


## Continued education offers under the Youth Guarantee – Experience from the ground

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In April 2013, EU Member States made a commitment to ensure young people's successful transition into work by establishing Youth Guarantee schemes. Under the Youth Guarantee, Member States ensure that within four months of leaving education or losing a job, young people under 25 can either find a good-quality job suited to their education, skills and experience; or acquire the education, skills and experience required to find a job in the future through an apprenticeship, traineeship or continued education. The principle of the Youth Guarantee has been reaffirmed by the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The Youth Guarantee was driven by high numbers of unemployed youth, and youth not in employment, education or training (NEET). But the Youth Guarantee is more than a measure to support young people to find a job. It aims at structural reforms in the Member States to drastically improve school-to-work transitions, and to ensure employability of young people in the long-term. Young people who leave education early and have a very low level of skills tend to have fewer chances to find employment: they would benefit from continued education to acquire solid basic skills (numeracy and literacy) as well as personal, social and study skills.

According to the latest monitoring data, in 2016, of the 2.1 million young people that took up an offer within four months:

- the vast majority (67.2 %) took up an employment opportunity;
- 13.9 % took up offers of a traineeship;
- 12 % took up offers of continued education;
- 6.9 % are reported to have taken up an apprenticeship.

It is important to note that in countries where apprenticeships are a well-established form of vocational education and training – for instance, in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and others - they may be counted in the figures as continued education. Due to the diversity of measures (which include for example different types of Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) training), some countries have difficulties tracking young people who are reintegrated into education and training. This means the actual percentage of young people returning to education is likely to be higher.

However, the monitoring data show that the Youth Guarantee's potential to upskill young people and to

ensure that they gain qualifications that facilitate access to the labour market could be further exploited. Young people with a low level of qualification (ISCED 0-2) represent around 43 % of NEETs across the EU (aged 15-24), with rates of over 50 % in Spain, Malta and Germany. This group is much more likely to become long-term unemployed or inactive in the long term. Promoting continued education offers to low-qualified young people is not always easy, for several reasons. The young people in question may have struggled during their time in the education and training system; they might prefer practical on-the-job learning; they are keen to earn a living and their current personal situation may not allow them to return to full-time education – especially for a longer period of time. These can be reasons why guidance counsellors do not encourage low-qualified young people to take up a continued education offer.

Hence, to step up the efforts to upskill young people, more emphasis should be put on designing and implementing continued education offers that are attractive to low-skilled young people and accommodate the needs of the target group.

This paper looks at continued education offers in and across EU Member States that are part of the countries' Youth Guarantee schemes and focus on supporting young people in their transition into employment. The paper presents well-developed practices that seem to have impact to the beneficiaries and seeks to provide inspiration and ideas for policy makers on potentially transferable elements of successful youth policies.

The paper contains four main sections:

- Section 2 summarises the key messages related to continued education offers under the Youth Guarantee;
- Section 3 gives an overview of continued education offers implemented within the context of the Youth Guarantee. It describes what types of continued education policies and practices exist, and for what target groups they would best be applied;
- Section 4 provides practical hands-on guidance on how to plan, design, implement and review continued education offers, based on evidence from existing practices;
- Section 5 gives an overview of challenges and success factors related to planning, implementing and reviewing continued education offers under the Youth Guarantee.

This is one in a series of five papers concentrating on different policy measures implemented as part of the Youth Guarantee. The other four papers cover outreach, activation measures for vulnerable NEETs, employment offers and traineeship offers. Therefore, policies and practices addressing these types of intervention are not discussed in this paper. Nevertheless, there may be some overlap, which is in part due to the fact that multifaceted policies and flexible types of intervention for young people should be seen as a sign of high-quality services.





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Experience from the ground



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