

Evaluation practices assessing the impacts of initiatives targeting 25+ NEETs

COUNTRY REPORT – POLAND

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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

The interventions targeting NEETs in Poland are usually co-funded by the European Social Fund. The Knowledge, Education and Development (POWER) and Human Capital Development operational programs are overwhelmingly represented among the interventions. Consequently, after the project is finished, it is mandatory to provide an evaluation. Nevertheless, the quality of the evaluation studies, especially those targeted at labour market issues, is low in Poland. Usually, the problem concerns focusing on the data collected from questionnaires, as it was not until 2021 that administrative data were used for causal analysis (Madoń et al., 2021).

To gather the data on the NEET interventions, we have searched through different sources of information. Firstly, we have studied the information of the Ministry of Social Policy and Family and other government agencies to look for the policies which took place recently. We have also relied on the dedicated website of the government, which collects reports on evaluation studies. In addition, we checked the website, which captures all projects co-funded by EU funds.

A significant number of interventions lack proper evaluations in Poland, even though the evaluations are mandatory because of the EU funding. Nevertheless, some of them are not accessible to the public. Even among those evaluated and accessible, it is challenging to provide actionable recommendations, as the methods applied are usually based on arbitrarily defined indicators, while Impact Evaluations are rarely found in terms of NEET projects.

2. Basic background of NEETs evaluations

2.1 Numbers and specifics of the implemented NEETs evaluations

During the desk research, we found 21 evaluation studies addressing the situation of NEETs in Poland. The number of interventions exceeds the number of evaluations, as not every identified policy was properly evaluated after the projects had finished. Among those recognized, there is no significant focus on particular periods, even though the labour market situation in Poland has changed drastically throughout the evaluated periods (2010-2020).

Although the desk research did not focus on any particular source of information, most of the identified evaluation reports were funded by the European Social Fund (Human Capital Development and Knowledge, Education, Development OP). However, in some cases, it was not explicitly stated what the project's funding was. For instance, in the ex-ante evaluation of the project coordinated by the National Fund of Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities (PFRON), there is no information on any EU funding.

Access to the evaluation reports is usually complex. Although the ESF requires mandatory evaluations, not all of them are easily accessible. In some cases, it seems that the published information remains only a summary of the evaluation to emphasize the outcome rather than give a proper analysis of the actions taken during the program. For instance, the analysis provided by Volunteer Labor Corps describes only some basic information, such as the geographical area of coverage, the goals of the project, number of individuals participating in the program.

2.2 Typology of NEETs evaluations

Among the selected and evaluated initiatives, the majority of them are implemented ex-post. Among the found evaluations, there was only an ex-ante that described the program realized by PFRON. In this case, it makes sense, as the evaluation gives an overview of the needs of the targeted groups. On the other hand, midterm evaluations are scarce. There was no association between the type of initiative and the type of evaluation applied.

Most of the identified evaluations applied quantitative methods based on arbitrarily defined indicators. However, it must be emphasized that none of these evaluations applied counterfactual impact evaluations. Due to the major changes in the Polish labour market in the evaluated periods, the positive results found after the intervention might not directly result from the interventions per se. There are no correlations between the applied evaluation methods and the type of evaluated initiatives.

Table 1. Summary of the identified evaluations studies in Poland

Title of the evaluation	Programme/initiative/project evaluated	Period of evaluation	Ex ante / mid-term / Ex post)	Qualitative / Quantitative / Mixed	Link to evaluation outputs
Ewaluacja mid-term projektu systemowego AKTYWNI ZAWODOWO, realizowanego przez Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Sandomierzu w ramach Poddziałania 6.1.3 Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki [Mid-term evaluation of "Economically Active" project, realised by Poviát Labour Office in Sandamierz as a part of 6.1.3. Human Capital Operational Program]	Aktywni Zawodowo [Economically Active]	2010	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Młodzi na rynku pracy - raport z badania [Report on "Youth on the Labour Market" initiative]	Młodzi na Rynku Pracy [Youth on the Labour Market]	2012	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Dobre praktyki zagraniczne i krajowe w zakresie przeciwdziałania zjawisku NEET: Projekt MOS-t w przyszłość [Good reaction practices to NEETs on	MOS-t w przyszłość	2013	Ex ante	Mixed	LINK

national and international level: MOS-t w przyszłość project]					
Podsumowanie projektu konkursowego "Nowe perspektywy" [Summary of project "New Perspectives"]	Nowe perspektywy ["New perspectives"]	2013	Ex post	Qualitative	LINK
Wsparcie młodych osób na mazowieckim rynku pracy. [Support for Youth on Mazovian Labour Market]	Wsparcie młodych osób na mazowieckim rynku pracy. [Support for Youth on Mazovian Labour Market]	2014	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Mobilności europejskie szansą lepszego zatrudnienia dla uczniów i rozwoju szkoły [European Mobility for creating better employment opportunities for students and school development]	Mobilności europejskie szansą lepszego zatrudnienia dla uczniów i rozwoju szkoły [European Mobility for creating better employment opportunities for students and school development]	2015	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Raport z ewaluacji projektu systemowego „Aktywizacja społeczno – zawodowa szansą na usamodzielnienie” realizowanego w latach 2008-2015 [Evaluation of systematic project "Socio-occupational activation - a chance for independence" realised in the period between 2008 and 2015]	Aktywizacja społeczno – zawodowa szansą na usamodzielnienie [Socio-occupational activation - a chance for independence]	2015	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Pomysł na siebie [Self-reinvention]	Self-reinvention	2016	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Równi na rynku pracy [Equal on the Labour Market]	Równi na rynku pracy [Equal on the Labour Market]	2016	Ex post	Qualitative	LINK
Akcja Aktywizacja	Akcja Aktywizacja	2017	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Raport z badań FGI z Młodzieżą (uczniami, absolwentami oraz tzw. NEET) przeprowadzonych w ramach projektu „DUAL. Ponadnarodowa Współpraca w Kierunku Wspierania Kształcenia Dualnego w Placówkach Szkolenia i Kształcenia Zawodowego”	DUAL. Ponadnarodowa Współpraca w Kierunku Wspierania Kształcenia Dualnego w Placówkach Szkolenia i Kształcenia Zawodowego	2018	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Raport końcowy z badania ewaluacyjnego pilotażowego programu "Aktywny samorząd" [Report from Evaluation Study of the Pilot program "Active Local Government"]	Active Local Government	2018	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Raport z ewaluacji projektu „Praktyka i stały rozwój drogą do sukcesu zawodowego” [Evaluation report "Practice and continuous development for career success"]	Praktyka i stały rozwój drogą do sukcesu zawodowego. [Practice and continuous development for career success]	2019	Mid term	Mixed	LINK
Ewaluacja mid-term postępu rzeczowego i finansowego Programu Operacyjnego Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój 2014-2020 (PO	POWER [Operational Program Knowledge, Education Development]	2019	Ex post	Mixed	LINK

WER) oraz wyliczenie wartości wskaźnika rezultatu długoterminowego [Midterm evaluation of material and financial progress of Operational Program Knowledge, Education and Development (2014-2020) and calculation of long-term result indicator]					
„Od szkolenia do zatrudnienia” – projekt zakończony [From Training to Employment - project finished]	Od szkolenia do zatrudnienia [From Training to Employment]	2020	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Stop and Go Metoda grupowego poradnictwa kariery [Stop and Go - group career guidance]	Sop and Go - adaptacja innowacyjnej metody poradnictwa kariery [Stop and Go - adaptation of innovative method of career guidance]	2020	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Raport z badania warsztatów Terapii Zajęciowej. [Study report from workshops on Occupational Therapy]	Aktywni niepełnosprawni - narzędzia wsparcia samodzielności osób niepełnosprawnych [Active people with disabilities - supporting the independence of people with disabilities]	2021	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Podsumowanie projektu konkursowego "Nowe perspektywy 2" [Summary of project "New Perspectives 2"]	Nowe perspektywy 2 ["New perspectives 2"]	2014 (estimated)	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Projekt „Zielone miejsca pracy szansą dla NEET” – zakończony [Project "Creating Green Jobs for NEETs" - finished]	Creating Green Jobs for NEETs	2019 - 2020 (estimated)	Ex post	Mixed	LINK
Akcja Aktywizacja	Akcja Aktywizacja	2021 (estimated)	Ex post	Quantitative	LINK
Raport z ewaluacji projektu systemowego pn. „Lepsze jutro” realizowanego przez Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Opocznie w ramach Poddziałania 6.1.3 Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki [Evaluation of systematic project "Better Tomorrow" realised by Poviats Labour Office in Opoczno as a part of 6.1.3 Human Capital Operational Program]	„Lepsze jutro” [Better Tomorrow]	Not defined	Mid term	Quantitative	LINK

Source: Own elaboration

3. Methodology of NEETs evaluations

Among the identified evaluation studies, the most often applied methods are questionnaires (62%), Interviews (62%), focus groups (52%), and Statistical Analysis (52%). In one case, the evaluation was based on desk research. Usually, the evaluations combine mentioned methods – in 11 out of 21 studies, three or more methods.

Although statistical analyses were standard, these usually included basic statistical descriptions. For instance, in the projects coordinated by the Voluntary Labor Corps, there was only information on what percentage of the participants found employment after participating in the program. Moreover, none of the studies applies counterfactual analysis. In consequence, the results of the evaluations are likely to result from improving the situation in the Polish labour market than the interventions themselves.

Another issue identified in the evaluations is usually the small number of respondents included in the analysis. This usually results from the minor scope of the programs. For instance, some programs were organized in specific schools, such as the project "Practice and continuous development for career success". Moreover, the report tends to not include precise information about the targeted population, making it difficult to assess what sample share was captured in the analysis.

Table 2. Summary of methods and sample sizes used in the identified evaluations in Poland

Title of the evaluation	Methods Applied	Number of respondents in the research per used evaluation methods	Sample size in %
Stop and Go Metoda grupowego poradnictwa kariery [Stop and Go - group career guidance]	Questionnaire, Interview	13	Not defined
Dobre praktyki zagraniczne i krajowe w zakresie przeciwdziałania zjawisku NEET: Projekt MOS-t w przyszłość [Good reaction practices to NEETs on national and international level: MOS-t w przyszłość project]	Questionnaire, Interviews	15	Not defined
Mobilności europejskie szansą lepszego zatrudnienia dla uczniów i rozwoju szkoły [European Mobility for creating better employment opportunities for students and school development]	Questionnaire, Focus Groups, Interview, Statistical Analysis	15	100% (Estimated)
Raport końcowy z badania ewaluacyjnego pilotażowego programu "Aktywny samorząd" [Report from Evaluation Study of the Pilot program "Active Local Government"]	Questionnaire, Focus Groups, Interview, Statistical Analysis	23	82%
Raport z badań FGI z Młodzieżą (uczniami, absolwentami oraz tzw. NEET) przeprowadzonych w ramach projektu „DUAL. Ponadnarodowa Współpraca w Kierunku Wspierania Kształcenia Dualnego w Placówkach Szkolenia i Kształcenia Zawodowego”	Questionnaire, Focus Groups, Interview	33	Not defined
Raport z ewaluacji projektu „Praktyka i stały rozwój drogą do sukcesu zawodowego” [Evaluation report "Practice and continuous development for career success"]	Questionnaire, Focus Groups, Interview, Statistical Analysis	35	Not defined

Projekt „Zielone miejsca pracy szansą dla NEET” – zakończony [Project "Creating Green Jobs for NEETs" - finished]	Focus Groups, Statistical Analysis	50	100% (Estimated)
Akcja Aktywizacja	Focus Groups	166	100% (Estimated)
Akcja Aktywizacja	Focus Groups	231	100% (Estimated)
Raport z badania warsztatów Terapii Zajęciowej. [Study report from workshops on Occupational Therapy]	Questionnaire, Interview, Statistical Analysis	340	3%
Raport z ewaluacji projektu systemowego pn. „Lepsze jutro” realizowanego przez Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Opocznie w ramach Poddziałania 6.1.3 Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki [Evaluation of systematic project "Better Tomorrow" realised by Powiat Labour Office in Opoczno as a part of 6.1.3 Human Capital Operational Program]	Questionnaire, Interview, Statistical Analysis	402	Not defined
Podsumowanie projektu konkursowego "Nowe perspektywy" [Summary of project "New Perspectives"]	Focus Groups, Statistical Analysis	585	100% (Estimated)
Pomysł na siebie [Self-reinvention]	Focus Groups	1320	100% (Estimated)
Podsumowanie projektu konkursowego "Nowe perspektywy 2" [Summary of project "New Perspectives 2"]	Focus Groups	1800	Not defined
Równi na rynku pracy [Equal on the Labour Market]	Focus Groups	6180	100% (Estimated)
Ewaluacja mid-term postępu rzeczowego i finansowego Programu Operacyjnego Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój 2014-2020 (PO WER) oraz wyliczenie wartości wskaźnika rezultatu długoterminowego [Midterm evaluation of material and financial progress of Operational Program Knowledge, Education and Development (2014-2020) and calculation of long-term result indicator]	Questionnaire, Interview, Statistical Analysis	7105	Not defined
„Od szkolenia do zatrudnienia” – projekt zakończony [From Training to Employment - project finished]	Focus Groups	100 (Estimated based on Targets)	Not defined
Ewaluacja mid-term projektu systemowego AKTYWNI ZAWODOWO, realizowanego przez Powiatowy Urząd Pracy w Sandomierzu w ramach Poddziałania 6.1.3 Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki [Mid-term evaluation of "Economically Active" project, realised by Powiat Labour Office in Sandamierz as a part of 6.1.3. Human Capital Operational Program]	Questionnaire, Interview, Statistical Analysis	981 (Estimated)	100% (Estimated)
Młodzi na rynku pracy - raport z badania [Report on "Youth on the Labour Market" initiative]	Questionnaire, Interview, Statistical Analysis	Not defined	Not defined
Wsparcie młodych osób na mazowieckim rynku pracy. [Support for Youth on Mazovian Labour Market]	Questionnaire, Interview, Statistical Analysis	Not defined	Not defined
Raport z ewaluacji projektu systemowego „Aktywizacja społeczno – zawodowa szansą na usamodzielnienie” realizowanego w latach 2008-2015 [Evaluation of systematic project "Socio-occupational activation - a chance for independence" realised in the period between 2008 and 2015]	Questionnaire, Focus Groups, Interview	Not defined	Not defined

Source: Own elaboration

4. Forms of evaluations and the quality of their outputs

Identified projects were, in the majority, evaluated externally. Only in a few cases, the evaluations took an internal form. For instance, some Voluntary Labor Corps Projects were analysed internally to give an overview of the actions taken and show how many individuals participated. The reports, however, do not explicitly state the data collection – it is unknown whether it was collected internally or externally.

As the vast majority of the identified evaluations focused on simple descriptive analysis, it is not surprising that the reports were not conclusive in terms of success. In addition, few of the chosen studies gave any recommendations on the further development of policies targeting NEETs. Table 3 summarizes the output from the evaluation studies conducted in Poland.

Table 3. Summary of the evaluation outputs

Project	Form of evaluation	Evaluated as:	Most important recommendations
Mobilności europejskie szansą lepszego zatrudnienia dla uczniów i rozwoju szkoły	external	successful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply for funds to EU programs, for further internships 2. Look for new partners, new places of apprenticeship. 3. Motivate students to learn foreign 4. Improving the monitoring and supervision of practices by all parties - the Sending Authority, Intermediary and the Receiving Authority (company) and the participant to ensure high quality practices. 5. Make students aware of the rules and principles prevailing not only in the place of internships, but also in place of accommodation. 6. Promote the project, the benefits of participation in it and the opportunities it creates for its participants. Make teachers, parents, students and participants aware of the benefits of participating in project.
Aktywni zawodowo	external	successful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of an additional job, or the involvement of an additional employee, whose tasks will be related to the annual preparation of applications for co-financing and assistance in the preparation of payment applications. 2. In order to increase the effectiveness of the support, it seems reasonable to establish cooperation with external institutions actions should be taken in the future to increase the scope of the support offered under the system project
Praktyka i stały rozwój drogą do sukcesu zawodowego	external	successful	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the future, conduct activities during the implementation of subsequent projects that are tailored to the needs and level of participants. 2. Continue cooperation with the partner organization in subsequent projects. 3. Look for partner organizations in other countries that will be in a similar exemplary role way to fulfil your tasks. 4. Enable foreign trips for internships to the largest possible group of students.

			5. As often as possible promote the results obtained during the internship
Lepsze jutro	external	cannot be said	<p>1. It is recommended that the Intermediate Bodies transfer funds allocated to within the system project at an earlier date.</p> <p>2. There is a need to separate a position in employee structures</p> <p>3. The Labor Office, whose duties would include supervision over the course and implementation of the system project.</p> <p>4. Consider extending the duration of training and internships under the project system. Final beneficiaries point out insufficient quantity time in relation to the material processed, especially in the case of training specialized.</p>
Aktywizacja społeczno – zawodowa szansą na usamodzielnienie	external	rather successful	<p>1. Most of the participants expected that the social welfare centre would actively help them after the end of the classes to find a job and this was not provided. The design of the social projects should better correspond to what is found in the offer and the expectations of the participants.</p>
Aktywni niepełnosprawni - narzędzia wsparcia samodzielności osób niepełnosprawnych	external	cannot be said	<p>1. The starting point for standards being developed must be detailed workshop goals</p> <p>2. There should be a balance between indication of the optimal ones ways to proceed and imposing details the duties to the staff</p>
Stop and Go – adaptacja innowacyjnej metody poradnictwa kariery	external	cannot be said	<p>The basic implementation requirements of the Stop and Go method are:</p> <p>1. Training of career counsellors</p> <p>2. providing more hours of group counselling</p>
Wsparcie młodych osób na mazowieckim rynku pracy	external	cannot be said	<p>1. Undertaking activities aimed at people leaving education to limit their entry into the NEET group</p> <p>2. Providing NEETs active on the labor market and willing to develop their competences, greater institutional support in the field of educational offer</p> <p>3. Providing institutional support to people from the NEET group caring for their family members</p> <p>4. Improving the number and quality of job offers and the quality of services provided by labor market institutions available to people from the NEET group</p> <p>5. Influencing the legislative policy and taking actions to reduce the burden of labor costs on employers</p> <p>6. Undertaking activities aimed at social reintegration of people from the NEET group</p> <p>7. Undertaking activities aimed at reaching and providing support to "extreme" representatives of the NEET group, i.e. people who are not looking for a job or training at all, who display risky behavior, travel or exhibit other forms of activity involving self-expression, e.g. interest in art, music, religion etc.</p>
Zielone miejsca pracy szansą dla NEET	external	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
MOS-t w przyszłość	external	rather successful	No recommendations available in the report.
Nowe Perspektywy	external	successful	No recommendations available in the report.
Nowe Perspektywy 2	external	successful	No recommendations available in the report.

Młodzi na rynku pracy	external	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
Akcja Aktywizacja - gmina Mikołów	internal	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
DUAL. Ponadnarodowa współpraca w kierunku wspierania kształcenia dualnego w placówkach szkolenia i kształcenia zawodowego	external	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
Akcja Aktywizacja	internal	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
Od Szkolenia do Zatrudnienia	external	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
Pomysł na Siebie	external	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
Równi na rynku pracy	internal	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.
Aktywny Samorząd	external	successful	No recommendations available in the report.
POWER	external	cannot be said	No recommendations available in the report.

Source: Own elaboration

5. Conclusions

The key message from the analysis of the evaluation studies is the emphasis on the poor quality of evaluations in Poland. However, the methods applied, and the scope of the analysis still need to be revised to conclude and provide actionable recommendations. Hence, the policymakers acquire biased information on the problem of the Polish labour market. To reach more robust conclusions, the researchers should apply advanced statistical analysis to study the causal nature of the policy interventions. In addition, as the majority of the initiatives were co-funded by EU funds, new legal regulations could enforce applying better-structured methods for policy-relevant actions.

6. References

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