



NEET U

Re-mobilizing experienced and resourceful seniors as
NEET brokers to help young people change depressed
NEET situations

2015-18

Duration 30 months

Coordination: Pistes Solidaires, France

Introducing the project



PROJECT SUMMARY

Re-mobilizing experienced and resourceful seniors as NEET brokers to help young people change depressed NEET situations

Social innovations do not happen by themselves. Throughout their life cycle, they need to be supported and nurtured if they are to make an impact on society and the economy.

Empowering people, driving change - social innovation in the European Union, European Commission, 2011

CHALLENGE

The multiple innovation perspectives of the NEET U are linked to a number of emerging social needs and innovation debates across Europe, well described and well documented in the Commission's 2011 paper: Empowering people, driving change - social innovation in the European Union.

This document represents and details the Commission's 2020 social innovation policy and is the project's key policy reference.

More precisely, the project's innovation is a contribution to transforming such emerging needs into emerging opportunities of change:

EMERGING SOCIAL NEEDS

- the need to re-engage seniors of all ages and backgrounds in the production of economic and social value
- the need to mobilize available and qualified resources in the communities to offer NEET youth powerful ways out of the social depression
- the need to find new solutions to existing and emerging social challenges not addressed by the open market and not sufficiently addressed by public services
- the need to engage users, clients and citizens in creating such solutions, in this case NEET youth
- the need to create social change dynamics to respond flexibly to the fast changing global and local economies and labour markets and to offer NEET youth life change competences

EMERGING CHANGE OPPORTUNITIES

- recognizing social innovation as a driver of and contributor to economic development
- recognizing that social entrepreneurship goes far beyond establishing a private company and embraces all sorts of initiative-taking, whether for profit or not
- recognizing that social innovation cannot happen to but with people, and that social innovation needs top-down as well as bottom-up initiative-taking to be successful
- recognizing that social innovation includes a wide range of challenges, from child services to greening the economy

NEET U's innovation is to put social innovation to work.

PROJECT MISSION

The project is one of the first attempts in Europe to systematically put the 21st century social innovation agenda to work: how can social change be brought about through new citizen-driven alliances in the communities, through mobilizing available resources for important needs and without putting additional pressure on public services?

Experienced and resourceful seniors: NEET youth NEED YOU!

The NEET U project combines two of the most important social and educational challenges in 21st century Europe - re-activating the overwhelming social and educational potential of the increasing number of experienced seniors in society to help counter the dramatic increase in depressed social situations among young people - with the mission to generate social and educational value from the dynamic interaction between these two “out of economy” population groups.

NEET youth situations across Europe is approaching dramatic proportions and neither public authorities nor private stakeholders seem able to mobilize the needed resources to efficiently counter this situation and to offer NEET youth the long-term capacity building they really need.

Therefore available, qualified, yet unexploited resources in the communities must be activated and mobilized to contribute to finding ways out of those depressed social situations.

NEET U is born out of this mission, prepared through several successful European initiatives identifying the unexplored potentials of bringing together experienced seniors and NEET youth.

PARTNERSHIP

The NEET U consortium brings together 9 partners from 7 European countries, including practice partners, knowledge partners, a special social innovation partners and an experienced quality partner.

The project is coordinated by Pistes Solidaires from France.

OUTCOMES

The project will produce and share the following key outcomes:

[SENIORS AS NEET BROKERS - www.NEET-U.eu](http://www.NEET-U.eu)

[I AM A NEET BROKER - WHAT R U?](#)

[PORTFOLIOS OF SENIOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURING](#)

[POLICY PAPER - LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SENIOR-NEET YOUTH ALLIANCES](#)

[POLICY PAPER - EUROPEAN FUNDING AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURING](#)

[FIRST EUROPEAN NETWORK OF THE SENIOR-NEET YOUTH ALLIANCE](#)

[THE SOCIAL NEET BROKER 10 PDF for large-scale dissemination](#)

PERSPECTIVES

This flagship perspective resulting from the project is the first platform for a European network, not simply missioned to share experience but to offer capacity building for social change services driven by seniors in interested communities, and to create further European initiatives in the fields of senior NEET brokering and social innovation driven by citizens.



THE CORE OF THE PROJECT

Organisations must be challenged by NEW ACTORS and business models to enable the inventive use of innovations with end users and local communities as co-creators.

Empowering people, driving change - social innovation in the European Union
European Commission, 2011

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Experienced and resourceful seniors: NEET youth NEED YOU!

It combines two of the most important social and educational challenges in 21st century EU, re-activating the overwhelming social and educational potential of the increasing number of experienced seniors in society to help counter the dramatic increase in depressed social situations among young people, with the mission to generate social and educational value from the dynamic interaction between these two “out of economy” population groups.

NEET youth across EU is approaching dramatic proportions and neither public authorities nor private stakeholders seem able to mobilize the needed resources.

NEET U is born out of this mission, prepared through several successful European initiatives identifying the unexplored potentials of bringing together experienced seniors and NEET youth.

The project brings together three top priorities in Europe 2020 policy:

1. The need to retain or re-engage the increasing number of European seniors as active social and economic contributors
2. The need to bring about social innovation as an alternative to traditional public services
3. The need to mobilize experienced seniors to bring about social innovation with and for NEET youth

The project brings together those policy needs in a very strong, systematic and sustainable, yet practical and realistic way:

- it will mobilize groups of seniors in European communities to build capacity to act as NEET brokers for youth in the communities, identifying their key social change needs and facilitate the change process by bringing together relevant stakeholders across relevant sectors, including activating citizens as co-drivers of social change
- the senior NEET brokers will develop competences to help NEET youth build capacity to co-drive and co-create the social change they need, as such capacity building is the only sustainable way for NEET youth to create long-term life, learning and work perspectives

The project is the first SYSTEMATIC attempt in EU to mobilize experienced seniors for NEET youth.

Seniors are known to have developed considerable experience along their working life and to have developed useful networks in their communities and those resources can be exploited and recognized through social entrepreneurship. The communities need specially trained resources to work as social change brokers between NEET youth and stakeholders from different sectors and to ensure initiative-taking in connection with identified needs.

NEET youth urgently need the support and skills of seniors to help them find ways out of their depressed social situations.

In most communities few resources are available for this mission; however precisely experienced seniors can be mobilized for this.

NEET youth urgently need inspiration and mentoring, different people will offer NEET youth different approaches to life and work change.

A special capacity to build among senior social change entrepreneurs will therefore be to mobilize NEETs, citizens or groups of citizens as co-drivers of change.

As stated by the EU Commission, social innovation is not something you do to but with citizens.

Seniors will contribute to promoting more entrepreneurial and initiative-taking mind-sets among NEET and in the community.

The role of the senior is not necessarily to take social change through long and complicated processes but to:

- spot and identify social change needs among NEET youth
- include NEET youth in the first phases of defining their social needs and bring innovative solutions
- bring together relevant and new cross-sector stakeholders for joint dialogues
- co-drive the creation of joint forces projects between stakeholders

The senior will at the same time serve as role-models and mentors for other seniors wishing to act as social change brokers.

The seniors' interventions might generate various results for themselves, such as:

- volunteering
- linking to or joining an existing association or organisation
- creating part time or full time employment
- freelance consultancy
- creating funded projects
- establishing a social enterprise
- offering various forms of services based on user payment

The ultimate mission is to create and share well-tested models of senior NEET brokering that can be useful to seniors and communities across EU.

The capacity building will include a EU or orientation.



THE INNOVATION

Social innovation also mobilises each citizen to become an active part of the innovation process.

*Empowering people, driving change - social innovation in the European Union
European Commission, 2011*

...tailor support to groups who may require additional resources such as young people or those who may not be best reached through traditional channels of business support.

Commission, Entrepreneurship 2020 Action plan

The multiple innovation perspectives of the initiative is linked to a number of emerging social needs and innovation debates across Europe, well described and well documented in the Commission's 2011 paper: Empowering people, driving change - social innovation in the European Union.

More precisely, the project's innovation is a contribution to transforming such emerging needs into emerging opportunities of change:

EMERGING SOCIAL NEEDS

Emerging social needs include such needs generated by globalized economy, the restraint of public spending and services, the depressed social situation for

millions of NEET youth across Europe and the well-known demographic changes in the European population.

Such needs are:

- the need to re-engage seniors of all ages and backgrounds in the production of economic and social value
- the need to mobilize available and qualified resources in the communities to offer NEET youth powerful ways out of the social depression
- the need to find new solutions to existing and emerging social challenges not addressed by the open market and not sufficiently addressed by public services
- the need to engage users, clients and citizens in creating such solutions, in this case NEET youth
- the need to create social change dynamics to respond flexibly to the fast changing global and local economies and labour markets and to offer NEET youth life change competences

EMERGING CHANGE OPPORTUNITIES

Emerging change opportunities are such opportunities generated by increasing consensus among policy-makers, researchers and professionals on what kind of innovation is needed, possible and attractive, and what innovation means - including recent re-thinking of the terms innovation, social innovation and social economy.

Such changes are:

- recognizing social innovation as a driver of and contributor to economic development
- recognizing that social entrepreneurship goes far beyond establishing a private company and embraces all sorts of initiative-taking, whether for profit or not
- recognizing that social innovation cannot happen to but with people, and that social innovation needs top-down as well as bottom-up initiative-taking to be successful
- recognizing that social innovation includes a wide range of challenges, from child services to greening the economy

However, and this is what drives the project, it is still very unclear how those needs and change opportunities can be combined and put to work in the everyday life of the communities and how, in practice, skilled resources in the community can support less resourceful citizens such as young people in NEET situations.

The mission of NEET U is to make a significant and pioneer contribution by creating models at the same time offering added value to the communities through exploiting senior resources and promoting bottom-up initiative-taking among young people in difficult situations.

NEET U's innovation is precisely to put social innovation to work. This mission must be governed and guided by the Commission's 21st century approach to social innovation:

- using existing resources in new ways, not offering more of the same or requesting more resources to solve the problem
- social innovation puts a strong focus on the innovative process, not only on the outcomes, as the process itself is seen as producing socio-economic value; the innovation must create new ways of collaboration, user involvement and mentality; the added social and economic value is precisely linked to the innovation of HOW, not just of the WHAT
- social innovation can be carried out within and generate a wide range of frameworks from simple volunteering to complex for profit social enterprising

In condensed form, the project innovation is to mobilize teams of seniors in participating and beyond project communities to build capacity among them to serve as NEET brokers for youth in depressed social situations, spotting social change needs, bringing together relevant stakeholders and citizens and facilitate or drive the social change process, and to use the social change processes to

sustain their own and the young people's activity through creating appropriate organisational frameworks, be it as volunteers, association members, employees, consultants or social service providers.

NEET U aims to demonstrate how models of social change alliances between experienced seniors and NEET youth can make considerable contributions to sustainable social change.



THE PARTNERS

Pistes Solidaires (coordinator)

France



Consiliere Economico-Sociala Oltenia

Romania



Ekonomski Institut Maribor

Slovenia



Fondazione Risorsa Donna

Italy



Associazione Centro Studi Foligno

Italy



Pere Tarres Foundation Barcelona

Spain



University of Chester

UK



Tartu Ulikool

Estonia



Working with Europe

Spain

