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► Guidelines on setting minimum service delivery standards for youth outreach in the context of the Youth Guarantee





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► **Guidelines on setting minimum service delivery standards for youth outreach in the context of the Youth Guarantee**

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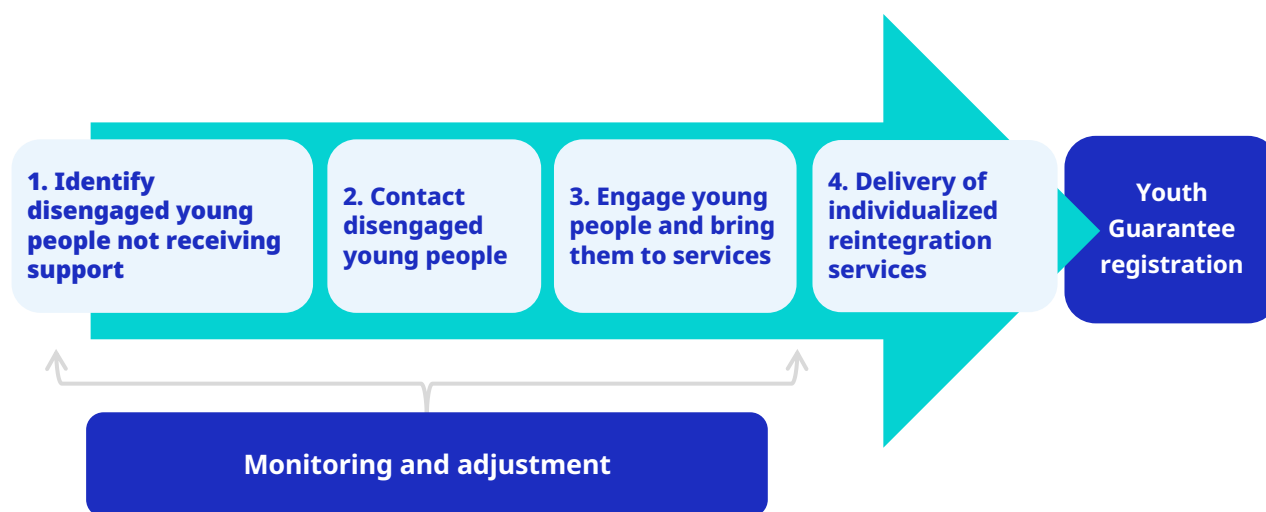
► Introduction

Although there is no agreed definition of “outreach” in the context of youth employment policies the term is used mainly when referring to the identification, contact and engagement of young people who: (i) are detached from the labour market and society (for example, young people who are unemployed or out of the labour force because of discouragement, disability, care responsibilities or other reasons); and (ii) are not registered with any public service providers (employment, social or health services) for support.¹

In the context of youth employment, outreach comprises: (i) awareness-raising campaigns to inform disengaged young people about available support services; (ii) interventions to identify, contact and engage young people who are detached from the labour market or society; and (iii) delivery of individualized inclusion services in proximity (for example, in local communities, schools, one-stop-shops or mobile settings). The objective is to ensure that all young people have equal access to services and to reduce the individual, economic and social costs of chronic unemployment, social exclusion, involvement with the justice system and long-term mental health issues.

The intervention model shown in Figure 1 captures the lessons learned during the implementation of outreach approaches under the European Youth Guarantee Preparatory Action and through the review of country practices aimed at providing support to disengaged young people.²

► Figure 1. The stages of outreach intervention models



¹ The understanding here is that young persons registered with service providers (employment, health care, social services) are already receiving support. Priority should therefore be given to those who are not receiving assistance, even though within the scope of outreach interventions information is usually gathered about the registration of a young beneficiary with a service provider during or after the engagement phase.

² European Commission: Piloting Youth Guarantee partnerships on the ground. Case study: Effective outreach strategies to identify and reach out to NEETs (Brussels, 2015); European Commission: Effective outreach to NEETs. Experiences from the ground (Luxembourg, 2018).

This model comprises four stages, as well as monitoring and adjustment:

1. **Identification.** This stage defines the approaches to be used to identify disengaged young people (for example, tracking systems, data exchange and data pooling, partnership agreements with youth organizations, recruitment of outreach or youth workers).
2. **Contact.** This stage details the methods to be used to contact disengaged young people (awareness-raising and information activities, one-to-one contact through field work, networking with other organizations) and identifies the entities or individuals responsible for delivery (municipalities; social workers; youth, outreach or street workers; civil society organizations).
3. **Engagement.** This stage details the activities (leisure, non-formal learning, counselling and guidance services) to be implemented to engage detached young people and bring them to the services that are available to address their needs.
4. **Service delivery.** This stage articulates the mix and sequence of services to be offered to detached young people (individual assessment, coaching, motivation training, self-awareness, self-esteem training, communication, teamwork, work readiness skills, career tasters, one-to-one mentoring and referral to specialized services); plans how the whole support system will operate on the ground; and details the specific responsibilities of outreach stakeholders (who will do what).

Monitoring and adjustment refer to the monitoring system to be used to assess individual progress and the implementation of activities, as well as how the findings will be used to adjust the delivery of contact and engagement activities and improve service delivery.

The purpose of this technical note is to offer Western Balkan economies engaged in implementation of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee guidance on:

- i. the design, implementation, and monitoring of outreach activities organized in partnership with civil society organizations (CSO);³
- ii. the development of minimum quality standards for the delivery of outreach interventions, to be adapted to national and local circumstances; and
- iii. the establishment of outsourcing and contracting requirements between the institutions responsible for outreach and CSOs.

The outreach interventions outlined below do not include prevention activities carried out with young people still in the formal education and training system (to avoid early school-leaving and school dropout), as most Youth Guarantee implementation plans consider these actions to be part of “early intervention activities” managed by ministries of education.

The design of an outreach intervention model at the national level needs to be preceded by research on the main characteristics of disengaged young people and their geographical distribution, as well as on available resources (resource mapping).

The main tool for understanding the characteristics and geographical distribution of disengaged young people is the statistical profile of young people (15–29) not in employment, education or training (NEET). This research uses microdata from the national Labour Force Survey to: (i) categorize young NEETs into different sub-groups according to their labour market status (short- and long-term unemployed, including the proportion of them who are registered with the Public Employment Service; young people out of the labour force due to illness/disability, care responsibilities, discouragement and other reasons); (ii) gather additional information about the individual characteristics of young NEETs belonging to the different subgroups (age cohort, gender, level of education); (iii)

³ All the Youth Guarantee implementation plans of Western Balkan economies rely on partnerships with civil society organizations to reach out to disengaged young people aged 15–29.

map their regional distribution; and (iv) understand the factors that most determine the probability of becoming NEET. This research can inform the shaping of an evidence-based outreach strategy (main issues to be addressed, target groups, resource allocation).

The second research exercise is resource mapping, which involves: (i) the identification and documentation of resources available to young people at community level (physical assets, types of services, personnel), and (ii) the identification of new or additional resources required to address needs. In the context of planning outreach activities, resource mapping can also be used to identify potential partner organizations and their capacity to perform youth outreach work.

The findings of these knowledge-building exercises may then be used to determine the scope of youth outreach activities (target groups, priority locations); design the various stages of the outreach intervention model; and establish the essential elements for outsourcing/contracting outreach partner organizations.

► SECTION 1: Outreach intervention model

1. Identification of detached young people (NEETs)

Systems for identifying disengaged young people – and establishing first contact – typically build on three main methods, which are often combined, namely: (i) tracking systems and pooling of administrative data; (ii) partnership with organizations catering to young people's needs; and (iii) recruitment of outreach or youth workers to carry out field work.

Tracking and data exchange approaches serve to “trace” disengaged young people (not in employment, education or training) with a view to establishing first contact and offering support. Tracking systems usually link the education information system – which records information on pupils' and students' performance – to other administrative databases (for example, public employment services, social services, or municipal records) to monitor school-to-work transitions and “track” young school leavers who have fallen off the radar. Depending on national context, the task of tracking young people can be carried out by a number of different institutions, including schools (or bodies linked to education authorities), the Public Employment Service (PES), social services or municipalities. The objective is to identify young people who are not registered with any support agency, contact them and engage them (in education, employment, society). Tracking and data pooling systems require that personal data be shared across institutions, which in several countries is not possible because of data privacy legislation and limited data interoperability features of public institutions' IT systems.

The second approach used to identify detached young people is the direct recruitment of outreach or youth workers to carry out field work. In this instance the public institution responsible for the implementation of the outreach strategy (youth centres, ministries responsible for youth issues, municipalities or the Public Employment Service) recruits additional staff (outreach and youth workers) to identify, contact and engage young people through street/field work (engagement with individuals in public spaces – such as streets, parks, shopping malls, schools – to offer support).

The final approach used to identify disengaged young people is to rely on the activities of organizations that cater to their needs. These organizations may be public or semi-public entities (for example, youth centres) or – more often – youth civil society organizations. The activities regularly carried out by these organizations (sport, leisure, non-formal learning) allow their staff to establish contact with different types of young people, including disengaged youth. This knowledge may be used by the responsible public institutions to implement the national outreach strategy through partnership approaches or outsourcing (that is, partner organizations are contracted to identify, contact and engage detached young people and help them approach available employment, social or health services).

Because at present tracking systems and the direct recruitment of outreach/youth workers are not feasible in Western Balkan economies (for example, because data interoperability is limited, the strictness of data privacy legislation and the lack of financial resources for direct recruitment), all Youth Guarantee implementation plans rely on youth civil society organizations to plan and implement the different phases of the outreach process (identification, contact and engagement, delivery of support services). This means that in the case of Western Balkan economies the identification and contact phases of the outreach intervention model are combined.

► **Box 1: Outreach and youth workers**

An **outreach worker** is a professional (a bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, sociology, or a related field is required) who engages with individuals and communities, often in hard-to-reach areas, to provide support, resources and guidance. These professionals work to bridge the gap between people needing assistance and available services, helping them to overcome barriers and improve their overall well-being. Outreach workers operate with homeless persons, individuals with addiction or mental health issues, persons with disabilities or in conflict with the law.

A **youth worker** (ESCO code 2635) supports young people in their personal, social and educational development through informal activities and relationships. They empower young people to make positive life choices, often working in non-formal educational settings, such as youth centres, community organizations and schools. Youth workers create opportunities for learning, growth and skill development through various activities and programmes. They connect young people with relevant services, support networks and opportunities within the community, often working to address issues such as poverty, discrimination and social exclusion. Some countries (for example, United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy) offer under- and post-graduate courses in youth and community work.

Outreach youth work is a form of youth work aimed at reaching young people in need of assistance in their communities and providing access to services and other support designed to promote their growth, independence, social inclusion and life management skills, as well as to improve access to education and the labour market.

Source: Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people (2013/C 168/03); E. Pammi et al (eds), *Outreach Youth Work Handbook. The Finnish Way*, Into – Association for Outreach Youth Work and Workshop Activities, 2022. *Izvor:* Zaključci Vijeća o doprinosu kvalitetnog omladinskog rada razvoju, dobrobiti i socijalnoj inkluziji mladih (2013/C 168/03); E. Pammi et al (eds), *Outreach Youth Work Handbook. The Finnish Way*, Into – Association for Outreach Youth Work and Workshop Activities, 2022.

2. Contact

The first contact with disengaged young people is made, using a variety of means, by the staff (outreach or youth workers) of partner organizations entrusted with implementing outreach activities. The objective is to involve the largest possible number of young people in the activities of the partner organization with a view to identifying and providing support to the most disengaged. Key pre-conditions for this to work are that activities be easily accessible (low-threshold entry points) and attractive (for example, leisure, arts or sport activities); the organization should be recognized as trustworthy and “able to help”; and the approach to be deployed is non-judgemental, open-minded and based on voluntary participation and confidentiality.

Partner youth organizations in Western Balkan economies should be required to use multiple channels to contact young people belonging to the different NEET sub-groups as detected at national/local level through the NEET statistical mapping. For example, medium or highly skilled unemployed young people may respond positively to awareness-raising campaigns carried out through social media. These categories of young people are more likely to take action themselves if they know where they can obtain information and support. Marginalized young people are more likely to respond to one-to-one (online or in person) contact made by outreach youth workers. Young people who are further away from the labour market and society or are facing multiple disadvantages require more time to engage and may also need one-to-one mentoring throughout their journey. Partner outreach organizations should therefore contact disengaged young people through a combination of the following means:

- **Information and awareness-raising activities** These methods can be useful for getting in touch with and providing information to different categories of young people (school leavers, unregistered unemployed, young people with different skill levels). Information and awareness-raising activities should use different communication means, such as printed and digital material, social media, hotlines and toll-free numbers. The information provided through these channels needs to be useful, easy to understand and offer – as a follow-up – a physical space in which young people can access low-threshold engagement activities (leisure, non-formal learning, peer-to-peer advice).
- **One-to-one contact:** Although resource-intensive, this method represents the most effective avenue for contacting (and possibly engaging) detached young people. It needs to be carried out by outreach workers adequately trained to communicate with young people, build a trust relationship and provide information and other advice, when or if required. Activities for contacting detached young people normally take place in areas in which young people are known to gather, either in person (malls, community centres, game shops, concert and sport halls) or online (platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn). The idea is to establish a rapport, provide information and offer the possibility of a youth-friendly space to go to and “do things”.
- **Networking with other service providers:** Networking with other (public or private) service providers (schools, health and social work centres, other civil society organizations) operating at the local level offers a means of getting in touch (directly or indirectly) with detached young people. Networking with other service providers works in two directions: (i) it is a means for outreach organizations to gather information about detached young people to be contacted and engaged; and (ii) it can be used by partner organizations to refer for assistance those in need of specialized assistance (education and health services, material support, housing and so on).

The monitoring indicators that may be considered to measure the effectiveness of contact activities are: (i) total number of young people reached through “contact” activities (disaggregation by type of activity, such as social media campaigns, field work events); and (ii) total number of young people contacted through various means who moved to the “engagement” phase. To accurately measure the abovementioned indicators, it is necessary for the outreach organizations to maintain records on the “contact” activities organized and the approximate number of young people reached in each. For example, for an awareness-raising activity organized with a TikTok testimonial, the indicator will refer to the number of young people who visualized the video within a specific timeframe.

For outsourcing purposes, contracting authorities may establish a minimum number of awareness-raising events (quarterly, annually), as well as a minimum frequency of field work in local communities.

3. Engagement

Engagement occurs when a young person, contacted through outreach work, decides to participate in one of the low-threshold activities proposed by partner organizations (open youth work method).⁴ It may take time and multiple contacts before a young person is ready to trust outreach youth workers and starts to engage. Young people can be said to be engaging in outreach when they participate in one or more of the available low-threshold activities (leisure, sport games, performing arts, workshops, other events) and/or communicate with outreach staff and other peers. Young people may voluntarily provide their (basic) personal information (name, telephone number, social media account) at this stage or decide to remain anonymous. The submission of personal information may be deferred to the moment of taking up individualized support (for example, if a young person wishes to participate in a group career guidance session or a learning workshop they are required to provide a form of ID that will serve to trace them through service delivery).

Engagement usually requires a physical space in which low-threshold and other engagement activities can be organized (it may be the premises of the partner organization, or of youth centres, or other spaces made available by the municipality or by other organizations in the network). Online engagement may work at first, but physical presence and participation are eventually needed to progress to personal development activities (interaction with adults and peers, self-confidence, establishing rapport).

Low-threshold engagement activities may include team sports (volleyball, soccer, basketball); games (table, board, video games), arts (theatre, music, photography, graffiti); other leisure activities (dance, movies, camps). Fully-fledged engagement activities include non-formal education workshops (digital skills, public speaking, health issues, life skills) and volunteering in the community.

Monitoring indicators for the abovementioned engagement activities could revolve around: (i) number of young people engaged in the available low-threshold activities (by age group, sex and type of activity); (ii) number of young people who regularly participate in engagement activities; (iii) number of young people who progress to individualized support services (by age group and sex); and (iv) number of young people registering in the Youth Guarantee service delivery system (or otherwise engaged in employment, continued education, training or traineeship).⁵ For service delivery and monitoring purposes, the outreach organization needs to develop an electronic registration form in which information about beneficiaries is recorded and maintained. This “basic” registration form will be further completed with additional information as individualized support unfolds.

For outsourcing purposes, contracting authorities may establish a minimum number of low-threshold and full engagement activities that partner organizations need to deliver (weekly, monthly), as well as the development of a monitoring framework to measure individuals’ progression from low-threshold engagement to the assessment of their readiness to partake in the Youth Guarantee service delivery system.

4. Individualized support services

The support services provided to detached young people by partner organizations need to be: (i) tailored to individual characteristics and the specific barriers to be addressed; and (ii) organized along a continuum of assistance that accompanies the young person from initial contact to inclusion in employment, education or training.

The assistance package provided by outreach organizations may include: (i) individualized needs assessment (to identify individual barriers and map service requirements); (ii) information, counselling and guidance (about all aspects of the young person’s life); (iii) services to increase motivation, self-esteem and self-awareness; (iv) training

⁴ Open youth work focuses on providing accessible and voluntary opportunities for young people to engage in social, educational and recreational activities within their communities. It emphasizes creating inclusive environments in which young people can develop skills, participate in social action and explore their interests. Open youth work is often delivered through youth centres and other community-based organizations.

⁵ It is possible that some young people may require a minimum of support to re-engage in the labour market and society.

in core employability skills (communication, team work, time management, critical thinking); and (v) referral (and accompaniment) to specialized services (education and training, employment, health care, social services).

Individualized assessments (or profiling) are geared towards gathering information and identifying individuals' challenges and needs in different life dimensions (education, family, employment or health). The process builds on counselling, peer-to-peer techniques and youth work, and it forms the basis for service delivery planning. The assessment is also instrumental in understanding whether the range of services offered by the outreach organization is sufficient to address individual needs or whether the support of other professionals/agencies need to be brokered. This activity requires the outreach organization to develop a structured questionnaire to identify and accurately record the main challenges a young person may be facing in their life dimensions (education, family, health, employment). This tool will also provide the basis for action and service delivery planning.

Individualized support is offered mainly through one-to-one coaching, mentoring, counselling and guidance throughout the inclusion process. These activities are usually carried out by the outreach or youth workers who made initial contact and have built a relationship of trust (engagement) with a detached young person. The typology of support services offered to disengaged young people can be grouped into two broad categories, usually delivered at different points in the inclusion process.

The first category includes services aimed at improving individuals' self-awareness, motivation and life skills. The objective is to "prepare and motivate" the young person to access more intensive and goal-oriented services. This first category of services should – as much as possible – be offered in-house by the outreach partner organization.

- Life skills training and coaching: Emotion and anger management, problem-solving, decision-making, goal setting, health and wellness (including sexuality), self-understanding, social identity, empathy, relationships and socialization skills. These sessions – for groups and one-to-one – should be provided by adequately trained staff (see Annex 2 for responsibilities, qualifications and competencies of outreach/youth workers). They are designed to help the young person manage challenges in one or more life dimensions.
- Career information and counselling (basic): These activities – to be offered individually or in groups, face-to-face or online – are designed to help young people make informed decisions about education, training or employment.
- Skills for the world of work (training or coaching): Communication, teamwork, work readiness skills. These services are designed to increase young people's employability skills. They may be delivered through one-to-one, or group sessions managed by properly trained staff. Work readiness skills training/coaching, more specifically, is aimed at providing young people with skills in compiling a CV, responding to job advertisements, interviews and using multiple channels for job search (personal networks, internet, direct contact with employers).
- Work tasters (optional): These are short periods of learning organized in a vocational school or training centre, where young people perform job tasks with a view to selecting the occupation that best suits their aspirations and needs. It is normally used in career counselling to help young people make informed decisions. The organization of work tasters requires partner organizations to network with adult education and training institutions.

Each of the service lines to be provided by the outreach organization should be described (objectives, content to be delivered, estimated duration, number and qualifications of the staff assigned to service delivery) and the results for each individual beneficiary recorded. It is good practice, once a young person has been profiled, to reach agreement with them on a service pathway to be followed (individual service plan, undertaken on a voluntary basis). This can also provide a means of reaching out to organizations to appraise a young person's progress throughout service delivery and help assess when they are ready to be referred to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system.

The second category of support comprises specialized services, normally delivered by different public or private service providers. These include health services (illness, disability, mental health, addiction, fertility and contraception), services provided by social work centres (housing, poverty, child or elderly care, transport) and other specialized services (for example, addiction rehabilitation programmes, services for victims of domestic

violence, trafficking or labour exploitation). Normally, access to these services is provided by the partner organization through referral (that is, the young person is accompanied to a service provider that is part of the organization's network for specialized assistance). The breadth of the referral network available is a key criterion in the selection of outreach partner organizations.

The key monitoring indicators for this phase of outreach are: (i) number of young people receiving an individualized needs assessment (by age group and sex); (ii) number of beneficiaries of inclusion services (by type of service and duration, as well as by sex and age group); (iii) number of beneficiaries who are referred to an external service provider for support (by type of service required, sex and age group); and (iv) number of service beneficiaries (internal and external) referred to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system.

4.1. Referral to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system

The final objective of outreach services under the aegis of the Youth Guarantee (YG) policy framework is to motivate and prepare detached young people to take on more intensive and goal-oriented support to return to education/training or enter the labour market.

The referral to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system will occur when the young person has concluded their service pathway in the partner organization and is considered (by both the outreach caseworker and themselves) as "ready" to register as a Youth Guarantee beneficiary at the local office of the public employment service (PES). A summary of the services that the young person has taken advantage of in the outreach organization will be provided to the PES staff in charge of registration, profiling and counselling under the Youth Guarantee (to avoid duplication of assistance). If the registration system is managed online, the outreach caseworker will help the young person to register and ensure that they go to the first counselling interview.

For this last stage of outreach there is only one indicator, namely number of outreach service beneficiaries registering in the Youth Guarantee (by sex, age group and level of education), as a different monitoring framework will apply from the moment of Youth Guarantee registration. If the partner organization extends mentoring support during the YG service delivery period (to minimize dropout), monitoring indicators should capture the number of outreach beneficiaries registered in the Youth Guarantee and receiving mentoring by the partner organization (by sex and age, duration of mentoring in weeks/months).

5. Monitoring and adjustment

The monitoring and adjustment of the outreach intervention model is critical to ensure its effectiveness and responsiveness to the needs of disengaged young people. Monitoring encompasses: (i) the gathering of data and information on the outreach activities carried out and the progress of individual beneficiaries through the outreach stages (see also paragraph 5.4); and (ii) the analysis of the results achieved in the implementation of each of the stages of the outreach intervention model. Insights into the type of data and information to be gathered on implementation has already been provided in the description of the four stages of the outreach intervention model outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

Monitoring data (on the implementation of all activities from contact to service delivery and of individuals' progress) needs to be analysed to identify trends, deviations from expected outcomes, barriers and gaps and the occurrence of unintended consequences (Box 2 offers some guiding questions for data analysis).

► **Box 2: Guiding questions for analysing outreach monitoring data**

Contact and engagement

- Which contact method seems to work best (awareness raising, one-to-one contact, social media) and for which groups of young people (gender, age-group, skills level)?
- Which youth groups are under- or over-represented in contact activities?
- Which groups are progressing faster/slower to engagement activities?
- Are the available human and financial resources sufficient to reach the targets established?
- Which engagement activity seems to work best (sports, arts, leisure) and for which groups of young people (gender, age-group, skills level)?
- Which youth groups are under- or over-represented in engagement activities?
- Which groups are progressing faster/slower to service delivery?
- Are the available human and financial resources sufficient to reach the targets established for engagement?
- What do beneficiaries suggest about engagement activities? Are there suggestions that may be taken on board?

Service delivery

- Which services are most/least used?
- Which groups of young people (by gender, age-group, skills level) are more likely to be referred to each service?
- What is the average duration of each service delivered to beneficiaries?
- What is the dropout rate from each service? What are the main reasons for dropout?
- Which youth groups are under- or over-represented in service delivery?
- Which groups are progressing faster/slower to the Youth Guarantee?
- Are the human and financial resources available for each service sufficient to reach the targets established?
- Which services should be expanded/reduced?
- What do beneficiaries suggest about services? Are there suggestions that may be taken on board?

Once the gaps have been identified, it will be possible to adjust the activities of the outreach model in terms of target groups, channels used, frequency and duration of activities, service content and resource needs.

► SECTION 2: Outsourcing of outreach interventions

6.1. Criteria for outsourcing outreach activities to partner organizations

This section outlines the basic criteria to be considered when outsourcing outreach activities to youth civil society organizations, to be adapted to existing procurement legislation and the local circumstances of Western Balkan economies.

Prior to outsourcing outreach activities within the piloting of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee, resource mapping is suggested in order to identify and assess services, programmes, organizations and other resources that exist in a specific location.⁶ This resource mapping will serve multiple purposes: (i) it makes it possible to build outreach interventions – to the extent possible – on the services that are already available; (ii) it helps in identifying fragmentation, gaps and overlaps in service delivery to be addressed in the national outreach strategy; (iii) it serves to identify service providers and organizations that can be involved as partners in the delivery of tailored support to detached young people; and (iv) it provides insights into the design of minimum standards for partner organizations and for the delivery of outreach services.

Outsourcing criteria are grouped into three broad categories: (i) legal requirements; (ii) operational and technical requirements; and (iii) service delivery requirements.

6.2. Legal requirements

The outsourcing of outreach activities in the context of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee implemented in the Western Balkan economies needs to comply with the relevant public procurement and financial regulations, registration requirements, and other laws and rules protecting individual rights (non-discrimination, personal data protection, workers' rights).

To participate in the competitive bidding process, applicants must: (i) be registered with (or licensed by) the competent national authority as a civil society/non-profit organization, as a local youth centre or as a social work/service centre; (ii) have a specific focus on (or mandate to work with) young people (as determined by the organization's statute); and (iii) be in compliance with sound financial and human resource management principles (transparency and accountability in budget management, human resource development strategies in compliance with labour law principles). All the abovementioned legal requirements are mandatory, with no exceptions.

6.3. Operational requirements

Applicant organizations need to comply with several operational requirements in terms of prior experience, staff qualifications, geographical coverage, facilities and partnership agreements. The resource mapping comes into play in the formulation of this part of the application procedure in the setting of minimum criteria (minimum number of years of experience, minimum number of qualified staff, municipalities covered, quantity and quality of physical facilities). More specifically:

- Experience: The first requirement for applicant organizations is to have a minimum number of years of experience in organizing youth support/engagement activities (leisure, sport, arts, life skills, personal development activities) and to have organized a minimum number of such activities in the recent past (to exclude organizations that are only sporadically active). The minimum experience required can be derived for the resource mapping (for example, if most of the mapped organizations have between three

⁶ See ILO, Guide for developing national outreach strategies for inactive young people, Geneva, International Labour Office, 2017.

and five years' experience in youth engagement activities, the requirement can be expressed as "minimum three years of documented experience in the organization and delivery of engagement activities targeting young people (15–29)".

- **Qualified staff:** The second requirement for applicant organizations is the availability of a team with a minimum number of trained youth, outreach or social workers (see Annex 2 for sample qualifications and responsibilities of outreach/youth workers). The application should also require prior experience in: (i) street or digital outreach work (or the availability to engage in capacity-building to this end), and (ii) the delivery non-formal education and mentorship related to life skills and personal development.
- **Geographical scope:** Applicant organizations may be required to have specific experience in organizing youth activities in certain municipalities or regions or a readiness to engage in the target geographical areas.
- **Facilities:** Applicants need to demonstrate the availability of a youth-friendly space in which they can organize engagement activities and the delivery of in-house services. Such a space may belong to a public institution and/or be shared with others (other youth organizations, a youth centre, municipal premises). The facility should offer spaces for different activities (social interaction, workshops and, if possible, an outdoor area for recreational activities) and be in compliance with national health, safety and accessibility standards.
- **Network/partnership arrangements:** Applicants should have partnership or cooperation agreements with other service providers (for example, schools, training centres, social work centres, health services). Such arrangements will be useful for the (indirect) identification of disengaged young people to be involved in outreach activities, as well as the referral of young beneficiaries in need of specialized services.

6.4. Service delivery requirements

The requirements in this area should be developed based on the stages of the outreach intervention model outlined above.

- **Contact:** Description and frequency of the online and street activities to be organized by the applicant organization to contact disengaged young people (awareness-raising campaigns, street and outreach work, partnership with other service providers) and qualification of youth/outreach workers tasked with managing the contact phase of outreach.
- **Engagement:** Description and frequency of the low-threshold and fully-fledged activities to be organized by the applicant organization to engage young people (leisure, sport, arts). Number and qualification of youth/outreach workers tasked with managing the engagement phase. Location of the physical, youth-friendly space in which fully-fledged engagement activities will be organized.
- **Individualized support:** Description of the in-house support (individualized needs assessment, service plan, life skills coaching, personal development, career information and counselling, work-readiness skills) that the applicant will offer to young beneficiaries; number and qualification of youth/outreach workers tasked with managing service delivery; location and description of facilities where in-house services will be organized. List of the partnership arrangements and description of the services to be made available through referral (non-formal education, psychological assistance, health services). Planned procedures for the referral of young beneficiaries to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system; description of mentorship activities during Youth Guarantee participation (if envisaged); number and qualification of youth/outreach workers assigned to the respective tasks.

6.5. Monitoring requirements

There are two types of monitoring requirements that applicant organizations should comply with. The first requirement is to develop an internal assessment tool capable of measuring the progression of young beneficiaries through the various stages of support (from low-threshold engagement to full engagement, from engagement to participation into individualized services and readiness to register in the Youth Guarantee service system). As the objective of outreach is that young NEETs achieve independence and self-reliance in various respects (family, health, employment, relations with peers, education and training), the assessment needs to measure the progression of the young person from the initial situation detected in a specific life area (for example, limited ability to communicate with peers and adults, confrontational attitude) to the desired outcome (for example, they demonstrate an ability to communicate with adults and peers in a non-confrontational manner).

The second monitoring requirement is related to process and outcome indicators that the applicant organization needs to gather on each of the different outreach phases, as described above and summarized in Box 3.

► **Box 3: Summary of monitoring indicators related to outreach activities**

Contact	► Number of young people reached through “contact” activities (disaggregation by type of activity, such as social media campaigns, field work events). ► Number of young people contacted through various means who moved to the “engagement” phase.
Engagement	► Number of young people who engaged in available low-threshold activities (by age group, sex and type of activity). ► Number of young people who regularly participate in engagement activities. ► Number of young people who progress to individualized support services (by age group and sex). ► Number of young people registering in the Youth Guarantee service delivery system (or otherwise engage in employment, continued education or training or traineeship).
Service delivery	► Number of young people receiving an individualized needs assessment (by age group and sex). ► Number of beneficiaries of inclusion services (by type of service and duration, as well as by sex and age group). ► Number of beneficiaries who are referred to an external service provider for support (by type of service required, sex and age group). ► Number of service beneficiaries (internal and external) referred to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system.
Referral to Youth Guarantee scheme	► Number of outreach service beneficiaries registering in the Youth Guarantee scheme (by sex, age group and level of education). ► Number of outreach beneficiaries registered in the Youth Guarantee scheme and receiving mentoring (by sex and age, duration of mentoring in weeks/months).

► Annex 1: Minimum service delivery standards for youth outreach activities

Objective	Content	Methods, tools and resources	Monitoring indicators
1. Identification and contact			
To identify and contact disengaged young people with a view to offering information about available support	• Information and awareness-raising activities • One-to-one contact • Networking with other service providers	Information and awareness-raising activities shall use different means of communication, such as ► printed and digital material, ► web and social media, ► hotlines and toll-free numbers One-to-one contact shall take place through field work in areas where young people gather (in person and online), namely: ► malls and shopping centres, ► community centres, ► concert and sport halls, ► parishes, youth centres, ► online platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, X, Viber Networking with other service providers, such as: ► education and training institutions, ► health and social work centres,	► Number of young people reached through “contact” activities (disaggregation by type of activity, such as social media campaigns, field work events) ► Number of young people contacted through various means who moved to the “engagement” phase

- municipalities,
- other specialized service providers (addiction, domestic violence, trafficking, exploitation)

Contact shall be made by qualified outreach or youth workers adequately trained to provide information, counselling and peer-to-peer support

Key requirement: records shall be made of the “contact” activities organized and of the approximate number of young people reached

NB: Because all the Youth Guarantee implementation plans of Western Balkan economies rely on the activities of youth civil society organizations to plan and implement the different phases of the outreach process, the identification and contact phases are combined.

Objectives	Content	Methods, tools and resources	Monitoring indicators
2.Engagement			
To offer disengaged young people low-threshold and fully-fledged engagement opportunities in a youth-friendly space	• Leisure, sports and arts activities • Information, peer-to-peer advice, mentorship, counselling and guidance	Leisure, sports, performing arts are low-threshold entry points designed to attract young people and convince them to participate in other events organized to enhance non-formal learning, personal development and similar skills Information, advice, mentorship, counselling and guidance shall use different techniques, such as • coaching • behavioural change techniques • active listening • scale question methods Engagement activities shall be carried out by qualified outreach or youth workers adequately trained in counselling and behavioural change techniques Key requirement: • A physical space in which low-threshold and full engagement activities can be organized, in compliance with national health, safety and accessibility requirements • An electronic registration form in which relevant information about beneficiaries is recorded and maintained	► Number of young people who engaged in available low-threshold activities (by age group, sex and type of activity) ► Number of young people who regularly participate in engagement activities ► Number of young people who progress to individualized support services (by age group and sex) ► Number of young people registering in the Youth Guarantee service delivery system (or otherwise engage in employment, continued education or training or traineeship)

Objectives	Content	Methods, tools and resources	Monitoring indicators
3. Individualized support services			
To offer disengaged young people inclusion services tailored to individual needs	• Individualized needs assessment • Services to increase motivation, self-esteem and self-awareness • Training in core employability skills (communication, teamwork, time management, critical thinking) • Career information and counselling • Referral (and accompaniment) to specialized services	Services to be provided by the partner organization in-house: Individualized needs assessment shall be carried out through a structured questionnaire to identify the challenges faced in life dimensions (education, family, health, employment). This should lead to a blueprint for action and service delivery planning. Life skills training and coaching (group and individual sessions): emotion and anger management, problem-solving, decision-making, goal setting, health and wellness (including sexuality), self-understanding, social identity, empathy, relationships, socialization skills. Skills for the world of work (training or coaching, one-to-one, in group): communication, teamwork, work readiness skills. Career information and counselling (individually or in group, face-to-face or online) to help young people make informed decisions about education, training or employment. Work tasters (optional): short periods of learning organized at a vocational school or training centre to practice the tasks of a job with a view to selecting an occupation. Individualized services shall be delivered by qualified and experienced outreach or youth workers with specific training in the content of each service. Key requirement: the availability of an individual assessment tool (profiling), service plan model, the description of services to be provided (objectives, content to be delivered, estimated duration, staff assigned to service delivery and competence level) and the expected results. Final appraisal tools to determine	► Number of young people receiving an individualized needs assessment (by age group and sex) ► Number of beneficiaries of inclusion services (by type of service and duration, as well as by sex and age group) ► Number of beneficiaries who are referred to an external service provider for support (by type of service required, sex and age group) ► Number of service beneficiaries (internal and external) referred to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system

individuals' readiness to move on to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system.

External services

Referral to (external) services shall include:

- health services (illness, disability, mental health, addiction, fertility and contraception),
- services provided by social work centres (housing, poverty, child or elderly care, transport),
- services provided by specialized agencies or organizations (addiction rehabilitation, victims of domestic violence, trafficking, other forms of exploitation).

The referral mechanism shall be evidenced by partnership agreements.

All the information related to beneficiaries and the services provided shall be recorded and maintained in e-format.

Referral to the Youth Guarantee service delivery system

To motivate and prepare young beneficiaries of outreach activities to take on more intensive and goal-oriented support to return to education/training or enter the labour market

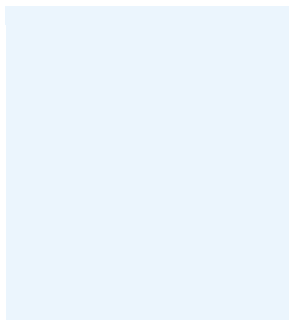
- Referral (and accompaniment) to the Youth Guarantee registration process
- Mentoring during Youth Guarantee participation (optional)

Readiness assessment is carried out voluntarily by the young person concerned and comprises self-assessment and an appraisal by a qualified outreach or youth worker.

Outreach/youth workers provide information about the Youth Guarantee (objectives, details of the services on offer, what to expect in terms of individual engagement).

Referral and accompaniment to Youth Guarantee registration shall be done by qualified outreach or youth workers to help the young person manage the requirements for Youth Guarantee registration (online, in person) and the first counselling interview. A summary of the services already provided to the young person is handed over to the PES caseworker to avoid duplication.

- Number of outreach service beneficiaries registering in the Youth Guarantee scheme (by sex, age group and level of education)
- Number of outreach beneficiaries registered in the Youth Guarantee scheme and receiving mentoring (by sex and age, duration of



Mentoring during Youth Guarantee participation (optional): the outreach worker periodically gets in touch with the beneficiary to offer advice, encouragement and coaching to complete the Youth Guarantee pathways.

Referral and mentoring shall be carried out by qualified outreach or youth workers.

Key requirement: records shall be kept of Youth Guarantee referrals and mentorship provided.

mentoring in
weeks/months)

► Annex 2: Responsibilities, qualifications and skills of youth outreach workers

A youth outreach worker identifies, engages and builds trusting relationships with young people who are disengaged from society and the labour market and their support system, while working with local resources to remove barriers and create opportunities for personal development, independence and self-reliance.

Responsibilities

- Working collaboratively with community partners to identify young people needing support.
- Providing proactive outreach in areas where young people are known to congregate, both online and through street work.
- Building trusting relationships and providing mentorship to identified at-risk young people.
- Assessing the needs of young people to correctly plan and deliver services and programmes related to areas such as health, training, employment and relationships.
- Setting up and running leisure and arts activities, community/environmental projects, residential activities, outdoor education and sporting activities.
- Developing relationships with young people based on respect and trust, ensuring they have a safe place in which to develop their identities.
- Establishing boundaries and challenging inappropriate behaviour.
- Supporting young people in different settings, including outreach work.
- Mentoring, coaching and supporting individuals, encouraging greater social inclusion.
- Setting targets for progression and regularly monitoring and reviewing the quality of the local youth work provision.
- Establishing and maintaining positive, productive work relationships with community partners, including school systems, law enforcement, and providers of social and employment services.
- Working in partnership with families and other key people in the young person's life, as well as with professionals from other organizations involved with young people, such as social care, health, education and local authorities, in order to build a strong support network.
- Undertaking administrative tasks, maintaining effective record systems and responding to queries.
- Providing consistent documentation of programme activities, individual support and critical incidents.

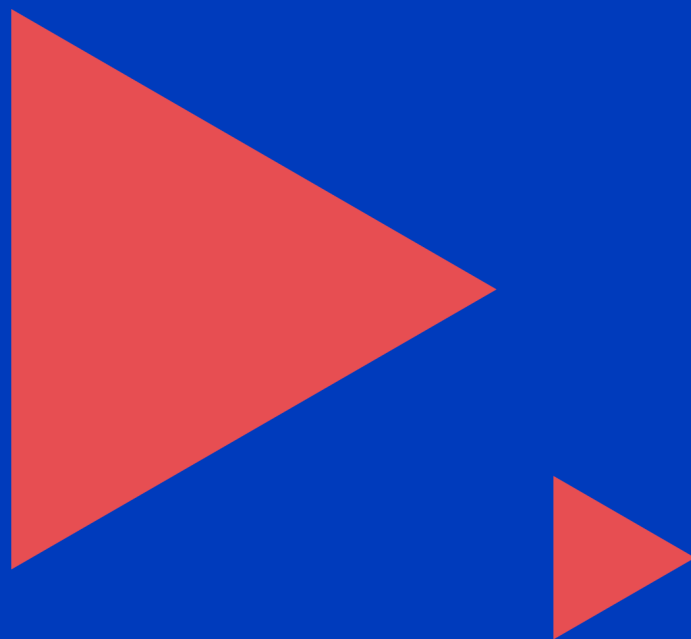
Qualifications

- University degree in social work, child and youth care, psychology, or other social science or health-related field.

- Professional certification or licensing by competent regulatory body (if applicable).
- Previous work experience in a social service environment.

Skill

- Strong commitment to young people and an understanding of the factors affecting their lives.
- Ability to provide reliable support to young people and act with integrity in times of stress.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to establish and maintain good relationships with young people.
- Knowledge of community services and resources.
- Patience, tolerance and flexibility.
- Flexibility with working hours and changing priorities.
- Formal communication skills for presentations and report writing.
- Ability to treat young people's concerns with respect, tact and sensitivity, while being aware of the limits required by confidentiality and the boundaries that govern the youth–youth worker relationship.
- Resilience, personal and professional integrity.
- Work effectively with a team, demonstrating a friendly and positive attitude.
- Interest in sport or performing arts – not essential, but helpful for engaging youth groups and facilitation activities.



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