

An example of good practice for integrating youth into the labor market in Hungary

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Introduction

Youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET) remain a key challenge across Europe, despite economic growth. In Hungary, certain subgroups—such as single mothers, Roma youth, and early school leavers—face persistent barriers to labour market access.

This poster presents key findings from the Hungarian implementation of the Incorpora project, which supports vulnerable youth through tailored mentoring and follow-up. Based on mixed-method research, we highlight how inclusive, personalised approaches can foster social and labour market integration.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the Hungarian implementation of the Incorpora project between January 2020 and January 2023, focusing on the 25-29-year-old NEET population.

Quantitative component:

Administrative data were analysed for 498 participants involved in the project. Demographic indicators, educational background, and institutional involvement were used to map key characteristics of the target group.

Qualitative component:

Four semi-structured expert interviews were conducted with mentors and coordinators from participating organisations. These interviews explored experiences with mentoring, follow-up practices, and barriers to integration.

The research aimed to assess how well the project’s inclusive methodology, individualised mentoring, and post-placement follow-up function in practice. Special attention was paid to the sustainability of the support system and to identifying innovative elements that may be transferable to other integration efforts.

Results

Participants were supported by various civil society organisations. The largest share (43%) was assisted by Impact Hub Budapest, with others involved through the Maltese Care Nonprofit Ltd., the Egyszülős Központ, and the Diverzitás Alapítvány. These organisations provided tailored support to vulnerable groups, including single parents, people with disabilities, and those with low qualifications.

The results show that individualised mentoring, combined with flexible, client-driven follow-up, played a key role in improving employment outcomes. Participants received support with job search skills, CV writing, interview preparation, and soft skill development. While the programme’s inclusive approach allowed broad access, certain groups—such as individuals with addiction or complex social needs—remained difficult to reach effectively.

Follow-up proved particularly important in ensuring sustainable employment, especially for participants facing instability. Some returned to the programme after job loss, which was especially common during the pandemic period. Regional inequalities and gender disparities were also evident, with women and those living in rural or segregated areas experiencing more barriers to labour market access.

Conclusion

The Incorpora programme in Hungary shows that personalised mentoring and flexible follow-up can effectively support NEET youth in entering the labour market. Focusing on individual strengths, rather than deficits, proved key to building lasting employment pathways.

While the programme’s inclusive approach enabled broad access, challenges remain in reaching the most marginalised groups and ensuring long-term sustainability. Locally adapted, supportive models are essential to reducing inequalities and promoting resilience.

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