



# EASY HANDBOOK

TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS  
IN WORKING WITH MARGINALISED  
GROUPS



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## INTRODUCTION

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In the context of the rapidly changing labor market, the need for skilled employees becomes significantly larger. People who lack even the basic skills and competencies to start a new job face a hard to overcome challenges. These people most often are from marginalized backgrounds. Consequently, they need more time and effort to realize themselves in the labor market, due to the variety of obstacles they need to tackle such as lack of skills, language barrier, immigration status, racial or gender discrimination, etc.

Professionals working in employment services carry the crucial role to prepare, orient, and match the knowledge and skills of the potential employees with the ones required in the job vacancies. Concerning marginalized groups of people, these professionals can highly contribute to their realization on the labor market and consequently to build better lives, be included in society, and lower the unemployment rates.

This is why this part of the Handbook is devoted to helping and orienting professionals in the field of employment services who work with marginalized people. It is assigned to giving concise and understandable information and to provide additional guidance to the professionals on how to approach and help marginalized people to find a job.

**The key points we put an emphasize on in this part of the Handbook are:**

- reasons hindering the employment accessibility;
- how to approach, attract, and interact with marginalized groups;
- how to “promote” candidates coming from marginalized groups to potential employers;
- which tools and methods can help marginalized groups to build up employability skills;
- specific employment legislation, requirements, and incentives for the employment;
- tools and methods to help marginalized people to build up employability skills;
- initiatives and programs that are addressed to marginalized groups;
- insights from professionals.



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## 1. TO WHOM THIS PART IS ADDRESSED

### 1.1. Professionals/agencies that facilitate access to the workforce

These professionals work directly in the field of employment services. Their main job is to provide access to job openings and manage the process of matching potential employees to potential employers.

**Professionals/agencies who are answering this characteristic are:**

#### Public employment services (PES)

PES are established as public agencies with legal obligations of effective recruitment and placement. They play a key role in matching people with jobs. PES have access to information about both the supply and demand side of the labor market.

PES data usually covers only registered jobseekers and a small share of all vacancies. The downside is that most of the vacancies stay out of the radar of employment services.

**The main actions performed by PES are:**

- providing information and directing jobseekers to suitable vacancies;
- preparation and coordination of an individual action plan for the unemployed;
- searching and summarizing information on vacancies and entering them in the National Database.

#### Human Resources (HRs)

HRs identify current or future staff needs, and deal with recruitment procedures. They are also responsible for all administrative work related to the employment relationship between the employee and the employer.

#### Private employment agencies (PrEA)

PrEA act as intermediaries between applicants and companies looking for personnel. As this type of recruitment agency is external to the company, the recruiters working in cannot hire the potential employee. They take into account the specific needs of the company and the existing skills of the candidate and make the connection between them.



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According to *The Role of Employment Service Providers: Volume 4* private employment agencies can be:

- **Private job brokers** that concentrate their effort, main and foremost on recruiting highly skilled or specialized staff and managers;
- **Temporary work agencies** act as employment service providers. They hire staff that after this is supervised by a third party e.g., user enterprise<sup>1</sup>.

According to CIETT (*International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies*) temporary agency work can serve as a stepping stone for employees under 25 to enter the labor market, gain work experience, change jobs, upgrade skills or move toward permanent positions.

- **Private entities** that provide labor-market-related services to individuals and public authorities in the form of counseling services and job assistance.

### NGOs that offer employment support services

The NGOs that promote the interests of groups that are marginalized or in danger of being marginalized in the labor market characterize with the direct matching of vacancies with job seekers, career guidance and counselling, and labor market training.

## 1.2. People that offer support and services to a variety of marginalized groups

Although not directly related in any type of employment services, these professionals offer support and services to a variety of marginalized groups. **Most often these professionals are:**

- counsellors;
- mentors;
- therapists;
- facilitators;
- coaches;

Each of these professionals' jobs is closely linked to development of one's capabilities, unlocking existing skills and talents, acquire knowledge and help people when they face a crisis. They make process of learning easier and faster as well. This kind of particular help promotes marginalized people to get any kind of job and/ or participate in upskilling training, and adapt to the society they are currently in.

<sup>1</sup> User enterprise – an employer under whose supervision the workers perform temporary work.



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The main difference between this group of professionals and the previous one (*professionals directly related to employment services*) is that the latter focuses their support only in providing employment services without putting such a significant effort on the "personal" factor.

## 2. DEFINITION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS (*a description of the range of characteristics of marginalized populations*)

Marginalized communities are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life. Examples of marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status. Marginalization occurs due to unequal power relationships between social groups.

**For purposes of this handbook, here is a definition of the different marginalized groups of people that are mentioned further in this paper:**

- **People with disabilities** - Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
- **Women and girls** – Women and girls are considered marginalized when they experience physical or psychological gender-based violence and discrimination, which leads to consequences for their health and human dignity.
- **Asylum seeker** – A person who seeks protection from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant authorities.
- **Refugee - 1.** A person who, experience well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or because of fear is unwilling to benefit from the help and protection of that country;
- **2.** A stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence is unable or, owing to fear, unwilling to return to it based on the above-mentioned reasons.



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- **Migrants** - A person who is outside the territory of their national country and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate.
- **Ethnic minorities** - A group which is numerically less than the majority population of a State or region regarding their ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics and who maintain solidarity with their own culture, traditions, religion, or language.
- **Long-term unemployed** - People who are out of work and have been actively seeking employment for at least a year.
- **NEETs** - Is an acronym for 'not in employment, education or training', used to refer to the situation of many young persons – typically aged between 15 and 24 – in Europe and beyond.
- **Homeless** – People who live in temporary, insecure or poor-quality housing.



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### 3. REASONS HINDERING THE EMPLOYMENT ACCESSIBILITY FOR MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

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There is a variety of factors affecting access to employment for people belonging to marginalized groups in each community, country and region. In addition to the current financial, social, political, and business environment, the historical background of each community, country and region, can also significantly affect how marginalized groups are treated when it comes to employment. Below we explore the 2 main types of reasons that negatively affect access to employment for the majority of marginalized groups, in a local, EU and even international level.

#### 3.1. Cultural, religious, ethnic differences

The cultural, religious, and ethnic elements can cause hindrances in the employment process both stemming from the potential employees and the potential employers. These elements are also linked to the factors explained in 3.2 (*prejudice, bias, and stereotypes*). Culture can contribute to gender roles and stereotypes as well as beliefs about what type of employment is suitable for whom, and who would be a good or bad candidate for each position. For example, certain employment options are believed to be better suited for women (*nurses, elementary teachers, carers, etc*) while other employment options are seen as more suitable for men. Culture can also create obstacles in balancing family and employment, expecting of women to take care of their families inside the house without seeking employment; however the difficult financial situation globally, forces women to seek employment -particularly those in need of means to support their families-, while potential employers are reluctant to hire them, believing they will lack commitment to their work or will have trouble meeting the requirements of the position.

In a similar manner, particularly in smaller communities, religious differences can play a role in the availability of employment and can be a factor of discrimination when looking for employment or going through the hiring process. Again, stereotypes and misconceptions, contribute to the above, creating distorted views about the behavior or capability of certain religious groups to perform well in certain jobs. A lot of employers are also reluctant to hire people of a different cultural and religious background, believing that it will cause friction in the workplace or tension or are just too uncomfortable with the idea of accommodating the needs of employees of a different culture/religion. The role of religious leaders should also be mentioned under this section, in the sense that they significantly affect the view and behavior of their religious followers and can, therefore, either promote inclusion and work integration or further propagate exclusion and marginalization.





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In addition to the above, ethnic differences -particularly those rooted in historical conflict- can also hinder the employability of ethnic minorities either through legal / administrative barriers or through misconceptions and racist profiling. These differences can have a cumulative negative effect on employment, especially when a candidate shares more than one of the characteristics, is -for example- a single parent belonging to an ethnic minority and having a religion different than what is prominent at the time.

### 3.2. Stereotypes, bias and prejudice

Cultural, historical, and ethnic differences alone, are not enough to prevent access to employment for marginalized groups; however, when these factors are combined with stereotyping, bias and prejudice, then they can not only hinder, but actually prevent the employment of marginalized members of the community.

Stereotypes are widely held but fixed and oversimplified images or ideas about a particular type of person or thing, that may often be untrue or inaccurate and are often perpetuated through the media or in everyday life. Such a stereotype -of previous decades- was that women are not capable of doing complex technical jobs such as being mechanics or pilots. In a similar manner, in many western countries, the Roma population is perceived as having higher rates of criminality and being unable to complete formal studies or hold down employment. These stereotypes are blanket statements that leave little room for a different perception and can guide people into making employment decisions that are not based on actual facts; refusing to give opportunities to marginalized people to prove the stereotype wrong.

Similarly, bias refers to an inclination for or against one person or group, especially in a way that is considered to be unfair. For example, the tendency of certain employers not to offer opportunities to single parent family candidates (*believing that a single parent is too much preoccupied with their family and therefore lacking in job performance*), can be considered a bias, hindering their access to the job market. Biases can take several forms and are often underlying employment decisions, although people are sometimes not aware of their presence and effect. Most potential employers like to think they are objective and fair, and are not very likely to reexamine their decisions, looking for evidence of bias or prejudice.

Lastly, prejudice (*as a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience*) is also a contributing factor to the limiting of opportunities that people belonging to marginalized groups face, when attempting to seek or to maintain employment. Prejudice can affect both employers, potential employees, but also all the other people who are involved in the hiring process, such as HR staff, recruiters, job agency personnel, managers and more.





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It is therefore essential that all people involve regularly examine the existing hiring and screening processes for evidence of bias, prejudice, and stereotypes and have controls in place to review and question their own practices, attitudes and actions.

## 4. HOW TO APPROACH, ATTRACT AND INTERACT WITH MARGINALIZED GROUPS

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Marginalized groups as mentioned in the first chapters of the easy handbook are a varied and diverse social universe, with distinct characteristics, both inherent and depending on the social, political, cultural and financial context in which they exist. Therefore, it is not possible to provide unified strategy for approaching, attracting, and interacting with members of these groups; however it is possible to highlight the elements that are crucial in that process:

- Educate yourself! Make sure you are well versed in the characteristics of the marginalized group you want to interact with. Make sure you have a grasp of the factors leading to their marginalization, the social, historical, cultural context, and any other factors affecting the group. Look for a variety of sources to ensure your perspective is not hindered by bias and prejudice.
- Identify people that belong to that group with which you already know each other or regularly interact. It is easier to approach a marginalized group, if a member of the group facilitates the process.
- Have a clear agenda for what you are trying to achieve and be open and honest about it. Make sure you are able to explain your motivation, incentives, goals and purpose of the interaction.
- Tailor your content and communication to the group and facilitate online interaction before you proceed with face-to-face, use appropriate language, be polite and concise.
- Make yourself available for questions and further discussions, be responsive and empathetic in your approach.
- Welcome comments, feedback and constructive criticism to make sure your communication is working and you are on the right path.
- Be respectful and mindful of controversial topics or traumatic circumstances that may affect the members of the group.
- Maintain honest communication but also discretion and confidentiality. When in doubt about how to handle information, just ask the person how they would like their information to be handled regarding your interaction.
- Place and maintain professional boundaries in all your interactions.



- Set clear expectations about what you want to achieve and what is possible. Avoid overhyping opportunities, or giving unrealistic goals and making promises that are impossible to keep.
- Utilize other resources available or people with more experience in interacting with marginalized groups and build upon their knowledge and skills.
- Ask for feedback often and hear what people have to say, what they are looking for, and how to better serve their needs.
- In case the process becomes too worrisome or stressful, seek out professional support and ask for assistance in managing the workload or the associated stress.
- Be realistic in your own goals and expectations about the extent and impact of your intervention, Rome wasn't built in a day :-)
- Establish liaisons with the group, using existing members of the group that are willing to help and facilitate your efforts, and can also help you attract a bigger audience.

## 5. HOW TO “PROMOTE” CANDIDATES COMING FROM MARGINALIZED GROUPS TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

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Taking into account the topics highlighted in chapter 3 about stereotypes, bias and prejudice, it becomes clear that promoting candidates from marginalized groups to potential employers can be quite challenging. The professional would be going against belief very deeply ingrained in the practices and policies of the employer, and could also be facing institutionalized racism or exclusion. It doesn't really matter if the employer is small or big, or their type of business, it all comes down to the management style they employ and their core beliefs as a business and as an employer.

**Below you may find some useful tips and ideas that could motivate you in the right direction:**

- Examine your own bias and prejudice and make sure you are maintaining an objective and accurate view of both the candidate and the potential employer.
- Familiarize yourself with the requirements and description of the job vacancy and make sure your candidate is a good fit (*employers are more likely to give a chance to a marginalized candidate that fits their requirements exactly*).



- In case your candidate is not the optimal fit for the job opening, make sure you have identified other potential strengths or contributions they can make.
- Do not highlight their marginalized status as a primary reason for employment (*offering a job should be done on merit and not as a favor*).
- Take the time to get to know your candidate, their strengths, their weaknesses and their ability and motivation.
- Be ready to support your candidate and prepare them for the screening and hiring process (*a candidate that is well prepared has higher chances of going through all the hiring steps*).
- Maintain an open line of communication with the potential employers, always ask for their feedback about what went wrong or what elements about the candidate they didn't like. This helps you tailor your search for the right candidate more effectively.
- Ask for feedback by marginalized candidates about the hiring process and what worked or didn't work for them.
- Create a "portfolio" of successful placements and employment of marginalized candidates so that you can demonstrate their capacity and ability for success.
- Become engaged with all the hiring staff and people in key positions and familiar with their hiring policies and processes. In a polite -yet firm- manner highlight any prejudice, bias, or racism present in those policies and practices.
- In cases where potential employers are running inclusion or integration schemes, make sure you promote candidates from group that fulfill the criteria of the particular schemes.
- Remain informed about any governmental or private initiatives that sponsor initiatives for the employment of marginalized groups and inform potential employers accordingly.
- Inform potential employers about any benefits or subsidies present for the employment of marginalized groups.
- Educate employers about the positive image they can create for their products / services and their brand by being an inclusive employer.
- Encourage candidates to share their positive or challenging experiences and inform potential employers accordingly.
- Network with similar-minded professionals, organizations, or NGOs supporting marginalized groups.
- Remain positive and consistent and seek out support and assistance whenever you need it.



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## 6. TOOLS AND METHODS TO HELP MARGINALIZED GROUPS BUILD UP THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

A marginalized group, as mentioned in the introduction, is any social group that is on the periphery of social power and without significant influence on important social trends and political events, with that come issues that have to do with employment, access to services, and overall participation in society.

With this manual, we want to say that the right to employment in our society exists for everyone and government agencies' employees, recruiters, private employment agencies, NGOs offering employment support services and all other stakeholders should make substantial efforts to ensure that marginalized groups (*Roma, people with disabilities, women, and men victims of violence, single mothers, single fathers, LGBTQ + people, members of national minorities, refugees, and people from other vulnerable marginalized groups*) are supported in their efforts to find and retain employment and contribute positively to their communities and society in general. Below, you can see some key points about tools and methods to help marginalized groups build employment skills.

### How to choose the right tools

- Get to know the marginalized groups you work with (*What are their demographics? What are their needs?*)
- Create small focus groups (*formal and informal*) and discuss their needs and the obstacles they face
- Make sure that the tools you are using are in the language / dialect your groups are most familiar with
- Make sure that the tools you are using are culturally compatible and not offensive, if necessary tailor them accordingly.
- Look around for best practices or practices to avoid, share your experience with others and learn from their expertise.
- Expand your search for tools that not only build employability skills, but also develop the soft skills needed for getting and maintaining employment.

### What kind of tools are useful for employment?

There are a variety of tools you can use, below you can find the key areas that these tools should address:





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- **Creating a CV or a resume** (*it is very likely that your target group will not be very familiar with the process of creating a CV or resume so it is important to familiarize them with tools for creating one*).
- **Managing the interview process** (*role playing exercises, mock interviews, preparatory workshops are all tools that can help you support your beneficiaries in their employment journey*).
- **Soft skills** (*time management, stress management, task management, team work, managing conflict, effective communication, etc*). All these skills are not directly tied to employment but they are essential for finding a good opportunity, navigating the hiring process, and retaining employment. There are several resources/tools online that can be used to support the development and nourishment of these skills in your target audience.

## What methods should you use?

The choice of method is entirely up to you since you are the one who is familiar with the needs and circumstances of your target audience. **There are several methods that can contribute to employment, depending on the social and cultural elements, but below you can review some basic components that can be useful for building your personalized approach:**

- Use methods that promote co-creation and participation. It is not possible to deliver solutions to your target audience without their contribution.
- Avoid didactic methods (where one party is the knowledgeable “teacher” and the other is the “ignorant” student), make sure your target audience is and feels respected and heard.
- Participatory methods that promote the engagement and active contribution from participants are usually a good solution for promoting employability skills and can contribute in creating strong ties and communities among participants and stakeholders.
- Non-formal learning methods are another option you may wish to explore in order to communicate the knowledge and skills that are needed for your beneficiaries to reach their full potential.

## NATIONAL EXAMPLES:

There are hundreds of tools and dozens of methods that can be useful for professionals working with marginalized groups, depending on the particular situation in each national context and the needs of each group. However, we thought it would be useful to showcase a few examples from the partners that contributed to the Easy Handbook, hoping they can serve as inspiration for new ideas and innovative approaches.





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**Cyprus:** One of the most prominent marginalized groups in Cyprus is that of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers! Many professionals working to support these groups in their employment journey, report that they are having difficulty managing the trauma that these people have suffered and understand how to approach them in the best possible way. One of the tools used in our partner organization, is the use of literature, and particularly “The little Prince” as a tool to reach out and talk about issues such as isolation, language and culture barriers, loss, loneliness, connection and friendship, migration, and the difficulties of being a foreigner. Despite the fact that the book is considered -wrongly- a children’s book, it has proven a valuable tool in reaching out to marginalized adults and starting the discussion about the issues they are facing in a non-threatening and non-invasive way.

**Serbia:** FCD is implementing a project that seeks to contribute to the improvement of the position of women in rural areas of Serbia.

All labor market indicators in Serbia, from year to year, point to the limitations that women have in accessing the labor market: far lower employment rates and higher inactivity rates compared to men. The position of women in rural areas is even more unfavorable than the position of women in urban areas: care for children and elderly members of the household is completely left to them, their access to education is limited, most of them are engaged as helping household members on farms. Most rural women are not employed or actively looking for work. Women in Serbia, especially rural women, are not the focus of employment policies at either the national or local level.

Through quantitative and qualitative research on the position of rural women in local labor markets, promotion of good practices in improving the position of women in the local community and establishing cooperation between women’s organizations and local government representatives, we want to draw attention to the importance of including women in rural areas.

**Bulgaria:** The most prominent marginalized society in Bulgaria is the Roma. Due to the low levels of literacy, their access to qualifications and opportunities to find a job and be employed is limited. To improve this, the National Program “Activation of Inactive Persons” of the National Employment Agency helps the Roma community, as well as other inactive persons to find jobs. The program also finances the hiring of intermediaries who are ethnically oriented and easily accessible to the unemployed Roma. Labor intermediaries help for better communication and cooperation between labor offices and employment agencies.





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## 7. HIRING PEOPLE WITH MARGINALIZED BACKGROUNDS - EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION, REQUIREMENTS, AND INCENTIVES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT

To improve the position and labor rights of people with marginalized foundations, Serbia has adopted the following law: “The Law on Professional Rehabilitation” ; this law regulates incentives for employers to create conditions for equal inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labor market; assessment of working abilities; professional rehabilitation; obligation to employ persons with disabilities; conditions for the establishment and performance of activities of companies for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities and other special forms of employment and employment of persons with disabilities; other issues of importance for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

In a similar manner, the law on non-discrimination, regulates the general prohibition of discrimination, forms, and cases of discrimination, as well as procedures for protection against discrimination. This law was established by the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality in Serbia as an independent state body in performing the tasks determined by the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination.

The law includes articles concerning discrimination in the field of labor, discrimination in the provision of public services and use of facilities and areas, prohibition of religious discrimination, discrimination in the field of education and vocational training, discrimination based on sex, gender, and gender identity, discrimination based on sexual orientation, discrimination on the grounds of age, discrimination against national minorities, discrimination on grounds of political or trade union affiliation, discrimination against persons with disabilities.

At a national service, we have data on people looking for work, as well as employers who need workers, but this does not include the whole group, but only those who have officially registered with the national employment service. According to the recently adopted Law on Protection against Discrimination, members of marginalized groups can easily apply for jobs in state institutions without fear of being offended based on their attitudes, beliefs values, and commitments. It is important to us that Serbia has such a law because it gives some kind of security to members of marginalized groups so that they can freely perform the jobs for which they were educated.





## 8. TOOLS AND TIPS TO ADDRESS AND SUPPORT MARGINALIZED GROUPS BOTH FACE TO FACE AND ONLINE

How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement. Women, the elderly, adolescents, youth, and children, persons with disabilities, indigenous populations, refugees, migrants, and minorities experience the highest degree of socio-economic marginalization. Marginalized people become even more vulnerable in emergencies. The COVID-19 outbreak is predicted to have significant impacts on various sectors. **The populations most at risk are those that:**

- depend heavily on the informal economy;
- occupy areas prone to shocks;
- have inadequate access to social services or political influence;
- have limited capacities and opportunities to cope and adapt and;
- limited or no access to technologies

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

They are often excluded from decision-making spaces and have unequal access to information on outbreaks and availability of services. They can be socially isolated if they don't access the community regularly through employment or education for example.

- *Disseminate information that uses clear and simple language.*
- *Provide information in accessible formats, like braille, large print.*
- *Offer multiple forms of communication, such as text captioning or signed videos, text captioning for hearing impaired, online materials for people who use assistive technology.*

### WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women are more likely to be engaged in the informal sector and be hardest hit economically by COVID-19. Women experience increased risks of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation. Cultural factors may exclude women from decision-making spaces and restrict their access to information on outbreaks and availability of services.



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- *Design online and in-person surveys and other engagement activities so that women in unpaid care work can participate.*
- *Take into account provisions for childcare, transport, and safety for any in-person community engagement activities.*

## REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

Legal status, discrimination, and language barriers may limit access to otherwise publicly available preventative materials, health care and social services. Like other official information, health service information and government announcements may not reach them. Refugees and migrants may not be included in the national strategies/plan/interventions. Refugees and migrants' mobility may make them difficult to reach, including during cross border movement.

- *Translate information into local languages. Give individuals opportunities to share their questions and concerns in their own language. This also has implications for gender, as women are more likely to be monolingual.*
- *In order to promote the socio-occupational inclusion of migrants, it is essential to plan training activities and set up online platforms that promote orientation for active job search.*
- *Internships and job placement*
- *Skills enhancement, literacy and civic education as tools for job placement*
- *Work inclusion - Diversity management and valuing cultural and religious diversity*

This section illustrates experiences promoted by civil society actors to foster the socio-occupational inclusion of migrants <https://www.ismu.org/inclusione-lavorativaorientamento-ricerca-attiva-lavoro/>

## LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE ALREADY DISADVANTAGED

Unemployment is an area of critical concern across OECD countries. Long periods of unemployment have been shown to have potentially 'scarring' effects which have a harmful impact in later life, particularly for young people 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET). It can lower future income levels, skills validity, future employability, job satisfaction, happiness, and health levels. *(No specific instruments found)*





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## NEETS (not in education, employment or training)

Population aged 15-29 who are neither employed nor in education or training.

- **Individual sessions of coaching**  
*Individual sessions in which the trainer adopts a coaching attitude to help young people to define their life perspectives and their professional plan.*
- **Group sessions**  
*Based on non-formal learning methodologies, group sessions allow to develop key competences for personal development and employability.*
- **Experiences of work-based learning**  
*Experiences in real professional contexts that allow young people to develop important soft skills and techniques and to widen their professional network.*
- **Referrals**  
*Youth workers can refer young people to network services according to the needs and peculiarities of each case*

### ComNetNEET: Networking Comunitario per l'integrazione dei giovani NEET

[https://neetsinaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/IO5\\_IT.pdf](https://neetsinaction.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/IO5_IT.pdf)

## HOMELESS

EU funding is available to support inclusive policies to combat this phenomenon. Member States will invest a significant share of their resources from the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) in social inclusion and poverty reduction. InvestEU also offers opportunities to support investments in social infrastructure, including social housing.

- *Within the reception structures, the creation of occupational workshops for social and work integration is effective. The guests are supervised by educators and retired craftsmen, to promote the social re-integration of marginalised people.*



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## 9. AN OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS THAT ARE ADDRESSED TO MARGINALIZED GROUPS

Inclusion of vulnerable groups is one of the priorities of the European Social Protection Social Inclusion Process. In this context, Member States have committed to develop integrated and coordinated responses to the multiple disadvantages and the need of particular groups.

**The European Union has a three-fold approach to overcoming discrimination and increasing the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups:**

- increasing access to mainstream services and opportunities,
- enforcing legislation to overcome discrimination and, where necessary,
- developing targeted approaches to respond to the specific needs of each group.

Measures are implemented in favour of areas marked by exclusion – combating regional inequalities, tackling disadvantages faced by rural areas, and helping regenerate deprived areas and disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Eliminating the barriers to education and training for all vulnerable groups and at all levels is a key issue. The European Union continues to work on the development of targets, objectives and common indicators, based on effective and reliable data and concrete statistics, in order to gain a clear picture of the situation and needs of each country and measure the actual impact of policies targeting vulnerable groups.

The European Commission supports and complements the Member States' policies in the fields of social inclusion and social protection through specific programmes, one of which is the European Social Fund. It is the EU's main instrument to support employment, help people find better jobs and ensure fairer job opportunities for all. To this end, the ESF invests in Europe's human capital: workers, young people and jobseekers. With a budget of EUR 10 billion a year, the ESF increases the employment prospects of millions of European citizens, paying particular attention to those who find it hardest to find work.

The European Union is committed to creating more and better jobs and an inclusive society. These objectives are at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU. The current economic crisis makes this challenge even more ambitious. The ESF is playing an important role in achieving Europe's objectives and in mitigating the effects of the crisis, in particular rising levels of unemployment and poverty.





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The European Commission and the EU Member States jointly determine the priorities of the ESF and how its resources are allocated. One of these priorities is to promote the adaptability of workers and enterprises through the development of new skills and working methods respectively. Others relate to improving access to employment by helping young people make the transition from school to work or by providing training for the low-skilled unemployed to improve their employment prospects. Vocational training and lifelong learning, which enable citizens to gain new skills, form a significant part of many ESF projects.

Another priority aims to help people from disadvantaged groups to find work. This focus on disadvantaged groups is part of the objectives to promote social inclusion and is a sign of the important role that employment plays in helping people integrate into society and everyday life. The financial crisis has led to increased efforts to enable people to keep their jobs or, if they have lost them, to help them find new ones as soon as possible.

The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth sets targets to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion and to increase employment of the population aged 20-64 to 75%. The flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, including the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, support efforts to reach these targets.

Through its Social Investment Package, the Commission provides guidance to Member States to modernise their welfare systems towards social investment throughout life.

The EC is also working hard and developing new equal and inclusive policies also for another category of marginalised people, people with disabilities. In fact, the level of discrimination against this target group is very high at EU level and encompasses different *sectors (education, job integration, culture accessibility...)*. On the 15th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has been announced that EU countries, civil society and the EU institutions have committed to work even more closely together to combat discrimination based on disability.

In the Disability Platform, all EU Member States, 14 civil society organisations and the European institutions will work together with the aim that persons with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Disability Platform is one of the flagship initiatives of the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Following its adoption by the European Commission on 27 October, all EU Member states have put forward their representatives. Fourteen civil society organizations active in the field of disability have now been selected through an open call for applications. The Platform launch is the beginning of a



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process to discuss relevant policy developments, exchange experiences and good practices, and reflect the diversity of disability. The Platform also provides a forum to engage and work together in the preparation of policy initiatives or legislative proposals in the field of disability and establish cooperation and coordination between the Commission and the Member States and stakeholders.

As part of the instruments implemented by the EU to foster the integration and social inclusion of marginalised groups, interesting is the publication of a new instrument to facilitate access to work for third-country nationals. In 2017, to coincide with UN World Refugee Day, the European Commission is publishing the European Skills Determination Tool for third-country nationals. It is a web editor that can be used online and offline and will allow non-EU nationals to present their skills, qualifications and experience in a way that is immediately understandable to employers, education and training providers and organisations dealing with migrants across the European Union. Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility (between 2014 and 2019), said: *"In today's world of work, it is essential that everyone is able to use all their skills in the labour market. We cannot waste the talents of those who are not EU citizens. The skills tool will help them to get closer to the world of work and enable national administrations to have a clear understanding of the skills and qualifications they have, so that they can address the difficulties and seize the opportunities presented by the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants into the labour market: the outcome will be positive for all."*

**Social investment package** <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en>

**Fighting marginalization** <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=63&langId=en>

**European Commission: employment, social affairs & inclusion**

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=750&furtherNews=yes&newsId=10124>

**European Pillar of Social Rights: Social protection and inclusion** <https://europa.eu/!dw86uV>





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