEETs
- Strategies for Building a Strong Personal Brand
- Case Studies and Best Practices in Personal Branding for NEETs
- Resources



Concept and Importance of Personal Branding

1. Understanding Personal Branding

The practice of deliberately creating and advancing a person's unique professional identity and reputation is known as personal branding. It entails identifying and presenting one's special qualities, abilities, principles, and subject matter knowledge in order to make a good and lasting impression on others both online and off.

Personal branding is all about developing a powerful and genuine image that makes a person stand out from others in their sector or area, much as how businesses develop their brands to stand out in the marketplace. It includes a range of components, such as:

1. **Self-Discovery:** Discovering one's strengths, passions, values, and career objectives lays the groundwork for personal branding.
 2. **Consistency:** Consistently presenting oneself across online platforms (such as social media and personal websites) and offline interactions (like networking gatherings and conferences) is crucial.
 3. **Authenticity:** Striving for authenticity entails staying true to oneself and refraining from embellishments or deceitful portrayals.
 4. **Value proposition:** Pinpointing and conveying an individual's distinct value to their field or community is essential.
 5. **Target audience:** Grasping the specific audience or community one seeks to connect with and tailoring communications accordingly is key.
 6. **Online presence:** Leveraging social media platforms, personal websites, blogs, and other digital avenues to exhibit expertise, disseminate valuable insights, and interact with the audience is imperative.
 7. **Networking:** Cultivating and nurturing professional connections to broaden one's sphere of influence within their industry is vital.
 8. **Personal mission statement:** Crafting a succinct and transparent statement that encapsulates one's mission and aspirations is crucial.
 9. **Reputation management:** Taking pre-emptive measures to oversee one's online reputation and address any potential concerns is essential.
- 

In the current professional environment, personal branding is essential as it may lead to new prospects, draw in prospective customers or employers, and build reputation and trust in a certain industry. It enables people to take charge of their professional story, influence how others see them, and leave a lasting impression on their community or business.

2 Importance of Personal Branding for NEETs

In today's competitive landscape, where opportunities abound and attention spans are fleeting, personal branding has emerged as a vital tool, particularly for NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Despite the challenges they face, NEETs possess unique skills, experiences, and perspectives that can be leveraged through effective personal branding.

Personal branding is crucial for NEETs in today's competitive job market, as it allows them to showcase their unique skills, experiences, and perspectives. This helps them stand out and foster credibility and trust among potential employers, clients, or collaborators. A strong personal brand opens doors to various opportunities, such as job offers, freelance projects, mentorship, and networking connections. By attracting opportunities aligned with their interests, skills, and aspirations, NEETs can propel them towards their desired path. Personal branding empowers NEETs to advocate for themselves effectively. By articulating their strengths, accomplishments, and goals, they can assert their value and potential, whether in job interviews, networking events, or online interactions.

Creating a personal brand is crucial for NEETs, as it involves introspection, goal-setting, and continuous refinement. This process helps identify areas for improvement, acquire new skills, and enhance employability. A well-established personal brand can streamline the transition into education, employment, or training, providing a cohesive narrative, highlightable skills, and reassuring stakeholders. Reflecting on strengths, values, and goals fosters self-awareness and confidence, while celebrating achievements and embracing uniqueness develops resilience to setbacks, essential for navigating job market challenges.

In conclusion, personal branding is not just a luxury but a necessity for NEETs seeking to carve out their path in today's dynamic world. By strategically crafting their personal brand, NEETs can amplify their visibility, credibility, and opportunities, ultimately unlocking their full potential and achieving their aspirations.

3. Strategies for Building a Strong Personal Brand

Building a powerful personal brand has several advantages. First of all, by emphasising their special talents and abilities, it helps people stand out from their peers. This distinction builds loyalty and trust among current relationships in addition to drawing in new business or employers.

Furthermore, having a strong personal brand makes new chances possible. A developed personal brand gives people more visibility and recognition in their field, whether it is through speaking engagements or features in trade journals.

Start by identifying the unique strengths, values, passions, and goals. What sets you apart from others in your field? What do you want to be known for? Clarifying your brand identity forms the foundation of your personal branding efforts.

Develop a compelling story that communicates who you are, what you stand for, and why you do what you do. Your narrative should resonate with your target audience and evoke an emotional connection. Share your journey, experiences, and achievements authentically to engage and inspire others.

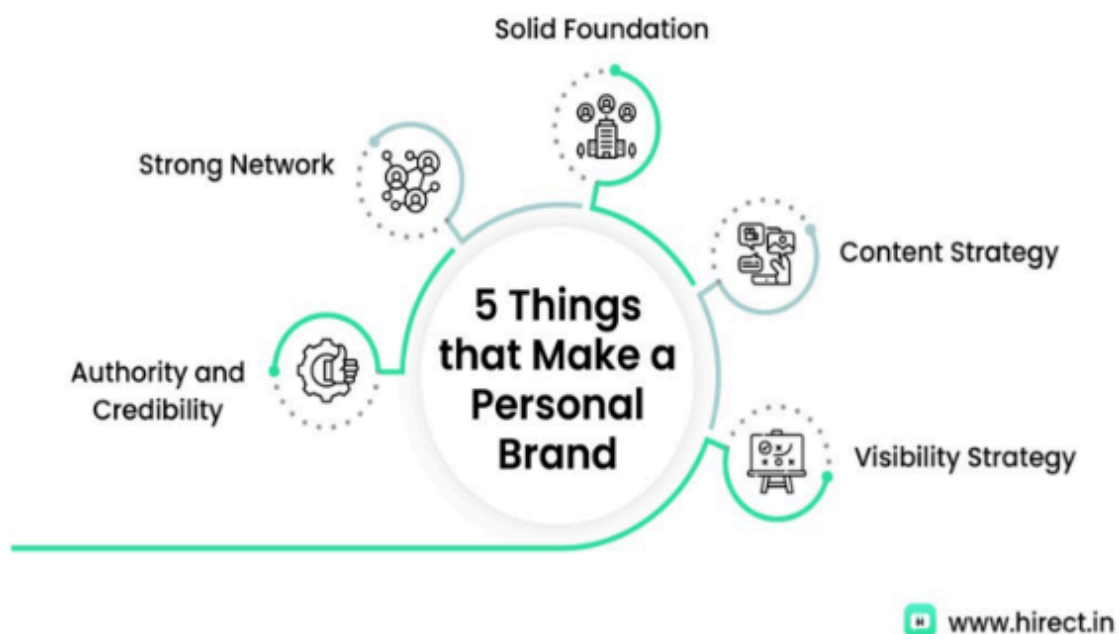


Figure 2. Strategy to make a personal brand. Source: www.hirect.in

Consistency is the key to make it happen. Maintain consistency in how you present yourself across various platforms and interactions. From your social media profiles and website to your networking conversations and professional engagements, ensure that your messaging, tone, and visuals align with your brand identity. Consistency builds trust and reinforces your brand image.

Position yourself as a thought leader in your niche by sharing valuable insights, knowledge, and expertise. Create content that educates, informs, or entertains your audience, whether through blog posts, videos, podcasts, or social media updates. Establishing yourself as an authority in your field enhances your credibility and visibility.

Cultivate meaningful connections with your audience by actively engaging with them online and offline. Respond to comments, messages, and inquiries promptly. Participate in relevant conversations, forums, and communities. Building a genuine rapport with your audience fosters loyalty and advocacy for your brand.

Solicit feedback from your audience, peers, mentors, and clients to gain valuable insights into how your brand is perceived. Be open to constructive criticism and use it to refine and evolve your brand strategy. Continuously monitor trends, industry developments, and audience preferences to stay relevant and adaptable.

Continuously invest in your personal and professional growth to strengthen your brand. Acquire new skills, expand your knowledge, and pursue opportunities for learning and development. Demonstrating a commitment to growth and improvement enhances your value proposition and reinforces your brand image.

Build and nurture relationships with key influencers, collaborators, and stakeholders in your industry. Attend events, conferences, and networking gatherings to expand your network and visibility. Collaborate on projects, contribute to joint ventures, and seek mutually beneficial partnerships to amplify your reach and impact.

Regularly monitor your online reputation and proactively manage your digital footprint. Google yourself periodically to assess what information is available about you online. Ensure that your online profiles are professional, up-to-date, and aligned with your brand image. Address any negative feedback or misinformation promptly and professionally.

Above all, remain true to yourself and your values throughout your personal branding journey. Authenticity breeds trust and fosters genuine connections with your audience. Let your personality shine through in your interactions, content, and branding efforts. Your authenticity is what makes your personal brand truly memorable and impactful.

4 Case Studies and Best Practices in Personal Branding for NEETs

Personal branding is a powerful tool for NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) to distinguish themselves in a competitive landscape and showcase their skills, passions, and potential. By strategically crafting their personal brand, NEETs can attract opportunities, build credibility, and pave the way for their professional success. To achieve the desired result, you should follow and engage in the following best practices:

Create a professional online presence through platforms like LinkedIn, personal websites, or professional social media profiles. Ensure that your online profiles are up-to-date, professional, and aligned with your personal brand. Share relevant content, achievements, and insights to showcase your expertise and engage with your audience. Create a portfolio showcasing your work, projects, or accomplishments. Whether it's through a personal website, online portfolio platform, or social media, highlight your skills and experiences to demonstrate your capabilities to potential employers or clients. Include samples of your work, testimonials, and any relevant certifications or awards.

Share valuable content related to your field or interests to establish yourself as a thought leader or expert. Write blog posts, create videos, or contribute to industry publications to share your insights, experiences, and expertise. Consistency is key - regularly update your content to stay relevant and keep your audience engaged. Authenticity is crucial in personal branding. Be genuine, transparent, and true to yourself in your branding efforts. Share your story, experiences, and challenges authentically to connect with your audience on a deeper level. People are drawn to authenticity and are more likely to trust and engage with individuals who are genuine. Solicit feedback from peers, mentors, or industry professionals to gain insights into how your personal brand is perceived. Use feedback to refine and iterate your branding strategy, adjusting as needed to better align with your goals and audience. Continuous improvement is key to building a strong and impactful personal brand.

Personal branding offers NEETs a powerful means to showcase their skills, expertise, and potential to the world. By following these best practices, NEETs can effectively differentiate themselves, attract opportunities, and pave the way for their professional success. Embrace personal branding as a strategic tool to take control of your professional journey and unlock new possibilities in your chosen field.

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Module 3

Active Career Development Strategies

Module 3 - Contents

- Goal Setting and Planning for Success
- Exploring Career Pathways and Opportunities
- Developing Essential Skills for Career Advancement
- Overcoming Barriers to Career Development
- Resources

Active Career Development Strategies

1. Goal Setting and Planning for Success

A huge part of pursuing a professional career in the dynamic landscape of the modern labour market is goal-setting. Goal-setting refers to the “process of defining specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound objectives that an individual or organisation aims to achieve” (Mindmesh, n.d.). According to Houston (2019), goal-setting is simply the process by which one seeks to pursue “the object or aim of an action”, that significantly impacts overall performance. For NEETs – individuals not currently in education, employment, or training – focusing on goal-setting becomes particularly important. In this chapter, we will explore the fundamentals of goal-setting and planning for success in the context of personal branding, shedding light on why this is beneficial and vital for NEETs seeking to integrate into the competitive job market.

There is “a direct correlation between setting goals and achieving success” (Perry, 2023): when defined accurately and properly, goals can help you to grow and maintain your focus on the most important aspects. If one wants to succeed, goal-setting is mandatory in order to ensure “focus and direction”, get a “benchmark for determining whether you are actually succeeding” (MindTools, n.d.).

There’s an interesting approach to start setting your goals. If achieving goals is taken seriously, one should start not with a question “What does success look like to you? In very specific terms, what do you want to achieve?”, but rather questioning, “What kind of challenge do I want?” (James Clear, n.d.). It is important to take notice that “goal-setting is not only about choosing the rewards you want to enjoy, but also the costs you are willing to pay” (James Clear, n.d.).

Goals can be classified into one of the three types: “process, performance, and outcome goals” (CALE Learning Enhancement, Eastern Washington University, n.d.) (see Picture 1). Process goals “deals with the technique or strategy necessary to perform well” (The Peak Performance Center, n.d.) and are used to improve the implementation of a specific skill, focusing on individual actions.

Performance goals “are usually expressed in terms of personal achievement”, specifying the results of a performance (Future Learn, n.d.). This type of a goal is characterised by flexibility and dependance on individual control; also it’s typical for a less competitive environment “compared to outcome goals” but are still affected by external factors (Future Learn, n.d.). Outcome goals connect the results from the previous goal types; in other words, “accomplishing these goals will be the result of proper application of your process and performance goals” (TritonWear, n.d.).



Figure 1. Three Types of Goals (The Peak Performance Center, n.d.; Srinivaas, 2020)

According to Picture 1, there’s a recommended sequence of steps when considering or setting goals. First of all, specific actions formed as process goals need to be set – they must be achievable in a fairly short period of time and sufficiently clear to assess whether they have been achieved. For example, “going to the gym 4 times a week” or “walking 10,000 steps each day” (Srinivaas, 2020) are clearly defined process goals. Performance goals are needed as additional ways to achieve outcome – the highest impact – goals. It’s important to consider the process that leads to achieving the goals and what habits are required to build, what controllable actions and behaviours need to be adjusted. For example, to achieve “going to the gym 4 times a week” as a process goal, one needs to consider purchasing a gym membership, find motivation in joining a sports club with friends or being part of a community that is actively involved in sports. The possible performance goal in this case could be “increase the number of times you go to the gym” or “find 3 friends to go to the gym with”.

Lastly, outcome goals are related to a long-term mindset – one or two goals that are important not only in terms of the present, but also in future perspective. If set correctly, process and performance goals, complementing each other, should contribute to achieving desired outcome goals. An example of an outcome goal can be “staying healthy and getting in shape by the end of the year”. From a career development field perspective, the outcome goal could be “finding a job that is value-driven and promotes growth by the end of the year”, the performance goal would be “find at least three job offers every month that meet your expectations”, and the process goal would be “look for the job offers two times a week”.

Other common types of goals also need to be considered. Aside from the process, performance and outcome goals, there are short-term and long-term, personal, professional, academic and social, financial goals (Perry, 2023). First of all, short-term goals can be understood as yearly, monthly, weekly or daily goals, and long-term goals require several months or even years (Perry, 2023). Personal goals are related to individual life, professional and academic goals – to career and education accordingly, social goals – to building and fostering relationships, and financial goals are associated with regulation of revenue and expenditure. Thus, goals are not only differentiated by interdependence or process, but also by the time taken to achieve the goal or the areas of life.



There are a few steps to follow in order to set successful goals (see Table 1).

Table 1. Steps to a successful goal-setting process (Mindmesh, n.d.)

Steps to goal-setting	Explanation and examples
Identify the desired outcome	→ Define specific outcomes → Apply <i>SMART technique</i> (specific, measurable, achievable / attainable, relevant, time-bound / timely)
Develop a plan of action	→ Make bigger goals into small and manageable steps → Action plan components have to follow each other in a logical sequence (for example, once a specific task is completed, its result can be applied to another task)
Set a deadline for completion	→ A timeline is needed to “give purpose and urgency” (Mindmesh, n.d.) to goals
Assess the resources needed	→ How many people will be involved? → What skills are required? → What resources are needed?
Implement the plan	→ Start of implementation → Create a reward system for motivation
Track progress	→ Identify <i>KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)</i>

A set of specific skills can also contribute to goal-setting success: for example, ability to “articulate one’s goals clearly; break goals down into small, manageable pieces; create a timeline for achieving set goals; develop a plan of action to achieve goals; track progress and adjust plans as needed” (MindMesh, n.d.) is useful. Also there are five principles that complement this set of skills and consist of commitment, clarity, challenge, complexity and feedback (see Picture 2).



Figure 2. The Five Principles of Successful Goal Setting (Houston, 2019, as written by Locke and Latham, 1990)

It is important to focus on the first stage of goal-setting, which involves the SMART technique (see Picture 3): it is the setting of more specific goals that helps to create an action plan that is easier to implement, to set start and end dates, estimate the resources needed, track progress and expect better results that are easier to measure in terms of effectiveness.



Picture 3. Setting SMART goals (BiteSize Learning, n.d.)

The first step to a SMART goal is to ensure that it is specific – “clearly identifies what is expected, why it is important, who’s involved, where it is going to happen, and which resources are involved in its achievement” (BiteSize Learning, n.d.). In other words, similarly as in journalism, a specific goal answers the ‘W’ questions: “What, Why, Who, Where, and Which” (BiteSize Learning, n.d.). Another step when forming the goal is to ensure that it is measurable, answering the questions “How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?” (BiteSize Learning, n.d.). Goals should also be attainable, “with the available resources and the effort one’s willing to put in, to stay within the realm of possibility” (TritonWear, n.d.). Relevance of the goal is also important: to evaluate this component, questions “Does this seem worthwhile? Is this the right time? Does this match our other efforts and needs?” might help (BiteSize Learning, n.d.). Lastly, the goal should be time-bound or time-based, with a clear start and end date: it is advisable to “set one or more target dates – the “by whens” to guide your goal to successful and timely completion” (CALE Learning Enhancement, Eastern Washington University, n.d.).

Setting realistic goals is important for several reasons. First of all, it gives a sense of direction, “a long-term plan to move on from dreaming to actually doing”; it changes the perspective and provides “a whole picture”; it motivates you and gives more control of what’s happening in your life (Perry, 2023). Moreover, realistic goals “build confidence and improve self-esteem”, facilitates the decision-making process, and they open up new opportunities (Matyska, 2023).

Mastering goal-setting is a powerful tool for NEETs seeking to re-enter the workforce. By implementing the SMART technique and understanding the different types of goals (process, performance, and outcome), NEETs can create a clear roadmap for success. This roadmap, built on achievable milestones, will keep them motivated and focused on their ultimate objective – securing a fulfilling career path. It’s important to remember that goal-setting is a continuous process – as you progress, re-evaluate and adjust your goals as needed to ensure they remain relevant and attainable. With dedication and a well-defined plan, NEETs can leverage the power of goal-setting to overcome challenges and reintegrate into the dynamic world of work.



2. Exploring Career Pathways and Opportunities

Once long-term and short-term goals oriented to fulfilment and development are set, it is important (especially for NEETs) to adapt good practice into the career opportunities, while searching for the most suitable professional path and shaping a professional brand. In this chapter, we will explore the important steps of career exploration and figure out how to search for potential opportunities.

When exploring different career possibilities, the first steps are usually “investigating what’s out there and finding opportunities that interest you so that you can decide what you need to do next” ([BigFuture](#), n.d.). When searching for the most suitable career, try to answer the first question “What matters to you?”: interest surveys, career quizzes might be helpful to make a decision. The next step involves considering your values and skills: in other words, try to align what’s important to you and what you’re capable of doing. Researching potential career options might be the best step afterwards; and the leading questions might facilitate this process. For example, when collecting information, ask yourself, “What people in this career do?”, “In what type of environment do people in this career work?”, “What salary do people in this career earn?”, “Is this career growing?”, “What education or training is needed to enter this career?” ([BigFuture](#), n.d.). The following step is to set a goal related to pursuing this career: apply SMART technique and other strategies mentioned in the first chapter.

There are multiple websites that can be explored to navigate career fields. For example, Glassdoor “provides company reviews and salary details, valuable insights into company cultures and working experiences”, Indeed offers “job listings from multiple sources”, and Career One Stop opens access to “informative videos, salary data, and educational prerequisites” ([Space Talent](#), n.d.). These websites, along with the guidance of mentioned steps, can act as a powerful tool to navigate an individual way through a wide range of careers.



3. Developing Essential Skills for Career Advancement

In order to be as successful as possible in the chosen career path, it is important to not only make the right decisions based on your values, expectations, priorities and goals, but also to develop the right skills. In this chapter, we will explore the skills-development process when searching for a career and achieving excellence in the chosen field.

Skills are known as “building blocks” for a successful career (Career Assessment, 2023). Skill development is the continuous process of expanding the ability to perform tasks, solve problems and add value in a workplace. It’s understood as “the process of improving specific skills to be more efficient and effective when you perform a task”, and this could be a type of upskilling (improving skills in the current role), cross-skilling (learning new skills for the role that you’re in), or reskilling (learning new skills to pursue other roles) (Coursera, 2024). Skills can be divided into “soft” and “hard” (technical) (see Picture 4): first category includes “personality traits, social competencies and skills, knowledge, and abilities used to perform interpersonal activities and unique tasks”, and the second one is defined as “specific competencies, skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to perform a specific task or role” (Andreev, 2021).

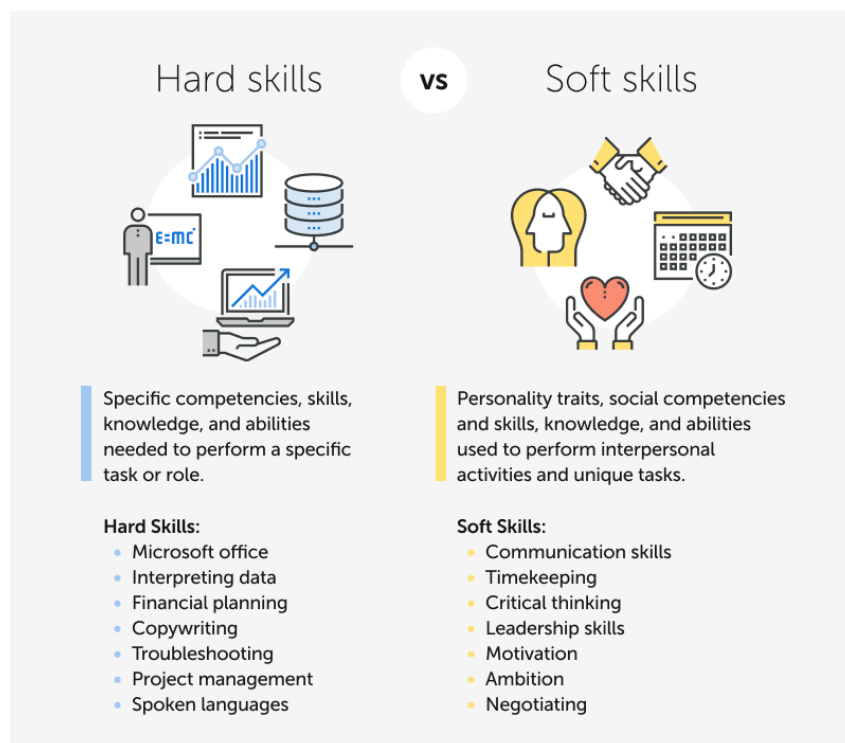


Figure 4. Examples of hard and soft skills (Andreev, 2021)

First of all, for developing essential skills, it's important to gain experience and be proactive (Pepperdine Seaver College, n.d.). Joining a student or professional organisation that is related to a chosen field of interest is advisable; getting involved in volunteering, activities that show leadership, getting a part-time job or internship; participating in programs or events with professionals could not only expand your perspective and knowledge base, but also become a great way for networking.

Moreover, there are several steps to work on developing your skills. The first step is to think about your individual goals and the reasons for improving them, which is followed by thinking about what you need in order to reach it (in other words, identifying your skills gap) and considering the category of chosen skills. Further steps include networking, coaching, researching, taking courses and practising (Coursera, 2024) – a chosen way to improve and make progress is up to an individual's preferences.

4. Overcoming Barriers to Career Development

Whether it's setting goals, finding the right career path or developing skills, there are bound to be obstacles, setbacks or challenges. In this chapter, we will look into the ways of how to overcome these challenges and continue pursuing goals or a desired career.

There are a few common barriers when it comes to career development, including lack of opportunities (employers hesitating to give a chance), lack of initiative, and lack of clarity in defining goals (MBA Discovery, n.d.). The key to overcoming them is showing initiative and making room to grow: communicating with professionals, analysing motivations, networking, researching, applying self-reflection and creative thinking (Harvard Business Review, 2023). When applied, these techniques contribute to “making the impossible possible”.



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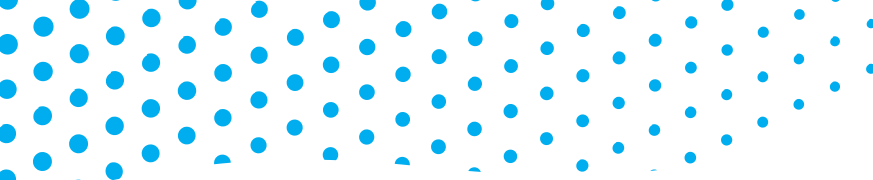


Module 4

Essential Skills Training for NEETs

Module 4 - Content

- Communication Skills: Written and Verbal Comm.
- Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking
- Digital Literacy and Technology Skills
- Adaptability and Resilience in the Workplace
- Resources



Essential Skills Training for NEETs

1. Communication Skills: Written and Verbal Comm.

As a youth worker dedicated to supporting NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), your role in helping these young individuals develop essential communication skills is vital. Communication skills are foundational for their success, enabling them to express themselves clearly, build relationships, and succeed in the professional environment.

Communication encompasses various forms: written, verbal, non-verbal, visual, and listening. Each type plays a role in how we convey and receive information. For NEETs, honing written and verbal communication skills is particularly crucial, as these are the most frequently used in professional and social settings.

Written communication involves expressing ideas through text. This could be in the form of emails, reports, or social media posts. The key to effective written communication is clarity and conciseness. Messages should be straightforward and to the point, avoiding unnecessary jargon. Proper grammar and spelling are essential to maintain professionalism and credibility. Additionally, a well-structured text, using headings, bullet points, and paragraphs, helps in organizing thoughts logically, making the information easier to read and understand.

In contrast, **verbal communication** involves communication that is crucial in scenarios such as job interviews, presentations, and everyday workplace conversations. Effective verbal communication requires clarity and articulation, ensuring that the speaker's message is understood. Active listening is also a vital component, involving giving full attention to the speaker, understanding their message, responding thoughtfully, and remembering what was said. Non-verbal cues such as body language, eye contact, and facial expressions significantly impact how verbal messages are received and interpreted.



Communication and NEETS: Practical Examples

When guiding NEETs in developing these skills, practical exercises and real-life examples can be highly beneficial. For instance, writing a professional email is a common task. A clear and relevant subject line, a concise body that introduces the sender, highlights relevant skills and experiences, and concludes with contact information, is a good practice. Emphasize the importance of using a professional tone and proofreading before sending.

Conducting a job interview is another critical area where verbal communication skills are tested. Preparing by researching the company and the role, starting the interview with a firm handshake, maintaining eye contact, and providing clear, concise answers are important steps. Encourage NEETs to practice these scenarios through role-playing exercises, which can boost their confidence and improve their speaking skills.

Best Practices for Youth Workers

Creating a supportive environment is also crucial. Offer platforms for NEETs to showcase their communication skills through internships and community projects. Mentorship programs can connect them with professionals who can provide guidance and insight into effective communication in various settings.

By focusing on these strategies, you can significantly impact NEETs' ability to communicate effectively, thus enhancing their career development prospects.

As a youth worker, you can support NEETs by organizing writing workshops where they can practice creating resumes, cover letters, and professional emails. Providing templates and examples can guide them in developing these documents. Interactive activities such as debates, group discussions, and public speaking exercises can enhance both verbal and written communication skills. Constructive feedback on their written assignments and presentations will help them understand their strengths and areas for improvement.



2. Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking

PROBLEM-SOLVING	CRITICAL THINKING
Problem-solving involves identifying, analyzing, and resolving obstacles or issues encountered in various contexts. It requires practical approaches to finding solutions, often involving creativity, resourcefulness, and persistence.	On the other hand, critical thinking is the ability to objectively analyze and evaluate information to form reasoned judgments or decisions. It involves questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and considering different perspectives to make well-informed conclusions.

While problem-solving focuses on finding practical solutions to specific challenges, critical thinking delves deeper into the analysis and evaluation of information to make informed decisions or judgments. However, these processes often overlap, as effective problem-solving requires critical thinking skills to assess the situation, analyze potential solutions, and evaluate their feasibility and effectiveness.

Similarly, critical thinking often involves problem-solving as individuals navigate complex issues by identifying problems, gathering relevant information, and generating potential solutions before reaching a reasoned conclusion.

In which kind of workplace scenario can NEETs apply these skills?

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Technical Issue Resolution: Imagine a NEET starting a new job at a technology company. On their first day, they encounter a technical issue with their computer, preventing them from accessing important documents. Applying problem-solving skills, the NEET would first identify the specific issue, such as a software malfunction or connectivity problem. They would then gather relevant information, perhaps checking for error messages or consulting with colleagues. Next, they would brainstorm potential solutions, such as restarting the computer, troubleshooting software settings, or contacting IT support. Finally, they would implement the chosen solution and evaluate its effectiveness in resolving the problem.

Project Management Challenge: Suppose a NEET is assigned to lead a team project in a marketing agency. As the project progresses, they encounter unexpected delays due to a miscommunication with a client. To address this issue, the NEET would apply critical thinking skills by analyzing the root cause of the miscommunication, evaluating the available information from both internal and external sources, and considering different perspectives to determine the best course of action. They may need to brainstorm alternative solutions, such as clarifying expectations with the client, reallocating resources to meet deadlines, or adjusting project timelines. Through critical thinking, the NEET can navigate the challenges effectively and ensure the project's success.

Strategies to train NEETs in these skills



- **Encourage Problem-Solving Activities:** Provide opportunities for NEETs to engage in problem-solving activities, such as group projects or real-life challenges.
- **Develop Critical Thinking Skills:** Incorporate activities that promote critical thinking, such as analyzing case studies, debating controversial topics, or solving puzzles.
- **Provide Guidance and Support:** Offer guidance and support to NEETs as they navigate problem-solving tasks and critical decision-making processes.
- **Foster a Growth Mindset:** Emphasize the importance of resilience, adaptability, and continuous learning in overcoming challenges and improving problem-solving abilities.

3. Digital Literacy and Technology Skills

These days, in a world increasingly reliant on technology, digital literacy and technology skills are indispensable for everyday tasks, including job searches, online learning, financial management, and social interaction. Moreover, many industries now require digital proficiency, making it a fundamental aspect of employability and career advancement.

Both concepts, digital literacy and technology skills are connected, since digital literacy refers to the ability to access, evaluate, and utilize digital information effectively, while technology skills refer to the practical abilities to use digital tools, software, and applications proficiently.

As a Youth Worker, how can I support its acquisition?



4. Adaptability and Resilience in the Workplace

Modern workplaces are always in constant change: new technologies, shifts in business landscapes, unexpected challenges, etc. In this context, the ability to adapt and be resilient is indispensable in NEETs professional careers.



What is Adaptability?

It involves the capacity to adjust to new situations, learn new things, and modify their approach based on changing circumstances. It's about being flexible and open-minded, readily embracing new ideas and processes. For this reason, learning agility is also related to adaptability, as it enables NEETs to learn quickly and efficiently, mastering new skills and knowledge as needed. Openness to change transforms change into an opportunity for growth and development, rather than something to be feared. Flexibility in thinking allows NEETs to approach problems from different angles, considering alternative solutions and adapting their strategies as necessary.

Collaboration is another critical aspect of adaptability. Working effectively with diverse teams and personalities not only broadens perspectives but also enhances problem-solving capabilities and fosters innovative solutions.

What about Resilience?

To be resilient, a NEET should have the ability to bounce back from setbacks, overcome challenges, and maintain a positive outlook in the face of adversity. This quality involves perseverance, emotional intelligence, and a willingness to learn from mistakes.

Some key aspect for resilience are developing healthy coping mechanisms, to better manage stress, frustration, and disappointment, effective problem-solving skills, which enables NEETs identify and overcome obstacles methodically and efficiently and also maintaining a positive self-talk can be a powerful tool to sustain optimism and confidence even during difficult times.

Re-entering the workforce after a period of NEET can be challenging. Skills may be outdated, confidence might be shaken, and the job market itself may have undergone significant changes. This is where adaptability and resilience become game-changers for NEETs.



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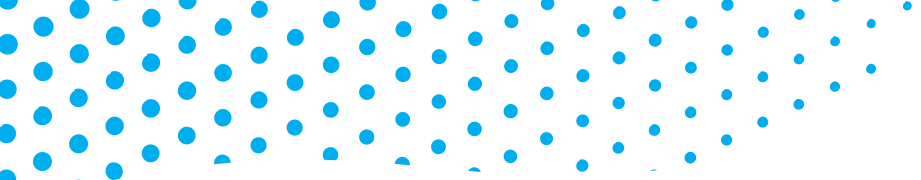


Module 5

Successful Hiring Practices

Module 5 - Content

- Crafting Effective Resumes and Cover Letters
- Mastering Job Interviews: Preparation and Techniques
- Building a Professional Network: Networking Strategies
- Navigating the Hiring Process: Tips for Success
- Best practice: Talent's Match + Resources



Successful Hiring Practices

1. Crafting Effective Resumes and Cover Letters

When reviewing a CV, recruiters spend 80% of their time scanning the following priority content

- Candidate name
- Current position/company
- Start and end dates of current role
- Previous position/company
- Start and end dates of previous role
- Educational background

The remaining 20% is used to search for specific skills or specific keywords. Keywords can include: industry-specific skills/ occupations/ competencies, technology terms and descriptions of technical skills, web program names, certifications, product and service names, industries, educational credentials and university names. Remember that the first keywords you find in the job posting are usually the most important.

Before you start writing or updating your CV, analyse the job you want to apply for. The aim will be to find certain keywords that are usually present in the description, so make a list of these words and then insert them into your CV to create a perfect (or near perfect) match with the ATS. Even if the company does not use an ATS, it is always a good idea to follow this preliminary procedure to greatly increase your chances of being contacted after applying.

What is an ATS (Applicant Tracking System)? An ATS is a software. It is a programme that pre-screens applications. How does it work? Quite simply, if your CV does not meet certain standards of correspondence with the text of the job advert, the software will automatically discard it without even showing it to the recruiter. The programme reads applications and discards those that do not contain the keywords or qualifications for the job in question. On the other hand, the ATS will generate a list of suitable candidates based on the inclusion of the keywords in the job description.

In general, the essential content to include in a resume is as follows:

Profile

- Photo (only if required)
- General Information (age and gender are not mandatory)
- Contact details
- Career goal / Position
- Job description

Education & work experience

- Degrees
- Certifications
- Work Experience
- Work Internship
- Voluntary work

Skills

- Language skills
- Computer skills
- Soft skills

Specific information

- Hobbies
- Interests
- Driving license
- Projects
- Other information

Here are some tips on content:

- Power words in bold;
 - Show results, actual goal achieved / problem solved / lesson learned from failure and how you overcame it;
 - Write about academic interests and extracurricular activities as research, projects, working with professors, etc;
 - Computer skills, equipment, applications, software, certifications required for the job;
 - Max 3 soft skills, avoid lists;
 - Hobbies and interests, if relevant to the job.
- 

As well as content, layout is also very important. In Europe, it is common to use the Europass for all CVs, but this should only be used if the job offer requires it. In fact, although Europass layouts have improved a lot in recent years, it is better to use chronological layouts, for example from Canva, which allow you to create an ad hoc CV.

If requested by the recruiter, the CV may be accompanied by a cover letter in which the candidate briefly introduces themselves, states their interest in the position and tries to include as much information as possible to help the recruiter understand why the candidate should be selected.

When writing a covering letter, the candidate should consider the following points:

- Describe your experience in general terms in relation to the job: what kind of job and company are you looking for?
- Highlight the achievements/characteristics of the company that match your preferences.
- Describe the results of your experiences that could be of value to the employer, whether academic, professional or extracurricular.
- Include the values that have led you through your past experiences to the position you want.

As for the CV, it is a good idea to bold the key words and divide the text into paragraphs. This will make it easier for the recruiter to read it visually and quickly identify the requirements that match.

The suggested structure would be:

- Introduction (educational and professional background);
- Sales pitch (objectives and benefits);
- Conclusion (motivation and greetings).



2. Mastering Job Interviews: Preparation and Techniques

Job interviews can be difficult if a candidate isn't used to them and isn't prepared. Therefore, before the interview, it is advisable to follow some steps to be ready:

- Research the company: understand its mission and values, learn about its activities and products, look at recent news and, if possible, talk to a current or former employee;
- Analyse and understand the role: read the job description carefully, select a few key words and make a list of the requirements so that you can answer questions about them;
- Prepare answers to frequently asked questions: think about the most common questions people ask and prepare a short answer;
- Be aware of what you have written on your CV: be prepared to answer questions about your CV, so look at it before the interview.
- Practice interviews: ask someone to simulate the interview environment and get feedback.

If you don't have the opportunity to do this, look for job fairs where there are activities that simulate interviews.

3. Building a Professional Network: Networking Strategies

A good way to build a professional network is to engage with people working in the area of interest. This can be done both participating at networking events, training and any other event or activity when the candidate have the opportunity to meet with relevant people. Not only meeting with people is important, but also keeping contact with them after the meeting following up and getting updates from them. In this sense, LinkedIn could be a useful tool.



4. Best practise: Talent's Match

Talent's Match is an activity organised by garagErasmus Foundation, in collaboration with the Italian Erasmus+ agency INDIRE, within the "The + of Erasmus" project. The aim of the project is to increase the chances of students and graduates being recruited by companies after their studies, as a follow-up to the European Year of Skills.



Talent's Match consists of in-person or virtual speed interviews aimed at enhancing the employability of current and former exchange students, helping them to take advantage of unique opportunities and showcasing the professional and personal skills they gained and developed during their international experiences to recruiters. For the occasion, companies are invited to a virtual room with international talents and current and former exchange students to have a "blind interview": recruiters have no information about candidates and candidates will have 10 minutes to persuade recruiters to call them back for a full job interview. It is a new way for students to prove themselves and enter the job market.

The above activity can be replicated and adapted for NEET inclusion in the labour market with the following structure:

- Liaise with local businesses who are recruiting for positions that may fit a NEET profile;
- Recruit NEETs who are willing to take part in the activity and select those who meet the requirements of the vacancies;
- Organise speed interviews with recruiters from participating companies, online or face-to-face;
- Divide the NEETs into groups based on the vacancies they've been selected for and direct them to the appropriate recruiter;
- Stop the speed interview every 10 minutes to allow candidates to take their turn with the recruiter;

Follow up with companies to share CVs of suitable candidates and have them contact them for a full interview.

5. Resources

Websites for resume and cover letters

- <https://enhancv.com/>
- <https://europass.europa.eu/en>
- <https://resumegenius.com/>
- <https://resumup.com/>
- <https://www.canva.com/>
- <https://www.cvmaker.com/>
- <https://www.resume.com/>
- <https://www.visualcv.com/>

Platforms for job offers

- <https://erasmusintern.org/>
- <https://www.jobiri.com/language/en/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>
- <https://programmes.eurodesk.eu/internships>
- <https://jobs.euractiv.com/>
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- <https://www.profilculture.com/>
- <https://www.businessfrance.fr/en/home>
- <https://it.indeed.com/>
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- <https://www.infojobs.it/offerte-lavoro>
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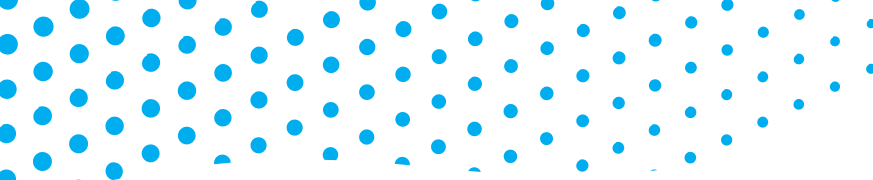
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- <https://prezi.com/view/6gcy3O3quV1OQlCKFSSQ/>





Conclusions



Conclusions

In summary, the BAM Manual has provided essential concepts, strategies, and skills for effectively engaging and supporting NEETs as they work toward personal and professional growth. Beginning with the foundational concepts of personal branding, career development strategies, and essential skills training, the manual equips youth workers, educators, and stakeholders with the tools needed to address the unique challenges NEETs face. Through a collaborative research effort, we identified 12 critical skills—grouped into personal branding skills (e.g., communication, networking), digital skills (e.g., data management, content evaluation), and entrepreneurial skills (e.g., creativity, perseverance)—that will empower NEETs to succeed in competitive job markets and educational paths.

Importance of Continuous Support and Engagement

The journey for NEETs requires more than a one-time intervention; it depends on continuous support and engagement. By fostering sustained mentorship and guidance, youth workers and educators play an important role in building the resilience, confidence, and adaptability needed for NEETs to succeed. This ongoing commitment is essential to help NEETs break down barriers, stay motivated, and confidently pursue their goals despite potential setbacks.

Call to Action: Empowering NEETs for Success

Now is the time to take these strategies and put them into practice. The BAM Manual invites youth workers, educators, and stakeholders to actively engage in empowering NEETs, offering them the skills, resources, and support they need to realize their potential. By committing to this holistic approach, we can create a future where NEETs are not only prepared for the job market but are also confident, skilled, and ready to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Together, let us take this call to action and support NEETs in becoming empowered individuals they are meant to be.

Check our platform for more information :<https://www.nowbrandme.eu/> .





Acknowledgement, Disclaimer and Copyright notice

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