

# DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 PROJECT SCOPE & CONTENT – IMPACT

## Project Description

*Explain the concept of your project and the main ideas that led you to propose this work. Describe in detail the Research/ Scientific objectives in a form that will allow verification during the course of the project. Refer to the benefit of involving EEA R&D actors in the project and the current level of knowledge in Greece and worldwide (attach relative bibliography). Justify the need of addressing the rising social and income inequalities in Greece with respect to social research.*

*The project should aim to promote knowledge and excellence in research organizations and its exploitation for the benefit of the participants and the economy and society in general.*

*Explain how the results of the project will contribute to the sustainability of Research and Development(R&D) activities in the field and have a positive effect on the direct target groups of the Programme by providing economic justification for the proposed research, i.e. its cost effectiveness, taking into account the overall cost of the project in relation to its potential direct benefits for the individual participants. Describe the extent to which the proposed project will lead to new and improved products, processes or services as well as benefits of a more general nature for society and economy.*

### **1. The project (concepts, aims, focal points in brief)**

This research proposal is essentially a follow up research of the Project “Absents’ Barometer: NEETs in Greece” without overlaps, as it follows a different direction (taking, of course, into consideration the key research findings of the project “Absents’ Barometer”) and has different content. Specifically, it focuses on more specialized issues, namely a) psychological profile/existence of possible psychopathology and psychological support of NEETs and b) NEETs’ skills-profile, needs-in- skills and targeted competence-based training, in terms of reskilling, towards the increase of their employability and consequently their integration into the labour market, while it investigates the impact of the ongoing crisis on the abovementioned parameters of the NEETs’ phenomenon. These issues were emerged as need for further research by the Project “Absents’ Barometer”. Simultaneously, it includes both research and practical responses to the abovementioned needs. Based on quantitative and qualitative research findings (including research both on the psychological profile of NEETs and on their “skills’ repertoire” and subsequently their needs-in-skills), it aims at the formulation of a comprehensive intervention at training level (based on the findings of the triangulated needs assessment) and at the development of a set of psychological supportive activities towards the actual inclusion of this major socially vulnerable group, namely NEETs, (young people who are off the key domains of institutions of welfare state and, therefore, are extremely vulnerable to social exclusion).

### **2. Research/ Scientific objectives, benefits and contribution.**

According to Eurostat, youth unemployment in Greece is one of the highest among the European Union member-states along with high percentages of poverty and social exclusion (Eurostat, 2014, visit:<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6155576/3-28112014-AP-EN.pdf/69c1ee9f-1b1f-4bec-b5cd-5e94eacd86>). Consequently, young people in Greece have been severely affected due to the financial crisis as long as the percentages of social vulnerable groups are rising. One socially vulnerable group of young people aged 15-24 who are not included in employment, education and training, is the group of NEETs.

According to the World Health Organization, in 2011, the economic crisis consists one of the major factors which affects negatively the mental health of the population worldwide. Social phenomena and problems such as unemployment, especially youth unemployment, poverty, social marginalization, inequalities etc. increase the rates of mental disorders (e.g. anxiety, depression) (World Health Organization, 2011: 1). Furthermore, the high rates of common mental disorders are related to unemployment and low educational level (Fryers et al., 2005: 14) while simultaneously suicidality rates appear in low socio-economic capital areas, namely in areas with high rates of unemployment, income inequalities and socio-economic deprivation (see in detail Rehkopf & Buka, 2006, Berk, Dodd & Henry, 2006, Middleton et al., 2004, Middleton, Sterne & Gunnell, 2006). **It is worth to mention that “the greater vulnerability of**

***the disadvantaged people in each community to mental health problems may be explained by such factors as the experience of insecurity and hopelessness, poor education, unemployment, indebtedness, social isolation and poor housing” (World Health Organization, 2011: 3).*** Socially vulnerable groups such as unemployed people, youth, single-parent families, migrants, low-income people etc. are affected mostly on mental or psychopathological disorders than other social groups (see in detail World Health Organization, 2009, Solantaus, Leinonen, Punamäki 2004, Leinonen, Solantaus, Punamäki, 2003).

NEETs consist a socially vulnerable group, not new, as the definition was, firstly, introduced in the United Kingdom in the late of 1990s (Social Exclusion, 1999: 9-6 and see in detail about NEETs in Europe: Papadakis, 2013: 15-75). However, during the recent years, special attention has given to the extent and intensity of this phenomenon, since the start of the financial crisis and then the percentages of young people who have fallen into this category of social vulnerability have risen high. Specifically, based on the statistical data of Eurostat while in 2008 the percentage of NEETs' population in EU-28 were 10,8% in 2013 the percentage stood at 13% (men: 12,8%, women: 13,3%) (Eurostat: 2014: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>).

In Greece, according to Eurostat, NEET's percentage was 11,4% in 2008 and during the crisis it has increased by 9 percentage points, namely in 2013 reached 20,4% (Eurostat, 2014: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>). High NEETs' percentages, also, occurred in other countries of Europe as Spain (2013: 18,6%), Italy (2013: 22,2%), Cyprus (2013: 18,7%), Croatia (2013: 19,6%) and Bulgaria (2013: 21,6%) which have been hit more by the economic crisis (Eurostat, 2014: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>).

As above mentioned, the crisis, which is a multiparametric phenomenon, had and continues to have harmful effects on several social and psychological levels (employment, family, social and financial level, physical and mental disorders) (see above, World Health Organization, 2011) especially on the life course of socially vulnerable groups such as NEETs, whose demographic and social characteristics indicate that this vulnerable target-group has been most affected by the crisis (about the NEETs' sub-categories in Europe based on their different demographic and social characteristics see Eurofound, 2012: 24-25, Papadakis, 2013: 57-64). Since NEETs constitute an heterogeneous category, are more likely to have low educational capital, disability or to be immigrants. Youth unemployment, which has been dramatically increased during the recession, with its following consequences (social, economic, psychological) in combination with the aforementioned disadvantages of the recession, contribute to a significant degree of recrudescence of NEETs physical and mental health disorders (Viner et al., 2012 as referred in European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2013: 193).

An additional but equally important is that, based on the findings of the Eurofound study about NEETs in Europe (2012), young men and women who suffer from physical and mental disorders have more odds to enter into the category of NEETs (Eurofound, 2012: 55). For instance, young people who suffer “...from some kind of disability are over more likely to be NEET compared to those with a good health status” (Eurofound, 2012: 55), or people with psychiatric disorders or substance use, are predictors of failure in all educational levels independently to the economic level of a country (Lee et al., 2009).

This NEETs' social vulnerability phenomenon is not only connected with youth unemployment, which constitutes a crucial parameter of being someone NEET but also with other parameters such the low/medium educational and social background, drop out, low/medium skills, mental disorders which are often obstacles either to access to labour market either to exit from it. It is worth to mention that according to OECD, people suffering from mental disorders are at 6-7 times higher risk of being unemployed than people who do not have psychopathological disorders. Accordingly, those suffering from mild and moderate mental disorders level have 2-3 times more odds to be unemployed (OECD, 2014: 8).

Although there is little international literature and no literature in Greece to link mental disorders with NEETS (predisposition or mental effects from the inclusion in NEETS' category), the research finding of a study, (which carried out in Mexico City in 2005), showed that young people who were NEETs for a year, had several odds for developing psychiatric disorders after

12 months of being NEETs. Especially, *“The disorders included were: mood disorders (major depressive disorder, bipolar I and II, and dysthymia), anxiety disorders (specific phobia, social phobia, panic disorder, agoraphobia, separation anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder), substance use disorders (alcohol and drug abuse and dependence), and behavioral disorders (oppositional-defiant disorder, conduct disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and intermittent explosive disorder)”* (Benjet et al., 2012: 412 and see in detail Benjet et al., 2012: 410-417).

However, according to World Health Organization, the consequences of the crisis on people's mental health could be prevented and tackled by policy measures such as active employment and training programmes contributing to re-employment and mental counterbalance of socially vulnerable groups. (World Health Organization, 2011: abstract). It should be mentioned that the new **European Strategy for Health “Health 2020”** stresses the importance of development and implementation of preventive and compensatory policy measures for tackling people's vulnerability, especially young people, through strengthening employability, transferring skills etc. aiming at reducing socioeconomic inequalities and improving the well-being of vulnerable groups (World Health Organization, 2013: 77)

**The above mentioned relationship, namely between mental disorders, psychopathology and NEETs and their connection with the economic crisis, consists one of the two basic incentives and for the conduction of the proposed project.**

In Greece there are no relevant and national studies on the association with psychopathology and NEETs or the occurrence of mental or psychiatric disorders after their inclusion in this socially vulnerable category.

Additionally, **the other focal point of the proposed research project is NEETs' actual needs-in-skills.** Training constitutes one of the main pillars of the “EU2020” Strategy and consequently one of the key pillars of the new European Strategy for Lifelong Learning. The development of Lifelong Learning, as effective process of NEETs' social inclusion is a crucial challenge both for the Greek Welfare State and the Greek education policy and employment policy. Prerequisite of such a development is NEETs' needs assessment, conducted within the proposed project.

According to the research findings of the project Absents' Barometer: NEETs in Greece”, training programs in Greece are considered insufficient and ineffective by NEETs (Kotroyannos et al., 2013: 189). On these grounds, the second, but not minor, research/scientific objective is the record of NEET's skills and competencies towards the construct of their skills profile based on their educational and vocational needs, aiming at the development of a comprehensive training-reskilling programme included per taxonomic NEETs' skills categories learning objectives, learning materials (horizontal and specialized modules), teaching methods and anticipated learning outcomes, which will include counseling guidelines towards vocational guidance. The development of a comprehensive training programme for NEETs towards the direction of their access to labour market or re-integration will contribute to better social inclusion of Greek NEETs and strengthening of their sense of active citizenship. In fact, it aims at the reactivation of this socially vulnerable group through acquiring the appropriate demanded skills and competences for employment towards its integration to the labour market- the absence of which comprises an important parameter of social exclusion.

In conclusion: With ultimate target NEETs' social inclusion in Greece, based on the above mentioned, with granted that there is no national report about this issue and taking into account the key research findings of the prior Project: Absents' Barometer: NEETs in Greece”, **the research/ scientific objectives of the proposed project** are based on the need

- a) to investigate NEETs psychological profile (by taxonomic category according to their different individual characteristics) and to map possible correlations between NEETs' phenomenon in Greece and the existence of psychopathological disorders as well as
- b) to investigate NEETs' actual needs in skills, while mapping their skills' profile.

In parallel with the development of the above mentioned training-reskilling programme, a set of psychological supportive interventions will be developed (or referral to mental health specialists) for NEETs, who suffer from disorders (based on the construct of NEETs psychological profile).

The combination of literal review, quantitative and qualitative methods and tools for the research conduction constitutes the most appropriate way to have a valid and reliable academic research. The theoretical investigation and literature review will contribute to the in depth analysis of the specialized issues (raised above). The literature will be the stepping stone for the parallel conduction of qualitative and quantitative research while been based on the initial findings. The contents of literature review will be the framework for both researches (qualitative and quantitative) design. Quantitative research, namely the use of questionnaires at national scale for recording the psychological profile of NEETs, will be conducted in parallel with the qualitative research (triangulated needs-in-skills assessment, namely semi-structured interviews – focus groups – check lists), in order to establish research feedback of the produced data from both quantitative and qualitative research. Feedback between the researches is necessary in order for the research team to continue to the content analysis of the interviews in order to categorize the “skills and competences’ profiles” and needs-in-skills developing taxonomic sub-categories aiming at the development of NEETs’ training programme in terms of reskilling.

The present proposed large scale project constitutes an innovative research topic in a field that there has not been conducted any similar research in Greece. Both the topic and the research methodology and research outcomes will be an important policy tool while the evidence based “products” (training-reskilling programme, set of psychological supportive actions) which will be produced, could be directly implemented against NEETs’ social exclusion. The cooperation between the Centre for Development of Education Policy (KANEP/GSEE) and the University of Crete, specifically two research centres, namely the Centre for Political Research and Documentation (KEPET) and the Centre for Human Rights (KEADIK) of the Department of Political Science, will highlight specific aspects of socioeconomic inequalities in Greece and furthermore will contribute to tackle them (via the twofold intervention planning and development). The utility of research findings and the development of the training-reskilling programme (including counseling guidelines towards vocational guidance) and the set of psychological supportive activities will help to the development and the sustainability of the society and economy of the country, since it may contribute to NEETs’ social re-integration and subsequently to the reduction of the national youth unemployment rates.

As mentioned above, the social and economic inequalities are directly related to NEETs social vulnerability. The advent of the economic crisis in Greece has resulted in dramatically increased rates of youth unemployment, NEETS and other vulnerable groups, are at risk of poverty and social exclusion and consequently social and income inequalities increase. The proposed project aims to analyze key but almost un-explored parameters of social and income inequalities, that lead young people (aged 15-24) to be NEETs. In addition, a very significant effect of being NEETs (i.e. not in education, employment or training) is the charge of the living standard and low life quality. This leads to NEETs’ marginalization and cut off from any activity of public sphere than other groups, whose living standard is higher. The tackling of social and income inequalities is a major issue, which concerns the whole society. Emphasizing NEETs’ psychological and skills’ profile, the proposed project can contribute to the above-mentioned task.

Due to lack of studies in Greece and minimum international literature for specialized parameters of NEETs’ social vulnerability and NEETs’ reskilling, the project will contribute to the production of specialized knowledge in relation to the re-inclusion of NEETs in employment, the increase of their employability and consequently towards their social integration.

By producing new research based knowledge and disseminating it (to the public by the webpage –WP6/ D.6.2. and to policy makers –WP.5/ D.5.4-), developing a twofold comprehensive intervention and being a follow-up study on NEETs conducted by part of the consortium that conducted the first research on NEETs in Greece, the proposed project will contribute to the sustainability of Research and Development(R&D) activities in the field. The proposed project is not exclusively a research one, since it includes in its results practical responses to the problem. On these grounds, it can have a positive effect on the direct target groups. Consisted by several WPs (7) and Deliverables (26), including both nationwide

research and research based programmes' development, and resulting both in research findings and practical responses the proposed project is evidently cost- effective.

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## Project Structure

### **A. Implementation and Management**

#### **Partner analysis-Organizational Structure, Procedures and Management of the Project**

Describe the **technological, the managerial capacity** and the scientific experience of the Project Promoter and of all partners.

Document the managerial capacity of the Coordinator Organization and the Scientific Supervisor (Coordinator's and Scientific Supervisor's experience in the execution and coordination of large projects and interdisciplinary research and technology projects, as well as their previous experience in managing and implementing the RTD and exploitation of results of projects insofar as they correspond to the role of each one of them) the organizational structure and mechanisms of decision-making for the project. Indicate how they are suitable to the scale and complexity of the project.

The European Union has already created specific categories of the socially vulnerable group of NEETs based on secondary data from Eurostat. The first primary research about NEETs in Greece was conducted under the supervision of the Centre for Human Rights of the Department of Political Science of the University of Crete (KEADIK/UoC) along with the Centre for Development of Education Policy (KANEP/GSEE), Greek Public Opinion (GPO) and the Institute for Electronic Structure and Laser (IESL/FORTH) with title "Absents' Barometer: Detection, classification and empirically founded policy proposals to tackle the new form of social vulnerability: NEETs (Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training)" during the time period 21.06.2011 – 20.08.2013, in the context of the Programme SYNERGASIA that was funded by the GSRT. In the context of that Project, two nationwide quantitative and two qualitative research phases were conducted. Apart from the research findings, that project included the development of a multi-parametric indicator (NEETs composite indicator), the development of an integrated policy proposals framework and the establishment of a Geographical Information System (NEETs GIS). Simultaneously, the research group of the Project mapped the basic characteristics of NEETs, the urgent dimensions of NEETs' biography and the problems that the above mentioned socially vulnerable group face in its day-to-day life. Furthermore, the Consortium analyzed the demographic and social characteristics of the target group and examined in depth the factors which affect, sometimes more and sometimes less, the categorization of a young person in the socially vulnerable group of NEETs (gender, age, urbanity, educational level, family income, ethno-cultural origin). Moreover, the research group analyzed, in detail, their point of view and their attitudes about education, training, employment, welfare state and political system in Greece as well as their strategies to exit from the difficult social situation which they encounter and their comprehensive proposals and recommendations regarding the broader state of play. Finally, in the context of the Project, the above mentioned Consortium investigated the economic and social impact in Greece from the expansion of



NEETs' phenomenon and attempted overall interpretations for that multi-prismatic and multi-complex phenomenon. Although that research has offered specific innovative data, there are other key issues concerning NEETs that have to be investigated, namely the impact of financial crisis on NEETs' psychological profile and their needs (in terms of skills and capacities). Eventhough these issues seem more specialized, do not lack in importance. Furthermore, the development of a research-based comprehensive training programme along with interventions/support/counseling procedures will offer crucial tools that are necessary in order to provide assistance both towards the psychological issues they face and the construction and amelioration of the essential capabilities (the data will be collected in the needs assessment part of the project).

The current consortium disposes all the necessary managerial, technologic and scientific capacity that is essential in order to conduct this project. The staff (both the coordinator and partners) has previously conducted large-scaled social researches such as the "Absences' Barometer: NEETs in Greece" and actively participates in activities which promote lifelong learning, employment and social inclusion. Thus, the academic staff and researchers meet the required experience and expertise which can be justified by the past implementation of research programmes (see below).

KANEP/GSEE which will be the Promoter of this project has an expertise in research of relevant issues. It represents the Greek General Confederation of Labour in the area of Education and Lifelong learning, promoting the agenda of trade unions which includes employment policies, policies for combating social exclusion, and reinforcement of trade union presence in society.

KANEP –through GSEE– institutionally participates to all national and regional bodies dealing with lifelong learning and employment both on policy and implementation level. Furthermore, a KANEP representative participates in the EQF Advisory Group and also in relevant committees concerning NQF in Greece. Additionally, it has participated as a partner in the abovementioned research project "Absence Barometer. NEETs in Greece".

Both KEADIK/UoC and KEPET/UoC (Centre for Political Research and Documentation) of the Department of Political Science of the University of Crete have been Coordinators in several nationwide research projects. In particular:

- the above mentioned project "Absents' Barometer" (Coordinator: KEADIK/UoC)
- the research project entitled "the dimensions of xenophobia and the evolution of multicultural patterns" in the context of "Equal II" (Coordinator: KEADIK/UoC-KEPET/UoC)
- research project on "quality assurance in consultative structures on education and primary vocational training". (Coordinator: KEADIK/UoC)
- the research project entitled «Governance for Sustainable Development- GAVA» (510751-LLP-1-2010-PL-ERASMUS-ECDEM) (Coordinator for Greek research team: KEPET/UoC) For further information visit: <http://www.study-sustainability.com/Home.10656.0.html>

The research team include social researchers with expertise in socially vulnerable groups, training and lifelong learning, political scientists, statisticians, psychiatrists and psychologists (see research team).

The Coordinating Person of the proposed project (Nikolaos Fotopoulos) was a key researcher in the project "Absents' Barometer: NEETs in Greece" and disposes all the required experience for the coordination of the proposed project. He is both an Assistant Professor of sociology in the field of cultural and educational practices at the University of Western Macedonia and expert on L.L.L policy development at Centre of Educational Policy Development KANEP/GSEE. He has participated in a significant number of national and European expert committees and has participated in the planning and implementation of research and educational courses in the field of lifelong learning, culture, education and labour policy. He has served as a member on the Board of Experts «*European Training Foundation (ETF) - Advisory Forum*» on matters related to policy development for Employment, Education and Lifelong Learning in Central and Eastern Europe and as a member of National Committee for Lifelong Learning – Greek Ministry of Education. He currently both serves as National Representative for the recognition of learning outcomes «*Cluster on recognition of Learning Outcomes*» DG EAC, Life Long Learning: Contribution to the Lisbon process" and belongs to the National Team of Experts for

*E.C.V.E.T (European Credits System for Vocational Education and Training).*

The Person in scientific charge of the proposed project (Professor Nikos Papadakis) has been the scientific supervisor of several research projects, including "Absents' Barometer: NEETs in Greece". He is Professor of Policies in Education and Training and Deputy Director of the Centre for Political Research and Documentation (KEPET) at the Department of Political Science at the University of Crete. Moreover, he teaches research methodology in, among others, the Master Programme on "Public Health and Health Management" of the Medicine Faculty at the University of Crete, as well as in the Master Programme "Political Theory and Political Analysis" of the Department of Political Science at the University of Crete, teaches Education Policy in the MA programme of the Department of Philosophical and Social Studies at the University of Crete, while he used to teach in the National Centre of Public Administration of Greece (EKDDA), in the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration, in the Academy of Public Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan and in the European Master on LLL of the University of London/ IoE and University of Aarhus- DPU. He cooperates (as an external evaluator) with the Fundacao para a Ciencia e a Tecnologia (FCT) of the Ministry of Research and Technology of Portugal (since 2008), while he has participated the Scientific Committee of the Local Administration Reform of Cyprus (2009- 2010) and was involved in the reform project "Civil Service Reform & Modernization of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan". Additionally, he was a member of both the European Commission ETCG (Education & Training Coordination Group- 2006- 2010), the European Commission Cluster on "Key Competences" (2007- 2010) and the European Commission SGIB (Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks/ 2007- 2012) while he has also participated either as expert or as member of the national delegation in several Bologna follow-up seminars and in Experts Meetings in the context of OECD's Institutional Management in Higher Education (OECD/ IMHE). He was a member of the Advisory Board of the United Nations DP/ Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform (UNDP/ RCPAR- 2008- 2011).

The Person, deputy in scientific charge of the proposed project (Professor Argyris Kyridis) was also a key researcher in the project "Absents' Barometer: NEETs in Greece". Dr.Argyris Kyridis is professor of sociology of education at the Department of Early Childhood Education (S.E.C.E.), Faculty of Education, of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, specialized in social and educational inequalities —education of vulnerable groups. Moreover he is specialized in research methodologies, both quantitative and qualitative. From February 2004 until March 2007, he was president of the Department of Nursery education of the University of Western Macedonia. From 2008 to 2011 he was president of the Department of Balkan Studies at University of Western Macedonia. He has taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses in various departments of Greek Universities (University of Athens, University of Crete, University of Western Macedonia, and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). He has supervised 110 undergraduate dissertations, 35 postgraduate theses as the main supervisor and he has participated in 26 supervision committees of PhD degrees, four of them as the main supervisor. Moreover, he used to be member of the coordinative committees of the postgraduate programs in the University of Western Macedonia and in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He is member of editorial boards of Greek and international journals (total number of 19). He was also a member of scientific committees of five global congresses and seven Greek conferences. He has participated in 27 funded research programs.

In terms of decision-making, the coordinating person will supervise the activities in order to meet the deadlines and the scientific and deputy scientific responsible will supervise and be responsible of the proper implementation of the academic research.

**How the project management is setting up?** Describe the organizational structure for the management of the project, the communication and collaboration among partners and the decision-making mechanisms. Describe the interaction between Greek partners and the partners of other countries.

Taking account of the impacts of the prospective project in terms of gender mainstreaming describe how the following considerations are addressed through the project:

- the ratios of women and men in the project target group, the characteristics of the target groups;
- in terms of the access to resources, the ratios of men and women in these target groups or among stakeholders;



- the exercising, observance and enforcement of rights, norms and values;
- taking gender-related requirements into account, management of different needs;
- connection of the project to national and other policies and priorities associated with gender mainstreaming,
- separation of activities promoting gender mainstreaming within the budget and work plan of the project,
- ensuring equality of opportunities within the management organisation.

1. According to the research project titled “Absents’ Barometer: NEETs in Greece”, conducted, among others, by the partners participating the proposed project (namely KANEP/ GSEE and KEADIK/ UoC) and subsequently by some of the key persons of the proposed project (Papadakis, Koutouzis, Fotopoulos, Kyridis, Kotroyannos etc), the ratio of the target group (namely NEETs) is 54,4% women and 45,6% men and the majority of them has finished secondary education. Furthermore, the vast majority has not participated in training programmes and believe that they do not gain anything through these programmes, are living with their parents and are economically depended to them (strong familialism that is a crucial characteristic of the North European countries). Anxiety levels are extremely high and this is a crucial factor that should be further examined in order to identify the psychopathological impact on NEETs (see: Papadakis –ed- 2013).

2. In terms of the access to resources, the ratios of men and women among stakeholders is 34% women and 66% men, according to the research team of the proposed project.

3. The proposed research will offer the opportunity to identify the psychological impact of the socially vulnerable situation to NEETs, categorized per group (including the identified consequences to women). Furthermore, the training intervention aims to enforce the rights of women through the promotion of their social inclusion and by taking into account the identified valued and norms.

4. There is a clear connection of the project with the priority of the Ministry of Employment, Social Insurance and Welfare for the social inclusion of the vulnerable social groups as one of the main guidelines of the European Social Fund as it is specialized to the social disadvantaged group of NEETs, where the gender mainstreaming is essential since, within the NEETs group, women seem to prevail (see 1).

5. The research team includes several women researchers and senior researchers and by keeping gender balance both in budget and work plan the project is promoting gender equality.

6. In the research team women’s participation is up to 34%. As regards the potential beneficiaries, women will overrepresented since they are the majority of the targeted group (namely NEETs).

## Partnership analysis-the Consortium as a Whole

**What is the added value through cooperation?** *Justify the role and the goal of each participant and explain how participants complement each other in the implementation of the project. Explain the reasons for the and particularly, how it applies to the mutual benefit of all participants, and how it contributes to the national economy, in general.*

**Is the partnership well balanced?** *Describe how the participants constitute a consortium capable to achieve project objectives and how the participants undertake to complete the tasks assigned to them within the project.*

The Coordinator (KANEP/GSEE) and the two partners (KEPET/UoC-KEADIK/UoC) have already cooperated in a previous successful research project (Absences' Barometer: NEETs in Greece) in which they achieved the research objectives. The fundamental objective of the participating research centres is to produce innovative research that will benefit the society and the economy. This particular research project will offer the opportunity to design specific interventions in order to reduce the potential psychological impact on NEETs and moreover, a comprehensive evidence-based training (reskilling) programme that will finally lead them to social inclusion. Resolving specific problems that NEETs encounter and promoting a training and reskilling framework will offer a way for their inclusion in the labour market and consequently will benefit the national economy.

For the better management of the project, the Coordinating Person (KANEP/GSEE) will supervise the implementation of the work plan within the required time. The Scientific (Nikos Papadakis-KEPET/UoC) and the Deputy Scientific Responsible (Argyris Kyridis-KANEP/GSEE) will supervise the scientific material and the conduction of research in order to produce better academic research outcomes.

In every work package one partner will be the coordinator and the others will support and cooperate in order to implement the required activities. The coordinating person will supervise the activities in order for every deliverable to meet the deadlines. The scientific responsible and the deputy scientific responsible will coordinate the research activities and supervise the research team in order to implement the scientific objectives of the project.

Furthermore, the expertise of all partners and participants in the field of social research and social exclusion and the specialization in psychology as well as in education and training of specific specialists will create the required balance between the participants in order to implement the research objectives of the multi-dimensional proposed project.

The close cooperation of the three partners as well as the separation of the organizational and scientific supervision will facilitate the research activities both in practical and scientific terms.

**Subcontracting:** *If any part of the work undertaken by a participant shall be subcontracted, explain why the approach of subcontracting was chosen. Describe also the criteria according to which the subcontractor was selected and justify the costs of the subcontracting. Particular importance to the justification must be given in the case of subcontracting assigned to an organization based abroad. Describe industrial and/or commercial partnerships/activities that will ensure the exploitation of the results of the project.*

*In case a part of a relevant WP which a participant undertakes, is given as subcontracting (Research contract expenses by legal entities), please provide the following information for the subcontractor:*

- 1) *Legal name of subcontractor*
  - 2) *Subcontractor's budget for the specific WP*
  - 3) *Exact scope of work that has been assigned to the subcontractor.*
  - 4) *Duration of subcontracting execution for the specific WP.*
  - 5) *Delivery time of the project assigned to the subcontractor, in the framework of each WP.*
- (Complete this section in conjunction taking under consideration the participation of legal entities or natural persons)*

## **B. Scientific / Technological Methodology, Technical Description, Overall Strategy and Associated Work Plan**

*Describe the state-of-the-art of the theoretical framework or line of inquiry in the area concerned, the advance that the proposed project would bring about over the current state of art. Indicate how your research will refine, revise, or extend existing knowledge in the area under investigation and the geographical/sectoral impact. The description may include literature research, or database selected to carry out the project. Clearly identify and define the central concepts or ideas of the study and the specific method of inquiry to be used. Outline the instruments you propose to use (surveys, scales, interview protocols, observation grids, etc). If instruments have previously been used, identify previous studies and findings related to reliability and validity. If instruments have not previously been used, outline procedures you will follow to develop and test their reliability and validity. Describe how the raw data collected will be transformed and analyzed. Include statistical analyses, bioinformatic manipulations, etc.*

### **1. Sketching the international landscape concerning NEETs.**

Research activity concerning NEETs and subsequent theoretical discussion is getting developed at international level, since the emphasis to this specific socially vulnerable group is rather new.

The global financial recession, which started at the beginning of 2008, and continues to affect the world economy, has created vast changes and deregulations in Europe, amplifying phenomena of social vulnerability, in particular to the member-states of the so-called "European South", Greece, Spain and Portugal. The formation of this new condition resulted in an alteration of the financial and social status of a great number of people, and in particular of young people below the age of 30, whose employment prospects were "severely damaged" (see Eurofound, 2012).

The living conditions and living standards of the unemployed are further deteriorated in the event they lack alternative sources of income or if they don't qualify for support from the welfare state, e.g. unemployment benefits.

The lack of either psychological support, e.g. from the family, or social networking and friends, is likely to intensify the existing bad living conditions of the unemployed.

As mentioned in the study 'NEETs in Europe: Convergences and divergences', (Papadakis, 2013), the age group most affected by unemployment is young people between the ages 15 to 24 (see European Commission, 2011a: 5). The European Commission has already characterized this age group as a 'lost generation', and not without reason, as the possibility of a young person entering into long-term unemployment with no future prospect for a permanent occupation is steadily increasing (European Commission, 2011a: 5). The unemployment rate of people aged 15-24 is much higher than the unemployment rates of all other age groups. While up to 2008, the youth unemployment rate was almost twice as high as the total unemployment rate of the EU, reaching its minimum value (18%) at the beginning of 2008 (Eurostat, 2013a

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics)), from the beginning of 2009, this 'gap' started to widen and reached 2.6 times the total unemployment rate of the EU-27 at the end of 2012 (Eurostat, 2013a [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics)).

The new Strategy «EU2020» puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

1. « **Smart Growth:** developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
2. **Sustainable Growth:** promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy
3. **Inclusive Growth:** fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion» (European Commission, 2010: 5).

Five key targets have been set towards the accomplishment of these priorities. Three of them are directly or indirectly related to education, to the creation of links between the education and training systems and employability, to the labour market and the combat of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion:

- a) 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be employed
- b) the drop-out rate of the early school leavers shall be reduced to below 10%; the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education shall be increased to at least 40%
- c) the number of people living below poverty lines shall be reduced by 20 million (European Commission, 2010: 5).

A series of relevant large scale initiatives have been adopted to this purpose (European Commission, 2010: 15-16 & 21-24 as discussed in Papadakis, 2013).

It is worth to recall the rates for youth unemployment of the start up year of the EU2020. More specifically, on December 2010, the unemployment rate of young people below the age of 25 was 21% in the EU-27, with small variations between sex (men: 21,2%, women: 20,7%). This rate remained consistent in 2011. In Greece, the rate for the same period was 37,1% (women: 43,9%, men: 31,5%) (see Eurostat, 2013b <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=0&pcode=teilm021&language=en>). At the end of 2012 youth unemployment rate in EU was increased up to 23,2% and in Greece up to 57,9%. (Eurostat, 2013a), while at September 2013 the relevant rates were 23,5% and 59,2%.

**2013:** Three years after the announcement of the priorities set by the EU2020 Strategy, these targets have not yet been attained. Youth unemployment has dramatically risen, there is a lack of job offerings in relation to the existing labour force and a large number of Europeans are living below poverty lines.

The phenomenon of youth unemployment has been a major concern for policy makers since the 1980s, despite the fact that unemployment rates on young persons have always been higher than those of other age groups (Eurofound, 2012: 4). Youth unemployment rates tend to increase more than those of other groups during periods of economic recession (Freeman and Wise, 1982, as cited in Eurofound, 2012: 4).

Young people seem to be more affected by the economic crisis and can be considered the most vulnerable population group among the economically active population, as a series of characteristics and events tend to increase the unemployment rates among young people.

Labour force participation rate usually takes into account employment and unemployment rates. In other words, it measures people that are already employed and those that seek employment (Eurofound, 2012: 19).

All these parameters should be taken into account when trying to interpret the recently studied (but not new) socially vulnerable group: namely the NEETs, young people aged 15-24 not in Education, Employment or Training (see European Commission, 2008: 130, International Labour Office, 2012: 9), or in other words young people who are unemployed but not just unemployed.

*How was the term NEET introduced? What are the characteristics of this group? Which are their similarities and differences with young people aged 15-24? Why is it imperative to systematically map and study this new socially vulnerable group?*

«The term NEET was formally introduced at the political level in the UK in the late 1990s (more specifically, in 1999), in response to the need for the development/formation of an indicator to capture people aged 16-18 who were not in education, employment or training» (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999 as cited in Eurofound, 2012: 20).

The changes made in the UK benefit regime for the unemployed at that time, left most of those aged 16–18 years without access to unemployment benefits (Furlong, 2006, as cited in Inui, 2009: 176, Furlong, 2007, as cited in Eurofound, 2012: 19).

More specifically, the term NEET was introduced in the government report “Bridging the Gap”. This report aimed to study this category of young people, estimate the scale of the problem, the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of the group but also, to study the heterogeneity among its population so as to propose policy actions to address the phenomenon (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999: 6-9). At the beginning, this term was associated with early school leaving in order to address the strikingly increasing percentages of early school leavers, and the priority given by the Lisbon Strategy on this issue (see Diagram 1).

The term NEETS has been formally introduced in EU documents in 2008 (see European Commission, 2008: 130-131 and Papadakis, 2013), while recent statistical data for the UK in 2007 based on Statistical First Release (SFR) demonstrated that 10% of young people aged 16-18 were NEETs (Statistical First Release, 2007 as cited in European Commission, 2008: 130).

The concept of the NEETs is now an international phenomenon, despite the differences in the definitions used to describe it (Eurofound, 2012: 19-21, European Commission, 2008: 130-131, European Commission, 2011c: 1-2)<sup>1</sup>. Apart from Europe “NEETS group has become a massive

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<sup>1</sup> However, OECD expands the age range of NEETs to 15-29 (OECD, 2012: 22).

problem, for families, governments and society in many countries in Asia”, (Liang 2009: 18), including mainly Japan, China and Korea. The status of NEET “affects the life chances of many of these young people as they face the possibility of long-term unemployment, isolation and social exclusion” (Simmons, R. & Thompson, R., 2011: abstract).

According to OECD, within the period 2000-2010, NEETs’ rate in the OECD countries decreased down to 0,7%. But since 2008, when the global financial crisis started, till 2010, the NEETs’ rate increased from 13,7% (2008) to 15,8% (2010). Spain (23,7%), Italy (23%) and Ireland (21%) face a major problem regarding NEETs (OECD, 2012 cited in International Labour Office, 2013: 90) (see Table 1).

In Ireland NEETs’ rate increased enormously (2008: 12,8%, 2010: 21%), while in Spain the rate increased up to 6,9% (2008: 16,8%, 2010: 23,7%) (OECD, 2012 cited in International Labour Office, 2013: 90). In Greece, another country heavily affected by the crisis, the NEETs’ rate increased from 16,2% (2008) to 18,3% (2010) (OECD, 2012 cited in International Labour Office, 2013: 90) (see Table 1).

In 2012, there were 7.469.100 NEETs in EU, namely 12,9% of the youth population (Eurofound, 2012: 23). Countries facing severe problems regarding Neets include Italy (19,8%), Greece (17,4%), Spain (18,5%), Bulgaria (22,6%) and Ireland (18,4%). (Eurofound, 2012: 28-29) (see Table 2). It’s more than obvious that there is a direct colleration between the impact of the crisis and the NEET rate.

The majority of NEETs, aged 15-24, are low skilled (especially in Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Bulgaria, Austria and Romania- see Eurofound, 2012: 31). On the other hand there are remarkable exceptions, namely countries where NEET have a higher educational level. Greece is one of them, since more than 25% of the Neets are Higher Education Graduates.

Different terms to describe the NEETs have also been adopted, at a European and international level: “*Angry young rebels, Quitters, Rebels without a cause, Cool dudes, Hedgers, Settlers, Escapists, Strugglers*” (BBC news, 5 November 2007 as cited in European Commission, 2008: 132).

The terms above are used to describe –in our opinion in a non-realistic, ambiguous, untargeted and most importantly, non-scientifically established manner – this socially vulnerable group. Moreover, the descriptions used are usually confused with the profiles of early school leavers who end up been included in the socially vulnerable NEET group (European Commission, 2008: 131-132). Yet, NEETs are not only the early school leavers.

Unlike the above descriptions, which present the NEETs as a generation of passive and «lazy» young people, low skilled and having behavioral problems, no dreams and ambitions, this «absence» of the young from the main institutions, that is, the education, training and employment systems, is usually not a personal choice but rather «...(can be interpreted) as a weakness and a failure of the dominant value system to restrain, inspire and give a meaning to their life course, showing them prematurely and hastily the exit to the tough arena of reality.... » (Fotopoulos, 2010: §4)

In fact, all descriptive terms that attempt to transfer the responsibility from the general context to the person should be treated with scrutiny.

Today, despite the lack of an internationally defined term for the NEETs<sup>2</sup>, an indicator has been developed in the EU (NEET indicator), which has been widely used since the beginning of the recession to perform cross-country comparisons at a European (EU) and also at an international level (OECD countries).

More specifically, in the EU, the concept and the indicator on the NEETs is used to monitor the labour market as well as the social situation of young people (Eurofound, 2012: 21-22, European Commission, 2011c: 1-2).

The need to monitor the NEETs is essential, considering the sharp increase of their percentages. It is worth mentioning that the NEET rate has increased more than 5 percentage points in the period

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<sup>2</sup> The term NEET in most European countries refers to young people aged 15-24 (European Commission, 2013c: 2), in Japan, to young people aged 15-34 (OECD, 2008 as cited in Eurofound, 2012: 20), in OECD’s data, to young people aged 15-29 (OECD, 2013: 326) while in some national cases (e.g. in the UK), it captures teenagers in the age of 16-18 (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999: 2).

2008-2010 in countries such as Ireland, Estonia, Iceland and Spain. (OECD, 2012 as cited in the International Labour Office, 2013: 90).

According to the OECD, several countries express serious concerns in respect to the rise of the percentage rate of the NEETs, since it is quite common for people who have quit the education system early and have not joined the labour force to engage in 'informal' – illegal economy activities and criminality (OECD, 2008 as cited in OECD, 2013: 330). Moreover, the association between unemployment and mental health, anxiety levels, depression and suicides has long been well established (OECD, 2008: 4-5).

Eurofound's relevant report (2012), is a first class «raw material» for mapping the socially vulnerable group of NEETs at a European level and performing cross-country analysis of the characteristics of the NEETs.

NEETs in Europe may be classified in five main sub-groups:

- “the conventionally unemployed, the largest subgroup, which can be further subdivided into long-term and short-term unemployed;
- the unavailable, which includes young carers, young people with family responsibilities and young people who are sick or disabled;
- the disengaged: those young people who are not seeking jobs or education and are not constrained from doing so by other obligations or incapacities, and takes in discouraged workers as well as other young people who are pursuing dangerous and asocial lifestyles;
- the opportunity-seekers: young people who are actively seeking work or training, but are holding out for opportunities that they see as befitting their skills and status;
- the voluntary NEETs: those young people who are travelling and those constructively engaged in other activities such as art, music and self-directed learning” (Eurofound, 2012: 24).

It is worth to note that there is a higher probability of ending up NEET for young people with low levels of education, an immigration background, some level of disability or problems of mental health as well as young people with a problematic family background (Eurofound, 2012: 55-56). In several cases “for some young people it is their health, low school attainment, bullying or parenthood that are associated with becoming NEET, for others it is a much more complex picture of multiple and mutually reinforcing issues” (Hutchinson, Korzeniewski and Moore, 2011: v).

This heterogeneity in the NEETs –and potential NEETs - population needs to be taken very seriously in policymaking, designed to tackle the phenomenon in the EU, as recent statistical data provided by Eurostat demonstrate an increase of the NEETs rate, as already documented before.

The share of the NEETs population varies among EU the member states. On this ground, countries with similar patterns have been grouped together to form four clusters, and facilitate analysis.

The clustering ranges from extremely high NEET rates (above 17%), to very low rates (below 7%) (see Eurofound, 2012: 28).

As already mentioned, NEETs constitute an heterogeneous and vulnerable social group, that may be associated with several different parameters, such as poor educational attainment, teenage pregnancy, disability, as well as mental health issues. Psychopathology may be either a risk factor or a consequence of being a NEET. However, up to date, there are very few studies addressing the association between psychopathology and the NEETs phenomenon. In a large US national study investigating psychopathology as a risk factor for becoming a NEET, Breslau et al found that conduct disorder and ADHD are risk factors for failure to graduate high school (Breslau et al 2011). Moreover, a large study conducted by the World Health Organization, including 16 different countries, showed that specific mental disorders, i.e. mood/anxiety disorders, substances abuse and impulse disorders, are associated with non-completion of education both in high and in low-income countries (Lee et al 2009) Finally, in a large population study in Australia, authors concluded that formal education and employment was extensively disrupted among adults with major psychiatric disorders, as schizophrenia, depression and anxiety disorders (Waghorn 2011). On the other hand being a NEET can lead to social isolation, lack of daily routine, lack of supervision that takes place in school / work, and low self-esteem for failing to fulfill the family and society expectations. All the above could result to development of psychopathology. Data on this hypothesis are very limited. A study in New Zealand found that among teenagers and young unemployed people the risk of suicidality, substances abuse and antisocial behaviors is significantly high (Fergusson, Horwood, Woodward 2001). Finally, an interesting study among NEETs in Mexico showed that teenager NEETs have higher risk for mood and anxiety disorders, substances abuse, conduct disorders and suicide, compared to those who are still in education

(Benjet et al 2012). Based on this finding the authors conclude that the education milieu has a protective role against the development of psychopathology. In Greece no similar studies are available. The project "Absents' Barometer" found that among Greek NEETS anxiety and despair rates are prevalent to the 54% and 31% of the sample, respectively (see GPO & KEADIK 2013). Since nowadays Greece is facing difficult economic situations and given that family structure in Greece is very different compared to west European or North America, we hypothesize that psychopathology in Greek NEETs may differ to what is found in the above studies. One of the aims of the proposed study is to investigate the psychological profile and the psychopathology of the NEETs in a national sample in Greece.

## **2. Existing knowledge at national level**

A large- scale research on NEETs, titled "Absents' Barometer Detection, Classification and Empirical Establishment of policy proposals to combat a new form of social vulnerability: NEETs (***Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training***)" was conducted by a partnership including KEADIK of the University of Crete, KANEP/ GSEE, GPO and IESL-FORTH, in the period between 21/6/2011-20/8/2013.

The project included 9 workpackages and 23 deliverables. Their implementation contributed in the achievement of the three major goals that have been initially addressed, namely:

- to form a NEETs composite indicator at a national level,
- to record and map the new category of social vulnerability, which are the NEETs
- to develop empirically established policy proposals to combat the social exclusion of NEETs as well as to contribute to their multilevel and sustainable social integration.

Two phases of quantitative and two phases of qualitative research in -an unusual for a social research project large number of subjects- have been implemented (800 and 3500 subjects respectively for the two phases of the quantitative and a total of 144 semi-structured and narrative interviews for the qualitative phase). The findings of the research set the base for a) the NEETs composite indicator, b) the establishment of an integrated policy proposal (in multiple levels of public policies and within different scenarios), c) the formation of the NEETs GIS, and d) the creation of a road map for an integrated intervention to prevent the social exclusion of NEETs.

At the same time a) the main characteristics of NEETs problems have been recorded, b) their demographic and social characteristics have been analyzed, c) the main factors contributing to the characterization of a young person as a NEET (gender, age, urbanity, educational level, family income, nationality) have been examined, d) their views and attitudes in respect to education and training, employment, social welfare and the political system as well as their strategies regarding a way out of the situation they are suffering have been analyzed, e) the impact deriving from the expansion of the NEETs phenomenon at an economic and social level has been investigated, (impact assessment) f) taxonomic categories, based on NEETs socio-demographic characteristics were developed and g) integrated interpretations on this multi-perspective and complex phenomenon have been attempted.

Essentially, NEETs have been 'mapped' in quantity (how many they are on the basis of their gender, age, urbanity, education, family income, nationality, characteristics, biography, attitudes, behavioral patterns, views and distribution at a regional and municipal level) as well as in quality. In a country where the percentage of the NEETs population is extremely high, and in which their basic characteristics are different than those of other national cases, the problem of the NEETs can't afford to be ignored. In fact further investigation of more specialized issues related to NEETs and development of comprehensive interventions are of vital importance.

## **3. The potential contribution of the proposed research**

The findings of the project "Absents Barometer" reveal the total failure of training concerning NEETs (their vast majority hasn't ever participated training, and the ones have done it are totally disappointed in terms of effectiveness). An implementation gap is evident. Additionally there is an obvious lack in the literature concerning NEET's reskilling, eventhough it is a tool of vital importance for their actual re-inclusion. On the other hand, international literature is relatively poor regarding NEETs' relation to psychopathology (including their psychological profile) and potential compensational activities. A potential research contribution on the above-mentioned areas (including practical response) may be critical for NEETs' integration and furthermore for the whole discussion on the role of Welfare State in combating social exclusion.



It is more than obvious, that the above-mentioned existing knowledge will be extended by the proposed project, since it will emphasize, via both qualitative and quantitative research, on the actual NEETs' needs (including their existing capabilities) for training and reskilling as well as on their psychological profile and needs for psychological support. Since the proposed project focuses on more specialized issues (psychological profile / existence of possible psychopathology and psychological support of NEETs and targeted training of those socially vulnerable people, in terms of reskilling, towards their integration into the labour market and consequently towards their social integration), and includes the formulation of a comprehensive and grounded intervention in training level (based on the findings of needs assessment) and the development of research-based set of psychological supportive activities, it will not just extend the existing knowledge. In fact, it will contribute on the better understanding of both the phenomenon itself and the parameters of NEETs' social exclusion, while it will simultaneously provide practical and evidence-based responses on the domains of reskilling and psychological support towards a feasible inclusion. The potential contribution of the proposed research becomes more obvious within the Work packages analysis that follows.

#### **4. On the methodological strategy.**

Concerning the **theoretical Investigation and literature review** that method is considered essential and necessary in order to analyze in depth the research topic and the different point of views from a research perspective. This method is absolutely necessary for this kind of academic research because the phenomenon of NEETs is not a linear research topic, since it combines empirical data and qualitative analysis. The literature review as research method will lead us closer to an objective critical analysis of the research topic through the understanding of existing arguments about it. In the case of the proposed project literature review will not focus on NEETs in general (since the former project "Absents' Barometer" has done it quite efficiently). It will investigate more specialized issues, beginning from LLL for social disadvantaged groups and ending on issues related to NEETs' both needs-in skills and reskilling and psychological profile (including issues of psychopathology). On these grounds, it will provide the research team with the opportunity to investigate deeply the raised issues and to generate a mind map for the research topic. Therefore, this research method is necessary for collecting information from several resources in order to provide concrete and accurate information, the research to be well written and to minimize personal biases regarding the topic. Through this method an integrated strategic analysis is also viable by combining different kind of resources such as books, scientific articles, academic research outcomes, reports, conferences booklets, official state and international organization documents (ex. OECD, European Union). Through this research method the main findings, which will derive from the literature analysis, they might generate ideas regarding the research topic. In conclusion, in order this method to be efficiently applied, an advanced and detailed referencing system is necessary in order to picture correctly the discussion and the main findings regarding the research topic and its sources.

**The questionnaires** (quantitative research at national scale) were chosen as the most appropriate tool for reviewing and recording the psychological profile's parameters of a large number youngsters belonging at the social subgroup of NEETs.

Large amount of data can be collected fairly quickly, the data collected should be reliable and representative and at the end of the day questionnaires are relatively cheap, ensuring the cost-effectiveness of the project. To sum up, In this piece of research we have selected the questionnaire as a research tool for the following reasons: a) The questionnaire attracts the interest of the people questioned more easily and increases their participation in the research procedure (Anderson, 1990, Javeau, 1988), b) The necessity of using a large sample of subjects (Davidson, 1970), c) The questionnaire is suitable for the collection of information, such as perceptions and opinions, which cannot be easily observed (Verma & Mallick, 1999, Fraise & Piaget, 1970) and d) The questionnaire is a research tool that provides the opportunity for continuous trials and interventions, in order to be constructed in the best possible way (Javeau, 1988).

Some practical indications on the use of questionnaires in our case: All participants will undergo an evaluation to assess their psychological profile and detect psychopathology. Specifically, psychological profile will be examined using the Traits Personality Questionnaire 5 (TPQue5),

which is validated in Greek by Tsaousis et al in 1999. This questionnaire is widely-used, self-completed and consists of 75 statements examining the big five dimensions of personality. Furthermore, in order to evaluate mood/anxiety symptoms and suicidality, participants will self-complete the SCL-90-R questionnaire, consisting of 101 statements. This questionnaire is also very widely-used and, is validated in Greek by Donias et al in 1991. Moreover, a structured additional questionnaire, including standard questions on substances/ alcohol abuse, as well as ADHD symptoms will be filled by all participants. All scored questionnaires will be collected and analyzed statistically in order to detect psychological profiles and psychopathological symptoms' frequencies in the population examined.

**The semi structured interviews**, being part of the triangulated needs-in-skills assessment, will be used as a basic research tool for recording NEETs' skills' profile and subsequently needs-in-skills deeper and in larger complexity (Cohen & Manion, 2000). The defining characteristic of semistructured interviews is that they have a flexible and fluid structure. The structure of a semistructured interview will be organized around an aide memoire or interview guide. This contains topics, themes, or areas to be covered during the course of the interview, rather than a sequenced script of standardized questions. Regarding to the present research the subjects will be asked on issues related to their existing "skills repertoire", their exact educational, training & vocational needs etc. Furthermore, through the interviews' findings, the research team will be able to design actions for their reskilling and training that would fit to both their capacities and needs. The aim of using semi structured interviews is usually to ensure flexibility in how and in what sequence questions are asked, and in whether and how particular areas might be followed up and developed with different interviewees.

The **focus groups**, being part of the triangulated needs-in-skills assessment, will be an essential research tool that will be also used in this research method via several modes and integrated mechanisms, in order to conclude to a more integrated analysis of the NEETs' existing "skills repertoire" and educational, training & vocational needs (towards reskilling). Focus groups are a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants (NEETs) in order to generate data. Although group interviews are often used simply as a quick and convenient way to collect data from several people simultaneously, focus groups explicitly use group interaction as part of the method. This means that instead of the researcher asking each person to respond to a question in turn, people are encouraged to talk to one another: asking questions, exchanging anecdotes and commenting on each other's experiences and points of view. One of the distinct features of focus-group interviews is its group dynamics, hence the type and range of data generated through the social interaction of the group are often deeper and richer than those obtained from one-to-one interviews (see Thomas et al. 1995). The method is particularly useful for exploring NEETs' "skills and competences' profile" and tracing their actual needs in terms of reskilling- training and can be used to examine not only what they think about the abovementioned issues but how they think and why they think that way.

**Check lists** complement and interact with the abovementioned 2 tools of the triangulated needs-in-skills assessment.

**Content analysis** of the interviews was chosen based on the need of recording the ways in which NEETs expressed on the topic under investigation (skills' profile and needs-in-skills) and the ways they approach it (Smith, 1992, Weber, 1990). Regarding the analysis of the answers of the subjects we will use the methodological tool of Quantitative Content Analysis, which, as Curley (1990) states, allows (a) the combination of quantitative and qualitative data, (b) traces and records the types of social interaction through discourse analysis, (c) records historic and cultural elements, (d) records and analyzes social ideologies and (e) investigates concepts as well as the ways in which the specific concepts are perceived by social subjects. In detail, the "texts" will be analyzed following the principles of Quantitative Content Analysis (classical thematic analysis). In the present research, the specific method was employed with a view to identifying the criteria for grouping the NEETs' "skills and competences' profiles" and needs-in-skills in order to develop taxonomic categories, namely sub-groups and subsequently to facilitate the development of the multi-targeted training- reskilling programme via examining, among others, the flow of information that the interrelations at issue generate.

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## **Anticipated Results, Interpretation, and Implications. Measures for the exploitation /protection of results**

**Describe the methodology, the goals and the planning approach of the project.** Describe the overall strategy of the proposed work plan, with reference to project activities and in particular: a)Research and

*Technological Development activities: basic and industrial research and experimental development and b) other activities (feasibility studies, IPR protection, Open Access etc).*

*Provide "Partnership Plan" - the description of the work and "Partnership Budget" - the allocation of all the resources from the Programme budget or/and from own budget for the activities as defined in the Partnership Plan, including the payment schedule. Describe each of the above topics and indicate the participants that will carry out the relevant tasks.*

*Activities regarding dissemination and exploitation of the project results, networking etc. will be included in research and technological development activities in the corresponding Work Package that they are carried out.*

*Contingency planning for the case of unforeseen results must also be included. Identify and describe any significant risks and present ways to manage those risks-contingency plans. Research and technological Development activities should be linked to Experimental Development/Demonstration activities. Experimental development should be linked to feasibility studies.*

### **Milestones and Deliverables**

*Provide Work Package (WP) description along with the milestones, which should follow the logical phases of the implementation of the project and will be matched to the degree of complexity of the proposed work and the overall value of the proposed project.*

## **1. Remarks on the methodology.**

The methodology of the project, already analytically described above, consists of both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research, in our case, focuses on NEETs' psychological profile in order to facilitate the planning and development of a comprehensive set of psychological supportive activities (part of the project as well). Qualitative research (including semi-structured interviews and focus groups) is the major part of the triangulated needs-in-skills assessment (the third part is quantitative, namely the check lists). It is a prerequisite for the planning and development of a multi-targeted (based on the NEETs' diverse subgroups), modularized, research-based comprehensive training- reskilling programme. On these grounds, the proposed research methodology is clearly an applied one.

The allocation of all the resources from the Programme budget for the activities, per Work package and partner is described on the following chapter concerning the partnership plan. It includes activities regarding dissemination and exploitation of the project results.

## **2. Contingency planning.**

In case of methodological problems the Coordinating Person, the Scientific and deputy scientific supervisor along with the key persons of the research team will cooperate in order to reformulate the strategy in order both to implement the research within the deadlines and to provide qualitative research outcomes. For better cooperation and potential risks' reduction the project contains a quality assurance work package which is planned (with flow chart procedures, interim report of the project) as a tool which will predict and tackle possible dysfunctions (see below WP7).

## **3. Workpackages, Milestones and Deliverables**

**WP1:** *Theoretical justification and literature review based on international and national literature, international and national policy documents, official data and relevant research outcomes (concerning a) social vulnerability, socio-economic inequalities, social exclusion especially for youth, adult learning, in-formal and non-formal learning, LLL, b) NEETS' psychological profile and issues of NEETS' psychopathology and c) correlation between NEETS' "skills repertoire" and reskilling- training).*

**Responsible Partner:** KEPET/ UoC in cooperation with KANEP/ GSEE & KEADIK/ UoC

**Budget:** 10.000

In the context of the theoretical justification, a national and international literature and research review will be conducted in order to identify the extent, the parameters and the pattern of social vulnerability in general, the role of LLL (including reskilling) in tackling social exclusion, the impact of being a NEET on the psychological profile and vice versa and the correlation between NEETS' skills repertoire and NEETS' needs-in-skills. The theoretical justification will offer an absolutely necessary theoretical framework for the development of the project methodological strategy, since it raises issues concerning a) social vulnerability, socio-economic inequalities, social exclusion especially for youth, adult learning, in-formal and non-formal learning, LLL, b) NEETS' psychological profile and issues of NEETS' psychopathology and c) correlation between NEETS'

“skills repertoire” and reskilling- training

**Deliverables:** D. 1.1. Report of literature review- theoretical justification based on primary and secondary international literature.

**Milestones – Timeline:** May 2015

**WP2:** Development of the methodological strategy of the research project (quantitative research for the psychological profile/potential psychopathology and triangular needs assessment based on qualitative and quantitative methods).

**Responsible Partner:** KANEP/ GSEE in cooperation with KEPET/ UOC

**Budget:** 15.000

The collection of specific qualitative and quantitative data is necessary in order to plan and construct the comprehensive intervention actions. The methodological strategy of the research project will be based, in general on the grounded theory and will exploit two techniques of data collection, namely the primary quantitative research using structured questionnaires and validated scales and mixed quantitative and qualitative methods (namely semi-structured interviews, checklists and focus groups) for the triangulated needs-assessment.

Data analysis (including content analysis, double coding and quantitative analysis) will allow

a) the categorization of the problems that NEETs face in psychological terms (psychological impact) and how these kind of problems interrelate with NEETs’ socio-economic background and educational background as well as NEETs psychological profile

b) the development of taxonomic categories regarding NEETs’ skills’ profile- repertoire and actual needs-in-skills.

Furthermore, the identification of needs is crucial in order to plan and develop evidence based comprehensive intervention and subsequently to develop a comprehensive, multi-targeted and modularized training program aiming at NEETs’ social inclusion, while the quantitative research regarding NEETs’ psychological profile is a conditio sine qua non for the development of the set of psychological supportive actions.

**Deliverables:**

D.2.1. Report of methodological strategy of the whole field research (including quantitative research for the psychological profile and mixed qualitative and quantitative research for the needs assessment).

D.2.2. Data collection methodological tools (quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interview plans, checklists and focus group planning).

D.2.3. Data analysis tools.

**Milestones – Timeline:** May 2015 – June 2015

**WP3:** Identification of the psychological profile of NEETs which will subsequently lead to the formulation of distinct classified sub-categories (nationwide quantitative research) and research on the impact of financial crisis on NEETs’ psychological profile and subsequently life course.

**Responsible Partner:** KEPET/ UOC in cooperation with KEADIK/ UOC

**Budget:** 40.000

The basic aims of the quantitative research are a) to map the specific psychological profiles and/or possible high risk for psychopathology among Greek NEETs. a) to investigate and identify the impact of the financial crisis to the abovementioned (including ways in which that correlation flows to potential social exclusion of NEETs). Considering that the target group is characterized by social vulnerability, evaluation of the psychological parameters is necessary to understand the relationship between Greek NEETs and psychopathology. In the previous Project entitled “Absents’ Barometer” the research findings showed that Greek NEETs are a heterogeneous and psychologically vulnerable group with high rates of anxiety and despair feeling. Moreover, studies, which carried out abroad, have shown that the existence of psychopathology can be both risk factor and a consequence of NEETs’ phenomenon. Based on the above mentioned, the proposed research will investigate, among other, issues in respect to symptoms of anxiety, mood disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), drug and alcohol abuse, suicidality and personality traits (possibly grouped in different clusters reflecting the heterogeneity of our group) which, may be associated with behavioral disorders, using weighted, structured questionnaires and scales validated in Greek. More specifically, the aim of this WP is to trace NEETs’ psychological profiles and investigate the relationship between being a NEET in Greece and having symptoms of psychopathology (via a national scale research). To achieve the above objectives, a collaboration with Professors of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychologists (evident in the

research team) exists.

**Deliverables:**

D.3.1. Report on the psychological profile of NEETs (taking into account the potential psychopathological risks) ending in classified sub-categories and based on the quantitative research at national level.

D.3.2. Report on the impact of the financial crisis to the abovementioned (based on the quantitative research at national level).

**Milestones – Timeline:** July 2015 – November 2015

**WP4:** Triangular needs-in-skills assessment of NEETs and development of taxonomic categories.

**Responsible Partner:** KANEP/ GSEE in cooperation with KEPET/ UOC, KEADIK/ UOC

**Budget:** 49.000

Training constitutes one of the main pillars of the “EU2020” Strategy and consequently one of the key pillars of the new European Strategy for Lifelong Learning. The development of Lifelong Learning, as effective process of NEETs’ social inclusion is a crucial challenge both for the Greek Welfare State and the Greek education policy and employment policy. However, the international trend concerning LLL is towards the development of targeted and modularized training frameworks, in terms of constant reskilling. The above mentioned requires a comprehensive needs-assessment for the target- group (namely NEETs). Grosso modo there are 11 needs assessment tools in international level and needs assessment is usually based on triangulation. The project’s perspective for needs assessment is based on triangulation. More specifically, it is based on the composition of individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and check lists of educational needs.

In this part of the project an extensive nationwide needs-in-skills assessment will be conducted. Taking into account the fundamental function of training as active employment policy (and thus as potential inclusive policy) as well as one of the key findings of the research “Absents’ Barometer” i.e. the extremely low participation of Greek NEETs in training programmes and (at a very large extent) the disappointment of those participated training programmes, the Consortium will proceed, through qualitative and quantitative research, a) to the development of Greek NEETs’ skills profile (ending in taxonomic categories) and b) to their needs-in-skills assessment (by sub-category and taking into account other parameters such as prior work experience).

**Deliverables:**

D.4.1. Report on semi-structured interviews’ findings

D.4.2. Report on focus groups’ findings

D.4.3. Report on check lists’ findings

D.4.4. Synthesis report of the overall “needs assessment” process.

D.4.5. Report on the classification of NEETs’ competencies (skills profile) and needs-in-skills by taxonomic category.

**Milestones – Timeline:** July 2015 – November 2015

**WP5:** Planning and development of a twofold comprehensive intervention proposal (towards NEETs’ social inclusion) in the form of research– based a) targeted and competence-based Training-Reskilling Programme (including counseling guidelines towards vocational guidance) and b) set of psychological supportive actions.

More specifically: Development of an integrated competence- based reskilling- training program in the context of lifelong learning, specialized per diverse NEETs target groups (based on the taxonomy developed within the abovementioned – WP4- needs assessment) and development of a set of psychological supportive interventions.

**Responsible Partner:** KANEP/ GSEE in cooperation with KEPET/ UOC and KEADIK/ UOC

**Budget:** 56.000

The findings of the needs assessment in combination with the findings of the research on NEETs’ psychological profile will constitute the basis for the establishment of a comprehensive training-reskilling programme towards NEETs’ integration in the labour market and society. Such a programme can affect, even reform, the existing LLL policy agenda in Greece. Essentially, it is not a set of policy proposals. A comprehensive and implementable training programme will be developed, in the direction of a competence-based and modularized reskilling process, targeted to the different taxonomic categories (which will be highlighted by the research). Thus, it is expected to include (by classified category), learning objectives, learning material (mainly horizontal and some specialized modules), teaching methods and expected learning outcomes.



The learning material will mainly concern the transversal- core skills' acquirement and it will be in the format of modules

Simultaneously, it will be accompanied by a proposed programme of psychological interventions or referral to mental health specialists, which will function as an accompanying measure for social inclusion of NEETs.

**Deliverables:**

D.5.1. A comprehensive, competence-based, targeted training- reskilling programme (by taxonomic category of NEETs, based on their skills profile), including

- D.5.1.1. learning objectives
- D.5.1.2. learning material
- D.5.1.3. teaching methods
- D.5.1.4 expected learning outcomes

D. 5.2. Counseling and vocational guidance handbook (including research based guidelines).

D.5.3. Report on the proposed set of psychological support interventions.

D.5.4. Policy handbook for the better implementation and fine-tuning of NEETs' a) training-reskilling programmes, b) counseling and vocational guidance and c) psychological supportive activities.

**Milestones – Timeline:** November 2015 – February 2016

**WP6:** Dissemination actions (informative material in the form of pamphlets, webpage, organization of scientific conference and conference proceedings publication).

**Responsible Partner:** KEADIK/ UOC in cooperation with KANEP/ GSEE

**Budget:** 15.000

The aim of this working package is to create different materials (including the construction of a webpage with comprehensive information on NEETs skill' profile, psychological profile, reskilling framework and framework of psychological supportive activities) in order to disseminate the findings of the proposed project and to inform both the public and the scientific community and policy makers-experts about both the extent and the impact of NEETs phenomenon in terms of psychopathological parameters and risks which contribute to the social marginalization of NEETs and their needs-in-skills (including their existing capacities).

**Deliverables:**

- D.6.1. Pamphlets
- D.6.2. Webpage
- D.6.3. Scientific Conference Programme
- D.6.4. Conference Proceedings

**Milestones – Timeline:** November 2015 – April 2016

**WP7:** Quality assurance (horizontal action which constitutes a continuous internal feedback evaluation).

**Responsible Partner:** KANEP/ GSEE

**Budget:** 10.000

This working package refers to the effective and efficient monitoring of the whole project. In fact, it comprises quality assurance procedures and feedback assessment of the project, during every step of its implementation. These procedures will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the work packages and their correlations, interactions and feedbacks.

**Deliverables:**

- D.7.1. Procedures' Flow Chart
- D.7.2. Interim Report of the project
- D.7.3. Final Evaluation Report

**Milestones – Timeline:** May 2015 – April 2016

### **C. Knowledge development envisaged in relation to the objectives and prioritized areas of the research programme**

*Clearly indicate the ways to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of project activities and to ensure the sustainability of measures after the project has been implemented. Describe the types of results that might be reasonably anticipated as an outcome of the project. How these results would add to the*

*knowledge base of the research area, especially in the context of the questions and hypotheses that were posed initially? In addition, provide the broader potential applications of the research findings.*

*Who is responsible for knowledge protection and how will the rights for this knowledge be distributed? Describe clearly the intended process and measures for the exploitation and/or protection of project results by the participants. The proposal should clearly outline how the consortium intends to protect, share, manage and exploit the New Products / Services / Procedures / Processes.*

The WP7 (Quality Assurance procedures) will contribute to the constant feedback evaluation of project activities. The fact that the project “translates” the research findings into the proposal of specific practical responses to the issues raised (WP5) ensures the sustainability of the research, even after the implementation of the project. Dissemination activities (at large scale-see WP6), concerning the public sphere, the policy-makers and the academic community (via Webpage, Conference, pamphlets, policy handbook etc) would additionally contribute to achieve the above-mentioned goal.

Both the contribution of the project to the research area and its potential applications have been already analyzed in previous chapters (i.e. Project description and Scientific / Technological Methodology, Technical Description, Overall Strategy and Associated Work Plan)

The project aims, primarily, at the research-based mapping of the relationship between Greek NEETs and psychopathology and the construction of their psychological profiles as well as the research-based mapping of their skills’ profiles and their needs-in-skills. Within this context, the findings of quantitative and qualitative research will lead to more implementable “products”, namely the training-reskilling programme (including counseling and vocational guidance) and the set of psychological supportive activities. The abovementioned “products” indicate directly the potential applications of the research findings. More specifically:

- Taking for granted that Lifelong Learning with its broader definition {education, training (initial and continuing) and adult education, including non-formal and informal learning} has a dual role, namely to promote and disseminate knowledge to diverse target groups, to develop human resources’ skills and competences and to tackle unemployment, poverty, social marginalization and exclusion. Within this context, the comprehensive training-reskilling and counseling & vocational guidance programme for Greek NEETs is anticipated to increase their employability and consequently facilitate their access to the labour market. More specifically, a comprehensive training-reskilling programme, being research-based, developed per taxonomic category, taking into account the diverse NEETs’ skills profiles- repertoires as well as their actual needs-in-skills, constitutes a useful and implementable “tool” for employability and social inclusion. Potentially it can contribute to the reform of the existing training and employment policy and can be used and further developed by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs – Structures of Counseling & Vocational Guidance, the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Welfare, the Local State, the stakeholders and social partners and even by the private sector [accredited Vocational Training Centres (KEK)], with simultaneous utilization at regional and sectoral level. In fact the abovementioned “product” can provide NEETs with an alternative learning pathway.
- Moreover, the Handbook of Counseling & Vocational Guidance can be used by the above mentioned structures, as a start-up initiative towards NEETs’ vocational guidance (providing them with the chance to plan and develop initiatives towards their re-integration to the labour market, while at the same time exploring new vocational and educational paths).
- The research-based psychological intervention framework, which is a supportive measure of NEETs’ social inclusion, can be utilized by the Structures and Services of Primary Health Care and the Sector of Mental Health - Ministry of Health for the reinforcement of NEETs’ physical and mental health.
- Furthermore, the webpage as well as the rest of the informative material and activities will contribute to inform and sensitize both public and academic community and policy-makers on major problems that NEETs face and on their needs. This kind of info is a prerequisite for developing the necessary consensus towards the tackling of social vulnerability (in the case of NEETs).

- All the abovementioned “products” are intended to constitute "good practices" in the fields of training- reskilling, psychological support / intervention and counseling & vocational guidance at both national and European level, even extended for other socially vulnerable groups, which are at risk of social marginalization and social exclusion (e.g. immigrants, single parent families leaders, especially women, etc.).

In conclusion, the dissemination of the research findings of the proposed project, the development of practical and implantable responses and the potential exchange of "good practices" could enrich the existing academic political and social dialogue (at the national and European level) and strengthen cooperation between the State, the Local State, the stakeholders, the communities of practice (especially in the fields of training, counseling and welfare) towards the further development of effective measures against social exclusion of NEETs and other socially vulnerable groups. The knowledge developed within the proposed project could be a prime mover for political initiatives at national and regional scale.

All the project results (deliverables) will be delivered to GSRT, part of them as already analysed, will be disseminated to the public sphere, to the academic community and the relevant stakeholders-social partners.