

**Game Laboratory in the fight against the exclusion of the "neither-nor" generation**

In the last issue of the local newspaper Leszczyński, an article about our project and the phenomenon of NEET was published. We encourage you to read, and those who have not been able to purchase a printed copy give us the opportunity to read the article on our website!



The phenomenon of NEET is currently one of the most important social problems faced by contemporary Europe. The problem concerns young people who, for various reasons, are also outside the sphere of education and out of employment (NEET - not in employment, education or training). It turns out that there are more and more such people, and in some countries of the European Union, they constitute half of the population aged up to 29 years of age. However, are they rebels by choice, or simply lost young people who do not know what to do with their lives?

This question has no unambiguous answer. The concept of NEET first appeared in Great Britain. In Poland, the term "generation neither" is also used, because neither they learn nor work. The problem is very complex and the social group itself is extremely diverse. NEET can be either an educated person or the one who prematurely abandoned education. They are people from poor and prosperous families; highly qualified, as well as those that do not have too many skills. However, they are mainly connected by the lack of motivation to continue education or change qualifications and lack of interest in professional activity. For what reasons are they at a point in their lives? It's also difficult to assess everyone the same. Some do not work off their own will, and others do not take up employment because, despite many efforts, they fail to find a job at all, or one that suits their expectations and qualifications. Let us not forget that this broad category also includes those who remain outside employment because of disability, illness or the need to care for a family member.

Regardless of whether the life situation is a conscious act or the effect of not having an impact on your life, you should support the development of NEET youth competences, support their smooth transition from the education system to the labor market, and also reintegrate them socially.

The "Games laboratory: Accelerator of education and entrepreneurship for Innovators and Leaders of Change" project co-funded under the Erasmus + European Union program focuses mainly on the development and implementation of innovative educational methods based on the use of games as an effective method of informal education in working with children representatives of the NEET group.

The project is implemented by the Creative Activity Center Foundation in partnership with organizations from Cyprus, Spain and Great Britain. As a result of its implementation, four educational tools will be created, with thanks to the international nature of the project will be universal and useful for young people from different backgrounds. The main tool that will ultimately be used by educators, educators and youth workers who meet NEET in their daily work will be an educational game, activating NEETs professionally and socially, supporting entrepreneurial attitudes, their language skills and key competences.

"Lack of motivation and interest in anything is the result of long-term stagnation experienced by young people who neither work nor learn. We realize how difficult it is to motivate such people to take action and get interested in anything, which is why we believe that the tool which is a board game will allow us to draw their attention and encourage us to open ourselves to life. The game will include such elements as: money turnover, specification of occupations, employer-employee relationship, ability to connect their actions with their consequences and dealing with problems and quick response, that is all that helps young people to integrate into the labor market "- says Ewelina Lasota from CAT Foundation.

The project will also develop a guide on the use of games as an effective method of non-formal education in social and professional activation of NEET youth, a catalog of good practices in the field of youth work NEET in the context of innovative tools for non-formal education and a guide for creating games for staff and recommendations.

To ensure the adequacy of the above tools, they will be developed not only by specialists who are part of the project team, but also primarily with the participation of educators and educators, as well as NEETs themselves.

"As part of the project, there will be four workshops for educational staff, and thus all those who work with NEET on a daily basis. We want not only to provide them with tools that will be created as part of the project, but also to provide the opportunity to have a real impact on the form, shape and content of these tools, by consulting developed assumptions and sharing experiences. For the next four workshops, we will invite young people who will have the opportunity to test the games and choose the mechanisms that they think are the most attractive and effective in the games. To a large extent, it is this youth who will decide what the game will look like - whether it will be a board with pawns, or maybe we will include cards and other elements in the game "- says project coordinator - Monika Pawlak from the CAT Foundation. On the website [www.gamelab.fundacja-cat.pl](http://www.gamelab.fundacja-cat.pl) there is information about the project and all activities, both those already taken and those that will take place in the near future. "We invite young people who have completed their education and are at a standstill, as well as people who work with such young people and look for inspiration for their professional activities," adds Monika Pawlak.