

Summary and public policy conclusions

Most NEETs in Poland are economically inactive, i.e. not looking for employment. Some of them could take up work, but remain outside the labour market, for instance because of difficulties in reconciling family and professional life or difficulty in finding a job owing to poor health or disability. Most youths who are not in employment, education or training are not registered with public employment services. The following actions may help increase employment levels in this group.

Employment offices should try to promote their professional activation offer among people who are not registered as unemployed. This is how they can access those people, who would not have approached an office otherwise – particularly inhabitants of rural areas and small towns. Their offer can be attractive for a sizeable part of the non-working population – even people who are not currently looking for employment. They can take part in generally accessible events organised by such institutions, such as job or education fairs. Employment offices are equipped with the relevant tools enabling outreach activities – they can run mobile job placement and career counselling points, promote their professional activation offer at local events or cooperate with local institutions (non-governmental organisations, social services). Developing cooperation with schools is also important, as already at that stage young people take decisions concerning their professional life. These actions are usually not encumbered with high costs, but they require the engagement of employment office staff.

The potential of non-governmental organisations and Volunteer Labour Corps (OHP) could be used to a greater extent, particularly under the Youth Guarantee programme. Compared to employment offices, these institutions activate few participants of the programme. However, they have a large network of facilities nationwide and operate in small towns and rural areas, which are hard to reach for employment office staff. They are rooted in local communities, have experience in working with youths at risk from social exclusion, and cooperate with schools and other educational facilities. They can offer comprehensive support to people outside the labour market and provide other forms of support than employment offices. Their projects are also available for people who are not registered as unemployed.

Activities that facilitate reconciling family and professional life may also lead to a growing employment rate. Increasing access to high-quality nurseries and kindergartens, developing new forms of childcare, creating attractive work conditions for people who are bringing up children, enabling part-time work and promoting a more partnership-based family model, where both women and men work and share childcare responsibilities, are some of the solutions that may enable women who would like to work, but find it hard to reconcile family and professional life, to enter or return to the labour market.

Actions that enable people with disabilities to take up employment are also important. Some of them could start working, but decide not to because of a number of barriers. Activities that may contribute to increasing employment levels in this group include removing digital, architectural and infrastructural barriers, increasing the availability of transport services, improving access to education and professional activation services, adapting workplaces, encouraging employers to hire people with disabilities, combating stereotypes, and greater public spending on mental health care.