



# CLUSTER (C\_A.3.1\_0014)

## WP6 – A.6.1.1 Mapping of Policy Frameworks France Report CDE Petra Patrimonia

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## Introduction and Methodology

This report is the result of the activities relating to the project Output 6.1 (A.6.1.1 - *Mapping of Policy Frameworks*), implemented within Work Package number 6 (*Raising awareness of public authorities to create supportive environment for employment*).

This report is therefore the result of several different actions carried out by *CDE Petra Patrimonia* in coordination with the WP6 leader (General Agency for Regional Development, PP7), the Project Coordinator and all the project partners (PPs), namely: design and translation of the consultation for mapping policy frameworks related to fostering employability of youth and women; conduction of the consultation with public authorities and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs); and analysis of the feedback received complemented by desk research. This consultation and the elaboration of the report lasted for two months (October – November 2022).

The questions tackled the employment landscape in each project targeted country/region in the context of COVID-19, in addition to addressing the challenges of NEETs in accessing the labour market and the role of public institutions in combating their exclusion. The consultation also refers to the level of trust young people have in public institutions and the synergies that already exist between the government and external employment initiatives. This specific set of questions was designed by PP7 with the input and comments of all other PPs and the Project Coordinator.

CDE Petra Patrimonia carried out desk research through data collection in order to gather information on the economic and employment situation in the southern region for young people aged 18 to 30. These official and therefore reliable statistics come from various institutions, mainly the Ministry of Labour, Full Employment and Inclusion, including DARES (Deciphering the world of work to enlighten the public debate) and POEM (Employment Policy), as well as the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies in order to get official statistics, analysis and reports on the NEETs' situation in France and in the South Region.

In parallel, CDE Petra Patrimonia contacted various employment, youth support and social inclusion structures (26 people) such as the National Employment Service (Pôle Emploi - directorates and advisors), local missions (advisors and managers), departmental directorates of employment, work and solidarity (DDETS) and the regional directorate of employment, work and solidarity (DRETS) but none of them officially responded positively to its invitation.

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One person was willing to speak anonymously, as he/she did not have the formal agreement of his/her organization to answer our questions; indeed, this is a time-consuming process that was not possible in the time available to complete this report.

## Employment Landscape

The unemployment is the total number of people aged 15 and over who are unemployed and looking for work. Its measurement is complex. The boundaries between employment, unemployment and inactivity are not always easy to establish, which often leads to talk of a "halo" around unemployment.<sup>1</sup> Youth unemployment is defined for people between 15 and 24 years of age.

In France, the unemployment rate for young people is significantly higher than for the rest of the population. In 2021, it will reach 18.9% on average over the year among 15–24-year-olds, compared with 7.1% among 25–49-year-olds and 5.7% among those aged 50 and above. The unemployment rate is calculated for the working population only. However, before the age of 25, most young people are still in education and therefore few are active. In relation to the total population, the proportion of unemployed 15–24-year-olds (7.5%) is close to that measured among 15–64-year-olds (5.8%).

The Région Sud (Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur) has a population of 5,081,101 inhabitants (INSEE 2019). According to INSEE statistics for 2019, 52.22% of the population in the Région Sud were women (INSEE) and 32.8% were under 30 years old, of which 16.1% were in the 15-29 age group (approx. 833,000). The overall unemployment rate in the Région Sud was 8.3% in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021 (INSEE), slightly higher than the national average of 8.1% (INSEE – excluding Mayotte). As of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter in 2021, average youth unemployment of 15–24-year-olds in France was 16% (INSEE). The regional council published a “Portrait territorial de la Jeunesse” in 2015 which states that, according to the census, out of 833,000 young people aged 16-29, just 4 out of 10 young people in that age group were in employment, while 15.5% were registered as unemployed. Interestingly, almost 4 in 10 young people were still in education/training. According to the same report, the main fields of employment for those young people were hospitality/catering, sales and cleaning/maintenance work. Finally, in terms of the economy, the main driver in Région Sud is the tertiary sector, accounting for 8 out of 10 jobs, mainly underpinned by the tourism industry (Groupe Mercure/Forbes) but also industry (petrochemicals, aircraft and space construction, microelectronics and food processing, shipping, transport and logistics, renewable energy)<sup>2</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/definition/c1303>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/>

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is not always appealing to young people<sup>3</sup>. Currently, there are many unfilled vacancies in these fields. The Covid19-crisis seems to have been overcome and hiring intentions are very high in these sectors, in particular sales, hotels and restaurants<sup>4</sup>. These jobs with a lot of constraints are not very motivating for young people. Moreover, there is a basic problem of qualification, a lack of skills among young people to meet all the needs of employers.

When they are not unemployed, young people who are not in education and are far from employment declare themselves to be inactive. The inactivity of young people increases steadily with age: from 4% at 16 to 9% at 29. This may be due to the birth of the first child, which causes some to delay their entry into working life, either by necessity or by choice. For others, it may be the sign of a gradual abandonment of the job search, which leads to a shift from the unemployed to the inactive category. Like the young unemployed, young inactive people have many faces. For 2% of 16–29-year-olds, inactivity means being a housewife or a househusband.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis have significantly affected the employment of 16–29-year-olds<sup>5</sup>. In particular, the occupations that were halted during the March-May 2020 lockdown are often occupied by young workers: this is the case in particular in the hotel and restaurant industry, sport and entertainment or arts and culture, which offer so-called "early career" occupations.

In France 13,9% of young people aged 15 to 29 in 2017 were NEETs. This means that 1.6 million young people were not employed, not in school, and not in training. In 2019, there were less NEETs, 12,9% representing 1,5 million young people. As a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, the proportion of young NEETs increased by more than one percentage point to 13.5% of this age group in 2020. Given the breaks in the series on the concept of NEET itself, INSEE (National Institute for Statistics) does not quantify the number of additional young people this one-point increase represents. If we relate it to the number put forward for 2019, we obtain an order of magnitude of some 130,000 additional young people concerned, i.e., a total exceeding 1.6 million in 2016.

Another factor of uncertainty is that 35% of these young workers have precarious contracts (fixed-term contracts, temporary work, etc.), especially in the catering sector (waiters, clerks, etc.) or in sports (sports instructors and educators, professional sportsmen). In addition, part-time work is common (38%), especially in the catering sector, where it concerns more than half of the young workers.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.pole-emploi.org/accueil/actualites/infographies/les-intentions-dembauches-en-2022.html?type=article>

<sup>4</sup><https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/donnees/les-emplois-vacants>

<sup>5</sup><https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/publication/comment-la-situation-des-jeunes-sur-le-marche-du-travail-evolue-t-elle-pendant-la-crise-sanitaire>

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Without the possibility of working remotely, they are exposed to high risks of losing their jobs due to the crisis. Between April and September 2020, the number of young jobseekers registered at the end of the month (DEFM) with Pôle emploi (public employment service) is significantly higher than in previous years (see figure below). In the region, the number of DEFMs aged 16 to 29 increased by 8.2% between March and September 2020, compared with +4.2% for all DEFMs.

## Policy Framework and Responses

Everything starts from the national education system. Not all the talents of young people are exploited. The current approach (formal education) does not allow for the development of children. First, there are not enough staff to give the correct guidance to the young people (job counsellors), nor are there school psychologists who could help the young people with doubts and questions.

As soon as young people do not meet the expectations of formal education, they are placed in vocational training which often does not reflect their desires and motivations. Afterwards, they leave the training they did not like and end up in schemes such as the Youth Guarantee because they do not know where to go. They have little hope and think that the system is against them, that they will be of no use anywhere. If we were interested in their talents, desires, and wishes from the beginning, young people would not have to wander around in different trainings.

A focus has to be put on soft skills nowadays, which needs to be addressed at school and during training too, as the hard skills or technical ones can be acquired more easily. Also, there must be more links between the business world and training courses to meet the needs of the market.

France implements many initiatives to integrate NEETs and young women (with children mostly), like:

- Contractualised Assistance Pathway to Employment and Autonomy (PACEA).
- Youth Commitment Contract (CEJ or YCC– corresponding to the Youth Guarantee): This is an application linking the Pole Emploi advisor or coach with the young person; the link is direct and a follow-up of tasks to be accomplished (done/not done/to be done) is elaborated to facilitate professional integration. The young person has rights and duties and can receive a 500€ aid. One counsellor accompanies about 30 young people, which allows to really create a link digitally. The number of counsellors is sufficient and allows for a humanised relationship. It is new that the social pillar is included in this Youth Commitment Contract, because that was missed a lot before. Pole Emploi is also working on developing gender-neutral jobs, especially in the field of construction, bus driving, etc. There is a real need of sensitisation and education of the NEETs.

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## Main Challenges

NEETs are facing many challenges, which include education (level of qualification – meeting the needs of the market):

- Mobility: difficulties in affording a driving licence and public transport services,
- Literacy: language barriers – Non-French speaking NEETs will have difficulties to find a job – the National Employment Service is making a huge effort on this side by providing an application for all counsellors to conduct an interview in all the languages of the world,
- Gender-neutral jobs

Once young people have entered the schemes, they believe in them and have confidence in the system in place because it is explained to them (not just financial aid but rights and duties) but the problem is rather upstream: how to reach young people who have not yet been followed up and who do not know our organisations or who see them as the police, that is to say as enemies.

Here, outreach offices are essential. At present, by ensuring that the services are not in the young person's place of residence, the idea is to encourage the young person's mobility, to get him out of his neighbourhood, for him to see another world and other people so that he feels more at ease in this new environment.

Often, young people do not come to the institutions because they are afraid (or do not know how to) of the formalities, papers or computer procedures. This is why the humanisation of the link (via the YCC) is essential.

In order to reach these young people, the National Employment Service has put in place different strategies:

- Establishing partnerships with neighbourhood associations in order to reach young people as closely as possible and therefore to work through actors that these young people trust;
- Identifying school dropouts during the Defence and Citizenship Day (compulsory between 16 and 18) in order to bring them closer to the national employment services.

There is a national strategy that is applied throughout France and the public institutions and services are working together. National agreements are signed with partners to be adapted at local level (e.g., with associations such as Nos Quartiers ont du Talent or Fondation Agir Contre l'Exclusion) in order to reach the young people.

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## Approaches Going Forward

- 1- Guidance counselling (how to choose a job and an associated training)
- 2- Access to training (knowledge of the existence and recognition of talents)
- 3- Access to driving license
- 4- Proximity work where the young people are: there should be some qualified mediators who could show them the value of getting out of the parallel economy (e.g. lookouts earning €100 per day) with a short-term vision, and allow them to have hope in the future by opening them up to a world other than their own neighborhood.

*“We should work on opening the space of possibilities for these young people”*

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