

Results of the LIKE project in Hungary, Vas and Zala counties

*“Life investment is the
key to employment”*

Commissioned by Human Profess Public Benefit Nonprofit Ltd

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In Europe, more than 7 million young adults currently fall into the so-called NEET category, i.e. young adults aged 15-29 who are not currently in work, education or training. NEET is an English acronym: Not in Employment, Education or Training.

In Hungary, the number of young adults aged 15-34 who were not working or studying, the so-called NEETs, was estimated at around 15 per cent in the period before the coronavirus epidemic (KSH 2020), so the problem affects tens of thousands of young people.

Human Profess Public Benefit Nonprofit Ltd. implemented the L.I.K.E. project in two operational areas: In Szombathely, the capital of Vas county; and in Zala county, in the villages of Zalakomár and Szentpéterúr. The latter two villages are Romani segregated communities, where NEET young adults are even more disadvantaged. Not just because of the number of jobs available, but also because of the following factors:

The young adults living there leave the primary school with a lack of basic skills, in fact they are already permanently left behind in senior classes because of their lack of reading and writing skills, which are essential for all subjects and, since no one cares about this problem, the low level of literacy remains. Secondary school is even less able to tolerate this disadvantage, and then there is also the negative attitude towards school, which does not strengthen the motivation of NEET young adults to learn. In many cases, their parents were also NEET young adults, but nobody described them as such at the time, because they came out of school with a lack of knowledge and skills, they had no profession, and they only started to work occasional and undeclared jobs when they had to, because they started families early.

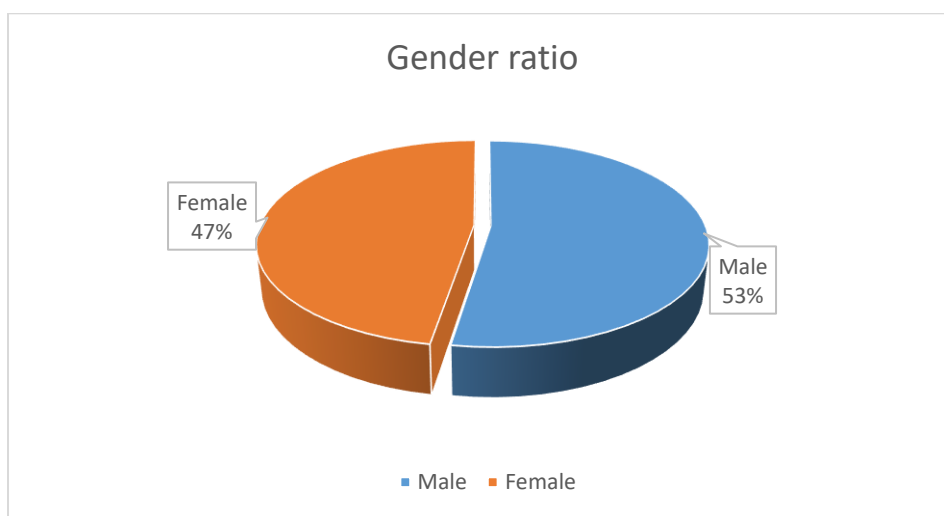
The project provided various services to help NEET young people to find their place in the labour market, either as employees or entrepreneurs.

In addition to the services for NEET young adults, the project provided sensitisation training for the employers involved. Employers were also supported by providing additional mentoring services for young people in their workplace, as well as the assistance of a mediator to help them resolve workplace conflicts, if needed.

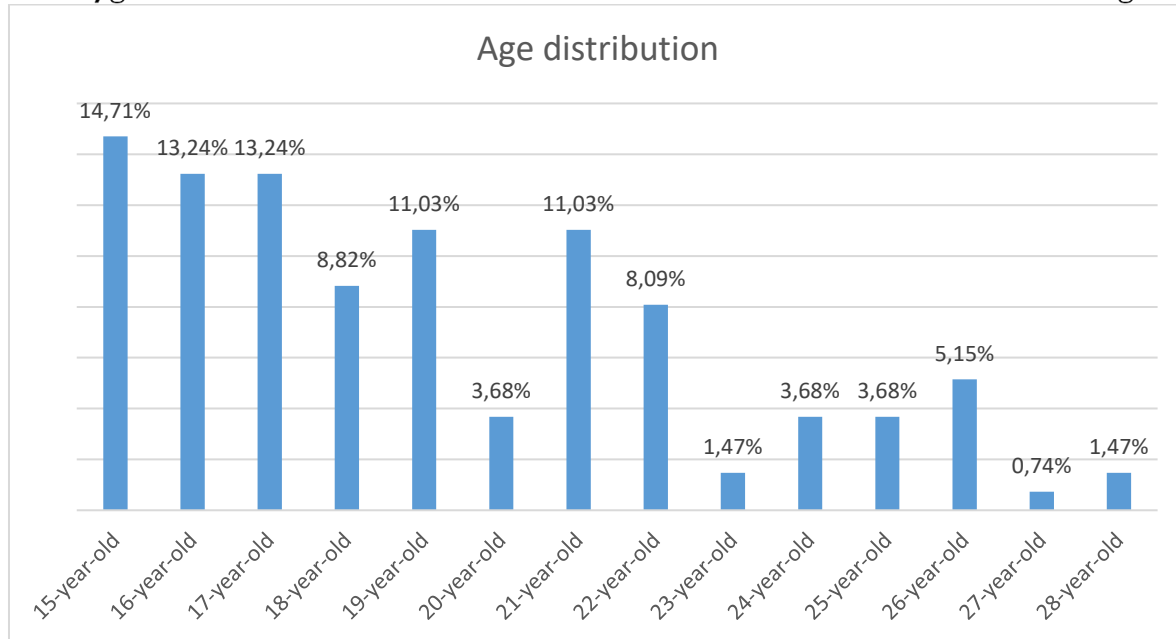
2. Project results in figures

2.1. NEET young adults

During the project implementation period, a total of 136 NEET young adults participated in the project in Vas and Zala counties, 72 of them were men and 64 of them were women. 56 NEET young adults entered the labour market with the help of the professionals of Human Profess Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd., and 1 started a micro enterprise as a beautician.



The age distribution of the young adults involved is more balanced than the national NEET composition, where women are much more over-represented. Almost everywhere in the country, but among those with low education, no work experience and living in small settlements, men are still more likely to be employed - so the proportion of women is higher among the NEET target group.

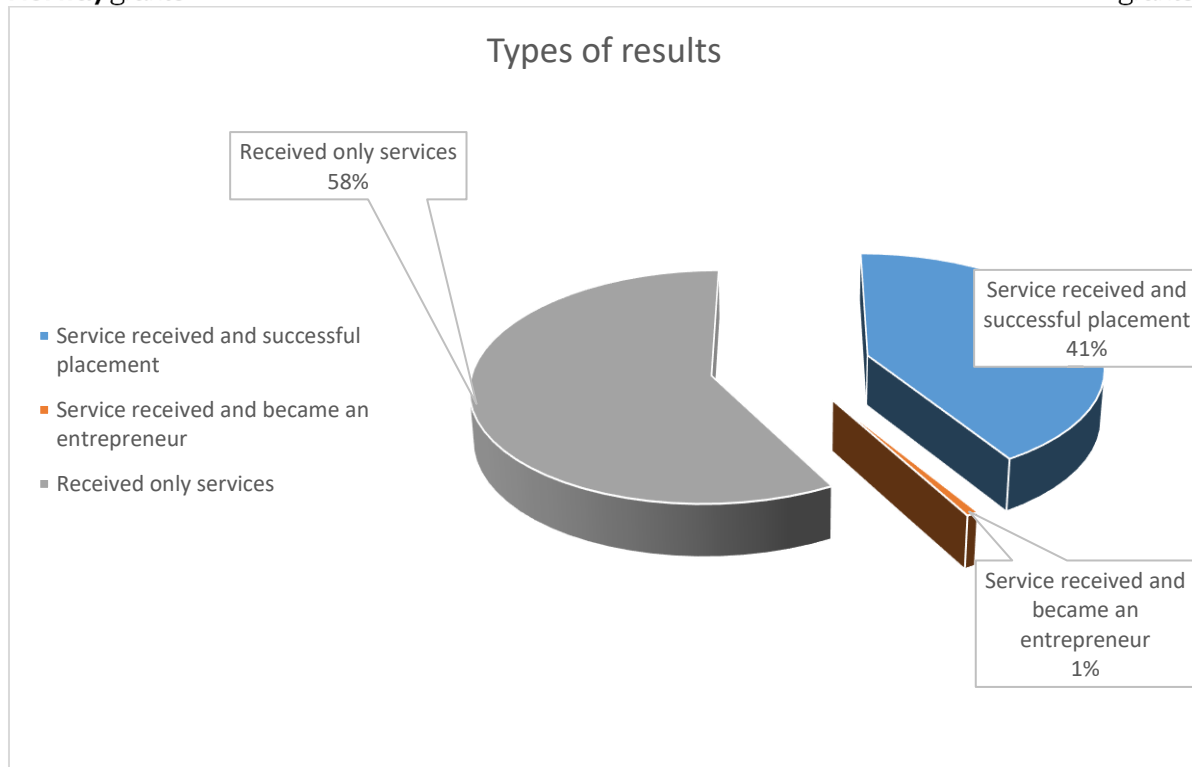


The age distribution shows that the 15 to 17 age group has a very high prevalence. If we look behind the causes, we see a truly vulnerable NEET group with the following risk factor:

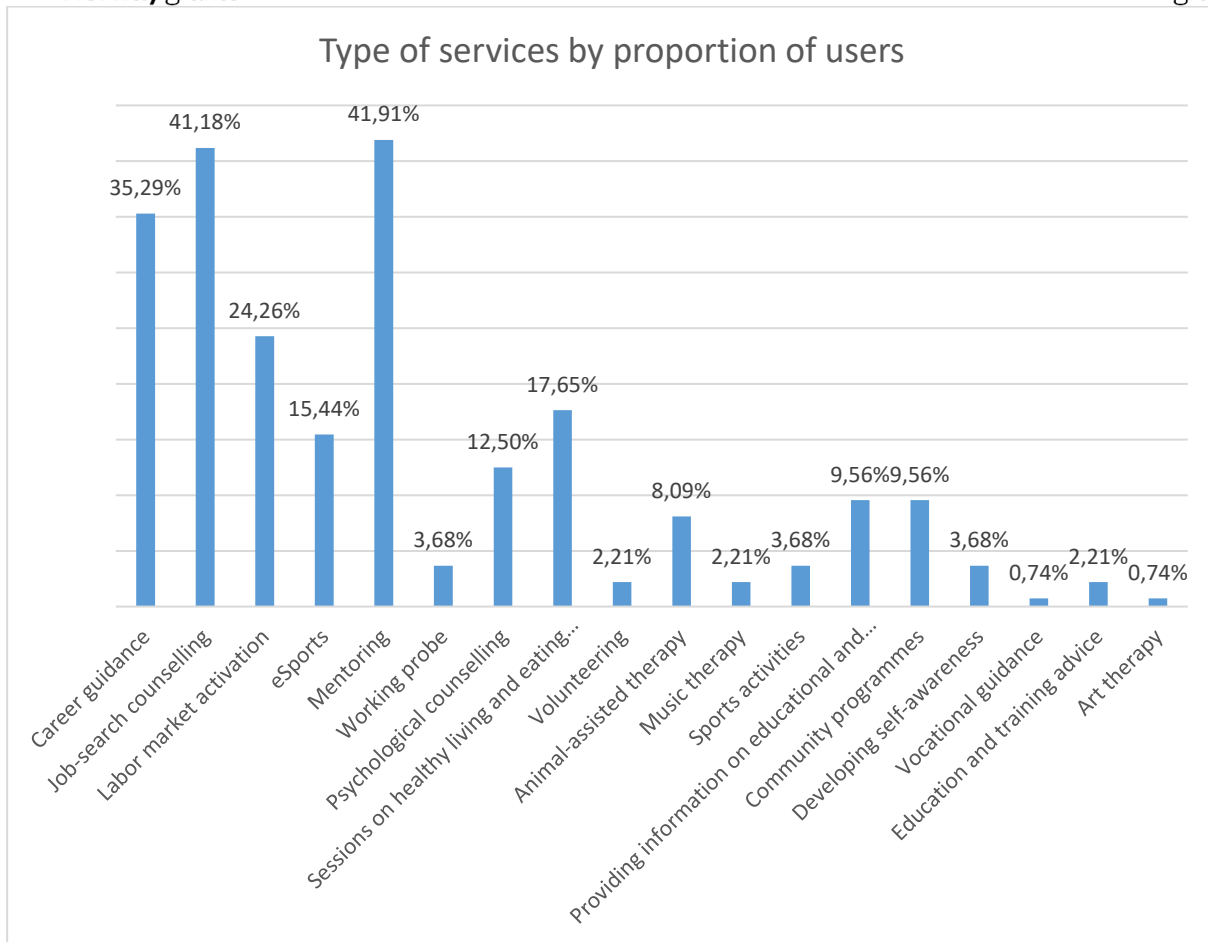
- parents are poor and unemployed
- live in deprived conditions
- low performance at primary school
- get pregnant young, become parents
- have special educational needs
- often have a drug or alcohol problem
- are early school leavers, or have been excluded for some reason
- have little or no education
- have definitively completed their studies after the compulsory school leaving age

A higher proportion of 19-year-olds means that they finish secondary school at this age (possibly after failing or having spent another year in a 'project' class because the school has assessed them to be at risk).

According to Zsuzsa Ferge's research in 2016, a very large number of NEET young people left Hungary for work (about 600,000), which will have increased several times by 2023.

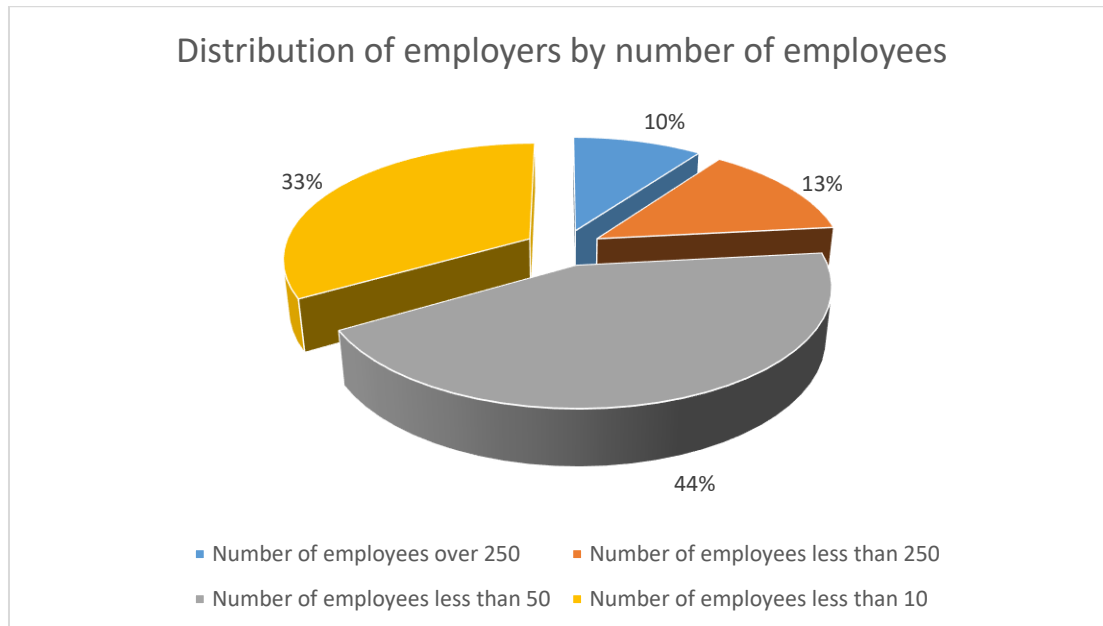


The results of the project can be summarised as 42% of young people were able to enter the labour market during the project implementation period. As the services implemented are effective, it is hoped that they will continue to have an impact on NEET young adults who did not find a job during the implementation period of the project. In other words, the acquired skills and positive attitudes can be mobilised over time.



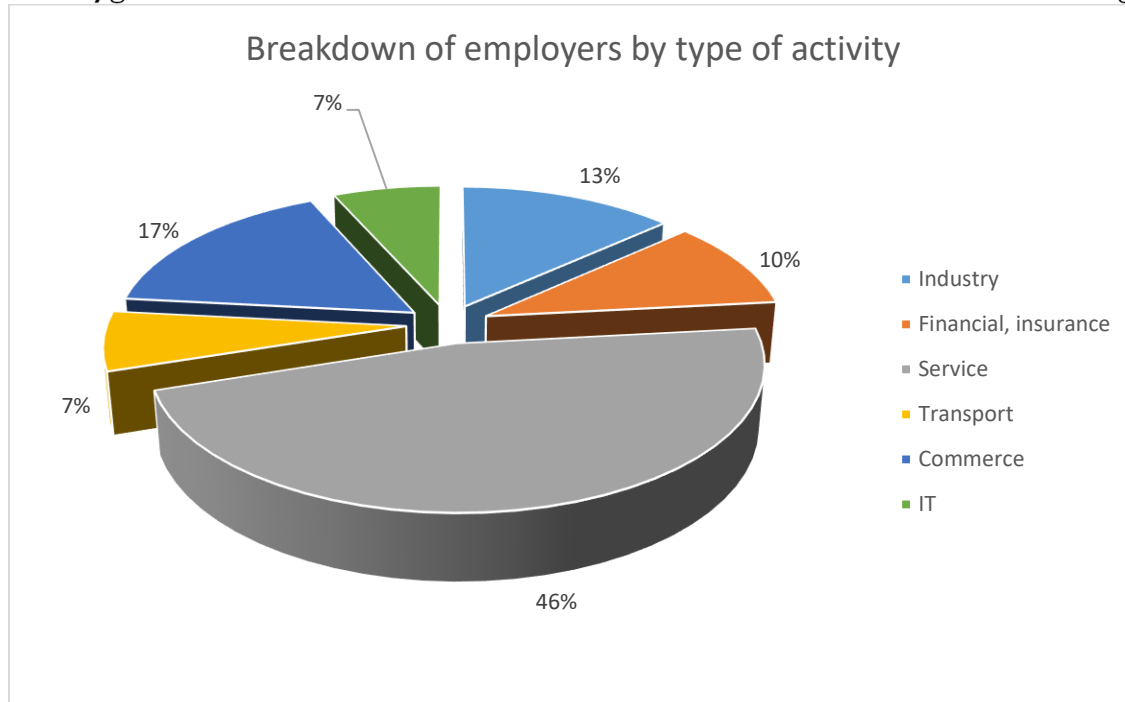
Mentoring and labour market services were the most popular services and the most used by professionals, taking into account the individual needs of NEET young adults.

30 employers were involved in the project. For them, the labour market counsellors and trainers held a sensitisation training.



The employers surveyed were mostly small (44%) and micro (33%) enterprises.

Based on their most important characteristics, the Hungarian enterprises included in the economic statistics can be divided into two clusters with different parameters, reflecting the fundamental duality of the structure of the Hungarian economy: on the one hand, the small number of export-oriented large companies and their resident supplier network, which is typically foreign-owned, and on the other hand, the large number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which play a key role in the local economy. The enterprises involved in the LIKE project (Life Investment is the Key to Employment) are also prominent players in the local economy of Vas and Zala counties, who have good personal relations with both the training providers and other actors in the labour market in order to increase the economic performance of the region.



The largest proportion of employers surveyed are in the services sector (46%), with the industrial, financial, insurance, transport, commercial and IT sectors accounting for a further 54%. It is a particularly good result that the group of employers covers such a wide range of activities.

3. Services for NEET young people

The services in Vas and Zala counties were implemented in two regions that are not only different from each other in aspects of geography, economy and labour force, but also differ in terms of the characteristics of the NEET target group. Professionals decided which services and within which framework to provide according to their professional competence and the individual needs of NEET young adults. In Zala County, the Romani community was primarily considering the implementation of a complex package of services. The reason for this was that community members there knew each other, their circumstances and disadvantages were the same and it was more effective to offer different services collated into groups by combining them.

In Vas county, the programmes took place in Szombathely, the county capital. There, participants did not know each other or rarely knew each other, were more withdrawn, more shy about group services and did not always require complex improvements.

3.1. Labour market services

A triple package of labour market services (**career guidance, job-search counselling, on-the-job training**) was put together by professionals in Vas county. The aim of the services was to ensure that the members of the NEET target group would become long-term employees in the primary labour market, that the given job would meet the employee's skills and needs, and that the employer would have access to a workforce that would meet their needs and expectations. Otherwise, employers would not be interested in long-term employment. In Vas county, in Szombathely, NEET young adults came from less disadvantaged backgrounds, had higher educational attainment and a family pattern of going to work.

The aim of the session:

- Helping NEET jobseekers to integrate or reintegrate into the labour market;
- identifying and removing obstacles to finding a job;
- addressing the negative, personality-damaging effects of long-term unemployment;
- to enable NEET jobseekers to become more independent in their job search and to find a job in the shortest possible time by learning job search skills;
- help them to choose a career or further education options that match their individual competences and career aspirations.

The content of the sessions:

During the personal interviews, the professionals got a comprehensive picture of the young people's goals, qualifications, ideas about employment, previous experiences, skills, strengths, difficulties and environment.

Following the assessment, the professionals worked with the NEET youth to determine which labour market services would be appropriate to achieve their goals.

Following the survey, the young adult was offered the following labour market services:

1. Job search counselling

The aim of the job search counselling:

Helping those who wanted to find a job, had a clear and realistic job goal, but lacked the skills and experience to find a job.

The content of the job search counselling:

Key job search techniques which can be used effectively (phoning employers, writing CVs, cover letters, motivation letters, preparing for face-to-face meetings, searching for unadvertised jobs, etc.) were taught in a personalised way.

The counselling was aimed at helping the job-seeking NEET persons to find a job and to solve their problems related to job search. The expert explained effective job search techniques, labour market conditions, employer habits and the methods for NEET persons to contact people they know and employers to find a job. The NEET persons were also able to apply the knowledge they had acquired independently in their job search.

2. Career guidance

The aim of career guidance:

Developing self-awareness and career knowledge for NEET persons who are unsure of their career choice or are unsure of themselves.

The content of career guidance:

The training content was selected to match the NEET person's interests, skills, values and way of working, taking into account their life experiences, education and studies.

The counselling also started a planning process to identify the tasks that are important for NEET persons in the longer term, by defining the levels of training and the target job or career.

Career guidance has also been implemented in the context of psychological counselling (see chapter on psychological counselling).

3. On-the-job training

The purpose of the on-the-job training:

Observation of skills or behaviours of the NEET persons that experts could not assess by other methods. During the on-the-job training, the labour market expert not only gained more accurate information about the NEET persons' work ability and skills, but also about the NEET persons' personality and work relationships. Another aim of the on-the-job training was to help young people learn the skills that are an integral part of work culture: presenting themselves punctually, taking breaks, taking and following instructions, observe safety at work and other rules, etc.

The content of the on-the-job training:

Observation was the main methodological tool of the on-the-job training. During the on-the-job training, the counsellor accompanied the NEET persons to the workplace, where they worked together for 2-4 hours. In several cases, this took place at one of the sites of Human Profess Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd.

Prior to the on-the-job training, the counsellor and the supervisor explained in detail the purpose, location, date and scope of the tasks to be carried out.

During the on-the-job training, particular attention was paid to the following areas: communication, interpretation of workplace peer relationships (e.g. boss-subordinate relationships, internal customs); information related to the specific work (e.g. how well the NEET persons understood the task; how they approached the solution; characteristics of task initiation and completion).

In providing labour market services to NEET young adults, attention often had to be paid to the fact that different problems were cumulative (low educational attainment, family circumstances, segregated housing), so addressing one problem or circumstance in isolation was not sufficient to find a solution. In their case, the experts had to think in terms of a complex service.

In many cases, NEET young adults had unrealistic ideas about education, employment and earning potential. They also had high expectations of prospective employers, despite the fact that they had little or no work experience.

However, the uninterrupted interest of NEET young adults in the labour market services had to be maintained. Reinforcement, positive feedback and continuous progression were essential elements in the counselling process.

3.2. Individual and group labour market activation

Labour market activation is also a complex service (**career guidance and counselling, job search counselling, referral to services, referral to training, information provision, on-the-job training, mentoring complemented by social work tools**), which was offered to NEET young adults in Zala county by professionals in two segregated Roma locality, Zalakomár and Szentpéterúr. In these closed communities, NEET young adults are in an even more difficult situation. Not only because of the extremely low number of job opportunities, but also because of the lack of basic skills and the recurrent poverty. They also learn less patterns in their families about what it means to work.

The Hétfa Research Institute's 2019 survey also shows that the employment rate among young adults is much lower than for those aged 25 and over (partly because they have a higher rate of full-time students, but also because the unemployment rate among those under 25 is much higher). The data from the first interviews conducted for the project also confirm the trend that young adults take more likely temporary jobs of shorter duration, followed by a various duration of unemployment. (Bördös, Koltai, Petróczi, 2019.)

There are several reasons behind this phenomenon, based on the experience derived from the interviews with NEET young adults involved in the programme. Many participants have said that they need time to find the right occupation, job, workplace and want to try out several jobs before settling into a more permanent job. Another factor behind the short duration of employment is that employers are often only willing to hire young people for a limited period of time, typically for the duration of the increased workload in rural small settlements (e.g. gardening season, harvesting season).

Labour market surveys show that young people are two and a half to three times more likely to have a fixed-term contract than those over 25.

The aim of labour market programmes:

A smooth transition from school to work is a key condition for social inclusion. It often determines an individual's social position and labour market situation in the long term. From both an economic and a social point of view, it is important that young people leaving school are professionally prepared for the labour market, that the skills they acquire at school are in line with labour market requirements, that they have the right level and type of qualifications and that they have convertible skills.

The time spent out of work/learning and the negative experiences of being out of work are not only discouraging, but the burden of supporting young adults out of work is a heavy burden on families and society as a whole, and the underutilisation of their labour is also a loss of social value for the society.

During the sessions, the specific situations and needs arising from the NEET situation and from living in a segregated area, deep poverty, needed attention:

- low educational attainment; lack of vocational qualifications (outdated qualification, unmarketable occupation, forced career, lack of career guidance or wrong career guidance)
- discrimination by employers (due to lack of experience - and in the case of young adults of Romani origin - also due to prejudice against the target group);
- inadequate skill levels required to work effectively or skill levels that do not meet employers' expectations (precision, accuracy, flexibility, tolerance of monotony)
- lack of basic employee skills (e.g. time management, discipline, responsibility, communication, conflict management)
- low self-esteem and self-doubt
- low motivation to work (lack of long-term plans, avoiding help)
- a predominance of lower quality jobs (job conditions which are not accepted by more experienced, skilled workers)

- shorter-term, fixed-term or insecure jobs (in many cases of the young adults involved it has been revealed afterwards that they have not been registered, not even for simplified employment)
- lower wages (highly correlated with lack of experience and skills)
- worse than average working conditions. (Bördös, Koltai, Petróczi, 2019.)

In case of the young adults involved in the project, the most common problems preventing them from finding a job were:

- undeclared or casual work that prevents them from moving on to legal and regular employment
- family circumstances (elderly or sick relative)
- regressive family environment (deviance, dependency)
- challenges for livelihood and social problems (extreme poverty, deprivation, e.g. no money to buy clothes to go to work in, or money for food until they get the first salary, etc.)
- indebtedness (having utility or credit debts that have led to a significant garnishment of the legal income)

At first sight, one might think that the wage cost subsidy alone, paid to employers, would ease the problem, as it could compensate employers for the "risks" they have listed. However, the results of various impact assessment studies show that wage subsidy programmes alone are not a solution, complex programmes are needed, which may include wage subsidies, but the simultaneous provision of practice-oriented on-the-job training and mentoring and counselling services is necessary for young jobseekers to find successful and sustainable employment. The project provided such services and support tailored to the specific needs of the target group.

The young adults involved in the programme were also found to have less or less precise knowledge of the labour market due to their inexperience. They did not know the right job search techniques, they did not know how to write a CV, and in many cases they had unrealistic expectations about wages and working conditions.

In these situations, job-search techniques training (individual and group), individual job-search counselling and mentoring have helped to address these problems. In the case of mentoring, it was important that the young adult involved in the programme met and talked to the mentor on a regular basis.

The young adults involved in the programme also tended to be unsure or uncertain about what they wanted to do, several of them did not complete the vocational training they had started, and they left the job early even if they had found one. In these cases, career guidance counselling and individual and group sessions to develop self-awareness have been particularly useful.

An important experience of the project has been the blurring of the boundaries between labour market counselling, mentoring and social work methods when working with clients with complex problems. The expert works with their own personality, while also using the social worker's tools.

The process of accessing the service:

- First contact, meeting, building trust
- Information on the services available under the programme
- Situation assessment, needs assessment, first interview:
 - o physical fitness assessment (to identify physical or health barriers to employment)
 - o psychological health assessment (mental and psychological health)
 - o assessment of skills and qualifications
 - o skills and competences assessment (previous work experience)
 - o identifying the client's motivation, interests and needs
 - o identifying the supporting or impeding environmental factors
 - o physical environment, related barriers thereof
 - o work history: experience, previous jobs, reasons for leaving employment
 - o an inventory of obstacles to finding a job, finding employment and participating in training
- Concluding a social and labour market "diagnosis"

- Reaching an agreement, formulation of the labour market target with the active involvement of the client
- Agreement on the steps to be taken to achieve the objectives, the services needed and the services to be requested:
 - o career guidance and counselling
 - o labour market activation, job search counselling
 - o on-the-job training (in the community, with a contractor producing pallet furnitures)
 - o referral to services: music therapy, animal-assisted therapy, healthy lifestyle and education on eating, sports,
 - o community programmes
 - o training guidance,
 - o information on educational and employment opportunities, rights and obligations
- Mentoring services and support
- Liaising, motivating the client, maintaining their commitment
- Documenting the cooperation in an activity log
- Follow up

A common characteristic of NEET young adults was that initially they were not very motivated to improve their labour market situation, ultimately they were motivated by one thing: to earn a lot of money (mostly not even expressed as a realistic goal to achieve). It was important to recognise that each of them could be motivated, but what motivated each of them could be very diverse, just as their values, goals and aspirations were very wide ranging.

In many cases, a lack of self-confidence and a lack of faith was behind the apparent lack of motivation. Therefore, highlighting and talking about the strengths and good qualities of the young adult had a great impact as a significant motivational factor. Especially young adults living in poor social and housing conditions were motivated and their inner resources were activated by talking about their goals, the possibility of better living conditions, and by expressing what kind of family and conditions they would like to live in. (Éva Tánczos, 2012.)

"When working with groups with multiple disadvantages, it is important to keep in mind that every client's situation is unique: people with unique life paths, adaptation strategies, needs, motivations, mobilisable resources - financial and psychological - and goals are different." (Éva Tánczos, 2012, p. 97)

It is clear that tailored assistance was also needed to help the target group in order to integrate them into the labour market. One that could react to the client's situation and problems in a complex way, and provide help.

"Social work, with its comprehensive, multi-disciplinary knowledge and diverse toolbox, plays an important role in employment-focused programmes. Successful labour market (re)integration cannot be achieved without active social work." (Éva Tánczos, 2012. p. 97)

Among the types of social work, individual case management has played a prominent role in the project implementation. As the problems of NEET young adults were complex and their needs were wide-ranging, it was important to have a facilitator (social worker, case manager) to provide effective support. With a thorough knowledge of the client's situation and problems, they were able to develop a strategy and then coordinate the different services, "walking" the client through the process.

In addition to individual case management, group work proved to be also essential in activities to improve the employability and labour market opportunities of the target group:

1. Sessions related to healthy lifestyle and nutrition

A characteristic of Romani communities is that they do almost everything together. Women like to cook together and share recipes. Traditional Romani food is, of course, a reflection of their culture, primarily about migration. This means that their food is linked to the flavours of the countries they have visited, and later they have adapted these dishes to their own tastes. Because of the migratory life, the dishes are mainly cooked in pots, clay pots, on skewers, on ember, and are very rich, richly spiced, and often spicy. It is also important aspect for them to be able to make delicious food from cheap ingredients. Romani housewives are very keen to please their husbands, as they have seen their mothers do it since they were little girls. By the age of seven or eight, they are already in the kitchen and can cook by the time they are young adults. One of the pillars of the project was that the community programmes were based on

cooking together. The experts linked the current activity to this. In the garden of the community space (barn), which also housed the HLH, they planted vegetables and fruit (e.g. strawberries) together. The experts, and also the Romani community, made sure that the food was always prepared with ingredients that they had grown themselves. Healthy eating is often unfamiliar territory for Romani families, but the experts also shared this information during the cooking sessions.

2. Animal-assisted therapy

Two rabbits are permanent residents of the community space. Caring for them is the responsibility of NEET young adults. Animals have a positive impact on the psychological well-being of NEET young adults. Caring for animals is associated with higher self-esteem, cognitive development and advanced social skills. Animals help reduce stress, provide social support, help reduce feelings of loneliness and improve communication skills. Caring for animals helps them to take responsibility, develop a sense of ownership and a love of regularity. The ability to change perspectives gradually began to be acquired by NEET young adults, pushing egocentric thinking into the background. This process can be facilitated by caring for an animal, when someone has to provide for another living being by setting the priority of the needs of self lower. Unconditional acceptance is important for their psychological well-being, and animals give them unconditional love. While their social environment often places expectations on them, an animal does not attach conditions to its love. The importance of non-verbal communication in interactions with animals has also been recognised. They have experienced that sometimes actions can mean more than words.

3. Music therapy

Music is integral part of the Romani traditions. Community programmes almost invariably end with music, with men playing music and women dancing. The members of the Zala orchestra are involved in music education as early as possible. Only the most talented of them get to the big city to study music, because of financial constraints. In all cases, professionals will try to find talent development programmes for them. At the opening of the HLH in Szombathely, the orchestra of the Romani community of Zala county participating in the LIKE project gave

the performance. Such opportunities help to overcome prejudices in the majority society and boost these young adults' self-confidence.

The methods and tools of community social work can also be used to influence social prejudices, to promote and create communication between disadvantaged groups and the rest of society.

4. Sports

Sport usually meant informal football matches in the community. The composition of the teams was always decided by the people present. There is no official pitch, no gate, and the rules are usually observed by the players collectively. Sport was part of the community activities, like cooking together or playing music.

A key aim of the project is to teach new abilities and to empower

"The ultimate goal of working with disadvantaged groups is to empower deprived people to regain control over their destiny, to become active participants in the life of the community. A key element of this is strengthening community solidarity, participation, giving them a say in their community and their own affairs, bolstering their representation, involving their representatives in social dialogues." (Éva Tánczos, 2012, p. 129)

3.3. Electronic-sports

The e-sports sessions were held in the children's shelter care in Szombathely and Kőszeg. The meetings always started with an interactive discussion and presentation. During this time, the experts assessed the activity of the group and structured the practical part of the session accordingly. During the interviews, fears, interests were discussed and in many cases NEET young adults also expressed their aspirations. In almost all cases, the team leaders were able to provide relevant content in order to fulfil the wishes expressed.

The aim of the session:

In each case, the aim was clearly to get NEETs interested and thus make them actively involved in the activity. Increase their problem-solving skills, so they can learn the basics of teamwork, experience its benefits and improve their communication.

The content of the sessions:

The sessions started with an educational, interactive presentation, which included the following steps:

1. Stages in the world's digital evolution
2. Introducing e-sports from the basics
3. Introduction to the types of video games
4. List of positive and negative effects of video games
5. Presenting the professional challenges and opportunities of e-sports
6. The importance of digital literacy in the 21st century
7. Summary
 - Summary of the opportunities of the digital world
 - The importance of health awareness

After the interactive presentation, several types of digital tools was presented during the session, all of which the participants were able to try out themselves.

1. Playstation 5 (console)

With multiple controllers so more people could try the device at the same time, there were team-building games alongside realistic simulator games. The software, mostly in Hungarian, brought the group together with funny questions and exercises.

2. Oculus Quest 2 (VR headsets)

It was the absolute favourite tool of the participants. The headsets allow the user to enter a whole new world of virtual reality. Initially, the opportunity to try out the headsets was provided through short but spectacular videos. Then such games were introduced where movement was a part of the games, and which the young adults had not yet encountered. In addition to team-building exercises, the tasks included small competitions and tests of courage. They also developed manual skills and creativity, with NEET young adults working together to decipher pictures and create sculptures in virtual space. These tasks could only be solved in close cooperation and teamwork.

At the end of the session, NEET young adults were given the opportunity to ask further questions and discuss them. The experts also found ways to channel them into different digital courses and training according to their interests, but also helped them to choose the right profession. They proposed training that started the process of entering the labour market.

The knowledge, skills, abilities and competences acquired during the session - their applicability to the training and to the labour market - gave the young adults a great motivation to enter the training. Digital inclusion plays a huge role in the lives of NEET young adults. According to the experts leading the sessions, NEET young adults often approached the sessions with a lack of interest, which could be due to fear to be seem uninformed or clueless. The presentations highlighted a wide range of issues and provided a constant opportunity for raising questions. They showed the potential of smart devices to make our everyday lives easier. As video games are now almost an integral part of our society, learning about their types can be a great advantage when integrating into communities. In the practical part, fear of the unknown was also dispelled.

The exercises developed other valuable skills: eye-hand coordination, quick reactions, sense of rhythm, fine motor skills. In some cases, a basic knowledge of English was needed to move on, so this way they could learn English phrases. In addition, good communication skills were needed for several tasks.

The professional experience of the experts leading the sessions was that they usually succeeded in arousing interest during the initial discussion, but they also found common ground with those whose trust could not be gained during this initial time. There was always a big digital literacy gap between the participants. Almost every group had a few young people who knew almost everything about the introduced tools, but for the most part there was a large gap between the participants. In several cases, young adults also contacted these participants after the group sessions.

3.4. Psychological counselling

Psychological counselling was implemented both in Vas and Zala counties. The social care system in Hungary aims to provide adequate support to help young adults to start

independent lives. This also applies to decisions that have a determining impact on your career. Schools and civil society organisations play an important role in preparing career choices. However, for some young adult, their social situation, their lack of skills/abilities and their place of residence marginalise them in this area.

The aim of the session:

Psychologists provided specific and more targeted support for NEET young adult, which were better adapted to their abilities, opportunities and life situations. They have taken into account that, in addition to their individual life situation, NEET young adults face a double challenge of constant change in the economy and society.

Their interventions focused on the transversal competences, the awareness and development of which can be a way out for NEETs in the changing labour market environment. To achieve that, they also worked with other partner organisations and professionals who helped them to reach and find the target group as widely as possible. Their aim was also to help them solve their problems and prepare them for their career choices/expand their options.

The intervention covered 3 main areas:

1. Self awareness;
2. Career awareness/educational pathways;
3. Labour market skills;

In addition, the group sessions were divided into sub-areas, which were differentiated according to the group's abilities and individual skills. Namely: sensitisation; attitude formation; skills development; self-awareness; awareness raising; overall picture and training about the world of work; stimulating motivation and strengthening thereof; clarification of roles and opportunities; dealing with fears and failures related to employment; taking assessments and then developing a career proposal based on whole/partial competences, related links and films demonstrating the jobs; career and occupational awareness; career presentation.

The role and opportunities of NEET young adults in the process of career guidance and career planning:

1. Career guidance, helping career choice, learning about self-management and techniques thereof, awareness of the need for more flexibility, developing self-awareness and self-reflection, awareness that the relationship with the world of work is changing, therefore keeping the importance of being up to date in mind. Introducing and trying out online platforms that are necessary for orientation, and providing them with access to resources that will keep them informed.
2. The aim was also to bring young people into within the scope of awareness of the supporting public organisations and civil communities, to develop an active relationship between the supporters and the young adults in order to ensure that the "labour market net" is constantly present and accessible to them through personal contacts, thus providing them with a continuous opportunity to connect.

Focus of the structure and content of the session

The sessions were structured around the following three areas:

1. Self-awareness, interests, skills, values, work style, self-management issues.
2. Career and professional knowledge, tasks, circumstances
3. Being an adult in the world of work, knowledge of the labour market, training market

Method to take the specific needs of NEETs into consideration during the session

It's safe to say, that the NEETs who attended the sessions consist a very heterogeneous group in terms of skills, education and work experience. The majority of them typically had to be considered by professionals as also having mental retardation as a complicating factor because of the variability of their ability structure - like severe dyslexia, dysgraphia. Sometimes they responded to the diversity of the group with leading groups in pairs. This way they were able to provide a personalised service, help with filling in questionnaires and registering for online surveys. NEET young adults were able to connect with each other

through role-playing, team-building, working in groups, where they were able to share very good experiences, drawing inspiration from their diversity and different experiences, living their competences and making them aware of their strengths.

In the isolated small settlements where the experts worked with a community of young adults of Romani origin, they made the programme adaptive in a different way. Here it was important to attract them into community spaces and to give them a sense of community connection. We helped them to become aware of their strengths and identify areas for improvement. Completing the competency map was rather difficult for this group. In their case, it was more important to integrate them into local small communities and to explore together the job opportunities available to them in the area.

Skills, abilities and competences acquired and developed during the training, their adaptability for inclusion in training and for the orientation on the labour market

Psychologists were cooperated with the young adults in the process of preparing their career choices. They have been provided information about the key features of each career path. To make their choices, of course, they also needed to know the training pathways leading to the profession, so they describe those in details. Scholarship opportunities were also introduced as a motivating factor, as for young adults from poorer areas, knowledge of the scholarship system also influences their decisions. Access to information about careers also influences their career choice. The training structure and optional courses are designed to meet labour market demand. This is one of the main reasons why training courses are constantly changing (in quality, content and structure). Such a fast-changing system is very difficult to understand, especially for young adults who have less access to information. The information from the immediate environment (e.g. family, friends, peers), from the teachers, from other information tools (internet, media) was supplemented and clarified for the young adults by the psychologists.

Although information is available in the virtual space, it is very important to process it in a meaningful way, differentiated according to individual abilities and needs. Also the alignment of this knowledge with their potential needs support. By working in a group, they benefited from the peer group connection, where they could practice their communication skills and at

the same time, belonging to a community provided emotional security for NEET young adults. Furthermore, the feedback they gave each other complemented their self-image well, contributing to a more realistic self-image. Psychological factors that determine the career choices, such as self-awareness, psychological maturity, interest, ability, importance of values, have been strengthened. Professionals linked their interest to their motivation, helping them to have a conscious insight about that. The motivated work is less tiring and gives a sense of achievement, which is a great asset in the labour market. They agreed to ensure that subsequent career choices will not be necessarily determined by the immediate family environment or lack of information, but they will be better adapted to market expectations and intrinsic motivation. The most important factors for a successful career choice have been taken into account together.

The psychologists' own experience

In their experience, the motivation of the young people was very diverse. They have used a variety of methods to maintain motivation and interest. NEETs generally enjoyed the community connection, the online surveys and tests, the movie clips about the professions and really liked the conversations in connection with them that took place after they watched the films. In one or two cases, they also processed failure stories, which, with the understanding and support of the group, helped to overcome the obstacles. They progressed in smaller steps, adapting to the performance and fatigue of the group. The dual group management also absolutely supported the possibility of individual attention, because psychologists were able to work with the individual and the group in parallel. A new phenomenon was experienced when they provided information to a young Ukrainian refugee. Again, this was also made possible by the dual leadership.

3.5. Animal-assisted therapy

Animal-assisted therapy was also implemented in Vas County, in a park forest near the county seat, on a farm (so-called “Lélekfarm” - Soul Farm). This meant literally that NEET young adults went out into the animals' habitat. This was a completely new experience for NEET young

adults from a metropolitan environment, unlike the target group from Zala county. They had fewer opportunities to meet animals in their natural environment before the project.

In the centre of the farm there is a 50 m² yurt and an area reserved for the animals like horses, goats, sheep, rabbits and dogs. Wildlife is also an integral part of the farm experience, as in front of the 3000 m² fenced area - round pen, pasture, parking - is directly adjacent to the forest and is not fenced. Thus, deer, roe deer, wild boar, rabbits and foxes are frequent guests. One form of animal-assisted development is animal-assisted activity, which is carried out by professionals and laypersons with the help of animals. This activity is primarily aimed at improving the quality of life of the NEET young adults involved. These activities include a recreational, educational and therapeutic activity.

The aim of the session:

1. Shifting the emotional state/mood to a positive direction

It is important to emphasise that the basis of the sessions was the creation of an inclusive, open emotional state, in which the recreational factor was of particular importance. By recreation we mean the regeneration and recovery of stamina (primarily, but not exclusively, mental stamina), which also has an important function as a kind of "affective regeneration", i.e. shifting the emotional-mood state in a positive direction (Bánhidi, 2016; Fritz, 2011; Kovács, 2004). The free, joyful and voluntary nature of the activity is also of particular importance (Caldwell and Witt, 2011; Pigram, 1983).

2. Fulfilling physical and mental health

The concept of health is also complex, meaning not only physical health but also mental health. (Nagyváradi, 2017) A common feature of today's conceptions of health is that it is described as a dynamically changing state. According to Bircher (2005), health is determined by age, life cycle and culture. In Füzesi and Tistyán's (2004) understanding, health is a constant physical, mental and social readiness to adapt to changes around us. A healthy person is not one who does not have problems, but one who knows how to cope with the difficulties that arise. Being aware of our resources makes us more resilient to life's storms. (Szondy, 2011) The sessions show that problems are part of our lives, an opportunity to change, to learn and

to be more successful. To achieve this, it is essential to be aware of our own values, resources, mechanics and dynamics and areas for improvement. The basics of mental health were discussed with the young adults during the sessions through self-awareness games.

3. Learning experiences outside your comfort zone

The young adults of the target group were simultaneously placed into an environment where they were learning in a yurt and then they spent time among animals in nature. Both the place and the experience were completely novel for everyone. No one had any advantage, everyone had to adapt. They have experienced how they and their partner behave in such a novel situation.

4. Learning to behave in a compliant way

In the farm area, NEET young adults have experienced that the presence of animals implies rules. As straw and hay bales are located in the area - you can smoke a cigarette only observing very controlled conditions! The majority of young adults smoke, they can't go 5-6 hours without nicotine because they get tense and irritable. Animals immediately reflect this negative mental state. Therefore, at the beginning of the programme, the farm manager clarified where, when and how smoking is allowed. It was forbidden to feed animals or approach the animals without supervision. In case of the dogs, rewarding them with food helped to reinforce and learn the desired behaviour, but the dogs could not be fed without control.

The content of the sessions:

Working with animals taking into account the specific needs

Theoretical background:

Being around our animals has many positive physical and psychological effects. They help us to stay in the "here and now", to get away from the hectic pace of everyday life, so working with them is very similar to mindfulness-based therapies. They also have a stimulating effect on our nervous system, developing the perceptual and sensory areas of the brain. The dog is a great motivator and participants will do things for or with the dog that they otherwise would hardly volunteer for. They are more focused, they want to be part of the game, even those

who for some reason often tend to stay away. We can feel that the mere presence of the dog relaxes us and has a calming effect. Stress and anxiety levels are reduced, which can be explained by lower blood pressure and heart rate.

Exercises with Boldizsár and Borka with the rescued dogs:

During the training, the 2 dogs were present in the yurt, the young adults were calm and active at the same time. The dogs walked around, getting a pat and a smile from everyone, then lay down in the middle of the yurt and watched the proceedings.

Theoretical background:

The magic of touch: When the dog is touched or petted, the animal automatically synchronises with the human's inner state and helps to completely relax. The very presence of animals in the yurt had a positive effect on the young adults. From a state of excitement and tension, they could experience the creation of a state of calm.

What happened in practice?

Completion of tasks as directed with rewards. The session leader asked the young adults to carry out a series of tasks using command words. (Sit, lie down, come to my feet, walk beside me.) For the young adults who were tense and de-concentrated, the dogs would not listen or would only respond correctly after repeated requests. They have also seen that it is easier to get the desired behaviour from someone who projects a firm and calm demeanour.

By giving out reward food as a motivational tool, the young adults were able to experience that change can be achieved through rewards and positive attitudes! They said that previously, for them punishment was largely known as a motivational tool.

NEET young adults have a specific need for encouragement through positive reinforcement. The therapy has resulted in increased cooperation and communication skills, and thus an improvement in the quality and depth of our social relationships. By interacting with animals, they have improved their ability to concentrate and the extent of their social sensitivity.

Exercise with "Cotton Candy" (Vattacukor), the therapy horse:

Theoretical background:

The physical effects of equine therapy: the three-dimensional movement sends continuous impulses to the human brain through the muscles and skeleton of the pelvic girdle, developing its motor centre. The psychological effect: compared to walking on two legs, the patient's spatial perception changes, and they can perceive their surroundings from a higher position and while moving. Working with an animal that weighs up to 600 kg underneath the rider - which is obedient, warm and controllable - gives confidence and a sense of achievement. (Bozori 2002) Encountering the horse improves communication skills and helps to regulate personal space. Horses also play a role as social facilitators: being around horses is a responsibility, and the size and strength of the horse make following the rules a matter of course. The horse reacts instantly to the impact it is subjected to, and consequently gives immediate feedback to the subject. (Bozori 2022)

What happened in practice?

With the horse, "Cotton Candy" the NEET young adults took part in works carried out on the ground. The horse is a fleeing animal, and if it senses fear or sudden movements in its environment, it will distance itself. The young adults learned that if someone is afraid of a horse, the horse will show it with its body language. If we exude calm and confidence, the horse will trust us. One by one, the young adults approached the horse, touched it and then they led the horse with the lead rein. Meanwhile, the horse's body language was constantly analysed. With the guidance of the session leader they drew a parallel and moved on to the importance of body language between people.

Exercise with Cameroonian pygmy goats "Hansel and Gretel" (In Hungarian: "Jancsi és Juliska"):

Theoretical background:

The topics of conflict management, personality types and "don't judge at first sight" were explored by the NEET young adults with the expert through their experiences among goats.

Personalities on the paddock:

Hansel and Gretel are Cameroonian pygmy goat: they have different personalities. Hansel is very aggressive and loud, he is the boss of the team, he wants everything for himself. He uses his horns regularly to assert his intentions! He provokes conflict, always looking for someone to pick a fight. Gretel is the goat-girl, who will go to whoever she can find more food next to. She has a smooth, conflict-avoidant attitude. She likes to be in the background. She only gets loud when someone in the trio is already "shouting" - but then she is very loud.

Mézga Géza (father figure from a Hungarian cartoon) - He is a Cameroon sheep: he stands out from the pack both in looks and size. He is much larger than goats, it has grown a sickle-like horn and a mane on his neck. Despite his appearance, he is a pious animal, and only beats back Hansel's provocation for the umpteenth time. He does not flaunt its strength. Extremely communicative, he uses signals. He is the "different" in the team.

What happened in practice?

The NEET young adults helped with feeding and observed the animals' behaviour and how conflicts arose in the paddock and how the animals settled them among themselves. They scattered corn in a designated place and guessed who would be the boss, which animal would eat first. Almost everyone thought the big, big horned sheep, Mézga, would be the dominant one. But the reality was different. Finally, they drew up a character sketch of each animal.

After discussing the behaviour and characteristics of the animals with the expert, they had to identify themselves with one animal. They drew parallels between what they had seen and what was happening in their lives now. The young adults told us about the conflicts and solutions they encounter in their everyday lives, and what it feels like to be excluded and different. The session took the form of a guided group session, where the NEETs could obtain some useful conflict management skills through an experience with animals.

How do the real-life experiences help the NEET young adults to find a job or to integrate into training?

In today's globalised, fast-changing world, it is essential to remain competitive in the labour market, that members of society are constantly educating themselves, acquiring new skills and competences to keep their jobs or to enter the labour market.

Competences related to interpersonal relationships: teamwork and leadership (of course, the priority of one or the other competence varies according to the position held by the employee).

Personality traits: motivation and positive attitude, learning competences, development potential; problem-solving skills, good communication skills when interacting with clients and colleagues, analytical skills. (Jákó, 2004)

The experts' own experience was that the young adults were very open during the sessions! The atmosphere of the yurt and the presence of the two dogs provided a calming environment where they gradually opened up to each other. The self-awareness games, the laughter, the clarification of the rules and the boundaries made it easier to deal with the animals. Communicating with dogs and horses, encouraging each other, experiencing a change of perspective, conflict management, empathy are all such topics that would have been more difficult to convey or approach to the NEET young adults without the animals.

3.6. Self-awareness development at the "Soul Farm"

One of the venues for self-awareness development was the yurt of the "Soul Farm". The special location also helped the session leader to engage NEETs in the activity.

The farm is also a recreational opportunity for mental and physical development for all ages. At various locations in the area, sections were developed which dealt with topics essential for self-awareness work (relationship to time, our belief and faith systems, communication, planning for the future, the tree of my life - where am I now...)

The literature shows that 10 per cent of the knowledge read, 20 per cent of what is heard, 30 per cent of what is seen is retained, but 70 per cent of what is seen and heard together, 80 per cent of what is said and explained by the trainee, and 90 per cent of the knowledge acquired through practice becomes lasting knowledge, applicable and recallable." (Walter M., 1974; Balogh J., 1976)

During the training sessions, they covered topics that are essential for finding a job in the labour market through playful learning. The themes of the sessions:

1. Who am I? Introduce yourself! What kind of superpower do you have?

According to experts, NEET young adults can talk about their mistakes easily. When asked what they are good at, what they do well, what talents they have - they find it harder to recall and articulate.

2. Effective communication: living, identifying and expressing our feelings - the basis of our human relationships. Unless we can show what we feel and what we want in a constructive way, we find ourselves in conflict situations.
3. Habit systems: our personality is defined by our set of habits. Apart from our constructive habits, what are the ones that destroy us (I'm always late, I use drugs, I drink alcohol because I'm stressed, etc.) What can we do to make our habits support us?
4. Looking for solutions instead of problems: the young adults were given an insight into how coaching works, through a series of solution-oriented discussions.

4. Services for employers

4.1. Sensitising employers

30 employers were involved in the project. For them, the labour market counsellors and trainers held a sensitisation training.

Objectives of the training:

- Clarifying the basic concepts related to the NEET target group and their employment.
- Developing a positive attitude towards the employment of the NEET target group.
- Presenting own and external resources when employing the NEET target group and developing problem-solving thinking.
- Employer expectations - harmonising the employee needs while taking the company business objectives into consideration.
- Developing an accepting and inclusive work culture.

During the training, the participants' knowledge about the employment of the NEET target group was increased and changes in the area of competences were initiated.

Knowledge acquired during the training:

- the forms and opportunities of employment for the NEET target group;
- tools to identify internal and external resources in a company;
- legal and financial framework for the employment of the NEET target group to support management decisions.

Skills, competences acquired during the training:

- a positive change in the employment of the NEET target group;
- identification of the company's own internal resources and the external resources that can be utilised;
- practical application of information in the employment of the NEET target group.

Structure of the training:

- Presentation of the specificities of the NEET target group.
- Management and communication tools to correlate employer expectations with employee needs.
- Tools for identifying internal and external resources in a company.

At the beginning of the training, the participants were informed about the project, the target group and the activities. They were then given sensitisation tasks related to the NEET target group, which they had to complete individually.

Employers could also report on the composition of their current workforce and the employment of the target group of the project.

Employers have employed a variety of disadvantaged people (Romani, disabled, etc.), but their feedback also shows that working with NEET young adults is a challenging process. During the training, the experts gave practical advice to the participants, which they could apply in the employment of the target group.

At the end of the training sessions, young NEET adults who had already been in employment also attended occasionally, so they could give personal accounts of their experiences in the workplace.

Employers and NEET young adults were also reassured by the fact that they could ask for the help of a mediator to deal with workplace conflicts if they wished. Employers knew exactly what the service meant, but young people needed to be informed.

Mediation is a special conflict-prevention and conflict-management method and process, the essence of which is that a neutral third party (mediator) intervenes in a dispute between two or more parties, with the consent of the conflicting parties.

The mediator helps to clarify the nature of the conflict and find a solution that is satisfactory for all parties involved.

For NEET young adults, workplace mediation is not the only option. The mediator explained to them that there is school mediation, criminal mediation, family mediation, adolescent-parent mediation and administrative mediation. All types of mediation can be used, and there are cases (mainly criminal) where the police, court or guardianship authorities appoint a mediator to resolve the case.

Based on professional discussion with the experts and the experience of services, NEET young adults can be grouped **not only by age, education level and geographical location**, but also by **length of job search, level of motivation and social background**.

One of these groups is the short-term unemployed, who have been looking for work for less than a year and are in the middle of the vulnerability scale. This includes those who lost their jobs during the epidemic and, although currently unemployed or looking for work, are expected to find new jobs quickly once the economy is fully restarted. Job search training, CV writing and interview preparation can be a solution for them.

The next group, those who have been looking for a job for years, are mostly disadvantaged by the fact that their work experience is expiring day-by-day. The constant job search also has an impact on motivation and future prospects - negatively. For them, self-awareness and skills training can provide a solution.

The third group includes young adults who are not working due to family responsibilities and those living in Roma segregated community. In their case, it is the lack of time, support and access that is holding them back from successfully seeking jobs and becoming employed. For them, acquiring new learning materials is recommended in addition to the complex services provided by the project. As well as self-actualisation, time management, motivation and learning new key skills.

The fourth group is made up of recent graduates or those about to start work, who are at the bottom of the vulnerability scale, as they are basically ready to take up a job or continue their studies.

In summary, the services provided in the LIKE project have all contributed to the development and success of the target group. Finding and working with young NEETs is in the interests of individuals, families and society.



NEET youth orchestra at the opening of the HLH in Szombathely



Employer training



E-sport in a team



Communication training, improving communication in the workplace



Career guidance group session



On-the-job training at the premises of Human Profess Public Benefit Nonprofit Ltd



Completion of a self-awareness test within the framework of briefing about the labour market



On-the-job training during the production of pallet furniture in Zala county



Experts' meeting at the Zala County Community Centre (HLH)



Cooking together according to Romani traditions



Animal-assisted therapy at "Soul Farm" 1.



Animal-assisted therapy at "Soul Farm" 2.



Community cooking in the light of healthy lifestyles in the Zala community



Employer sensitisation training



Individual mentoring service



Group mentoring service

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