

Evaluation of selected initiatives targeting 25+ NEET based on the results of the evaluations, including policy recommendations

COUNTRY REPORT OF GREECE

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**IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT ‘LOST
MILLENNIALS – TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH
NETWORK FOR THE EVALUATION OF INITIATIVES
TARGETING 25+ NEETS’**

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Project summary:

The project 'Lost Millennials' focuses on a regularly neglected group of the generation of Millennials: young people aged 25-29 neither in employment or education and training (25+ NEETs). This generation started their working life shortly after the economic crisis of 2008, perceiving uncertainty and lack of security for work and well-being, they are more likely to be inactive or in precarious jobs. The main objective of the project is to contribute to the successful integration of 25+ NEETs to the labour market through increasing knowledge on the effects of employment initiatives on 25+ NEETs, building capacity of stakeholders to perform impact studies and thus improving the quality of labour market interventions. This objective will be achieved through the creation of the transnational research network which will share know-how and good practices, the evaluations of governmental and community-based initiatives targeting 25+ NEETs, as well as the engagement of stakeholders to increase the policy-relevance of project results.

For more information, please visit our [website](#), contact us on lm.leadpartner@hetfa.hu and follow our social media ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#)).

The Lost Millennials project is funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA and Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment.

Implemented by:



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1. Introduction and context

In recent years, the issue of NEETs (Young People Not in Employment, Education, or Training) has gained increasing attention in Greece, as well as in many other European countries. In Greece, NEETs represent a significant portion of the youth population, and their social and economic exclusion is a major concern for policymakers and society as a whole. This report starts with an overview of the characteristics of NEETs in Greece, as well as of national initiatives and frameworks aimed at addressing this issue. Specifically, the report will discuss the various initiatives and policies implemented by the Greek government and other stakeholders, such as the Training Voucher Programme. The report will provide a detailed account of the Training Voucher Programme in Greece, including its design, implementation, and evaluation. Section 2 focuses on the initiative's design, outlining its target group and the measures and services provided under the programme. It also assesses the effectiveness of the Training Voucher Programme, as reported in the literature. Section 3 provides an overview of the programme participants and their characteristics. Section 4 describes the methodology used to evaluate the programme, including the data collection process and the profile of the participants. Section 5 details the evaluation results used to assess the Training Voucher Programme's effectiveness, relevance, coherence, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. It then analyses them to conclude the Programme's performance.

1.1 Profile of NEETs in Greece

NEETs in Greece are a relatively newly established category of social vulnerability for the young Greek population – mainly because the population of NEETs is confused with the overall population of unemployed youth. Moreover, most Greek families provide an umbrella of protection and support for these individuals (unlike other family models in EU Member States) and, indirectly or directly, mitigate the actual extent and intensity of the phenomenon in Greece. Consequently, for quite a long time, since the term first appeared in the international debate, it has been very difficult to estimate the number of and map NEETs in Greece.

The basic attributes of NEETs in Greece seem to differ in several aspects compared to other countries. The economic crisis in Greece has had a negative impact not only on youth unemployment but also on mental health, according to data from Eurostat and the World Health Organisation. The intensification of the NEET phenomenon in our country may be related to this. At the same time, the particular features of Greek society in terms of the role and cohesion of the family seem to constitute an important support factor for the vulnerable group of NEETs.

As can be observed by studying Eurostat data for 2021 (Eurostat, 2022), the percentage of NEETs aged 15-29 in Greece was 17.3% (see Figure 1). Although this rate appears to decrease every year, it is still

very high compared to the European average (13.1%); and compared to other European countries, Greece records one of the highest rates in the EU, i.e., 24.28% above the EU average and 47.98% above the EU target of 9% by 2030 (see Figure 2). The percentage of male NEETs was 16.6% in Greece, while the percentage of female NEETs was 18.1% (see Figure 3). Although the proportion of female NEETs is higher than the corresponding proportion of men, the gap is narrower compared to other countries.

Figure 1. NEET rates in Greece

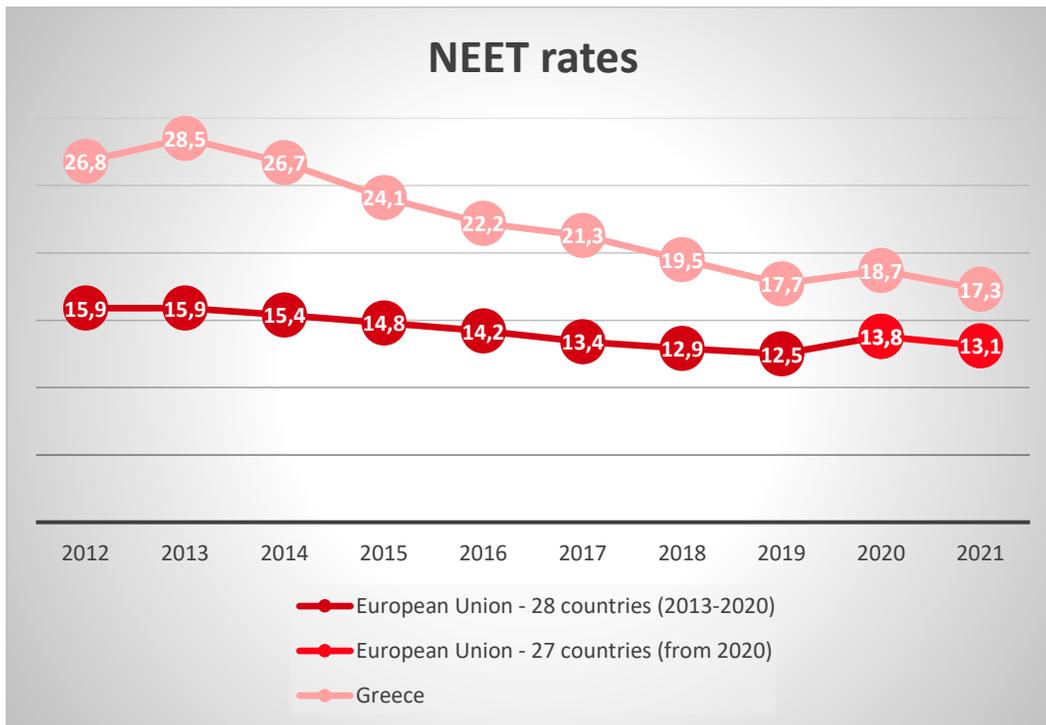


Figure 2. Comparative mapping of the NEET rates in the EU, 2021

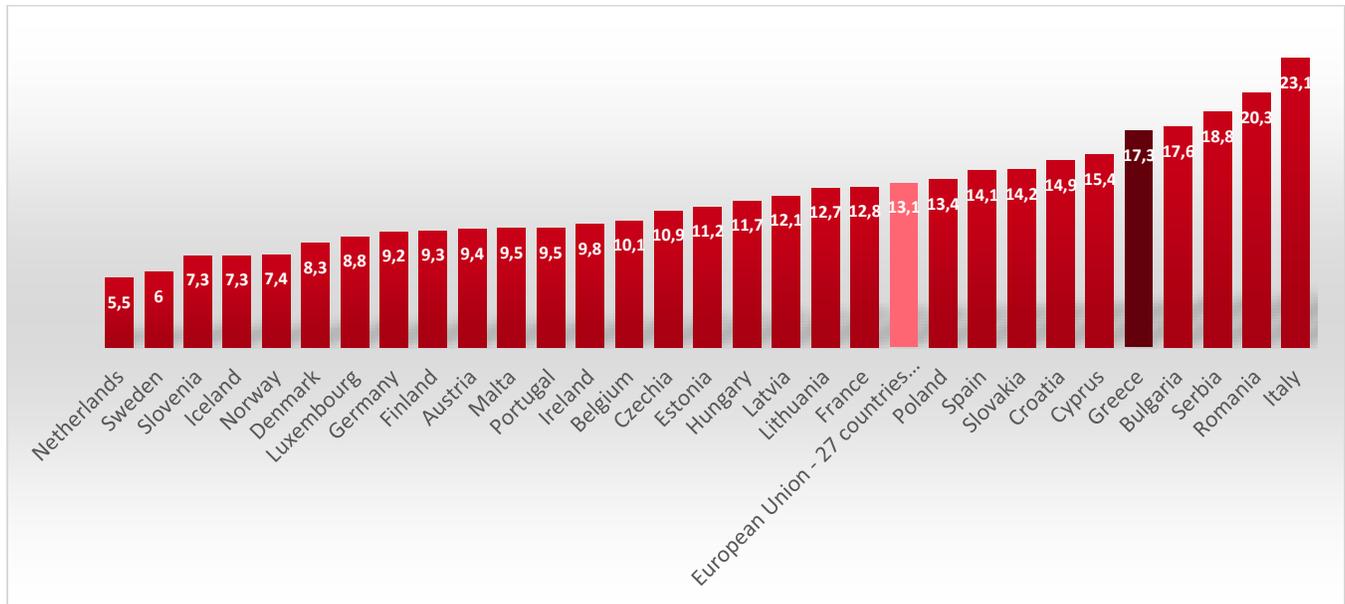
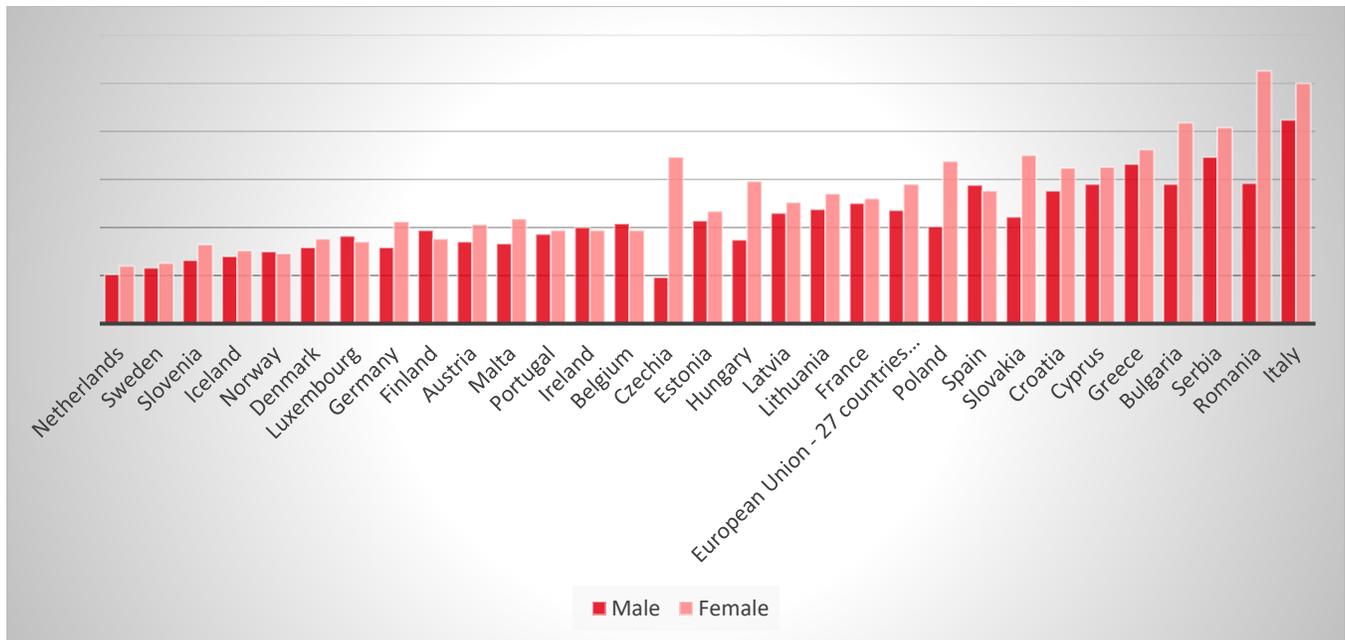


Figure 3. NEET rates in the EU by sex



The rate of NEETs aged 25-29 in Greece was quite higher than the total NEET rate, i.e., 28.7% compared to 17.3% respectively (see Figure 4). Greece and Italy record one of the highest rates of NEETs aged 25-29 in the EU (see Figure 5). The percentage of male NEETs aged 25-29 was 25.3% in Greece and is the highest in the EU, while the percentage of female NEETs was 33% (see Figure 6). The

evidence shows that particular attention should be paid to NEETs aged 25-29, who are currently not in the policy focus.

Figure 4. 25-29 NEET rates in Greece

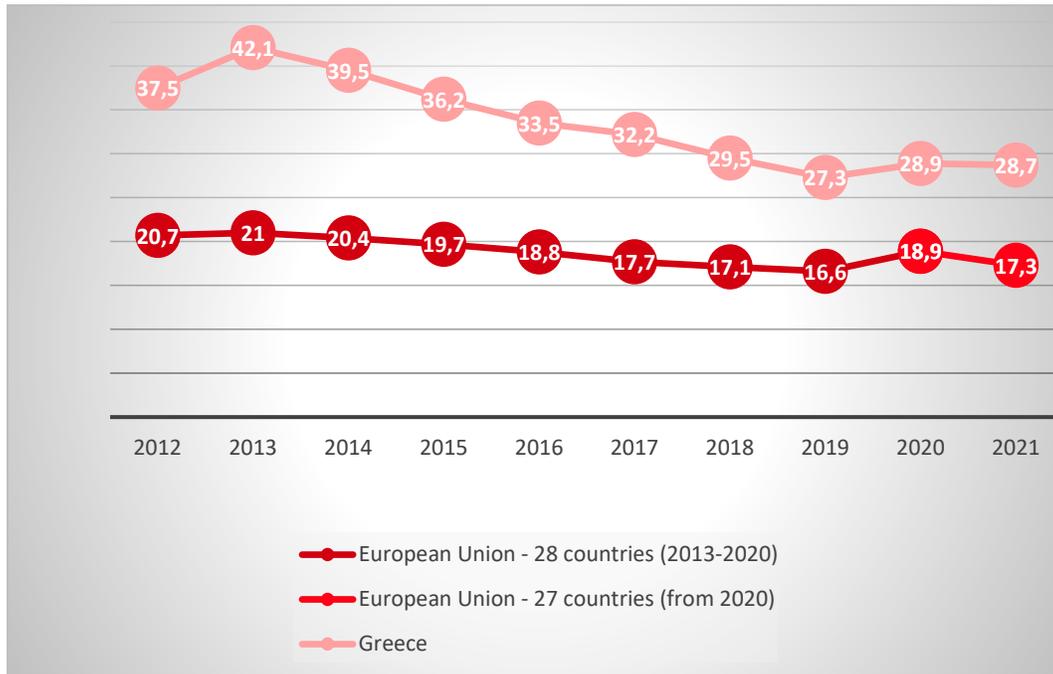


Figure 5. Comparative mapping of the 25-29 NEET rates in the EU

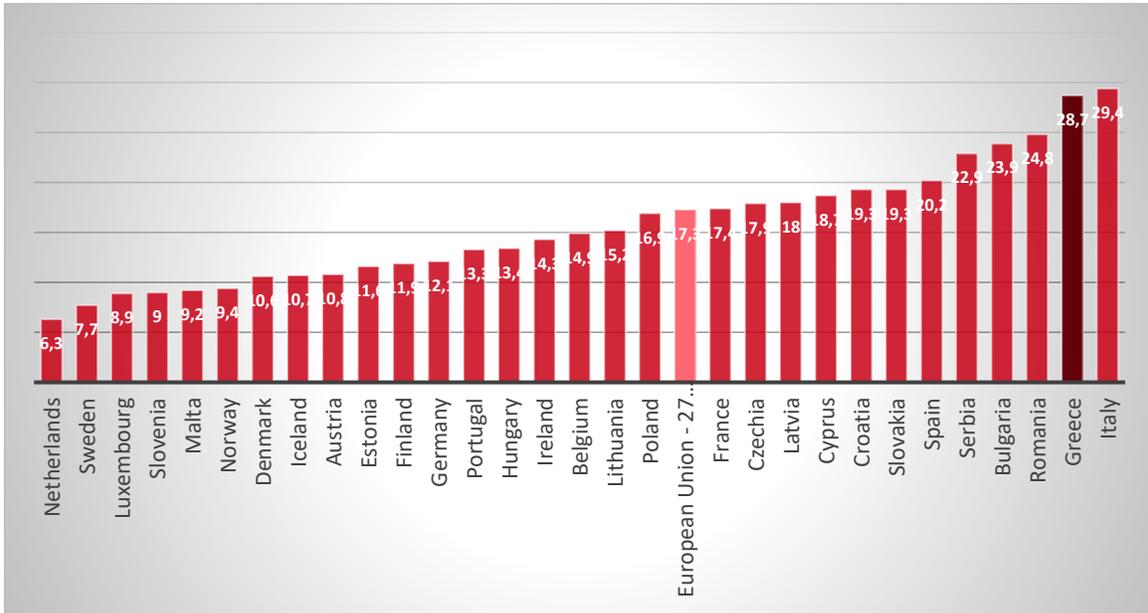
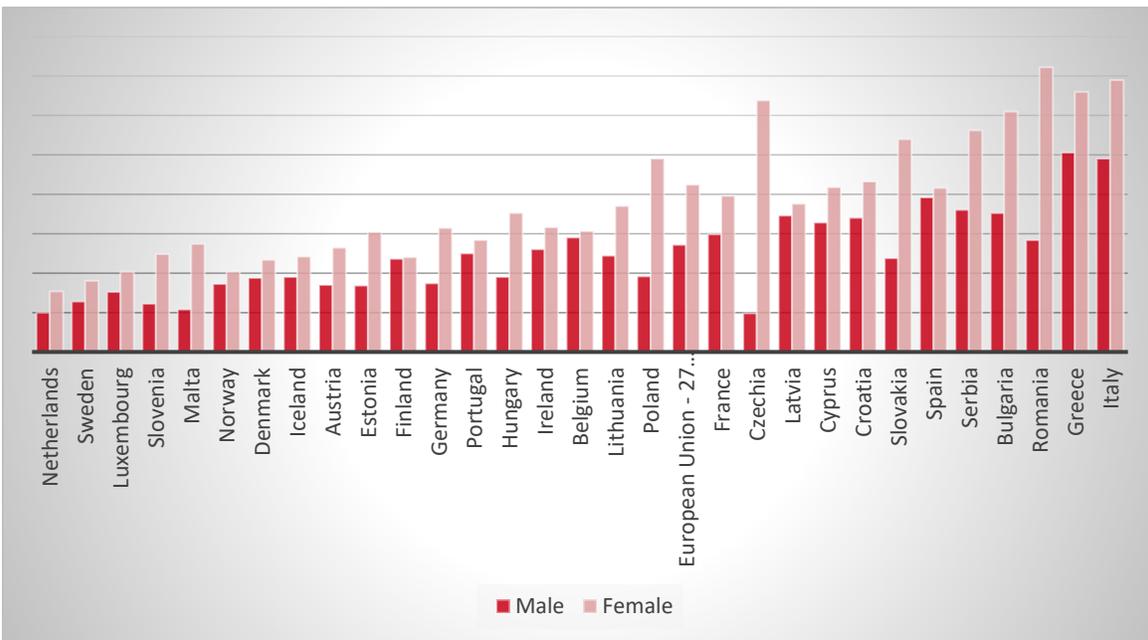


Figure 6. 25-29 NEET rates in the EU by sex



In a survey by the Centre for Educational Policy Development (KANEP) of the GSEE (2017), it is noted that employment policies¹ to date have followed patterns of entrepreneurship models with an emphasis on 'labour intensity' rather than 'knowledge intensity', which is linked to the high performance in both brain drain and brain waste, i.e. the waste of skilled human resources in inferior jobs of their qualifications and potential. One key aspect exacerbating these trends is the inherent discrepancy between the labour market and the education system. Graduates with high levels of specialization, despite their rigorous higher education, find limited appreciation and reward within the Greek labour market. Quite often, this market primarily offers positions suitable for high school graduates, frequently with salaries that even undercut the remuneration levels these graduates should ostensibly command. Consequently, Greece has witnessed an alarmingly high prevalence of individuals classified as NEETs, numbering in the hundreds of thousands. These young individuals find themselves adrift from both academic pursuits and gainful employment, with their prospects for future integration into either realm alarmingly bleak.

1.2 National initiatives aimed at addressing NEETs

In Greece, until a few years ago, no research on NEETs had been carried out. This gap was filled by a national-scale research project on NEETs, called 'Barometer of Absenteeism: the NEETs (2011-2013)'. The Barometer is the first baseline national scale survey for the major problem of NEETs, but also one of the few such surveys at the national level. The results of the project laid the basis for a) the NEETs composite indicator, b) the recommendation of an integrated policy proposal (at multiple levels of public policies and within different scenarios), c) the creation of the NEETs GIS, and d) a roadmap for an integrated intervention to prevent the social exclusion of NEETs, leading to an implemented set of public policies.

This was followed by the Neets2 Project (EEA Grants/ GR07-3757), which aimed at: a) researching the psychological profile of the NEETs, studying at the same time the existence of possible psychopathology and identifying the need for psychological support of Greek NEETs, b) the impact of both the crisis and the NEETs status on the young people's life trajectory, raising at the same time issues of social exclusion/integration, survival strategies, political behaviour and moral values and c) the diagnosis of the needs in terms of skills of Greek NEETs.

The findings of the two national-scale surveys have made it clear to policy actors that the issue of NEETs needs special attention and targeted intervention. Thus, the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance in cooperation with the Centre for the

¹ ΚΑΝΕΠ-ΓΣΕΕ, *Τεχνική Επαγγελματική Εκπαίδευση και Κατάρτιση, Ελληνική οικονομία και αναπτυξιακές προοπτικές: Δείκτες και Μεγέθη σε Ελλάδα και Ευρώπη, 2017*

Development of Educational Policy – GSEE developed need scientific support material and a framework for a training programme for career guidance/career counsellors on the subject of "Career Counselling for the support of NEETs" within the framework of the actions of the EOPPEP as the Euroguidance Centre of Greece for the year 2016 (EOPPEP & KANEP, 2016). It includes the Intervention Counselling manual for NEETs and the practice handbook (EOPPEP & KANEP, 2016, see also EOPPEP, 2012). It is a toolbox at the disposal of the Career Counsellor that includes experiential exercises, activities and case studies aimed at activating NEETs to facilitate educational, professional and social integration or, more precisely, reintegration.

Following these early efforts, there have been several national initiatives aimed at addressing the issue of NEETs (and promoting the social and economic inclusion of young people). Some of the key initiatives include:

Vocational education and training (VET) programmes: The Greek government has been investing in VET programmes, which aim to equip young people with the skills and qualifications they need to find employment or start their own businesses. The VET programmes are offered by vocational training centres and public institutions and cover a range of fields, such as tourism, agriculture, and health.

Apprenticeship programmes: The Greek government has established apprenticeship programmes that offer work-based learning opportunities to young people. These programmes aim to bridge the gap between education and the labour market and to provide young people with the skills and experience they need to succeed in their chosen field.

Training voucher programmes: The Greek government provides funding for training courses through the Training Voucher Programme, which is aimed at promoting lifelong learning and upskilling among the Greek workforce. The programme is open to all individuals who are registered with the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED), including NEETs and other unemployed individuals.

Entrepreneurship support programmes: The Greek government has established programmes that support young people who want to start their businesses. These programmes offer training, mentorship, and financial support to help young entrepreneurs get their businesses off the ground.

Overall, these national initiatives are aimed at providing targeted support to NEETs and other young people who face barriers to employment and social inclusion. These initiatives aim to provide young people with the skills, qualifications, and work experience they need to enter the labour market and pursue a career in their chosen field. By providing targeted support to this group, the initiatives can play an important role in reducing the NEET rate in Greece and promoting economic growth and development.

1.3 National frameworks in support of initiatives addressing NEETs

In Greece, several national frameworks support the initiatives aimed at addressing NEETs and promoting the social and economic inclusion of young people. Some of the key frameworks include:

The **National Action Plan for Youth Employment**²: This plan sets out the measures and policies that the Greek government is implementing to address youth unemployment, including NEETs. The plan is based on the European Commission's Youth Guarantee scheme and includes initiatives such as vocational training programmes, entrepreneurship support programmes, and apprenticeship programmes.

The **National Reform Program**³: This programme sets out the economic and social reforms that the Greek government is undertaking in line with EU policy objectives. The programme includes specific measures aimed at addressing youth unemployment and NEETs, such as improving the quality and accessibility of vocational training and apprenticeships.

The **Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) Strategic Plan**⁴: The OAED is the public organization responsible for implementing active labour market policies in Greece. The organization's strategic plan includes initiatives and programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and NEETs, such as vocational training programmes, work-based learning opportunities, and job search assistance.

The **European Social Fund (ESF)**⁵: The ESF is one of the main financial instruments of the European Union for supporting employment and social inclusion. In Greece, the ESF provides funding for a range of initiatives and programmes aimed at addressing youth unemployment and NEETs, including vocational training programmes, entrepreneurship support programmes, and apprenticeship programmes.

² Hellenic Republic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. (2018). National Action Plan for Youth Employment 2018-2020. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20325&langId=en>

³ Hellenic Republic Ministry of Finance. (2020). National Reform Programme of Greece 2020. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2020-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-commission-recommendations/greece-2020-country-specific-recommendation_en

⁴ Greek Manpower Employment Organization. (2018). Strategic Plan 2018-2022. Retrieved from <https://www.oad.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Strategic-Plan-2018-2022.pdf>

⁵ Ministry of Development and Investments. (2021). European Social Fund. Retrieved from <https://www.antagonistikotita.gr/en/european-social-fund/>

The **National Strategy for Lifelong Learning**⁶: This strategy sets out the policies and initiatives aimed at promoting lifelong learning in Greece, including for young people who are NEETs or at risk of becoming NEETs. The strategy emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to lifelong learning that includes formal, non-formal, and informal education and training.

These national frameworks provide the policy context and guidance for addressing NEETs and youth unemployment in Greece and complement the initiatives and programmes that the government and other organizations are implementing to support young people in gaining the skills, qualifications, and experience they need to enter the labour market. The frameworks emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses the multiple barriers to employment that young people face, and that provides targeted support to those who are most in need.

1.4 The Training Voucher programme

The Training Voucher programme in Greece is a programme that provides funding to individuals to participate in certified training courses, intending to promote lifelong learning and upskilling among the Greek workforce. The programme is available to all individuals who are registered with the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED), including NEETs and other unemployed individuals.

The Training Voucher programme is designed to support the development of a highly skilled workforce in Greece, by providing individuals with the opportunity to gain new skills and qualifications that are in demand in the labour market. The programme covers a wide range of training courses: from language courses and IT skills training to vocational training and apprenticeships. It is designed to cater to various sectors and industries, aiming to meet the demands of the labour market. While the programme offers training courses across multiple sectors, certain industries tend to attract more participants due to their high demand and potential for employment. These sectors include Information Technology (IT), hospitality and tourism, healthcare, business and administration, construction, and manufacturing.

Within these sectors, specific courses have garnered more interest and participation among individuals. For instance, IT-related courses such as programming languages, web development, data analysis, and cybersecurity have been popular choices due to the increasing digitalization of industries and the growing demand for IT professionals. Language courses, particularly English and other widely spoken languages, are also in demand, as language proficiency is seen as a valuable skill in many job positions.

⁶ Hellenic Republic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. (2017). National Strategy for Lifelong Learning. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/content/national-strategy-lifelong-learning-greece-2017-2023>

Additionally, vocational training courses and apprenticeships in trades such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, and automotive repair have attracted individuals seeking hands-on skills that can lead to employment opportunities in the construction and maintenance sectors.

The programme is administered by the OAED, which provides eligible individuals with a voucher that can be used to cover the cost of tuition and course materials. The voucher is issued based on the individual's level of education and training, as well as their employment status and income level. The programme also provides a stipend to participants to cover living expenses during the course and offers additional support to individuals with disabilities or other special needs.

The Training Voucher programme is an important part of the policy framework for addressing NEETs and promoting the social and economic inclusion of young people in Greece. By providing funding for training and upskilling, the programme aims to support the development of a highly skilled workforce, promote employment and economic growth, and improve the prospects of young people who are currently not engaged in education, employment, or training. The programme is just one of several initiatives aimed at addressing youth unemployment and promoting vocational education and training in Greece.

1.4.1 The design of the initiative

The Training Voucher Programme in Greece is designed to provide financial support to individuals who want to participate in training courses to gain new skills and qualifications that are in demand in the labour market. The programme was first launched in 2016, as part of the country's efforts to address high youth unemployment and NEET rate. The programme was established with funding from the European Union, through the European Social Fund, and is implemented by the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED). The duration of the training courses varies depending on the course and the provider but typically ranges from a few weeks to several months. The training courses are provided by a range of certified institutions, including vocational training centres, language schools, and other educational institutions.

Since its launch, the programme has undergone several modifications and adjustments to improve its effectiveness and meet the needs of participants. For example, in 2018, the programme was expanded to cover a wider range of training courses and to provide additional support to individuals with disabilities or other special needs.

As of 2021, the Training Voucher Programme has become a key part of the Greek government's efforts to promote lifelong learning and upskilling among the Greek workforce. As of the present moment, this programme remains ongoing and continues to significantly contribute to the professional development of Greek employees. The programme is expected to continue in the coming years, subject to funding

and other resources. The exact timeframe for the programme may vary depending on funding and other factors, but the programme is designed to be ongoing and to provide support to individuals who want to improve their skills and qualifications through certified training courses.

1.4.2 The Training Voucher Programme target group

The Training Voucher Programme is designed to support a wide range of individuals who want to participate in certified training courses to gain new skills and qualifications. The target group for the programme includes:

Unemployed individuals: The programme is open to individuals who are currently unemployed and seeking to improve their skills and qualifications to enhance their employability.

Employed individuals: The programme is also available to individuals who are currently employed but want to improve their skills and qualifications to advance their careers or pursue new opportunities.

Underemployed individuals: The programme is open to individuals who are currently working but are in low-paying or low-skilled jobs and want to improve their skills and qualifications to advance their careers.

NEETs: The programme is specifically designed to support young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs) and want to gain new skills and qualifications to improve their prospects in the labour market.

Individuals with disabilities: The programme provides additional support to individuals with disabilities or other special needs, such as providing accommodations or assistance with transportation.

To be eligible for the Training Voucher programme, individuals must be registered with the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) and meet certain criteria, such as being a Greek citizen or a citizen of an EU or EEA member state and being aged 18 or older. Participants must also demonstrate a commitment to completing the training course and using the skills and qualifications they gain to pursue employment or further education.

The Training Voucher Programme is designed to be inclusive and to support individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances. The programme aims to provide targeted support to those who are most in need of upskilling and reskilling and to promote lifelong learning and the development of a highly skilled workforce in Greece.

1.4.3 Measures and services under the Training Voucher Program

The Training Voucher Programme in Greece provides a range of measures and services to support individuals who want to participate in certified training courses to gain new skills and qualifications. These measures and services include:

Vouchers: Eligible individuals receive a voucher that can be used to cover the cost of tuition and course materials for the training course they wish to attend. The value of the voucher depends on the individual's level of education and training, as well as their employment status and income level.

Range of training courses: The programme covers a wide range of training courses, from language courses and IT skills training to vocational training and apprenticeships. The courses are certified by the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (E.O.P.P.E.P.).

Stipend: The programme provides a stipend to participants to cover living expenses during the course. The amount of the stipend depends on the individual's level of income and employment status.

Additional support: The programme offers additional support to individuals with disabilities or other special needs, such as providing accommodations or assistance with transportation.

Guidance and counselling: The programme provides guidance and counselling services to help individuals choose the training course that best suits their needs and interests, and to provide support throughout the training process.

Certification: At the end of the training course, participants receive a certificate of completion, which can be used to demonstrate their new skills and qualifications to potential employers or educational institutions.

1.4.4 Effectiveness of the training voucher programme

The programme is subject to monitoring and evaluation by the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) to ensure that it is meeting its objectives and providing effective support to participants.

The effectiveness of the Training Voucher Programme in Greece has been the subject of ongoing evaluation and analysis. While there is no single answer to the question of the Programme's effectiveness, there is evidence to suggest that the programme has had a positive impact on the employment prospects of participants.

One study conducted by the European Commission in 2018^{7,8} found that the programme had a positive effect on the employment outcomes of participants. The study found that participants who completed a training course through the programme were more likely to be employed or to have improved their employment situation six months after completing the course, compared to a control group that did not participate in the programme. The study also found that the programme had a positive effect on the earnings of participants, with those who completed a course through the programme earning more than those in the control group.

Other studies and evaluations⁹ have also found that the programme has been effective in supporting the upskilling and reskilling of individuals, and in promoting lifelong learning and the development of a highly skilled workforce in Greece.

While the programme has demonstrated positive outcomes, there is always room for improvement. Some areas for improvement include increasing the availability of high-quality training courses and expanding the programme to reach more individuals in need of upskilling and reskilling. Additionally, more research and evaluation are needed to fully understand the impact of the programme and to identify opportunities for improvement.

The added value of our research is encapsulated in its comprehensive approach to evaluating the Training Voucher Programme, looking beyond employment outcomes to assess relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. This all-encompassing view provides a rich understanding of the programme's overall performance. At the heart of our research, we focus on the beneficiaries themselves. Their experiences and outcomes are integral to our analysis, grounding our insights into the lived realities of those directly affected by the programme. But our research isn't solely about examining the present; it's also about paving the way for the future. We identify opportunities for improvement that can enhance future iterations of the programme, making our work a key tool for its ongoing evolution. This analysis significantly expands the knowledge base on workforce development initiatives, offering insights that can inform similar projects not only within Greece but around the globe. Lastly, by using an online survey, we can gather a comprehensive range of detailed responses, fortifying the depth and reliability of our findings.

⁷ European Commission. (2018). Assessment of the Greek Training Voucher Scheme. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20772&langId=en>

⁸ OECD. (2020). Getting Skills Right: Greece. Paris: OECD Publishing. Retrieved from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/getting-skills-right-greece_9789264323693-en

⁹ Katsaros, K., & Karkalakos, S. (2021). An evaluation of the Greek Training Voucher Scheme using propensity score matching. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 73(2), 186-202.

2. Descriptive statistics

According to data from the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED)¹⁰, more than 270,000 individuals have participated in the Training Voucher Programme since its launch in 2016. This includes individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances, including unemployed individuals, employed individuals seeking to upskill, underemployed individuals, and NEETs.

It is worth noting that the number of individuals who participate in the programme may vary from year to year, depending on funding, resources, and other factors. However, the programme has been ongoing since its launch and has provided targeted support to individuals who want to improve their skills and qualifications through certified training courses.

Table 1 presents some individual sub-actions of the training voucher programme that target, among other beneficiaries, NEETs.

Table 1. Sub-actions targeting NEETs under the training voucher programme

Action	Description	Period	Level	Budget	Target group	Total beneficiaries	No of NEETs
EGF/2014/001 EL/NUTRIART ¹¹	Subsidised training of 'NUTRIART' ex-employees' training voucher	2014-2016	Local EL12 EL30	€10,160,000	NEETs 15-29	508	505
EGF/2014/013 – GR Odyssefs Fokas ¹²	Subsidised training of 'Odyssefs Fokas' ex-employees' training voucher	2014-2017	Local EL12 EL14 EL30	€10,740,000	NEETs 15-29	1,100	500
EGF/2015/011 GR/Supermarket Larissa ¹³	Subsidised training of 'Supermarket Larissa' ex-employees' training voucher	2017	Local EL12 EL14	€10,780,000	NEETs 15-29	1,100	543

¹⁰ Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED). (2021). Πρόγραμμα Κατάρτισης Ενηλίκων Εργαζομένων και Άνεργων [Adult Education and Training Programme for Employees and Unemployed Individuals]. Retrieved from <https://www.oaed.gr/prokirikseis/katartisi-erevnon-prosopikou-epangelmatos/proskliseis-programma-katartisis-enilikon-ergazomenon-kai-anergon.html>

¹¹ Decision 2014/698 - 2014/698/EU: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 September 2014 on the Globalisation Fund application EGF/2014/001 EL/Nutriart from Greece, [https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvke1fm2yd1u0_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vkcwedg08czk/v=s7z/f=/com\(2014\)376_en.pdf](https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvke1fm2yd1u0_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vkcwedg08czk/v=s7z/f=/com(2014)376_en.pdf)

¹² Decision 2015/43 – 2015/43/EU: Decision of the European Parliament and of the council of 17 December 2014 on the Globalisation Fund application EGF/2014/013 EL/Odyssefs Fokas from Greece, [https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvke1fm2yd1u0_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vkcwedgllwzc/v=s7z/f=/com\(2014\)702_en.pdf](https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvke1fm2yd1u0_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vkcwedgllwzc/v=s7z/f=/com(2014)702_en.pdf)

Action	Description	Period	Level	Budget	Target group	Total beneficiaries	No of NEETs
EGF/2014/009 – GR Sprider Stores ¹⁴	Subsidised training of 'Sprider Stores A.E.' ex-employees' training voucher	2014-2016	Local EL12 EL30	€12,151,500	NEETs 15-29	1,311	550
9.45559/24/07/2019 ¹⁵	Consultancy support, training, certification and promotion in the employment of unemployed young people aged 25-29 in the sector of Information and Communication Technologies	2019-2022	National	€9,038,701	NEETs 25-29	1,580	1,580
9.3849/26-06-2019 ¹⁶	Promoting the employment of unemployed young people aged 25 to 29 years old graduates in science, technology and economics, through training in the ICT sector	2019-2022	National	€17,537,600	NEETs 25-29	3,000	3,000

3. Description of methodology

In our pursuit of a comprehensive evaluation of the Training Voucher Programme, we employed a methodological approach that was twofold. Firstly, an online survey was deployed to gather the experiences and outcomes of the beneficiaries who had completed the programme. This survey was

¹³ Decision 2016/990 - Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (application from Greece – EGF/2015/011 GR/Supermarket Larissa), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016PC0210>

¹⁴ Decision 2014/879 - 2014/879/EU: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2014 on the Globalisation Fund application EGF/2014/009 EL/Sprider Stores, from Greece, [https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvke1fm2yd1u0_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vkcwtedk0ywj/v=s7z/f=/com\(2014\)620_en.pdf](https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvke1fm2yd1u0_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vkcwtedk0ywj/v=s7z/f=/com(2014)620_en.pdf)

¹⁵ ACTION 'Consultancy support, training, certification and promotion in employment of unemployed young people aged 25-29 in the sector of Information and Communication Technologies' https://www.espa.gr/Lists/Proclamations/Attachments/4451/epandvm_190724_1h_Tropop_Symvoyleytiki_katartisi_TPE_Foreis.pdf

¹⁶ ACTION 'Promoting the employment of unemployed young people aged 25 to 29 years old graduates in science, technology and economics, through training in the ICT sector', <https://www.voucher.gov.gr/project/download-doc/id/34>

thoughtfully designed to probe multiple dimensions of the programme, including its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. The overarching goal was to produce a robust assessment of the programme's impact on its intended beneficiaries.

While the data gathered from this survey forms the crux of our research, we also recognized the importance of supplementing this quantitative data with expert insight to provide context and validation. For this reason, the second component of our methodology involved an in-depth discussion of the survey results with a Job Counsellor from the local OAED branch in Larissa, Greece.

This Job Counsellor, with her professional expertise and on-the-ground understanding of the programme's operations, served as a vital collaborator in our research process. We engaged in a meticulous review of the survey results with this counsellor, leveraging her insights to elucidate the data, identify patterns, and draw well-founded conclusions. Her expertise offered us the unique advantage of correlating our empirical findings with the practical aspects of the programme implementation.

Through this dialogue, we were also able to unearth potential gaps between the programme's theoretical design and its real-world application. The Counsellor's input assisted us in interpreting the survey responses in light of these operational realities, thereby adding depth to our analysis.

This combination of data-driven insights from beneficiaries and expert opinions from those directly involved in the programme's execution allowed us to provide a comprehensive and grounded evaluation of the Training Voucher Programme.

3.1 Structure of the online survey

The structure of the questionnaire is as follows:

I. Introduction

The purpose of the survey and how the data will be used are explained.

Instructions for responding to the survey are provided.

II. Demographic Information

Basic demographic data are collected, such as age, gender, education level, and employment status.

III. Evaluation Criteria

Likert-scale statements are included addressing each of the evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Respondents are encouraged to provide additional comments or feedback on each statement.

IV. Overall Assessment

Respondents are asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the training voucher programme on a Likert scale.

V. Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions are included to allow respondents to provide more detailed feedback on their experiences with the training voucher programme.

VI. Closing

Respondents are thanked for their time and participation in the survey and are requested to provide their contact information to keep in touch with the results of the survey and the Lost Millennials project.

The participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. On this scale, a rating of 1 represented "*totally disagree*" while a rating of 5 indicated "*totally agree*". The following statements were included:

Relevance:

1. The training courses provided through the voucher programme were relevant to my career interests and goals.
2. The training voucher programme addressed my personal development needs.
3. The training courses provided through the voucher programme improved my employability and career prospects.

Coherence:

4. The training voucher programme aligned with my previous education and training.
5. The training voucher programme was compatible with other support programmes or initiatives that I have participated in or was aware of.
6. The training voucher programme did not conflict with my other priorities or obligations.

Effectiveness:

7. The training voucher programme helped me develop new skills and knowledge that I can use in my work.
8. The outcomes of my participation in the training voucher programme met my expectations.
9. The training voucher programme contributed to my personal and professional development.

Efficiency:

10. The resources available (e.g., budget, time, staff expertise) for the training voucher programme were well-suited for achieving its objectives.
11. The application process for the training voucher programme was user-friendly and easy to complete.
12. The training courses provided through the voucher programme were cost-effective and efficient in terms of time.

Sustainability:

13. I feel that the skills and knowledge I gained through the training voucher programme will be useful to me in the future.
14. The benefits of the training voucher programme will continue after the programme ends.
15. The training voucher programme had a positive impact on my long-term personal and professional goals.

Impact:

16. The training voucher programme improved my career prospects and employability.
17. The training voucher programme had a positive impact on my personal and professional development.
18. The training voucher programme helped me transition into employment or further education.

The questionnaire was developed in the Greek language and was made available in an online format. The distributed questionnaire can be accessed through the following link: <https://forms.gle/qBspW3sorioravcPA>.

The participants were also given the opportunity to provide qualitative information regarding their personal experience with the training voucher programme. This section consisted of open-ended questions, allowing the participants to provide written responses. It is important to note that participation in this section was optional, and the participants had the choice to provide their insights through free-text responses. The inclusion of open-ended questions aimed to gather rich and detailed information, allowing the participants to share their unique perspectives, opinions, and experiences related to the training voucher programme.

The open-ended questions were the following:

- *'What motivated you to apply for the training voucher programme?'*
- *'Is there anything you think could be improved about the training voucher programme?'*

- *'Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience of the training voucher programme?'*

The final section of the questionnaire provided participants with the opportunity to provide their contact information, specifically their email address, if they were interested in receiving the results of the evaluation, as well as future updates and opportunities regarding the training voucher programme. It assured participants that their email addresses would be treated confidentially and would not be shared with third parties. The purpose of collecting this contact information was to establish a means of communicating with participants and informing them of the results of the evaluation and any relevant updates or opportunities related to the training voucher programme. Participants were given the option to either provide their email address or leave the section blank if they preferred not to receive further communication.

3.2 Data collection

The survey was based on a countrywide sample of men and women, beneficiaries of the training voucher programme. The online survey was conducted over a period of approximately two months, from mid-March 2023 to early May 2023. The survey was distributed to a variety of sources, including local Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions that offer training programmes through the training voucher programme, the official online communication channels of the Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED), as well as various social media groups dedicated to exchanging opinions and answering questions regarding current voucher programmes.

In total, the survey received 146 responses from individuals who have benefitted from the training voucher programme.

The survey aimed to gather data on the experiences of beneficiaries and assess the effectiveness of the programme from their perspective. By using multiple distribution channels, the survey was able to reach a diverse pool of participants and generate a comprehensive understanding of the programme's impact on beneficiaries.

4. Evaluation questions

The results of the training voucher programme questionnaire were analysed to obtain information on the effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability of the programme from the perspective of its beneficiaries. The questionnaire responses were used to calculate the average score for each criterion, and a correlation analysis was conducted to explore possible relationships between the different criteria.

4.1 Profile of the participants

The survey had a total of 146 participants, with 16.44% male and 82.88% female respondents. The majority of respondents fell in the age range of 35-44 (49.32%), followed by 30-34 (21.92%), over 45 (18.49%), and 25-29 (9.59%). In terms of educational level, the highest number of respondents were higher education graduates (37.67%), followed by master's degree graduates (26.03%), secondary education graduates (19.18%), vocational education and training graduates (13.70%), and primary education graduates (0.68%). In terms of employment status during the period of participation in the training voucher Programme, the majority of respondents were employed (47.95%), followed by in education or training but not employed (30.14%), not in education, employment or training (17.12%), and those who preferred not to respond (4.79%). The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of survey participants

Data Category	Available responses	No of participants	% of participants
Gender	Male	24	16,44%
	Female	121	82,88%
	I'd rather not respond	1	0,68%
Age	Less than 24	1	0,68%
	25 - 29	14	9,59%
	30 - 34	32	21,92%
	35 - 44	72	49,32%
	Over 45	27	18,49%
	I'd rather not respond	0	0,00%
Age at the time of participation in the training voucher programme	Less than 24	6	4,11%
	25 - 29	21	14,38%
	30 - 34	29	19,86%
	35 - 44	67	45,89%
	Over 45	22	15,07%
	I'd rather not respond	1	0,68%
Educational level	Primary education graduate	1	0,68%
	Secondary education graduate	28	19,18%
	Vocational education and training graduate	20	13,70%
	Higher education graduate	55	37,67%
	Master's degree graduate	38	26,03%
	PhD holder	1	0,68%
	I'd rather not respond	3	2,05%
Employment status during the period of participation in the training voucher programme	Not in education, employment or training	25	17,12%
	In education or training, not employed	44	30,14%
	Employed	70	47,95%
	I'd rather not respond	7	4,79%

The expert analysis reveals a striking correspondence between the demographic profiles from the survey and the national unemployment data. It was observed that the majority of unemployed individuals fall within the 30-45 age group, mirroring the same demographic trends in the survey. There is a significant gender imbalance in unemployment figures, with women bearing the brunt. In fact, the number of unemployed women is double that of men, which aligns with the patterns seen in the broader Greek addresses labour market. This is largely attributed to societal factors, as women are often tasked with providing care for children and elderly family members, consequently hindering their professional progression. An additional salient point is the high unemployment rates among higher education graduates, a trend that is particularly prevalent in southern Europe, with Greece and Italy standing out. The survey results corroborate this, highlighting the underemployment of this highly educated demographic.

Among the survey participants, a mere count of four individuals is classified within our primary area of interest, namely the 25-29 NEETs. While this subset forms a modest fraction of the overall respondents, it nevertheless forms an integral part of the larger societal tapestry that the survey encapsulates. Conclusions drawn from the broader dataset, encompassing prevalent trends, achieved outcomes, and prevailing perceptions, can potentially illuminate the wider socio-economic and pedagogical landscape within which these NEET individuals are situated.

Furthermore, a global assessment of the programme's efficacy—its influence on employment trajectories, income gradients, and skill augmentation—provides a crucial understanding of the programme's strengths and potential shortcomings. Such comprehensive insights will underpin the formulation of strategies aimed at optimally serving the 25-29 NEET cohort.

Barriers impeding participation or factors driving success, as indicated by the overarching survey results, can shape targeted interventions for the 25-29 NEET demographic. It is important to note that these barriers or drivers of success, even if identified by respondents outside the primary focus group, could still apply to our target demographic and warrant further exploration.

In essence, the more extensive dataset derived from the survey offers invaluable insights into the broader environment where the 25-29 NEET group operates, as well as a holistic view of the programme's effectiveness. Such information is crucial to both comprehend and enhance the Training Voucher Programme's impact on this specific demographic.

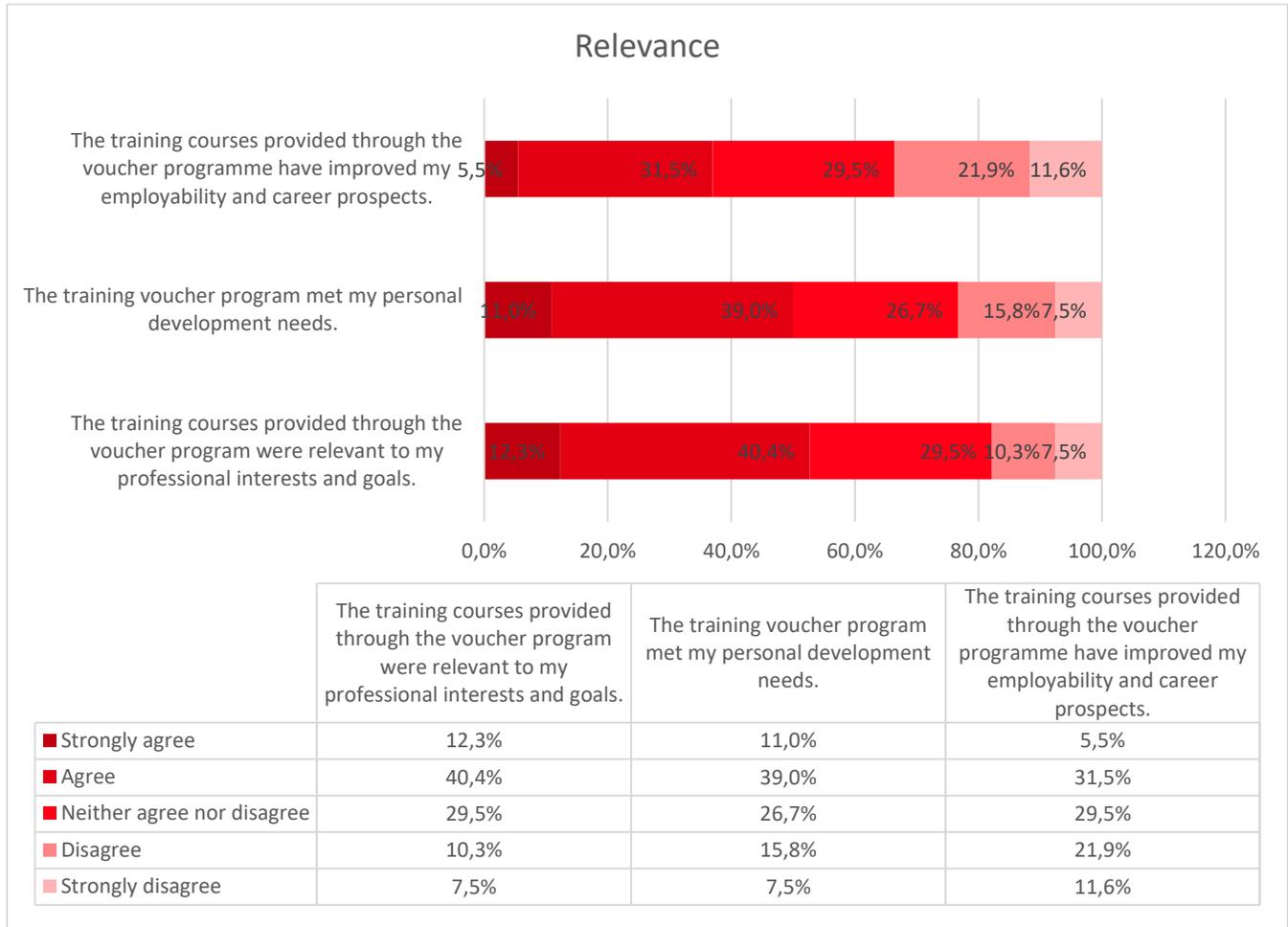
4.2 Results description

4.2.1 Relevance

Based on the analysis of the survey responses (see Figure 7), it can be concluded that the objectives of the training voucher programme are generally aligned with the local situation and respond effectively to the needs of the beneficiaries in terms of their professional interests, personal development needs, employability and career prospects. Specifically, more than half (52.7%) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training courses provided through the voucher programme were relevant to their career interests and goals. In addition, 50% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the voucher training programme met their personal development needs. Finally, 36.9% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training courses provided through the voucher programme improved their employability and career prospects.

However, while the majority of respondents found the programme relevant, the relevance criterion received an average score of 3.22 out of 5, indicating a moderate level of relevance. This suggests that there is room for improvement in terms of aligning the objectives and aims of the programme with the local context and the needs of the beneficiaries. Further analysis of the survey data may reveal factors that influenced respondents' perceptions of the relevance of the programme.

Figure 7. Summary of Responses to the Relevance Criterion Questions in the Online Survey of Training Voucher Beneficiaries



Given the country's policies, priorities and statistics, it would be necessary to conduct a more comprehensive analysis comparing the survey results with relevant data and trends. At first sight, the high rate of youth unemployment in Greece, despite high educational attainment, could lead to scepticism about the effectiveness of further training. The perceived relevance of the Training Voucher Programme could be affected if Greek NEETs see that completing a training course does not guarantee employment in the current economic climate.

The expert analysis concerning the relevance criterion provides valuable insight into how the Training Voucher Programme is perceived by its beneficiaries. The expert suggests a different interpretation of neutral responses, viewing respondents who "neither agree nor disagree" as expressing an absence of satisfaction. Thus, they propose that dividing responses into "satisfied" and "not satisfied" could reveal that satisfaction is evenly split, which may not reflect as positive an outcome as initially assumed.

The expert also discusses the role of the programme's specificity in influencing perceived relevance. She argues that tailored training courses with specific topics are more likely to align with the beneficiaries' needs and expectations, as opposed to broad, general courses. The latter may lead to a mismatch in skills training — for instance, a plumber attending a digital skills course simply because it's available, rather than because it's directly beneficial to their profession. Such cases, she believes, could negatively impact satisfaction ratings.

The expert notes that, surprisingly, the survey results were better than expected. They predict that increased specialisation in these training programs would further improve satisfaction and relevance scores.

As for entry criteria, the expert notes that these are typically broad, which can lead to people participating in programs that don't align with their interests or backgrounds. They suggest that this mismatch could be addressed by allowing potential participants to specify their training interests to the public employment promotion agency, which could then inform them when relevant programs become available.

For more specialised programs, the expert recommends that a minimum level of relevance should be established, either based on previous knowledge, work experience, or intended job. The recent practice of allowing anyone who is unemployed and has completed secondary education to apply for any program, regardless of relevance, is viewed as problematic. This approach, they believe, undervalues the educational component of training in favour of simply providing compensation for attendance, which should not be the primary goal of these programs.

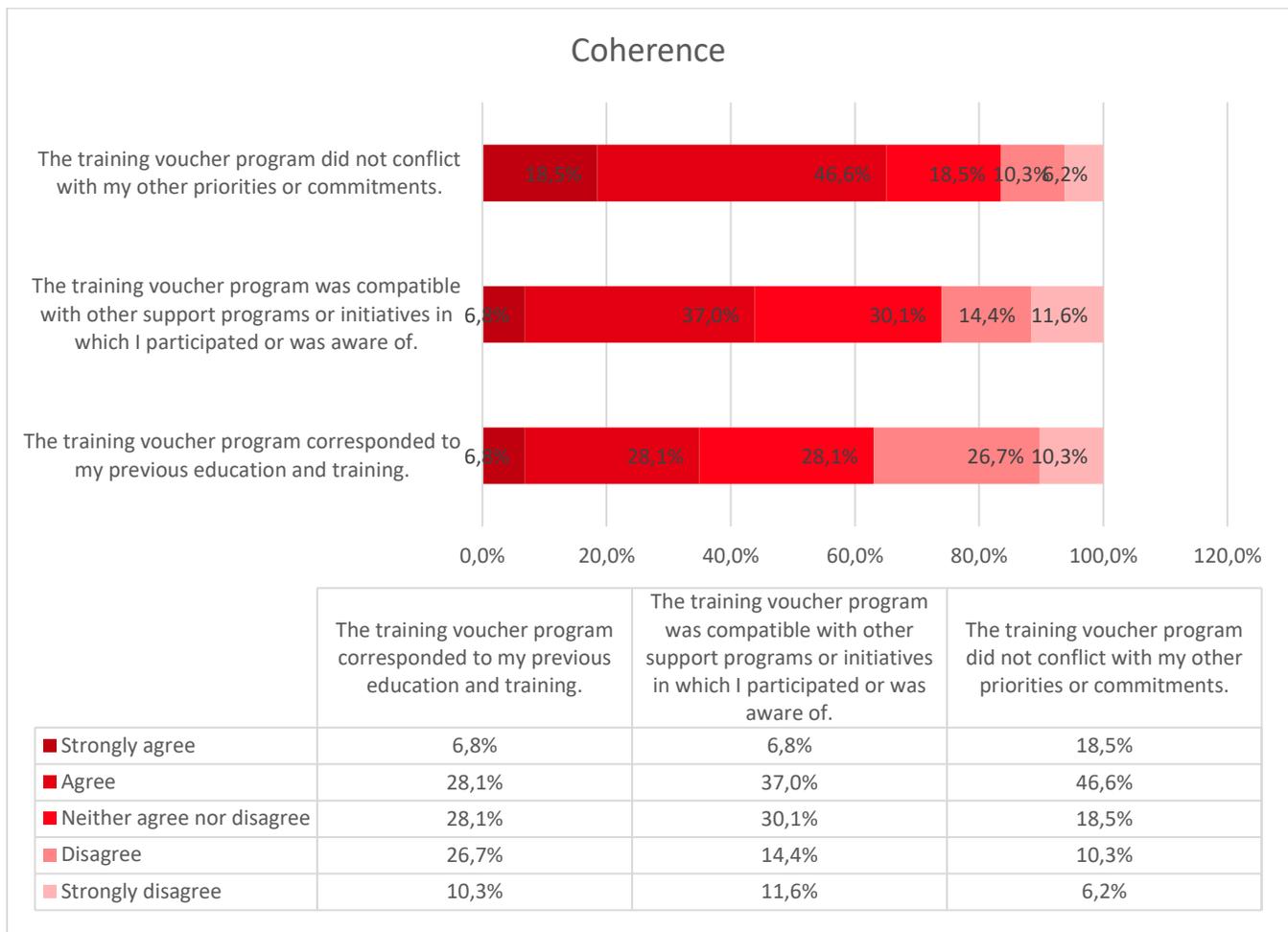
4.2.2 Coherence

Based on the responses to coherence criterion questions in the survey, it can be inferred that the training voucher programme generally fits well with the education and training backgrounds of its beneficiaries, is compatible with other support programmes or initiatives, and does not conflict with their other priorities or commitments.

Specifically, 35% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training voucher programme corresponded to their previous education and training, while 43.8% were neutral on this statement. Similarly, 44.2% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training voucher programme was compatible with other support programmes or initiatives in which they participated or were aware of, while only 24.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Furthermore, 57.6% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training voucher programme did not conflict with their other priorities or commitments.

According to the survey results, the coherence criterion received an average score of 3.23 out of 5, indicating a moderate level of coherence of the training voucher programme with the backgrounds, priorities, and commitments of its beneficiaries. While a significant portion of respondents agreed that the programme fit well with their education and training backgrounds, was compatible with other initiatives, and did not conflict with their priorities, a notable proportion remained neutral or disagreed with these statements.

Figure 8. Summary of the Likert Scale Responses for the Coherence Criterion Questions in the Training Voucher Programme Evaluation



The Training Voucher Programme's coherence with other interventions in Greece is substantiated by its alignment with national strategies and initiatives. Specifically, it embodies the objectives of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment, the National Reform Program, and the National Strategy

for Lifelong Learning by working to reduce youth unemployment, augment vocational training, and encourage lifelong learning. Simultaneously, the programme enhances other complementary initiatives such as entrepreneurship and apprenticeship programmes by providing the necessary training resources. Furthermore, it is harmonious with the strategic goals of the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) as well as the European Social Fund's objective to support employment and social inclusion. Therefore, the Training Voucher Programme doesn't operate in isolation but rather fits within and supports a broader framework of national and European employment strategies and initiatives.

The expert analysis regarding the coherence criterion of the Training Voucher Programme reveals some mixed perspectives.

The expert appreciates the design of the programme for its non-conflict with other employee obligations, noting this aspect as a positive feature. The programme was structured in a manner that did not place an undue burden on participants, making attendance manageable and considerate of other commitments the beneficiaries might have.

However, the expert expressed reservations about the perceived compatibility of the programme with other initiatives and actions. She queried why respondents found it compatible, suggesting that it might be due to some programmes offering internship opportunities post-training. For instance, a digital marketing training programme paired high-achieving trainees with companies seeking interns in the same field. This practice, the expert acknowledged, illustrates positive coherence between different initiatives.

In terms of relevance to the participants' educational background, the expert expressed some concerns. She noted that even when a training course topic, such as digital skills, is broadly relevant, it should be tailored to the educational level of the participants. She referred to a large-scale digital and green skills programme as an example, where feedback from participants was mixed. Some found it highly beneficial, while others seemed to participate mostly for the compensation. The expert also mentioned that some of the programme's topics were too specialised yet open to all, leading to people with no relevant background attending training on highly specialised subjects such as carbon footprint, which may not be beneficial or coherent with their needs or goals.

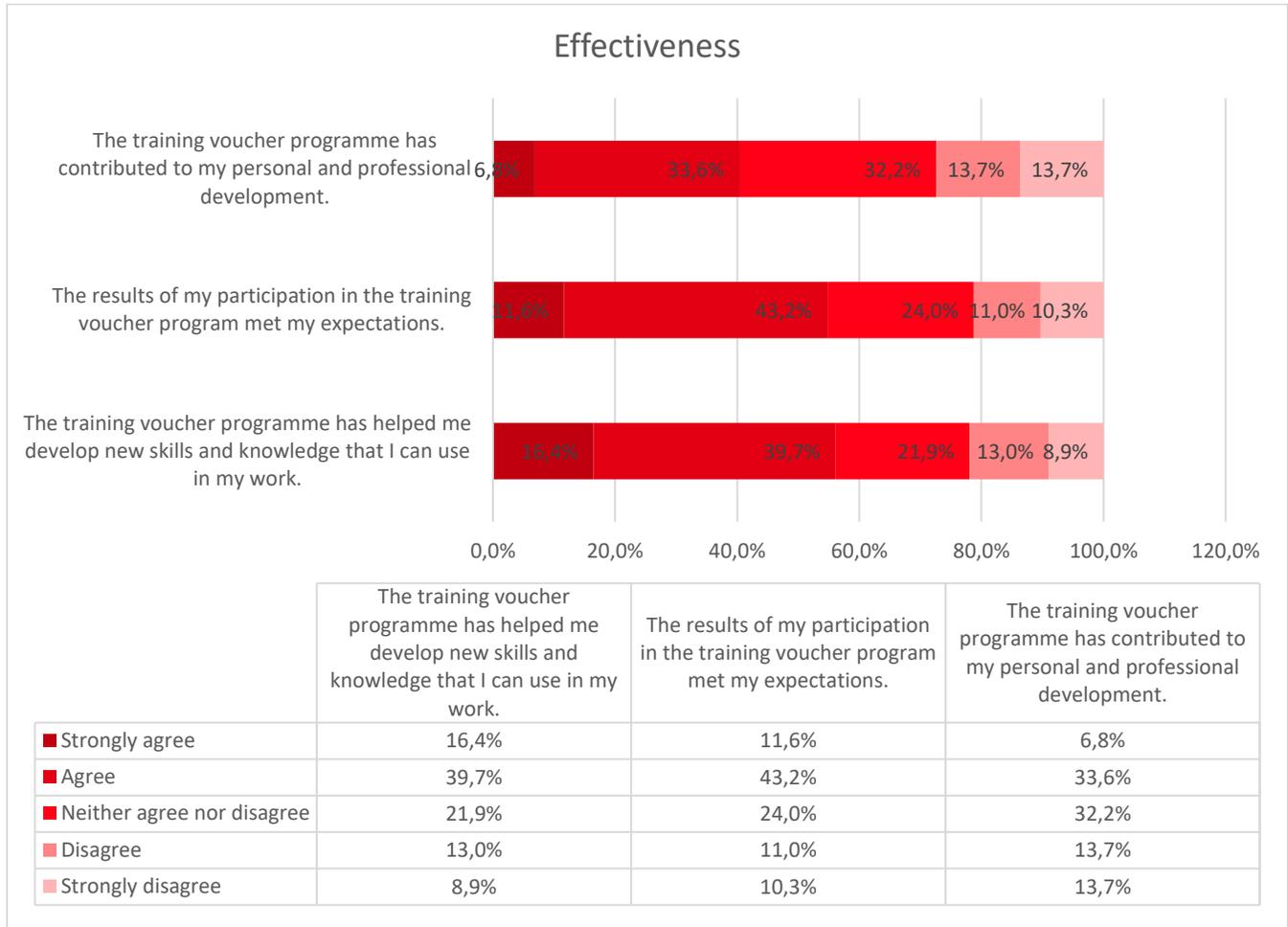
In summary, the expert analysis on coherence points to both positive aspects, such as non-conflict with other obligations, and areas for improvement, such as ensuring compatibility with other initiatives and tailoring content to participants' educational backgrounds. The expert's insights highlight the need for a nuanced approach to design and implement training programmes, to enhance coherence and overall effectiveness.

4.2.3 Effectiveness

The results for the effectiveness criterion (see Figure 9 9) indicated that a significant proportion of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the training voucher programme was effective in achieving its intended results. Specifically, 56.1% of respondents agreed that the programme helped them develop new skills and knowledge that they could use in their work, and 54.8% felt that the results of their participation in the training voucher programme met their expectations. In addition, 40.4% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the programme contributed to their personal and professional development.

However, a non-negligible percentage of respondents either remained neutral or disagreed with the statements, indicating that there is room for improvement in terms of the Programme's effectiveness. The effectiveness criterion of the training voucher programme can be considered moderate, with an overall average score of 3.28 out of 5.

Figure 9. Summary of the Likert Scale Responses for the Effectiveness Criterion Questions in the Training Voucher Programme Evaluation



The survey results for the effectiveness criterion align well with the findings from the literature review (see Section 1.4.4). Both suggest that the Training Voucher Programme has had a positive impact on the beneficiaries, particularly in terms of skill development and enhancement of employment prospects. Survey responses highlight that a majority of participants perceived the programme as beneficial, with 56.1% agreeing that the programme helped them develop new skills and knowledge applicable to their work, while 54.8% felt the outcomes met their expectations. Similarly, literature sources, including a 2018 European Commission study, echo this sentiment, showcasing a positive effect on employment outcomes and earnings for participants who completed the programme. The studies also underscore the programme's contribution to upskilling and promoting lifelong learning. However, both sources indicate that there is room for improvement. While the survey respondents

marked the programme's effectiveness as moderate (3.28 out of 5), the literature review called for enhancing the quality and availability of training courses and expanding the reach of the programme.

In assessing the effectiveness criterion survey results, the expert expressed surprise at the positive outcome. The responses suggest that a significant portion of the participants, nearly half, felt that they gained from the programme, a finding that surpassed the expert's expectations. However, the expert noted that it's important to consider the other half of the respondents who did not express complete satisfaction, indicating room for improvement.

The expert commented that, despite any potential flaws in design or relevance, individuals with a strong drive and willingness to learn would ultimately benefit from such programmes. The expert expressed a positive view of training vouchers as a base measure, primarily due to their potential to foster continuous learning even if the specific topic of a training might not directly relate to a participant's immediate needs or interests.

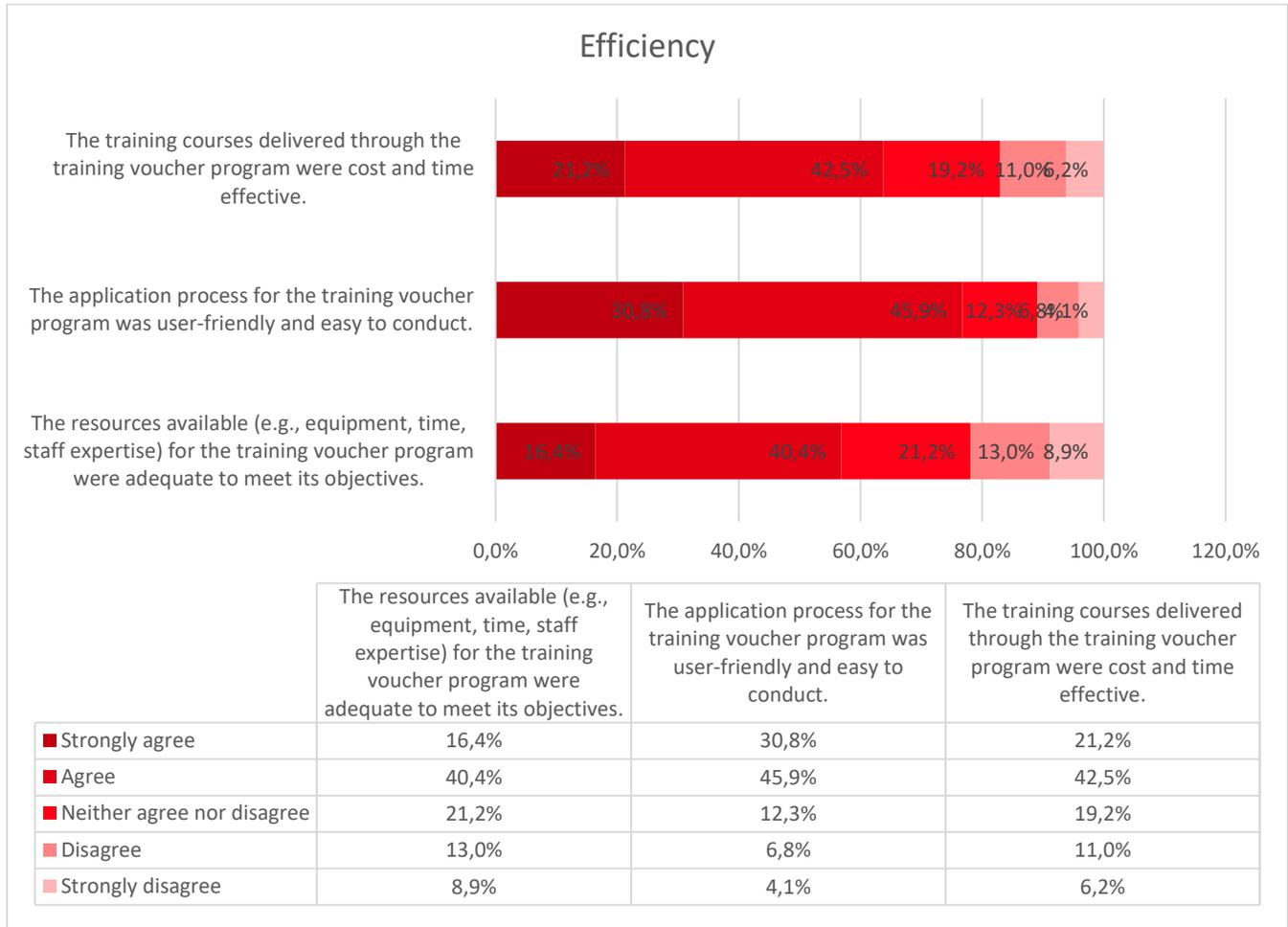
The expert also posited that the high level of satisfaction may be linked to the ever-present necessity for continuous learning in the modern age. They suggested that any opportunity to further one's education is generally seen as welcome and beneficial, contributing to the positive feedback received for the Training Voucher Programme's effectiveness. This observation implies that the value of the programme may extend beyond the specific skills it teaches, also promoting an overarching culture of lifelong learning.

4.2.4 Efficiency

Based on the evaluation questions related to efficiency (see Figure 10), it can be concluded that the resources allocated to the training voucher programme were generally adequate and the application process was user-friendly. In addition, a significant proportion of respondents agreed that the training courses delivered through the programme were cost and time-effective. However, a non-negligible proportion of respondents remained neutral or disagreed with these statements, indicating that some improvements are needed in terms of the effectiveness of the programme.

The criterion of effectiveness of the training voucher programme can be considered medium to high, with an average score of 3.66 out of 5. The majority of respondents agreed that the resources available for the training voucher programme, such as equipment, staff time and expertise, were sufficient to achieve its objectives (56.8% strongly agreed or agreed). Similarly, a large number of respondents felt that the application process for the training voucher programme was user-friendly and easy to administer (76.7% either strongly agreed or agreed). In terms of cost and time efficiency, 63.7% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training courses delivered through the programme were effective.

Figure 10. Summary of the Online Survey Responses for the Effectiveness Criterion Questions in the Training Voucher Programme Evaluation



The literature underscores the program's efficiency by highlighting the successful outcomes related to upskilling participants and promoting lifelong learning. These positive outcomes are a testament to the effective utilization of resources, where participants' enhanced skills and continued learning are considered returns on the investments made in the programme. The resources here refer to financial inputs, training materials, staff expertise, and time spent on the program. Efficient allocation suggests that these resources have been used in such a way that maximizes the potential benefits or outcomes. The survey results complement these findings by showing that a majority of participants felt the program was efficiently run.

In the expert analysis of the efficiency results, the expert expressed admiration for the outcomes, which she suggested underscored her earlier remarks on the programme's proficient planning.

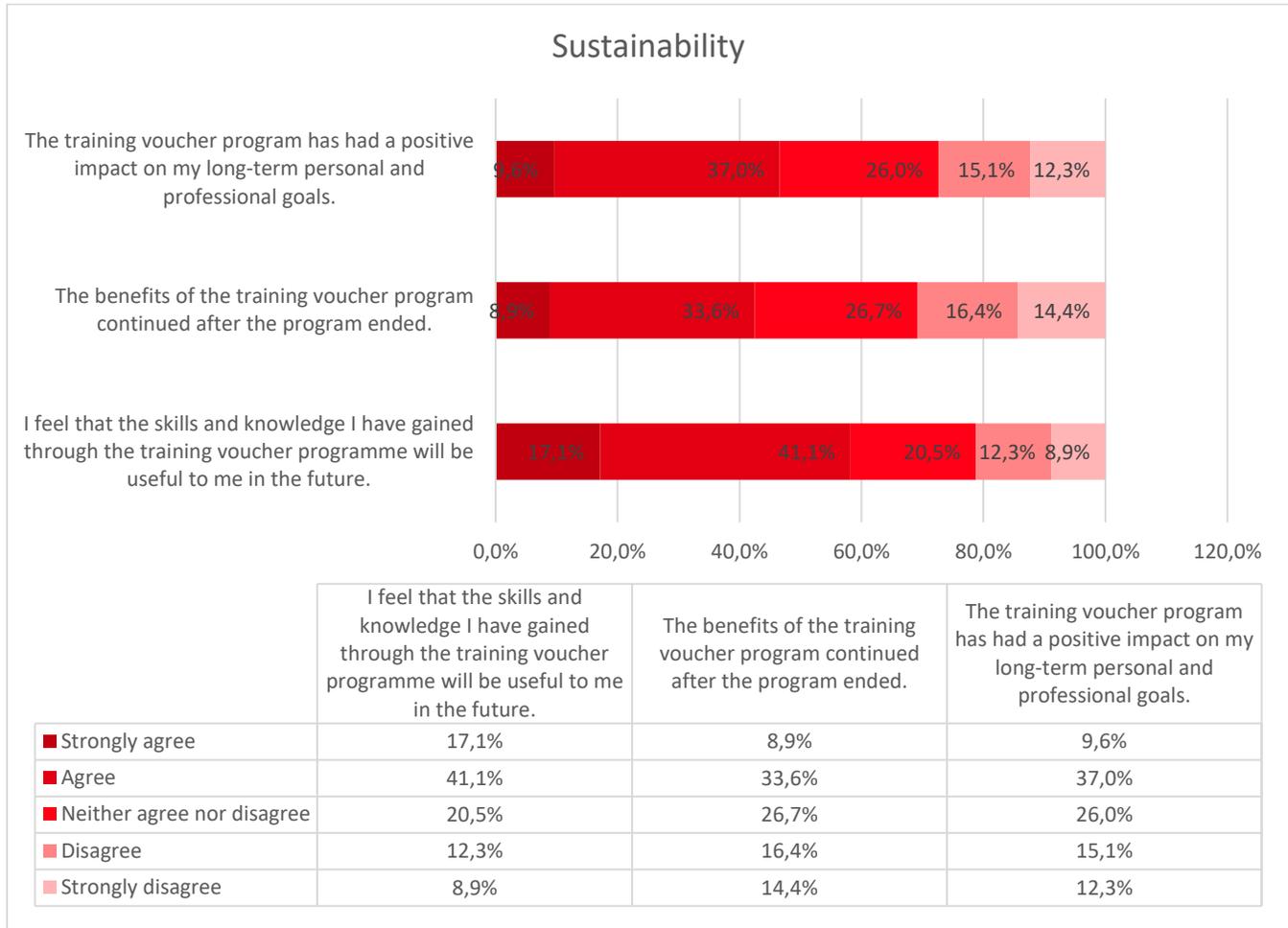
She shared her insight on the high calibre of trainers involved in the training voucher scheme. The expert noted that the trainers, who are certified adult educators, often possess an impressive combination of qualifications, aptitude for adult education, and a strong desire to transfer knowledge. The proficiency and dedication of these trainers, according to her, have significantly contributed to the programme's success, which is mirrored in the survey's results.

As for the application process, the expert pointed out that it is typically conducted online. She went on to suggest that the training providers, driven by their interest in securing participants, are likely to offer assistance during the application process. Even though such support isn't institutionally mandated, it is likely to be available due to the inherent incentives for providers to attract participants. This supportive aspect could also be a contributing factor to the reported efficiency of the application process.

4.2.5 Sustainability

Based on the survey responses (see Figure 11), the sustainability of the training voucher programme can be assessed as moderate, with an average score of 3.23 out of 5. While a significant percentage of respondents agreed that the skills and knowledge acquired through the programme will be useful to them in the future (58.2% agreed or strongly agreed), a significant percentage of respondents were neutral or disagreed, indicating that not all beneficiaries can consider the programme sustainable. Similarly, a significant proportion of respondents were neutral or disagreed that the benefits of the programme continue after its end (30.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed and 26.7% were neutral). While a large number of respondents felt that the programme had a positive impact on their long-term personal and professional goals (46.9% agreed or strongly agreed), a significant proportion of respondents remained neutral or disagreed with this statement, indicating room for improvement in terms of the sustainability of the programme.

Figure 11. Summary of the Online Survey Responses for the Sustainability Criterion Questions in the Training Voucher Programme Evaluation



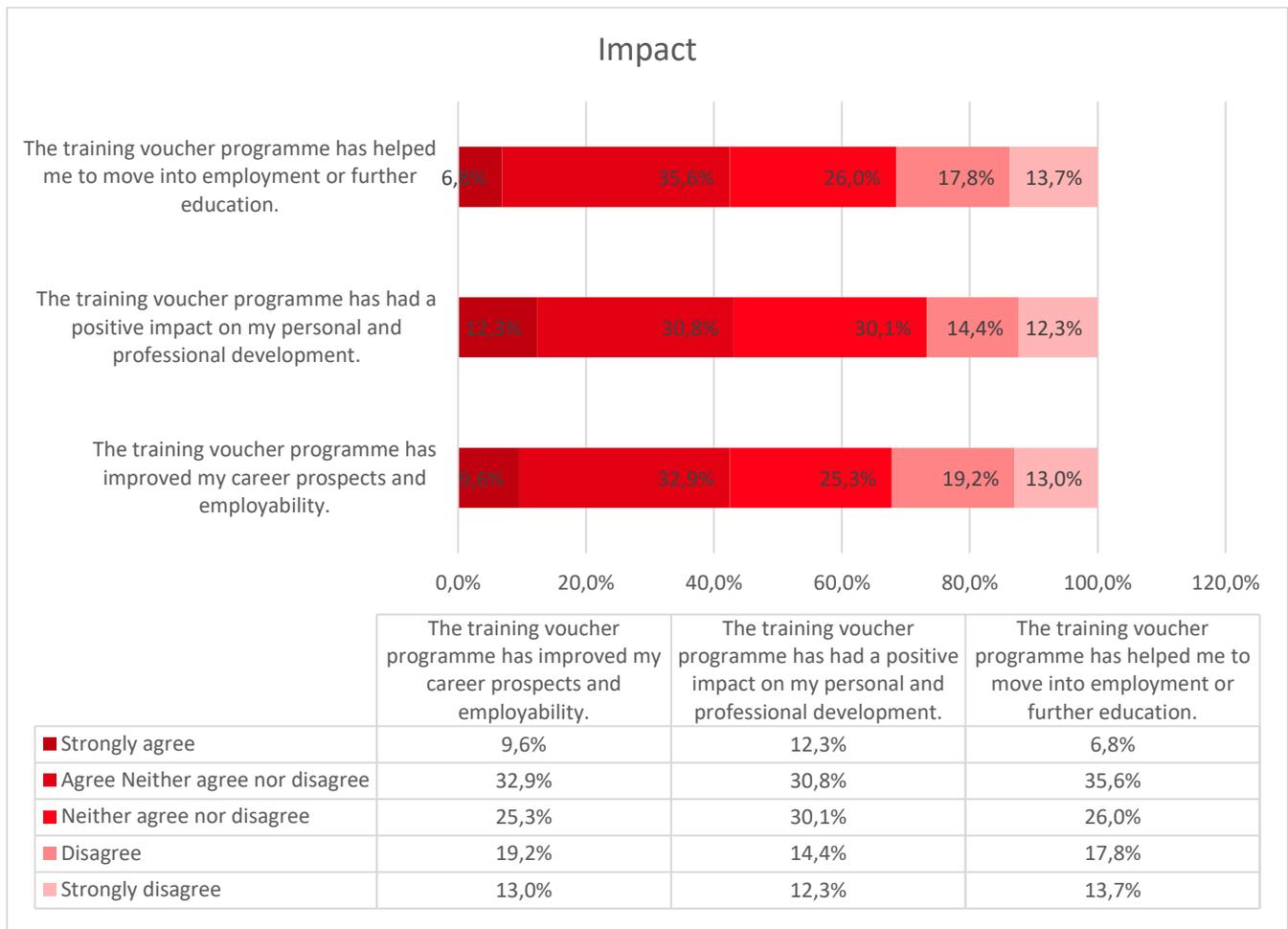
In the analysis of the sustainability results, the expert noted an apparent consistency in the responses. This observation led her to conclude that the survey participants had responded with a high level of honesty. The consistency across the responses, in the expert's view, validates the accuracy of the data collected in the survey, reinforcing the credibility of the results on the sustainability criterion.

4.2.6 Impact

Based on the survey responses (see Figure 12), it appears that the training voucher programme did not fully meet the needs of the participants. A considerable number of participants, 19.2%, disagreed or strongly disagreed that the programme had improved their career prospects and employability, and 31.1% were neutral on this matter. Similarly, 25.3% of participants neither agreed nor disagreed that the programme had a positive impact on their personal and professional development. In terms of

moving into employment or further education, 30.6% of participants were neutral, and 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the programme had helped them in this regard.

Figure 12. Summary of the Online Survey Responses for the Impact Criterion Questions in the Training Voucher Programme Evaluation



In her analysis of the impact results, the expert expressed a sense of surprise at the outcome. The data showed that 42% of respondents acknowledged that the training programmes facilitated a positive influence on their professional development. Additionally, 41% believed that these programmes significantly aided them in transitioning into employment. These results surpassed the expert's initial expectations. This unexpected finding demonstrates that, according to the survey, the efficacy and the real-world benefits of the training voucher programmes are often underestimated and more considerable than typically anticipated. Consequently, this points towards the training voucher programmes' tangible impact on beneficiaries' career progression and job acquisition, indicating a higher level of effectiveness than previously assumed.

4.2.7 Motivations of Participants for Joining the Training Voucher Programme

'In the initial stage, it was certainly the allure of the grant that caught my attention. However, as I transitioned into the second phase, it was the prospect of acquiring new knowledge that truly fuelled my motivation to participate in the programme.'

'Joining the programme was fuelled by my intrinsic desire to learn and grow. I find joy in learning new things and constantly striving to better myself.'

It appears that the training voucher programme provided a valuable opportunity for participants to improve their financial situation and gain new skills and knowledge, both of which could potentially lead to improved employability and career advancement.

Based on the responses provided, it seems that the main motives for participants to apply for the training voucher programme were financial incentives and personal and professional development. Specifically, many participants mentioned the financial support provided by the programme, including training allowances and subsidies. Some mentioned that they were unemployed at the time and saw the programme as an opportunity to gain new skills and potentially find employment.

Additionally, a significant number of participants cited their desire to gain new knowledge and skills as a reason for applying to the programme. Some were interested in a specific subject that was not previously studied, while others wanted to develop their existing skills and knowledge. Many mentioned the desire to enhance their CV and improve their career prospects.

The expert insightfully analysed the motivations of participants in the training voucher programme. She acknowledged the financial incentive as a practical and human response to the program's offerings. The opportunity to supplement income while learning is a significant attraction for those considering participation.

More so, the expert underscored the importance of continuous learning and skills development for today's job market. For younger participants, in particular, she noted the perceived value of adding the training program to their curriculum vitae (CV). Young individuals are well aware of the competitiveness in the employment sphere and understand the need for an extensive resume, not limited to their formal education.

The expert believes that taking part in such programs not only provides formal qualifications but also demonstrates a proactive and ambitious attitude to potential employers. Hence, the motivation to enhance one's CV and avoid any semblance of complacency or lack of ambition is a considerable driver for programme participation.

Overall, she concurs with the results of the survey and perceives the motivations expressed by the participants – both financial gain and personal/professional development – as reasonable and justified under the current economic and employment climate.

4.2.8 Proposed Improvements for the Training Voucher Programme by Participants

From the feedback provided by the participants, it seems that there is a variety of proposed improvements for the training voucher programme. Some of the most common suggestions include:

- Improvements to the quality of the education material and lessons, with a focus on practical applications and modern teaching methods.
- More targeted and modern subjects that correspond to the specializations chosen by the candidates, with a wider range of professionals and specializations available.
- Faster payment and simpler participation procedures, with a quicker audit by the relevant departments so that participants can be paid more quickly.
- More practical and less theoretical programmes, with assignments and recent examples cited to make the material more engaging and relevant.
- More transparency in the process, with greater control by competent authorities and more frequent and less bureaucratic checks.
- More interactive and qualified instructors, with more training hours and a wider range of subjects available.
- More programmes with corresponding options for training, better logistics, and control by relevant departments, and immediate payment of the allowance with simplified procedures for sending supporting documents.

In response to the participants' feedback regarding suggested improvements for the training voucher programme, the expert offered insightful remarks that underlined the trends in modern learning and the necessary adjustments in the educational approach.

The expert acknowledged the significance of maintaining participants' interest, recognizing the high competition in the learning landscape and the ease with which individuals might lose interest. Citing parallels with the arts, she stressed the need for a dynamic educational model that mirrors contemporary consumption patterns - shorter, more engaging 'micro-stories' as opposed to longer, drawn-out narratives.

On the suggestion for more targeted and modern subjects, the expert agreed with the participants' call for specificity and relevance. Generalizing subjects, she reasoned, wouldn't serve the varied needs of

learners and the fast-paced changes in the job market. A tailored approach with a wider range of topics and specializations, she suggested, would prove more beneficial.

The expert concurred with the feedback for simpler procedures and faster payments, noting that these requests are a constant whenever there is public interaction. Similarly, the expert affirmed the need for less theoretical, more practical programmes, which reflects the demand of learners who wish to immediately apply the knowledge they gain.

Reflecting on the feedback calling for more transparency and control by relevant authorities, the expert viewed it as a sign of participants' care for the quality of education they receive. This care was also evident in the call for more interactive and qualified instructors and better logistics.

In conclusion, the expert stressed the importance of these suggestions, viewing them not merely as a critique but as a testament to the participants' vested interest in the educational aspect of the program. By aligning with the participants' insights, she emphasized the necessity for the training voucher program to evolve according to modern learning trends and the diverse needs of its beneficiaries.

4.2.9 Summary of Additional Comments by Participants

'Harnessing the power of connection, the training voucher programme is not just a professional opportunity, but a social one.'

'Despite challenges, the resolve to learn is unquenchable. The programme might have its limitations, but our thirst for practical, impactful knowledge pushes us to aspire for more.'

'Empowering us beyond conventional skills, the training voucher programme fosters an environment where digital proficiency meets human interaction and dialogue.'

The additional comments provided by the participants varied in their opinions about the training voucher programme. Some participants found the programme useful and valuable, while others felt it was a waste of time and not worth the effort. Some suggestions for improvement included better control of VET providers, more relevant and practical training, and simplification of supporting documents. Many participants also expressed frustration with the slow payment process and the limited selection of speciality options. Overall, the comments showed a mix of positive and negative experiences with the training voucher programme.

4.3 Analysis of results

A correlation analysis is a statistical technique used to measure the degree of association between two or more variables. In the case of the training voucher programme questionnaire, the correlation

analysis was performed to investigate if there was a significant relationship between the different criteria. The results are presented in Figure 13).

The correlation coefficient is a measure that indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. The coefficient ranges from -1 to +1, where -1 represents a perfect negative correlation, 0 represents no correlation, and +1 represents a perfect positive correlation.

Figure 13. Correlation analysis of the results: Correlation Coefficients between the online survey criteria

	[GEN]	[AGE]	[AGE2]	[EDU]	[EMPL]	[REL]	[COH]	[EFN]	[EFC]	[SUS]	[IMP]	[SUM]
[GEN]	1,000											
[AGE]	0,031	1,000										
[AGE2]	0,069	0,810	1,000									
[EDU]	0,041	-0,106	-0,120	1,000								
[EMPL]	-0,067	0,187	0,228	0,246	1,000							
[REL]	0,015	0,106	0,086	0,062	0,149	1,000						
[COH]	0,019	0,145	0,067	0,029	0,160	0,566	1,000					
[EFN]	0,003	0,084	0,088	0,000	0,154	0,826	0,487	1,000				
[EFC]	0,025	0,103	0,082	0,088	0,125	0,679	0,472	0,652	1,000			
[SUS]	0,024	0,080	0,067	0,009	0,140	0,783	0,440	0,868	0,684	1,000		
[IMP]	0,001	0,110	0,123	-0,003	0,174	0,761	0,397	0,838	0,644	0,903	1,000	
[SUM]	-0,002	0,040	0,074	0,055	0,165	0,740	0,445	0,793	0,640	0,832	0,840	1,000

- [GEN] Gender
- [AGE] Age
- [AGE2] Age at the time of participation in the training voucher programme
- [EDU] Educational level
- [EMPL] Employment status during the period of participation in the training voucher programme
- [REL] Relevance
- [COH] Coherence
- [EFN] Effectiveness
- [EFC] Efficiency
- [SUS] Sustainability
- [IMP] Impact
- [SUM] Overall Assessment

- **Relevance and Effectiveness:** The strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.826 suggests that the more relevant the programme was perceived to be, the more effective it was perceived to be.
- **Sustainability and Effectiveness:** The strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.868 suggests that the perception of the Programme’s effectiveness was associated with the likelihood of its benefits being continued.

- **Impact and Effectiveness:** The strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.838 suggests that the perception of the Programme's effectiveness was associated with the perceived impact it had on the beneficiaries.
- **Impact and Sustainability:** The very strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.903 suggests that the perception of the Programme's impact was associated with the likelihood of its benefits being continued.
- **Overall assessment and Sustainability:** The strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.832 suggests that the overall assessment of the programme was associated with the likelihood of its benefits being continued.
- **Overall assessment and Impact:** The strong positive correlation coefficient of 0.840 suggests that the overall assessment of the programme was associated with the perceived impact it had on the beneficiaries.

In summary, the results suggest that the relevance, impact, and overall assessment of the programme are strongly associated with both its effectiveness and sustainability. These findings can be used to identify areas for improvement and to optimize the Programme's outcomes and long-term impact.

Based on the results of the correlation analysis, it is recommended that the training voucher programme should prioritize sustainability and impact. To ensure a positive overall assessment, it is recommended to take proactive measures to sustain the Programme's benefits and maximize its impact on the beneficiaries. This may include continuous monitoring and evaluation of the Programme's effectiveness and impact and incorporating feedback from beneficiaries to improve the Programme's sustainability and impact over time. Such efforts can help to build beneficiaries' trust in the programme and increase their likelihood of recommending it to others.

4.4 Gender analysis of the evaluation findings

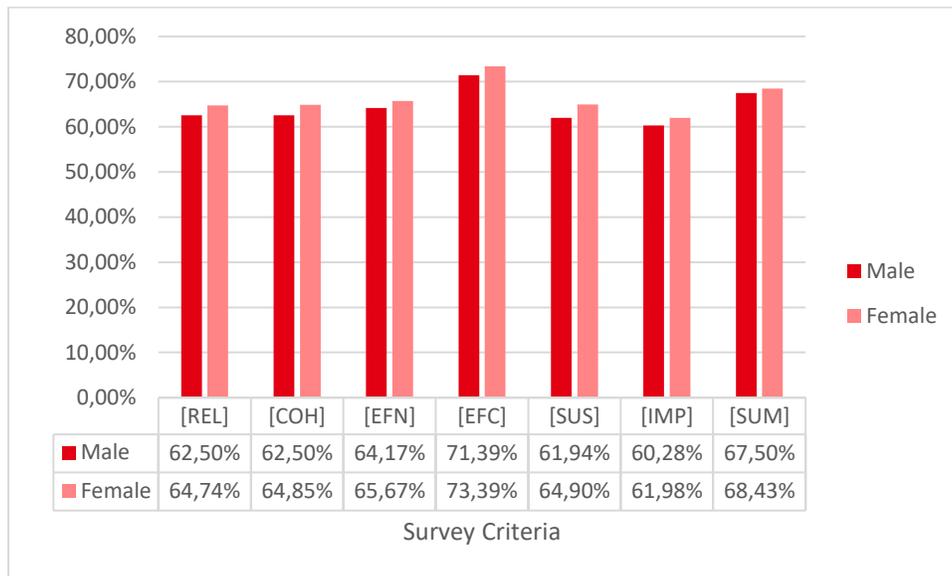
In terms of gender, the analysis of the evaluation results (see Figure 14) reveals the following:

- **Relevance:** both male and female participants expressed a high level of agreement with the relevance of the training voucher Programme, with men having a rate of 62.50% and women slightly higher at 64.74%.
- **Coherence:** similar patterns can be observed in terms of coherence, with both men and women rating the programme positively. Men rated it at 62.50%, while women rated it slightly higher at 64.85%.
- **Effectiveness:** The training voucher programme was considered effective by both genders, with men scoring 64.17% and women 65.67%.

- Effectiveness: The evaluation findings show that the programme was considered effective by both male (71.39%) and female (73.39%) participants, reflecting a high level of satisfaction.
- Sustainability: In terms of sustainability, both men (61.94%) and women (64.90%) expressed positive views on the long-term sustainability of the programme.
- Impact: Both male and female participants recognized the impact of the training voucher Programme, with men rating it at 60.28% and women slightly higher at 61.98%.
- Overall Evaluation: When considering the overall evaluation of the Programme, both men (67.50%) and women (68.43%) gave positive ratings, indicating a positive perception of the training voucher programme.

These results suggest that there are no significant differences in ratings between men and women. Both genders generally perceive the programme positively on several dimensions, indicating a relatively balanced gender perspective on the effectiveness, efficiency and overall value of the programme.

Figure 14. Comparison of Evaluation Ratings between Male and Female Participants for the Training Voucher Program



- [REL] *Relevance*
- [COH] *Coherence*
- [EFN] *Effectiveness*
- [EFC] *Efficiency*
- [SUS] *Sustainability*
- [IMP] *Impact*
- [SUM] *Overall Assessment*

5. Conclusion

The results of the training voucher programme questionnaire provide valuable insights into the effectiveness, relevance, impact, and sustainability of the programme. The questionnaire was designed to gather feedback from beneficiaries on various aspects of the Programme, including their satisfaction with the Programme, the relevance of the training they received, the impact of the programme on their personal and professional goals, and the likelihood of the Programme’s benefits being continued after the funding ended. In addition, a correlation analysis was performed to investigate the relationships between the different criteria. These results can be used to identify areas of strength and weakness in the programme and to make improvements to enhance the Programme’s overall effectiveness and impact.

In summary, it is clear that the training voucher programme has both strengths and weaknesses. While it may be a valuable opportunity for some, it is important to address the issues and concerns raised by

participants in order to improve the programme and ensure that it remains a valuable resource for those seeking to develop their skills and advance their careers.

The proposed improvements of the training voucher programme include better educational material, more targeted and modern subjects, quicker payment and simpler participation procedures, more practical and less theoretical content, inclusion of internships or employment opportunities, better training of staff and more qualified instructors, more specializations, quicker audit by relevant departments for faster payment, more control by competent authorities, wider range of professionals and subjects, faster results, transparency in the process, more flexible course sections, greater specialization, and improved logistics and control by relevant departments. Participants also suggested improvements in the payment schedule, structure of training content, certification exams, and availability of VET Providers. Additionally, participants suggested programmes to help them find jobs after completion of the course.

The training voucher programme can be of significant benefit to NEETs by providing them with the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge, and ultimately improve their employability prospects. By participating in the Programme, NEETs can gain access to a variety of training courses and workshops that can help them build their capacity in areas such as digital skills, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Additionally, the programme offers a flexible approach that allows NEETs to learn at their own pace and in their own time, which can be particularly beneficial for those who face various personal or social barriers to learning.

Through the training voucher Programme, NEETs can also gain valuable practical experience and develop the necessary skills to successfully navigate the job market. The programme provides them with the opportunity to work on projects and case studies, which can help them gain hands-on experience and build their confidence. Moreover, by obtaining recognized certifications, NEETs can demonstrate their knowledge and skills to potential employers, which can help them stand out in a competitive job market.

In conclusion, the training voucher programme can be a valuable tool for NEETs to enhance their employability prospects and improve their overall well-being. However, efforts must be made to ensure that the programme is accessible, relevant, and effective for NEETs and that it addresses their specific needs and challenges.

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