



PRIORITY SECTOR  
Social Inclusion, Youth  
Employment and  
Poverty Reduction

## Programme area n°9 Youth Participation in the Labour Market

### OBJECTIVE

Increased number of young people aged 15-30 in employment

### AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Vocational education and training systems and work-based learning
- > Assisting the transition from education and unemployment to the world of work
- > Reshaping labour market policy and institutions to facilitate access to employment and tackle social exclusion
- > Social protection mechanisms providing adequate income support

### SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Stimulating analysis, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of labour market policies and institutions
- > Promoting knowledge exchange and peer learning within and across donor and beneficiary countries
- > Supporting institutional capacity-building
- > Tackling and reducing early school-leaving and providing second-chance opportunities
- > Strengthening the role and effectiveness of vocational education and training in close cooperation with social partners
- > Strengthening and expanding quality apprenticeship programmes, dual learning, and other work experience programmes
- > Providing appropriate work experience opportunities for young people before they leave education
- > Providing good quality career guidance services backed up with high quality information about careers and labour market prospects
- > Mapping and sharing new solutions for inclusion and job creation/social enterprises/public private partnerships/piloting
- > Addressing demand-side barriers, such as high labour costs
- > Strengthening employment and education systems and regulations in private and public sectors for youth participation in the labour market and transition from school to work
- > Awareness-raising activities
- > Strengthening networks and cooperation to facilitate knowledge-exchange and accelerated learning

## RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

The economic crisis has hit young people harder than any other group. In many countries, youth unemployment rates soared and have remained persistently high in the face of modest job growth so far during the economic recovery. In 2013, the youth unemployment rate in EU countries was 23% on average. In two-thirds of the beneficiary countries (ten countries in 2013) the youth unemployment rate was higher than the EU average, and four of these countries have rates above 30%. Many young people become discouraged and withdraw from the labour market altogether. In 2013, 7 million young people were neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET) across the European Union, representing 13% of young Europeans aged between 15 and 24. In many countries, the school-to-work transition is particularly difficult and lengthy, justifying this programme area's focus on young people.

For many young people labour market difficulties are related to a number of factors, including: lack of professional experience; inadequate education or training; limited social protection coverage; and - when in a job - precarious working conditions. Some groups are at more of a disadvantage than others, in particular young women, migrants, young people from minority and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, and people with disabilities. The difficulties faced by many young people are multidimensional, and require a comprehensive set of policies and actions to allow them to participate in the labour market.

While the economic and financial crisis has intensified problems in the area of youth unemployment, many young people struggled to make a successful transition from school to work even prior to the crisis – reflecting long-standing structural obstacles to their integration in the labour market. Obstacles include weak systems of initial education and training and high school-leaving rates; poor careers advice and guidance; demand-side barriers to the employment of the low-skilled; poorly functioning public employment services for helping disadvantaged youths find work or improve their employability; lack of social services/protection to assist young people most at risk of exclusion from the labour market.

The Europe 2020 strategy puts a specific focus on youth inclusion in the labour market. The Council of the European Union adopted the Youth Guarantee in 2013. The guarantee aims to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education adapted to their needs within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. All EU Member States have developed national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans.

## PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > The programme area is particularly suitable for partnerships with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)