

Employment initiatives supporting 25+ NEETs

COUNTRY REPORT – SPAIN

Juan Bautista Delgado-García, Celia Díaz-Portugal, Virginia Blanco-Mazagatos, María Elena Romero-Merino, Alicia Izquierdo-Yusta, Marcos Santamaría-Mariscal, Íñigo García-Rodríguez

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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](#)).

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Implemented by:



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1. Introduction

Spain has considerably improved its NEETs rate, which suffered an extreme increase after the 2008 crisis (Eurostat, 2021). However, despite its efforts to improve its rate, Spain still has a NEETs rate that is among the highest in the European Union (Eurostat, 2021). Looking at the evolution of the 25+ NEETs rate in Spain (2007-2020), we can see how the NEET phenomenon in Spain is more affected by the economic cycle than in other countries. As some studies have revealed, this increasing rate of NEETs was mainly linked to the economic crisis of 2008 (Strecker et al., 2021). In Spain, the NEET phenomenon is more affected by the economic cycle and **mainly related to unemployment** (De Luca et al. 2020). In contrast to some other countries where the inactivity component is predominant (e.g., Italy), **in Spain, most of the NEETs are not inactive NEETs and they are indeed searching for a job** (Strecker et al., 2021). Indeed, as Vallejo Peña (2017) or Salvà-Mut et al. (2018) point out, only a small percentage of NEETs are not interested in seeking employment. Most of the Spanish NEETs participate in the labour market and consider themselves as available and actively searching for employment (Salvà-Mut et al. 2018; Strecker et al., 2021).

The literature on the NEETs phenomenon has found interesting this specificity of Spain and has highlighted education and training as the main factors influencing why even if most of the NEETs in Spain are actively searching for a job are still unemployed (Salvà-Mut et al. 2018). Spain has a structure regarding its **training system that, compared to other countries, is biased downwards and upwards** (grounds of the Organic Law 3/2022 on the organisation and integration of Vocational Training). Despite having a high number of people with no qualifications and having a high rate of early school leaving (in 2020 in Spain, the ESL rate was 16.0% and the average of the European Union 10.2%), Spain has also one of the highest rates of overqualification (Holleran, 2019). Whereas other European countries rely on the intermediate group with VET degrees, Spain does not have a proportion of people with intermediate qualifications that makes this group relevant to define its workforce.

Although there are some initiatives facing the problem of the overqualified unemployed (e.g., regional-level initiatives that promote the transformation of temporary contracts into open-ended contracts for high skilled workers, or mobility initiatives to improve skills on foreign languages), overqualification is being tackled mainly from the point of view of policies. Accordingly, the government has recently approved strategies to boost Vocational Training and to modernize the university system by combining the training of jobseekers with the skills demanded by the labour market. From the point of view of the unemployed suffering a lack of qualifications, most of the initiatives in Spain try to fight this problem by offering training to those who have difficulties accessing it, such as people with disabilities, Roma population, or early school leavers.

2. Institutional context of initiatives and programmes

In Spain, public funding and especially European funding, which is channelled through the European Social Fund, translates into the elaboration of 4 operational programmes at a national level and 19 operational programmes at a regional level (UAFSE, 2022).

The operational programmes at a national level establish the common framework for the regional-level ones as well as for the programmes and initiatives in different areas:

- Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education (*Programa Operativo de Empleo, Formación y Educación*, POEFE)
- Operational Programme for Social Inclusion and the Social Economy (*Programa Operativo de Inclusión Social y Economía Social*, POISES)
- Operational Programme for Technical Assistance (*Programa Operativo de Asistencia Técnica*, POAT)
- Youth Employment Operational Programme (*Programa Operativo de Empleo Juvenil*, POEJ).

Given that in Spain, the definition of youth includes people over 16 and under 30 years old (since the law 5/2015 of 28 of July), the programmes and initiatives targeting 25+NEETs are designed under the umbrella of the **Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ)** from now on). To implement the Youth Employment Initiative and design the National Youth Guarantee System, the Central Government approved in 2014 the POEJ in coordination with the Autonomous Communities, the social agents, and other stakeholders. The POEJ is aimed at raising the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) funds. From 2014, this POEJ has been updated periodically, and in 2020 an additional budget was added to be executed until 2023. The POEJ is a national-level operational programme that creates a common framework for all the programmes targeting youth in Spain to be implemented by Intermediate Bodies and/or Beneficiary Organisations.

The POEJ's **Managing Authority** is the Subdirectorate General for Management and Evaluation of the ESF (*Subdirección General de Programación y Evaluación del Fondo Social Europeo*) of the **UAFSE (Unidad Administradora del Fondo Social Europeo, Spain's Administrative Unit for the European Social Fund)** that depends on the Ministry of Employment and Social Economy (*Ministerio de Trabajo y Economía Social*). The Managing Authority appointed 29 entities as Intermediate Bodies which select the initiatives and may implement them by themselves. The Managing Authority also appointed 5 non-profit entities by public procurement procedures as Direct Beneficiaries that implement the initiatives that contribute to the POEJ's objectives:

- Regional-level Intermediate Organisations: 17 Autonomous Communities (regions), and 2 Autonomous Cities: Andalucía, Aragón, Principado de Asturias, Canarias, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Cataluña, Comunidad Valenciana, Extremadura, Galicia, Islas Baleares, La Rioja, Comunidad de Madrid, Región de Murcia, Navarra, País Vasco, and Ceuta and Melilla.
- National-level Intermediate Organisations: State Research Agency (*Agencia Estatal de Investigación*, AEI), Chamber of Spain (*Cámara de España*), Superior Council of Scientific Investigations (*Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas*, CSIC), General Directorate for Regional and Local Cooperation (*Dirección General de Coordinación de Competencias con las Comunidades Autónomas y las Entidades Locales*), Caixa Bank Foundation, *Escuela de Organización Industrial* (EOI), INCYDE Foundation, ONCE Foundation, RED.ES, National Public Employment Service (*Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal*, SEPE).
- Beneficiary Organizations: Spanish Red Cross (*Cruz Roja Española*), Action Against Hunger Foundation (*Acción contra el Hambre*), entities depending on ONCE Foundation, Roma Secretariat Foundation (*Fundación Secretariado Gitano*), YMCA.

The POEJ is a national-level operational program that creates a common framework to design the initiatives targeting young people and NEETs. These initiatives are designed by the Intermediate Organisations based on POEJ's indications and can be implemented by these Intermediate Organisations themselves or by Beneficiary Organisations.

According to the decentralised model of state and distribution of power, the youth policies (including youth guarantee policies targeting 16-29-year-old NEETs) must be implemented by the Autonomous Communities, and in most of the cases, the programmes in Spain are defined at a regional level (by the 17 Autonomous Communities and 2 autonomous cities). Moreover, the initiatives are defined at a local level by the youth sections of the city and town councils. This means that there have been hundreds of programmes and thousands of initiatives targeting NEETS, 25+ young people and 25+NEETs during the period under review—under the framework of the POEJ, 41,375 projects were executed within the 5,134 operations that were carried out until the end of 2020 (UAFSE, 2021) —. Therefore, we have selected a **sample of representative national-level programmes** carried out in all the regions by organisations such as Red Cross Spain or Roma Secretariat Foundation **as well as two regional-level programmes that have been selected as the most representatives** in POEJ's evaluation.

- **YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME (PROGRAMA OPERATIVO DE EMPLEO JUVENIL, POEJ)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy).
 - *Intermediate Organizations:* Regional-level Intermediate Organisations (Departments of Youth of Regional Governments) and National-level Intermediate Organisations (e.g., State Research Agency, National Public Employment Service).
 - *Implementors:* Intermediate Organisations by themselves or through Beneficiary Organizations
 - *Link to web pages:* <https://www.mites.gob.es/uafse/es/properativos/poej/index.htm>

- **Programme ‘PULSA Employment, Program for Activation, orientation, and support for Young People’ (PULSA Empleo, Programa de Activación, Orientación y acompañamiento a Jóvenes)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organizations:* Regional Governments, Departments of Youth
 - *Implementor (Beneficiary Organisation):* Red Cross Spain
 - *Link to web pages:* <https://www2.cruzroja.es/que-hacemos/empleo/ayuda-ue>; <https://www2.cruzroja.es/documents/5640665/13673188/POEJ+2016+Resumen+participaci%C3%B3n+CRE.pdf/8f0e92c9-23f8-e420-0cf2-8ff255c31e70?version=1.1&t=1563469074393&download=true>

- **Programme ‘Second Chances of Training and Learning for Youth Guarantee Young People’ (Segundas Oportunidades de Formación y Aprendizaje para Jóvenes de Garantía Juvenil)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organizations:* Regional Governments, Departments of Youth
 - *Implementor (Beneficiary Organisation):* Red Cross Spain
 - *Link to web pages:* <https://www2.cruzroja.es/que-hacemos/empleo/ayuda-ue>

- **Programme ‘Training Program for Youth Employment in the Digital Economy’ (Programa de Formación para el Empleo Juvenil en la Economía Digital)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)

- *Intermediate Organisation and Implementor:* RED.ES (public business entity that reports directly to the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism and, specifically, to the Secretary of State for Telecommunications and the Information Society).
- *Link to web pages:* <https://sede.red.gob.es/es/procedimientos/programa-de-formacion-para-el-empleo-juvenil-en-la-economia-digital>

- **Programme ‘Por Talento: Personalized Itineraries and intermediation for young people with disabilities’** (*Itinerarios Personalizados e intermediación para personas jóvenes con discapacidad, Portal Talento_ Programa Por Talento*)
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organisation:* ONCE Foundation (National Organization of the Spanish Blind people)
 - *Implementor (Beneficiary Organisation):* Inserta Empleo Association (an entity of ONCE Foundation specialized in the provision of labour intermediation services, recruitment and development of talent with disabilities and employment management, with the aim of achieving the employability of people with disabilities). The Inserta Empleo Association currently manages as final beneficiary as well as operations from the POEJ operations of the Operational Programme for Social Inclusion and the Social Economy (POISES) 2014-2020 that are co-financed by the ONCE Foundation itself and by the European Social Fund.
 - *Link to web pages:* <https://www.portalento.es/>;
<https://www.insertaempleo.es/portalento/introduccion-al-programa>

- **Programme ‘Entrepreneurial initiative’** (*Iniciativa emprendedora*)
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organization and Implementor:* Escuela de Organización Industrial (EOI) dependent on the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism
 - *Link to web pages:* <https://www.eoi.es/es/empresas/emprendedores/iniciativa-emprendedora>

- **Programme ‘Training for youth employment’** (*Formación para el empleo joven*)
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (*Ministry of Labour and Social Economy*)

- *Intermediate Organization and Implementor:* Escuela de Organización Industrial (EOI) dependent on the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism
- *Link to web pages:* <https://www.eoi.es/es/empleo/empleo-joven/formacion-para-el-empleo-joven>

- **Programme ‘PICE Training Plan’ (Plan de Capacitación- PICE)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organizations:* Spanish Chamber of commerce
 - *Implementor:* Chambers of commerce of every city
 - *Link to web pages:* <https://empleoygarantiajuvenil.camara.es/es/formacion-en-espana>

- **Programme ‘Acceder Programme’ (Programa Acceder)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organizations:* Regional Governments
 - *Implementor:* Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Roma Secretariat Foundation)
 - *Link to web pages:* https://www.gitanos.org/que-hacemos/areas/empleo_y_formacion_profesional/acceder.html

- **Programme ‘You can with Compulsory Secondary Education’ (Puedes con ESO)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organizations:* Regional Governments
 - *Implementor:* YMCA
 - *Link to web pages:* <https://www.ymca.es/puedes-con-eso-segunda-oportunidad-para-jovenes>

- **Programme ‘Training Program in Alternation with the Employment of Innovation and Talent (PIT) of the region of Extremadura’ (Programa de Formación en Alternancia con el Empleo de Innovación y Talento (PIT) de Extremadura)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organization:* Region of Extremadura

- *Implementor:* Public Employment Service of Extremadura (Servicio Extremeño Público de Empleo, SEXPE).
- *Link to web pages:* <https://www.extremaduraavante.es/ayudasfinanciacion/programa-de-innovacion-y-talento-pit-2020-2021/>
- **Programme 'TLN Mobilicat of Catalonia' (Programa TLN Mobilicat de Catalunya)**
 - *Managing authority:* Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy)
 - *Intermediate Organization:* Region of Catalunya
 - *Implementor:* Public Employment Service of Catalonia (Servicio de Ocupación de Catalunya, SOC).
 - *Link to web pages:* http://garantiajuvenil.gencat.cat/es/Que_Toferim/Mobilitat-internacional/TLN-Mobilicat/

3. Focus of initiatives/programmes

3.1 Typology of initiatives/programmes and their supported activities

As explained in Chapter 2, the Central Government approved in 2014 the Youth Employment Operational Program (POEJ) that has been updated periodically. The POEJ creates a common framework for the programmes carried out in Spain by the regional-level Intermediate Organisations (Youth Departments of the Autonomous Communities) and national-level Intermediate Organisations. The initiatives are carried out at a local level with the collaboration of the youth sections of the city and town councils. In this report, we have focused on programmes, which they are defined as the main instrument to support young people and/or NEETs in the POEJ.

Based on the POEJ common framework, the main lines of activity for the programmes and initiatives are the following (UAFSE, 2020):

- Promotion of the Vocational Education Training
- Training-employment actions
- Hiring subsidies
- Incentives to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship
- Initiatives focused on employment and hiring subsidies at a local level

The POEJ was assessed in 2017 and 2019 through two interim evaluations evaluating Axis 1 and the whole program respectively. Another evaluation was carried out in 2018 to evaluate Axis 5 and the use of funds from the YEI. Unlike POEJ, lower-level programmes are usually not subject to external evaluation as such. The organisations in charge of implementing programmes assess their own results and report these results to the managing authority of the POEJ which includes the most remarkable ones in the execution reports of the whole POEJ.

Table 1. List of selected programs in Spain by type, supported activities and availability of evaluation

Title of the programme	Type of initiative	Supported activities	Evaluation available
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT (POEJ)	Operational Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education • training • training jobs • jobs creation (social entrepreneurship) • support of creating own businesses • guarantees in creating own businesses • support of mobility • psychological support 	Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Interim Evaluation of the Operational Programme for Youth Employment 2017

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> orientation and counselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative (Priority axis 5) 2018 Second Evaluation of the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ), 2019
<p>PULSA Employment, Activation programme, orientation and support for Young People</p>	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> training training jobs psychological support orientation and counselling <p>The project is structured in three closely interrelated lines of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation and activation of young people from centres of interest, relevant information and experiences that link them to the labour market. Professional guidance for decision-making that connects with your interests and arouses enthusiasm in your professional future Advice and support in the effective search through strategic alliances with companies that allow their transition to the labour market or reintegration into training. 	<p>Yes, but only within the Execution Report of POEJ and the Good practices reported to Youth Guarantee – Knowledge Centre</p>
<p>Second Chances of Training and Learning for Youth Guarantee Young People</p>	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> training training jobs support of mobility psychological support orientation and counselling. <p>The project is structured in three closely interrelated lines of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivational intervention: individual and group sessions that promote self-confidence, self-control, communication, initiative, 	<p>Yes, but only within the Execution Report of POEJ</p>

		<p>achievement orientation, etc., all of them focused on the training area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational intervention: preparation for the ESO exam and the entrance exam to intermediate cycles, educational reinforcement sessions, learning of study techniques, resolution of doubts, etc • Training intervention: introductory courses oriented to the basic knowledge of a trade, where the person can discover his or her professional vocation. <p>It has also complementary measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support through financial aid for travel, training material, etc. • Encourage the use of new technologies (on-line tutorials, e-mail, etc.) to acquire technological skills and habits of daily use of these resources. 	
<p>Training Programme for Youth Employment in the Digital Economy</p>	<p>Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training • training jobs • orientation and employment promotion <p>The programme includes two kinds of support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for training activities: this includes orientation and training activities and the performance of the non-working practices. These training activities address the requirements of the digital industry and the change in business models that is taking place. The training also includes guidance and the realization of non-working practices, it must deal with subjects related to ICT and the digital economy. • Support for labour market insertion. Promoting access to jobs related to these subjects in order to respond to the growing demand for professional 	<p>Yes, but only within the Execution Report of POEJ</p>

		profiles that drive the digital transformation of companies.	
Programme <i>Por Talento</i> : Personalized Itineraries and intermediation for young people with disabilities	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training • training jobs • jobs creation (social entrepreneurship) • support of creating own businesses • consultancy • orientation and employment promotion <p>The programme includes different projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop your talent by improving your employability: It helps to assess and develop the participants' skills, to discover their entrepreneurial side and to create their employment plan. • Strengthen your talent with quality training: professional training for employment and updating of knowledge. Preparation for public employment offers and for internships in companies. • Offer your Diverse Talent to Companies to obtain a sustainable development: Development of innovative employment projects with companies, public and private entities. • Transform Your Talent, bet on you and be the protagonist of your training: Development of competencies, participation in internships in Sectorial Classrooms or obtaining Certificates of Professionalism. • For young people who are in Youth Guarantee, Employ Your Talent with the Inserta Empleo coach: Connection to employment with social networks and ICT; participation in communication plans for companies; knowledge and practice for selection processes; knowledge of job offers that 	<p>No</p> <p>There is no evaluation of the entire program, but there is an evaluation of some of the projects that comprise it. For example, for Activate your talent (https://www.mites.gob.es/uafse/ficheros/properativos/poej/iae/resumen_iae2018_poej.pdf)</p>

		<p>are and will be available; use of entrepreneurial tools for companies; knowledge and practice for selection processes; knowledge of job offers that are available and those that will be available; use of entrepreneurial tools, creation of ideas and leadership in decisions; good practices and connection with peers and experts in the Emprende 2020 Network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And some others (i.e., Activate your Talent or in 2022 For Digital Talent 	
Entrepreneurial initiative	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training • support of creating own businesses <p>These are initiatives developed in different areas of Spain designed to help the student in the design of their business model, with an innovative methodology, so that they can launch their project quickly and effectively</p>	No
Training for youth employment	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training <p>Includes different types of training courses for employment and fitting in the job market.</p>	No
PICE Training Plan	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training • orientation and mediation with companies <p>The training plan is part of the Comprehensive Programme of Qualifications and Employment (PICE) and offers formation after a previous vocational guidance. Additionally, it designs a series of measures and actions of mediation with companies.</p>	No
Acceder Programme	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training • support of creating own businesses • labour intermediation programme to achieve effective incorporation of the Roma population employment. <p>Each person can participate the following actions:</p>	Yes. This programme is an exception and has its own specific evaluation on results and impact

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actions of custom job information. • Actions of personalized advice seeking the activation and motivation for the labour market, the return educational, obtaining the graduated in compulsory education (ESO). • improvement actions of competences. • actions of vocational guidance and assistance in finding employment. • intermediation actions with companies 	
You can with Compulsory Secondary Education	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education • training • psychological support • orientation and counselling <p>The project is structured in three closely interrelated lines of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To empower these young people by restoring their self-concept and motivation after the experience of school failure. • To provide them with a qualification in accordance with their interests and facilitating their professional development in order to obtain the ESO, the basic competences of level 2, access to Intermediate Level Training Cycles, or a Certificate of Professionalism of level 1 in sectors with demand for workers in the labour market. • To provide them with the personal, social and transversal competences necessary to successfully face this training process, as well as to undertake the training process, as well as to successfully undertake their new personal training and/or professional projects. 	Yes, but only an internal evaluation with a few indicators
Training Programme in	Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training • training jobs 	Yes, but only within Second Evaluation of

<p>Alternation with the Employment of Innovation and Talent (PIT) of the region of Extremadura</p>		<p>The PIT projects have a duration of 9 months, of which 25% of the day is devoted to training in technological centres of Extremadura or the University of Extremadura and 75% to effective work in the company or non-profit entity that promotes the project. This percentage can be combined every day or according to the timetable established in each project.</p>	<p>the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ), 2019</p>
<p>Programme TLN Mobilicat of Catalonia</p>	<p>Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education • training jobs • support of mobility • orientation and counselling <p>The Programme establishes actions structured in two phases: Phase1: Preparation and training. a) Pedagogical support, b) Linguistic training of the participants, c) Development of the execution plan of the Collaboration Agreement with the European partners. Phase 2: Unpaid internships in European Union countries. a) Practical apprenticeship in a company, b) Complementary pedagogical actions, c) Language training actions during the internship phase (complementary and optional).</p>	<p>Yes, but only within Second Evaluation of the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ), 2019</p>

Source: Own elaboration

3.2 Geographic coverage of NEETs support

Although there are some disparities between the different regions of Spain (Autonomous Communities, NUTS2 level) in terms of their NEETs rate (see Figure 1), the NEET rate in Spain, on average higher than that of the EU, is a national problem mainly related to unemployment.

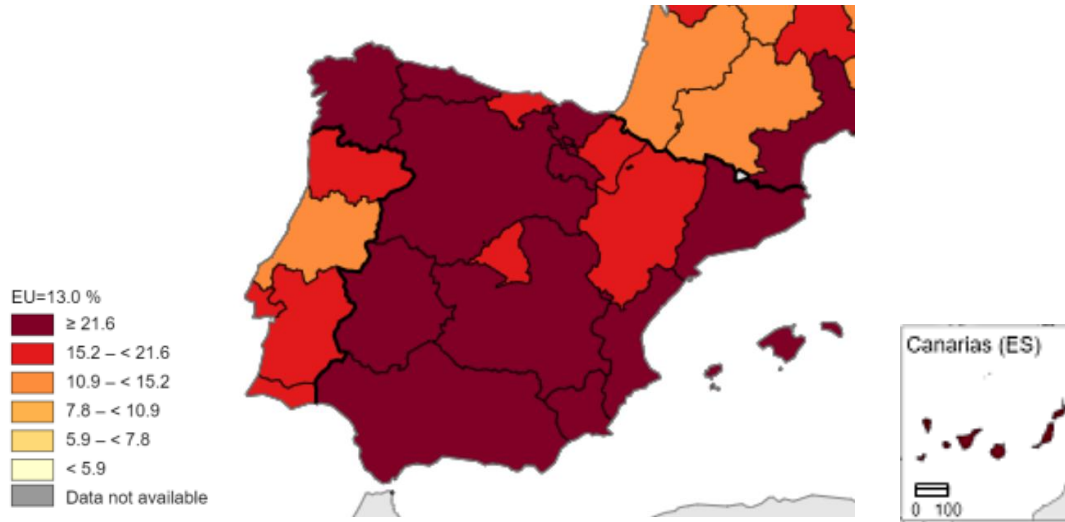
Figure 1. Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by NUTS 2 region in Spain (NEET rates) (2021)



Source: Eurostat, 2022

The youth unemployment rate is very high in all regions in Spain (see Figure 2). This high rate of youth unemployment has remained constantly higher than the EU average since the 2008 crisis. Indeed, in 2012, all the regions of Spain were eligible to be part of the Youth Employment Initiative with a youth unemployment rate higher than the 25% (European Commission, 2014), and all Spanish regions were treated the same to define the axes of POEJ in 2014 as all of them were financed by the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative to implement the Youth Guarantee policies. Based on these common eligibility and funding for all regions, the POEJ establishes a common framework for the programmes supporting NEETs that are carried out at national level as well as at a regional level in every Autonomous Community. The axis 5 of the POEJ refers to the ‘sustainable integration in the labour market of young people who do not have a job and do not participate in education or training systems, in particular in the context of the Youth Guarantee’, and it is the priority axis that specifically targets NEETs, which in Spain have an age range between 16 and 30 years old. Additionally, the Autonomous Communities develop their own programmes based on their specific situation regarding NEETs.

Figure 2. Youth unemployment rate (in % of the labour force) by NUTS 2 region in Spain (2021)



Source: Eurostat, 2022a

4. Financial aspects of initiatives and programmes

The main source of financing for the programmes and initiatives targeting NEETs in Spain comes from the EU, and more specifically, from the European Social Fund, which operates as the main source of funding for the POEJ. In addition, all Spanish regions were considered eligible to be part of the Youth Employment Initiative. The YEI was aimed at young people not in employment, education or training in regions experiencing youth unemployment rates above 25% and was designed to finance measures such as ‘direct support for high-quality traineeships and apprenticeships; provision of first job experience; start-up support for young entrepreneurs; quality vocational education and training’ (European Commission, 2014).

Table 2. Financial aspects of the programs targeting NEETs in Spain

Title of the programme	Financial allocation of the programme/initiative [EUR]	Financial allocation for NEETs only [EUR]	Source of major financing
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT (POEJ)	€ 2,360 million (from the ESF, of which 943.5 million came from the YEI) By the end of 2017, the POEJ was modified to allocate an additional €5,418 million that can be executed until 2023	€1,939 million of which €1,886.993 million are financed by the EU (YEI: 943.5 million euros and ESF 943.5 million euros) By the end of 2017, the POEJ was modified to allocate additional funds from the YEI. Therefore, the axis 5 of the POEJ now has an allocation of €2,723 million, which can be executed until 2023.	European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative
PULSA Employment, Activation programme, orientation and support for Young People	€ 6,630,691 from the ESF and € 585,209.53 from the NGO Spanish Red Cross (Funding period: 2016-2018)	N.A (the whole programme targets NEETs)	European Social Fund

Second Chances of Training and Learning for Youth Guarantee Young People	€ 13,374,886 from the ESF (Funding period: 2016-2018). € 16,202,504.48 from the ESF (Funding period: 2018-2022).	N.A (the whole programme targets NEETs)	European Social Fund
Training Program for Youth Employment in the Digital Economy	Total budget: 20 million and the maximum amount of aid granted per group of regions. Granted by group of regions. Group A: €13,500,000, Group B: €6,000,000, and Group C: €500,000. European Social Fund: €12,459,418.57	N.A (the whole programme targets NEETs)	European Social Fund
Programme <i>Por Talento</i> : Personalized Itineraries and intermediation for young people with disabilities	N.A We cannot find the specific amount as it is developed from both Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ) and Operational Programme for Social Inclusion and the Social Economy (POISES)	N.A	European Social Fund
Entrepreneurial initiative	N.A The EOI Foundation (implementor) does not specify the amount. It only explains that the initiatives developed from this programme 'will be co-financed with the European Social Fund and with the Youth Employment Initiative within the Youth Employment Operational Program (POEJ)'	N.A	European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative

Training for youth employment	N.A The EOI Foundation (implementor) does not specify the amount. It only explains that the initiatives developed from this programme 'will be financed through the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ)'	N.A	European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative
PICE Training Plan	N.A We cannot find the specific amount as it is developed from both Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ) and Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education (POEFE)	N.A	European Social Fund
Acceder Programme	€156,974,402.75 €59,533,641.60 (Funding period 2000-2008) €55,531,912.78 (Funding period 2009-2015) €41,908,848.37 (Funding period 2016-2019) Of the €156,974,402.75, €7,085,491 (4.51%) are funded by the ESF. The main source of funding is the personal income tax collected by the Central Government.	N.A	Spanish Central Government, Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030 (<i>Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030</i>)
You can with Compulsory Secondary Education	There is no information about the funding for this specific programme. The evaluation of the axis 5 of the POEJ explains that there is a	N.A	European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative

	common funding for all actions of YMCA 2017-2019. This funding came from the European Social Fund (€2,500,364) and the Youth Employment Initiative (€2,500,364).		
Training Programme in Alternation with the Employment of Innovation and Talent (PIT) of the region of Extremadura	€4,880,000	N.A	European Social Fund
Programme TLN Mobilicat of Catalonia	€1,200,000 for 2017 and €2,000,000 for 2018	N.A	European Social Fund

Source: Own elaboration

5. Implementation of initiatives and programmes

5.1 Project implementers

As explained in Chapter 2, the POEJ is an operational programme that creates a common framework to design the projects and initiatives targeting young people and NEETs. These projects are designed by the Intermediate Organisations based on POEJ's indications and can be implemented by these Intermediate Organisations themselves or by Beneficiary Organisations. To illustrate, of the 41,375 projects still in effect by the end of 2020, 489 are implemented directly by Beneficiary Organisations, 11,598 by national-level Intermediate Organisations and 29,288 by regional-level Intermediate Organisations (UAFSE, 2021). The distribution of these projects by type of entity in charge of their implementation is shown in Table 3. Table 4 provides further details for the implementers of the analysed programmes in Spain.

Table 3. Distribution of actions of POEJ implemented by type of entity

Total actions POEJ (before the end of 2020)	41,375
Total actions by Beneficiary Organizations:	489
Action Against Hunger Foundation	2
Roma Secretariat Foundation	63
MEYSS	20
YMCA	19
Red Cross Spain	328
Total actions by National-level Intermediate Organisations:	11598
Superior Council of Scientific Investigations (AE.CSIC)	30
State Research Agency (AEI)	220
Chamber of Spain	4332
General Directorate for Regional and Local Cooperation	332
Escuela de Organización Industrial (EOI)	372
INCYDE Foundation	130
Caixa Bank Foundation	4961
ONCE Foundation	629
RED.ES	98
National Public Employment Service (SEPE)	494
Total actions by Regional-level Intermediate Organisations:	29288
Andalucía	3252
Aragón	374
Asturias	515
Baleares	425
Canarias	38
Cantabria	545

Castilla y León	464
Castilla-La Mancha	3025
Cataluña	6063
Ceuta	68
Comunidad Valenciana	2495
Extremadura	2582
Galicia	3007
La Rioja	121
Madrid	2749
Melilla	60
Murcia	1332
Navarra	194
País Vasco	1979

Source: UAFSE, 2021

Table 4. Project implementers in Spain

Title of the programme	Name of implementer	Number of implemented projects	Period of implementation
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT (POEJ)	Intermediate Organisations and Beneficiary Organisations	41,375	2014-2020 extended until 2023
PULSA Employment, Activation programme, orientation and support for Young People	Non-profit organization Spanish Red Cross (Beneficiary Organisation)	Between January and December 2016: Partnerships were established with 932 companies across 44 provinces. 4,159 agreements were signed with the 932 companies regarding: hiring commitments for certain job positions, collaboration in the various project activities (e.g., provision of individual guidance, organisation of company	2016-2018; 2018-2022

		visits, job interview simulations etc.).	
Second Chances of Training and Learning for Youth Guarantee Young People	Non-profit organization Spanish Red Cross (Beneficiary Organisation)	Red Cross youth training and employment initiatives worked in 46 locations with more than 3,800 partner companies between 2016 and 2018 and worked in 73 locations with 2331 partner companies and 9372 alliances in 2018-2020.	2016-2018; 2018-2022
Training Programme for Youth Employment in the Digital Economy	RED.ES (National-level Intermediate Organisation)	33 projects financed and 265 training activities in 15 Autonomous Communities	2019
Programme <i>Por Talento</i> : Personalized Itineraries and intermediation for young people with disabilities	Inserta Empleo association (an entity of ONCE Foundation specialized in improving the employability of people with disabilities) (Beneficiary Organisation).	N.A	2000-2008; 2009-2015; 2016-2021; 2022-
Entrepreneurial initiative	Escuela de Organización Industrial (EOI Foundation) (National-level Intermediate Organisation)	Since 2019, 40 courses	2019-2022
Training for youth employment	EOI Foundation (National-level Intermediate Organisation)	N.A	2019-2022
PICE Training Plan	Chamber of Spain	N.A	2015-2023

	(integrates the Chambers of Spain placed in different cities) (National-level Intermediate Organisation)		
Acceder Programme	Roma Secretariat Foundation (Beneficiary Organisation)	N.A	2000-2008; 2009-2015; 2016-2019
You can with Compulsory Secondary Education	YMCA (Beneficiary Organisation)	N.A	2019-2020-2021-2022
Training Programme in Alternation with the Employment of Innovation and Talent (PIT) of the region of Extremadura	Region of Extremadura (Regional-level Intermediate Organisation) through companies, associations or non-profit entities, civil partnerships, temporary business unions and business groups, with work centres located in Extremadura.	N.A	2017-2018 (but renewed for successive periods)
Programme TLN Mobilicat of Catalonia	Region of Catalonia (Regional-level Intermediate Organisation)	N.A	2017-2018 (but renewed for successive periods and still in effect)

Source: Own elaboration

5.2 Target groups of NEETs

In 2014, Spain approved the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan to design the National Youth Guarantee System (NYGS). To develop this NYGS, the Central Government approved the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ). The POEJ was initially aimed at people over 16 and under 25 (or under 30 for people with a degree of disability of at least 33%), who were not employed or integrated into the education or training systems. However, with the Law 25/2015 (of July 28, on the second chance mechanism, reduction of the financial burden and other social measures) the upper age limit was increased from 25 to 30 years old. The target group for the NYGS was defined since 2015 as NEETs over 16 and under 30 years old if the unemployment rate of this group (people younger than 30 years old) is equal to or greater than 20 percent, according to the Survey of Active Population corresponding to the last quarter of the year.

As well as this reform to increase the age limit, the NYGS increased its scope of action to reach a higher number of NEETs. When the NYGS was created, one of the requirements to be registered was a certain disconnection from work and education (Visconti, 2017). As such, it was necessary to be 30 days without working, and not have received training or training actions in the 90 days prior to the request. Currently, it is simply required not to have worked or received educational/training actions on the calendar day preceding the application for registration (SEPE, 2022). Consequently, the age limit has been increased, and the waiting time has been reduced to allow the POEJ and its programmes to reach a higher number of NEETs and 25+ NEETs.

The legal subjects of the Young Guarantee System in Spain are individuals older than 16 and younger than 30 years old, and that is the target group of most of the programmes that we have selected. The Spanish Active Employment Support Strategy 2021-2024 has highlighted the importance of strengthening the professional careers of millennial generation and connect them more solidly with the labour market as one of its priorities. Nevertheless, most of the programmes carried out so far are still targeting NEETs from 16 to 30 years old, not focusing on 25+NEETs. Table 5 provides further information about the target groups of the analysed programmes in Spain.

Table 5. Target groups of NEETs’ programmes in Spain

Title of the programme	Type of target group	Number of supported persons in the target group	Degree of reflection of NEETs in the given programme
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH	Young people aged 16-29 with a special impact on disadvantaged groups	1,060,538 young people have participated in POEJ	Axis 5: Sustainable integration in the labour market of young people who do not

<p>EMPLOYMENT (POEJ)</p>	<p>or groups at risk of exclusion.</p>	<p>actions until the end of 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 118,484 participants of foreign origin and other ethnic minorities • 104,477 participants with disabilities • 118,090 participants belonging to other disadvantaged groups (e.g., people who live in households without any employed member) • 150,849 participants from rural areas 	<p>have a job and do not participate in education or training systems, in particular in the context of the Youth Guarantee.</p>
<p>PULSA Employment, Activation program, orientation and support for Young People</p>	<p>Young people aged 18-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database. This programme pays particular attention to those individuals at risk of social exclusion ('discouraged, excluded and those not searching actively for a job').</p>	<p>Between January and December 2016: 3,790 young people took part in the programme and 'have improved their employability'. 1,570 beneficiaries found a job</p>	<p>The whole programme targets NEETs (young people registered in the YG system)</p>
<p>Second Chances of Training and Learning for Youth Guarantee Young People</p>	<p>Young people under 30 years of age who are beneficiaries of the Youth Guarantee System (or who meet the requirements for registration) and who are at risk of exclusion in different situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people who have not completed compulsory secondary education or who have not 	<p>2016-2018: 1,749 participants. A total of 682 participants qualified.</p> <p>2020: 5,252 participants 1,268 participants employed</p>	<p>The whole programme targets NEETs</p>

	<p>continued training processes that enable them to be employable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people who, despite having an average level of education, do not want to continue studying and do not have the necessary qualifications to perform a profession or trade, or have them in sectors with low employment potential. 		
<p>Training Programme for Youth Employment in the Digital Economy</p>	<p>The programme is aimed at young people between 16-30 years old, registered in the National Youth Guarantee System, who have not worked or received educational or training actions in the 4 weeks prior to their application for participation.</p>	<p>4727 participants (1532 women and 3195 men)</p>	<p>The whole programme targets NEETs</p>
<p>Programme <i>Por Talento</i>: Personalized Itineraries and intermediation for young people with disabilities</p>	<p>The programme is aimed at people with disabilities who are unemployed, including unemployed young people with disabilities. However, some of its projects are specifically designed for young people who are in Youth Guarantee.</p>	<p>2009-2015: 133,510 people assisted; 48,211 students trained; 37,833 contracts.</p> <p>2016-2021: 175,709 people assisted; 76,674 students trained; 54,241 contracts.</p>	<p>The programme targets people with disabilities and some of them are NEETs registered in the YG system</p>

Entrepreneurial initiative	Young people aged 18-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database	N.A	The whole programme targets NEETs
Training for youth employment	Young people aged 18-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database	In 2020, the EOI Foundation supported 2,269 participants (1,272 men and 997 women).	The whole programme targets NEETs
PICE Training Plan	Young people aged 16-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people who have received core training: 13,572 • Vocational guidance: 23,921 • Young people who have received support aimed at their insertion: 3,166 • Young people who have received specific training: 10,535 	The whole programme targets NEETs
Acceder Programme	Young people aged 16-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database	82,091 people have completed personalized job placement itineraries. 1,591 people have been advised and accompanied in starting up a business. 360 people in a situation of greater vulnerability have obtained a protected job through the FSG's insertion companies. 91,733 contracts signed within the framework of Acceder.	The programme targets Roma population and some of them are NEETs registered in the YG system

<p>You can with Compulsory Secondary Education</p>	<p>Young people aged 16-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database.</p>	<p>The project has been in effect since 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019: 170 people have been assisted In 2020: 343 people have been assisted- In 2021: 359 people have been assisted. 	<p>The whole programme targets NEETs</p>
<p>Training Programme in Alternation with the Employment of Innovation and Talent (PIT) of the region of Extremadura</p>	<p>Young people aged 18-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database. Unemployed people registered in the Public Employment service of Extremadura under 30 years of age and who are beneficiaries of the YG National System. These people need to meet the following requirements to participate in PIT projects:</p> <p>A) Be university graduates or have intermediate or higher-level VET degrees.</p> <p>B) Not suffer from illness or physical or mental health problems that prevents the normal performance of the functions of the position, or any other personal impediment or of any other nature for the performance of the activities of the job occupation to be performed in accordance</p>	<p>The PIT projects approved in 2017 benefited 224 people. In 2018 these projects under PIT supported 209 people</p>	<p>The whole programme targets NEETs</p>

	<p>with the applicable regulations.</p> <p>C) Meet the requirements established in the applicable regulations to formalize an internship contract.</p> <p>D) Adapt to the corresponding position according to the professional profiles established in the training project.</p> <p>E) Not having done before the training that will be acquired along the project.</p>		
<p>Programme TLN Mobilicat of Catalonia</p>	<p>Young people aged 18-29 registered in the Youth Guarantee database with no previous work experience but that hold at least a VET degree.</p>	<p>The edition of 2017 of the Programme TLN Mobilicat supported 153 people</p>	<p>The whole programme targets NEETs</p>

Source: Own elaboration

6. Conclusions

In Spain, the main driving force behind programmes and initiatives aimed at NEETs is the EU. The approval of the Youth Employment Initiative and the Youth Guarantee in 2013 provided an important incentive to boost youth employment policies and actions in Spain, especially at regional and local levels. As a result, Spain approved in 2014 the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ) (2014-2020; extended until 2023), which establishes a common framework for the programmes targeting youth people and NEETs and distributes the EU financing from the ESF and the YEI.

One specificity of Spain and its programmes and initiatives is the definition of youth, which is broader than in other EU countries. According to this broader definition of youth, the POEJ targets people older than 16 and younger than 30 years old whereas in some other countries, people from 25 to 30 years would be targeted by general employment programmes.

Another specificity of Spain is its decentralized model of state and the distribution of competences in employment and youth, which imply the existence of numerous bodies at national, regional and local level responsible for implementing programmes and initiatives all over the country. This means that there have been thousands of actions targeting NEETS (and 25+NEETs as a group included among them) with multiple different institutions during the period under review—under the framework of the POEJ, 41,375 projects were executed by 34 institutions until the end of 2020 (UAFSE, 2021) —. This multiplicity of programmes and initiatives and responsible institutions makes it very difficult to obtain a general overview of the success and effectiveness of actions aimed at NEETs and 25+ NEETs.

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