

IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

SERBIA - NORTH MACEDONIA

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Republic of Serbia



Republic of North Macedonia

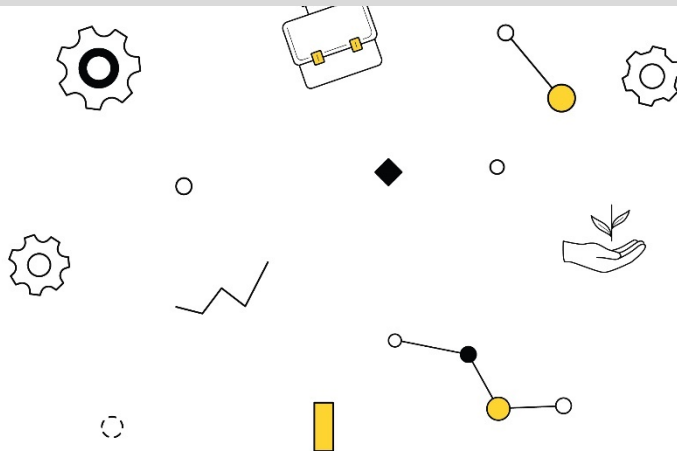


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**Coaching for
Employment and
Entrepreneurship**

**Analysis research on local labour market needs for
NEET youth**



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June 2023





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List of abbreviations

RNM – Republic of North Macedonia

EU – European Union

NEET - Not in Education, Employment, or Training

VEET - Vocational Education and Employment Training



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The user mapping interviews were conducted as a crucial step to select suitable beneficiaries for the project and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth and youth at risk in both the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM) and Serbia. These interviews aimed to identify potential candidates for participation, assess their needs and challenges, and gather valuable insights to inform the project's direction and activities.

The user mapping interviews employed a participatory selection process involving project partners and peer experts. A field analysis approach was adopted, utilizing interviews as a primary data collection method. A structured questionnaire was used to facilitate interviews, ensuring consistency in data collection across both countries. The interviews were conducted respecting data protection laws, focusing on providing the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, and trying to align with best practices from the European Union (EU).

The interviews yielded several key findings that provide a clear picture of NEET youth and youth at risk in RNM and Serbia:

- **Demographic Information**

The interviews revealed demographic details about the interviewed individuals, including age, gender, educational background, and employment status. This information provided insights into the composition of the target group.

- **Challenges and Aspirations**

Participants shared their challenges, aspirations, and goals. This provided an understanding of the barriers they face in education and employment, as well as their desires for personal and professional growth.

- **Motivations**

The interviews highlighted the motivations of potential beneficiaries to participate in the project. Understanding their motivations is crucial for tailoring project activities to meet their needs effectively.

- **Skills and Competencies**

Participants discussed their existing skills, competencies, and areas they would like to improve. This information is essential for designing capacity-building activities that align with their requirements.

- **Feedback on Training**

Where applicable, participants provided feedback on the idea of capacity-building training. This input will guide the creation of relevant training modules and ensure they are well-received.

- **Data Privacy**

It was confirmed that the interviews strictly adhered to data protection laws, ensuring that personal data would only be used for project purposes.

Overall, the user mapping interviews have provided rich information about the target group, their needs, and their growth potential. These findings will be a foundation for making informed decisions about the project's design, implementation, and activities. The insights gained from the interviews will help ensure that the project effectively addresses the needs of NEET youth and youth at risk in both RNM and Serbia.

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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The user mapping process lies at the heart of the project's mission to empower and strengthen the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth and youth at risk in both RNM and Serbia. By exploring these individuals' lives, challenges, and aspirations, the user mapping process aims to create a foundation of understanding that will guide the project's actions and initiatives.

- **Context and Objectives**

In today's rapidly changing socio-economic landscape, addressing the challenges faced by NEET youth and youth at risk is imperative. These individuals are often excluded from mainstream opportunities due to various barriers, such as lack of education, limited access to training, and economic hardships. The project seeks to bridge this gap by providing tailored support, capacity-building, and pathways to a brighter future.

- **Importance of Selecting Appropriate Project Beneficiaries**

Selecting the right beneficiaries is pivotal to the success of the project. By identifying and engaging with those who are most in need and who stand to benefit the most, we ensure that the project's efforts are impactful and sustainable. Effective beneficiary selection allows the project team to allocate resources, design interventions, and deliver training that aligns with the unique challenges and aspirations of each individual. This personalized approach enhances the likelihood of successful outcomes and positive impact.

- **Understanding NEET Youth in Macedonia and Serbia**

NEET youth form a marginalized segment of our societies. They often face cycles of unemployment, limited educational opportunities, and a lack of essential life and employability skills. Through the user mapping process, we aim to gain a deep understanding of their situations, aspirations, and barriers. This understanding is essential in crafting interventions that address their needs and facilitate their reintegration into education, training, or employment pathways.

- **Targeting Youth at Risk**

In addition to NEET youth, our focus extends to youth at risk of becoming disengaged. By identifying these individuals early on, we can prevent their transition into the NEET category and provide timely interventions to steer them toward positive trajectories.

- **Empowering Through Data and Insights**

The user mapping process goes beyond mere data collection. It empowers us with insights that drive evidence-based decision-making. By understanding the complexities of the challenges faced by NEET youth and at-risk youth, we can create tailor-made strategies that lead to their holistic development and integration into society.

In conclusion, the user mapping process serves as the compass that guides the project's journey. Through an in-depth understanding of the beneficiaries and their needs, we ensure that our efforts are impactful, sustainable, and transformative. By investing in the future of NEET youth and youth at risk, we are changing individual lives and contributing to the overall development and prosperity of our communities in RNM and Serbia.

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3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology we've chosen acts as a trustworthy guide in our quest to understand vocational education and employment training (VEET) in North Macedonia and Serbia. Our approach combines careful data collection from surveys and research, allowing us to uncover the complex challenges and promising opportunities faced by the target group. Analyzing both survey responses and desk research findings gives us a comprehensive picture that shapes our conclusions and recommendations. This method not only ensures the reliability of our insights but also makes our proposed actions more valid. With this chosen approach, we're embarking on a journey to shed light on practical ways to enhance employability and skill development.

- **Participatory Selection Process**

The participatory selection process involves engaging project partners, peer experts, and stakeholders to identify and select beneficiaries collaboratively. This approach ensures that the beneficiaries' voices are heard and their needs and aspirations are considered in the selection process. The aim is to create a sense of ownership and empowerment among the beneficiaries, fostering a more inclusive and effective project.

- **Interview Process**

Before conducting interviews, project partners and peer experts are trained on ethical considerations, interview techniques, and data protection regulations.

Potential beneficiaries are identified through community networks, local organizations, and outreach efforts. Efforts are made to ensure diversity in terms of gender, age, socio-economic background, and geographic location. Prior to interviews, participants are informed about the purpose of the interviews and the confidentiality of their information.

A structured questionnaire is developed to gather relevant information. The questionnaire is designed to stimulate an understanding of demographics, challenges, aspirations, skills, motivations, and feedback on project activities. Interviews are conducted in-person or virtually, based on participant preferences. Project partner representatives and peer experts lead interviews as trained facilitators.

During interviews, active listening techniques are employed to encourage participants to share their experiences openly. Open-ended questions allow for comprehensive responses.

Interviews are conducted in a private and respectful environment. Participants' personal data is handled with the utmost care and in compliance with data protection laws.

Detailed notes or recordings of the interviews are taken, ensuring accuracy in capturing participants' insights.

- **Tools and Techniques**

A structured questionnaire with a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions ensures consistency in data collection and enables quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Open-ended questions allow participants to share their stories, challenges, and aspirations in their own words.

Interviewers employ active listening skills to create a comfortable environment for participants to express themselves.

Interviewers take detailed notes during interviews or record them, ensuring accurate documentation of responses.

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Comparing interview data with other data sources helps validate the reliability of the findings.

- **Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the interview process, ethical considerations are paramount. Participants' consent, privacy, and data protection rights are respected. Personal information is kept confidential, and data is used solely for project purposes.

By using a participatory approach and employing a well-structured interview process, the methodology ensures that the voices of the beneficiaries are central to the project, fostering inclusivity, empowerment, and accurate insights that guide the project's direction.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Desk research findings and information

This desk research provides insights into Vocational Education and Employment Training (VEET) status in Serbia and North Macedonia, focusing on its role in addressing unemployment, skill gaps, and economic challenges. VEET programs aim to bridge the gap between education and the job market by imparting practical skills relevant to specific industries and occupations. Recognized as vital for tackling unemployment and contributing to economic growth, VEET has gained prominence.

Serbia recognizes the importance of VEET in addressing its unemployment, skill gaps, and economic challenges.

The NEET rate, representing young individuals not engaged in employment, education, or training, notably stood at 18.9% in 2019 in Serbia. This figure marked a substantial decline of 5.6 percentage points compared to the 2015 statistics. This decrease signifies a positive trend wherein young people in Serbia have either encountered improved employment opportunities, leading to easier job attainment or have chosen to extend their participation in educational pursuits over the observed period.

The country faces a considerable unemployment rate, particularly among its youth. To tackle this issue, Serbia has taken several measures:

- The Serbian government has implemented policies to promote VEET as a means of enhancing employability. The Employment Strategy of the Republic of Serbia 2021–2026 emphasizes the role of vocational training in reducing unemployment, particularly for youth.
- Collaboration between educational institutions and industries is a key focus. Partnerships ensure that VEET programs align with industry needs, increasing graduates' chances of finding relevant employment.
- Serbia has been working on modernizing VEET curricula to meet the changing demands of the job market. This involves incorporating technical and soft skills required by industries.
- Efforts are being made to invest in training facilities, instructors, and equipment to provide high-quality VEET programs. This investment is crucial to ensure graduates are well-prepared for their chosen professions.
- The government actively promotes VEET among students, parents, and employers to increase participation. Raising awareness about the benefits of VEET helps change perceptions and encourages enrollment.



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Similarly, North Macedonia has recognized VEET as a solution to its unemployment, skill gaps, and economic challenges. The country faces high youth unemployment rates and strives to address these issues through the following strategies:

- North Macedonia's EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR 2018-2025 focuses on the importance of VEET. It outlines measures to improve the quality and relevance of vocational education to meet the demands of the labour market.
- Collaboration with industries is crucial to tailor VEET programs to market needs. Through partnerships, North Macedonia aims to ensure that graduates possess the skills required by employers.
- The country is working to modernize and adapt VEET curricula to align with technological advancements and evolving industry requirements. This ensures that graduates are equipped with up-to-date skills.
- North Macedonia established a Skills Development Fund to support vocational training initiatives. This fund helps finance training programs that target skill gaps and promote employability.
- North Macedonia has introduced job placement programs to help VEET graduates transition smoothly into the workforce. These programs connect graduates with potential employers, increasing their chances of finding suitable employment.

In conclusion, both Serbia and North Macedonia are actively focusing on the role of VEET in addressing unemployment, skill gaps, and economic challenges. By implementing policies, fostering industry collaborations, modernizing curricula, and raising awareness, these countries aim to equip their workforce with the necessary skills for sustainable economic growth and reduced unemployment rates.

The two countries share significant youth unemployment issues. VEET programs have the potential to combat this by equipping young people with skills that match market demands. Traditional education systems often result in a skills mismatch, but VEET offers targeted and practical training addressing this disparity. Governments in both countries have shown support for VEET initiatives, leveraging policies, funding, and collaborations with educational institutions and industries.

Effective VEET programs involve industry partnerships to ensure training aligns with market needs. These programs focus on technical skills and soft skills like communication and problem-solving, enhancing employability. Challenges include funding constraints and adapting to changing industries, which present opportunities for innovation. VEET should consider regional economic conditions and industry demands.

Recommendations for strengthening VEET include enhancing industry partnerships, investing in quality training resources, promoting awareness of program benefits, and developing pathways for graduates to transition smoothly into the workforce. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of VEET outcomes are crucial for improvement.

In conclusion, VEET programs can significantly impact unemployment, skill development, and economic growth in Serbia and North Macedonia. By addressing skill mismatches and fostering collaboration between education and industry, VEET contributes to a resilient and prosperous workforce in both countries.

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4.2. Interviews

4.2.1 General information about the structure and profile of the interviewees

In the research process and activities, during the planned period, a total of 187 interviews were conducted out of 200 individuals planned according to the project objectives and methodology.

The survey conducted among the respondents aimed to gain insights into the general structure and profile of the interviewees. The participants were individuals from various backgrounds, with diverse characteristics that shed light on their socio-economic status, educational attainment, family situations, employment status, and aspirations. Here is a summary of the general information about the structure and profile of the interviewees: Most respondents (39) had completed elementary school, indicating a basic level of formal education. Secondary school graduates accounted for 32 respondents, suggesting a slightly higher educational attainment. Only one respondent reported having no education, while 17 respondents did not provide information about their education.

The participants' marital status varied, with 44 respondents being married and 35 respondents not married. One respondent indicated being divorced, and one was a single mother.

The family size ranged from 2 to 14 members, with different configurations and familial relationships.

Many interviewees reported a challenging economic situation. Some referred to it as "very bad" or "bad."

The financial stability of their households seemed to vary, with some relying solely on social assistance.

Seasonal work and contributions from family members were also mentioned as sources of income.

The employment status was diverse, with a significant number of participants (79) being unemployed.

Some respondents were employed, working in various sectors such as the private, public, and self-employment sectors.

Seasonal work and irregular employment were common among respondents.

The participants' housing situations were varied, including living in rented apartments, owned apartments, individual residential buildings, and public care facilities.

Some respondents lived with their families in houses.

Respondents expressed a range of aspirations, including wanting to work in various sectors like the private sector, public sector, self-employment, and family businesses.

Some participants showed interest in vocational training to improve their employability.

Various challenges were mentioned, such as lack of transport, financial constraints, and lack of time.

Some respondents highlighted their vulnerable status, including being adopted children or individuals with special needs.

Gender distribution in Serbia was relatively balanced, with 50 female respondents and 52 male respondents.

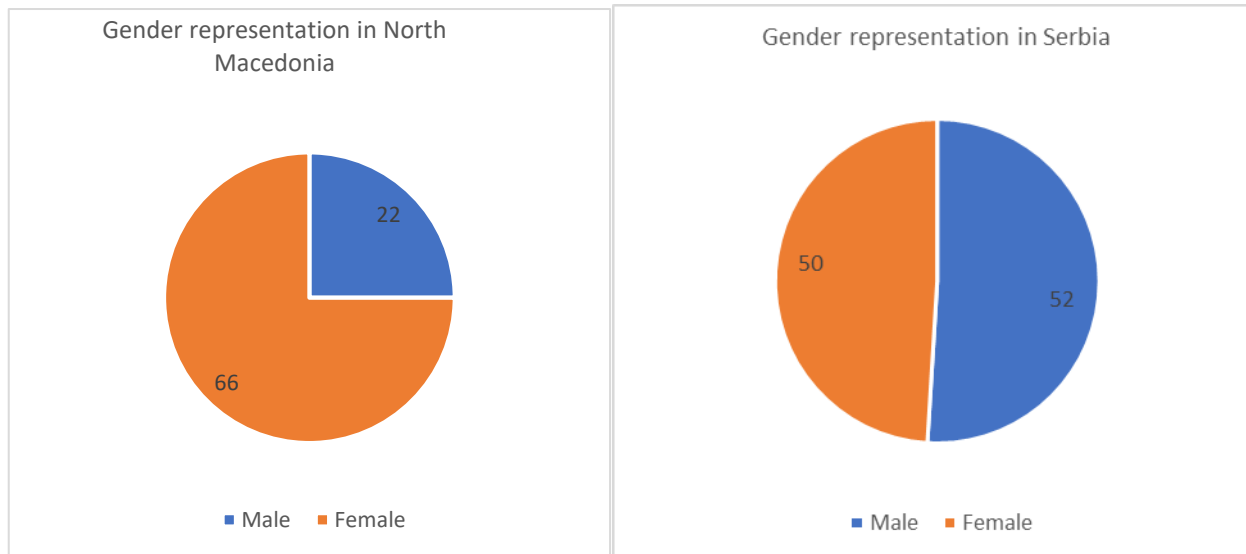
Different ethnic backgrounds were represented among the respondents, including Serbian and Roma ethnicities.

Several respondents indicated proficiency in languages like English, Serbian, German, and Roma.

In North Macedonia, the percentage of female respondents was 75%, while male respondents were 25%.

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Overall, the interviewees' profiles reflect diverse individuals facing various socio-economic challenges and opportunities. Their aspirations for vocational training and employment highlight the importance of tailored interventions to enhance their skills and improve their overall quality of life.

4.2.2 Key challenges for the target group

Serbia

The responses from the questionnaire provide insights into the key challenges faced by the target group, shedding light on the difficulties and barriers that the respondents encounter in their daily lives. These challenges encompass various aspects of their socio-economic circumstances. Here are the key challenges identified based on the responses:

- Many respondents mentioned facing challenging economic situations, describing them as "bad" or "very bad." A significant number of respondents reported relying on social assistance as a primary source of income. Limited access to stable employment and financial instability were recurrent themes.
- A large proportion of respondents indicated being unemployed. For those who were employed, many mentioned working in temporary or seasonal jobs. Underemployment and the lack of consistent income opportunities were evident challenges.
- Most respondents had completed only elementary school or secondary school education. Limited education can hinder their access to higher-paying job opportunities and restrict their options for personal development.
- Respondents expressed a desire for vocational training to enhance their skills and employability. The lack of relevant skills and qualifications prevents them from accessing better job opportunities.
- Lack of transportation was highlighted as a challenge by some respondents. This barrier can limit their access to job opportunities, training programs, and other essential services.

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- Financial limitations were mentioned as a reason for being unable to participate in certain activities, including vocational training. Financial barriers restrict their ability to invest in personal and professional development.
- Many respondents indicated taking care of their families, including children and elderly relatives. Balancing family responsibilities with work and training opportunities can be challenging and limiting.
- Some respondents mentioned having health issues or disabilities. These challenges can further limit their options for employment and participation in various activities.
- Some respondents expressed being unaware of available opportunities, programs, and resources that could potentially improve their situation. Limited access to information affects their ability to make informed decisions.
- Respondents living in rural areas mentioned the scarcity of job opportunities and training programs in their regions, contributing to their economic challenges.
- A few respondents mentioned being from marginalized or minority groups. Discrimination based on ethnicity or other factors can hinder their access to equal opportunities.
- Respondents expressed an interest in specific professions, but many lacked the necessary skills and qualifications to pursue those professions effectively.
- Some respondents might lack self-confidence due to their economic situation or limited educational background, impacting their willingness to seek opportunities.
- A portion of respondents relied heavily on social assistance, highlighting a need for initiatives that promote self-sufficiency and reduce dependency.

The responses underline the target group's multi-faceted challenges, ranging from economic difficulties and limited education to barriers in accessing training and job opportunities. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that considers their unique circumstances and offers tailored solutions to improve their socio-economic conditions.

North Macedonia

The target group in North Macedonia, which includes individuals seeking to participate in Vocational Education and Employment Training (VEET) programs, faces several key challenges:

- North Macedonia has consistently struggled with high unemployment rates, particularly among its youth. Many individuals from the target group find it difficult to secure stable employment opportunities, leading to financial insecurity and limited career prospects.
- There is often a significant gap between the skills acquired through traditional education systems and the skills demanded by the job market. This skills mismatch leaves individuals from the target group ill-prepared to meet the requirements of available jobs and hinders their employability.
- Many individuals within the target group may not be fully aware of the benefits and opportunities provided by VEET programs. Limited awareness about these training initiatives can deter potential participants from enrolling, further perpetuating unemployment and skill gaps.

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- Access to quality education, including vocational training, can be unevenly distributed, especially in rural areas and disadvantaged communities. This limits the opportunities for individuals from the target group to acquire relevant skills and improve their employability.
- Many individuals within the target group may face financial challenges that prevent them from pursuing further education and training. The costs associated with vocational training, such as tuition fees, materials, and transportation, can be prohibitive for those with limited resources.
- Vocational education and training may sometimes be perceived as less prestigious compared to traditional academic paths. As a result, individuals from the target group might face societal pressure to pursue a university education, even if it does not align with their interests or career goals.
- The dynamic nature of industries and technological advancements can make it challenging for individuals to keep up with the evolving skill requirements. The target group may struggle to adapt to these changes, leading to further skill gaps and reduced employability.
- Some individuals within the target group might lack relevant work experience, making it challenging to secure employment even after completing VEET programs. Employers often seek candidates with practical experience, which can be a barrier for newcomers to the job market.
- Gender-based stereotypes and traditional roles can influence individuals' career choices within the target group. This can limit opportunities for women to enter certain fields and industries, contributing to gender-based skill gaps.
- Adequate career guidance and counselling services may be lacking for individuals from the target group. Without proper guidance, they might struggle to identify suitable career paths and make informed decisions about their education and training choices.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves policy reforms, increased access to quality education and training, awareness campaigns, financial support mechanisms, and efforts to bridge the gap between education and industry needs.

4.2.3 Detailed analyses of the questionnaire

The survey participants' educational backgrounds were as follows:

Serbia

No Education: 1 respondent.

Elementary School: 39 respondents had completed elementary school.

Secondary School: 32 respondents had completed secondary school.

No Information: 17 respondents did not provide information about their education.



Republic of Serbia

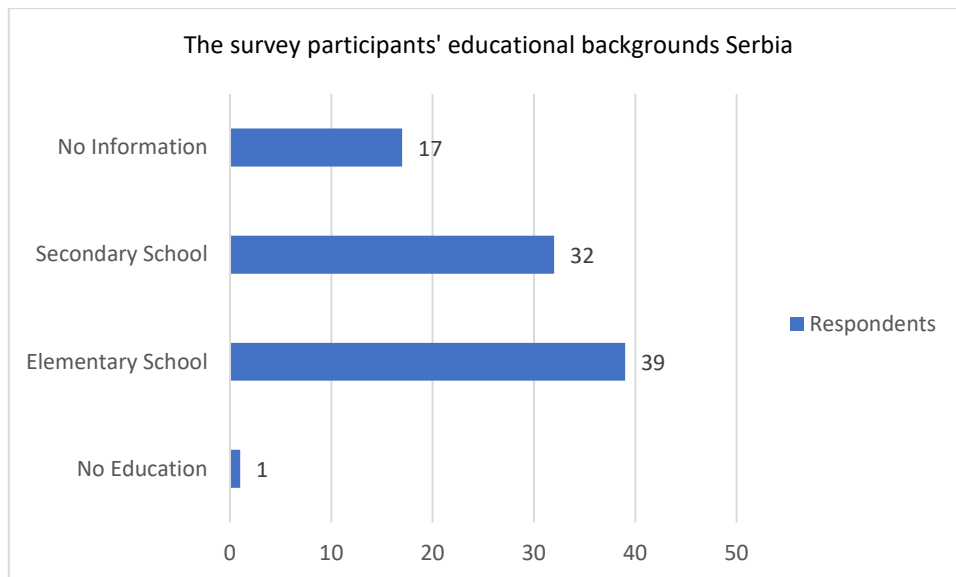


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The summary highlights the distribution of educational levels among the surveyed participants, indicating the proportions of those who had completed different levels of education and those who did not provide information about their education.

North Macedonia

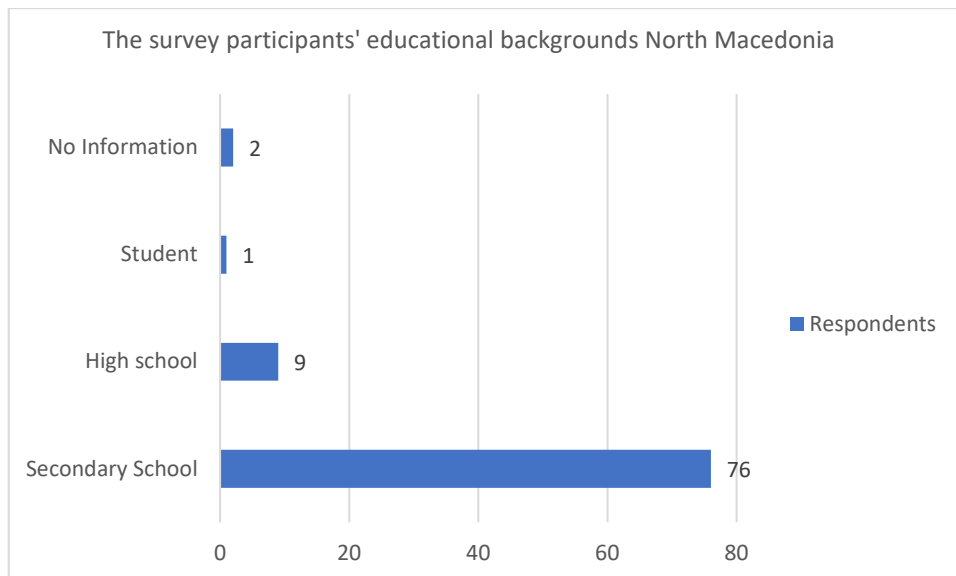
The educational profile of the Macedonian respondents is as follows:

Secondary School: The majority of respondents (76) indicated that they have completed secondary school.

High School: A smaller number of respondents (9) reported completing high school.

Student: Only 1 respondent mentioned being a student.

No Information: A few respondents (2) did not provide information about their education level.



The prevalence of respondents with a secondary school education underscores the importance of offering vocational training and skill development programs that cater to individuals with this level of education. These

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programs can equip them with practical skills and knowledge that enhance their employability and open up opportunities for their future careers. Additionally, the project team can explore strategies for reaching out to students and individuals with higher education aspirations to align their expectations with available training options.

Distribution of Professions

North Macedonia

A total of 87 respondents provided information about their professions.

Among these, 42 respondents mentioned specific professions, and 34 claimed that they had no profession.

Among the respondents with professions, 26 reported having no work experience in their stated professions, while 16 indicated having relevant experience.

Serbia

In Serbia, a total of 98 respondents provided information about their professions. Among these, 23 respondents mentioned specific professions. Of these respondents, ten (10) reported having no work experience in their stated professions, while 13 indicated relevant experience. Furthermore, 85 respondents did not specify their professions, making it essential to consider various skill levels and backgrounds when designing training and support programs.

For both countries, there is a significant majority of respondents indicated having no specific profession. For this group, vocational training programs could be tailored to provide foundational skills aligned with local job market demands. Training could cover areas such as basic computer literacy, customer service, soft skills, and introductory vocational courses that open pathways to various industries.

Incorporating the various professions and backgrounds of the responders into future training programs requires a customized approach. Tailoring training modules to align with each subgroup's skill sets and aspirations can enhance their employability, open new career pathways, and empower them to contribute effectively to their communities and the job market.

Also, the majority of respondents indicated that they have no prior work experience. This suggests that a significant portion of the target group lacks exposure to formal employment. Future activities could introduce foundational work-related skills, such as time management, teamwork, communication, and workplace etiquette, to address this. Additionally, introductory vocational training programs could be designed to provide hands-on experience in various industries, helping participants gain confidence and a sense of direction.

Potential Training Areas

The survey responses from both Serbia and North Macedonia reveal a diverse range of professions and career aspirations among the respondents. These findings provide opportunities for future training programs tailored to the specific needs and backgrounds of these individuals.

Professions mentioned by respondents in both countries encompass a wide spectrum, including technical trades like Mechanic, Carpenter, and Electrician, creative roles like Makeup Artist, and service-based positions such as Waiter and Medical Sister. These varied professions suggest potential areas for focused training programs.

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For instance, professionals in the beauty industry, like Cosmetic Artists and Hairdressers, could benefit from advanced training in the latest techniques, salon management, and customer relationship management. Continuous education for Medical Sisters and Mechanics is essential to ensure they stay updated with the latest practices and technologies in their respective fields.

Musicians, a significant subgroup among the respondents, may benefit from training in entrepreneurial skills, marketing, event planning, and industry networking, aligning with opportunities in the music-related industries. In conclusion, these findings emphasize the importance of customized training and skill development programs that cater to the specific skill sets, career aspirations, and industry demands in both Serbia and North Macedonia. By aligning training initiatives with the diverse professions and needs of the respondents, we can enhance their employability, foster career growth, and contribute to the overall development of these regions.

Serbia

The survey responses reveal a diverse range of professions among the responders, with varying skill sets and backgrounds. Here is a summary of the occupations mentioned and their potential fit in future training programs in Serbia:

- Tiles, Medical Sister, Mechanic, Technician, Carpenter, Painter, Electrician, Tailor, Hairdresser, and Make-up Artist (1 respondent): This group represents a mix of skilled professions that encompass various fields, such as construction, technical trades, and creative services. These individuals possess specific technical skills that could potentially be further developed through advanced training, workshops, or specialized courses. Training programs can focus on enhancing their existing expertise, updating them on industry trends, and offering certifications to improve their employability.
- Musicians (12 respondents): Musicians form a significant subgroup among the responders. While their skill set may not directly align with traditional vocational training, there could be opportunities to explore music-related industries, such as entertainment, event management, or music education. Training could focus on entrepreneurial skills, marketing, event planning, and networking within the music industry to maximize their career prospects.
- Medical Sister (1 respondent): The medical field offers specialized training and career advancement opportunities. While the single respondent in this category is already a medical sister, there could be scope for further professional development through advanced medical courses, specialization programs, or healthcare administration and management workshops.
- Mechanic (1 respondent): Mechanics possess valuable technical skills that could be honed through advanced training in specific areas, such as automotive technology, machinery repair, or specialized vehicle maintenance. Training programs could focus on modern diagnostic techniques, industry certifications, and emerging technologies in the automotive sector.

North Macedonia

The respondents from North Macedonia exhibit a broad array of professions and career aspirations, reflecting the rich diversity of roles they are currently engaged in or aspire to pursue. These encompass occupations ranging from dry cleaning of furniture and cars, economy technician, economy psychologist to lash artist, waiter, medical

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sister, mechanic, hairdresser, administrator, and teacher. However, it's worth noting that some respondents did not specify their profession or provide any information regarding it.

Below is a summary of the professions mentioned by respondents in North Macedonia and their potential fit in future training programs:

- Dry Cleaning of Furniture and Cars, Economy Technician, Economy Psychologist: This group represents a mix of professions, including service-based roles and those related to economics and psychology. Training programs could focus on enhancing their specific skills, business management, customer service, and industry-specific knowledge. For example, those in dry cleaning could benefit from workshops on modern cleaning techniques, equipment handling, and customer relations. At the same time, economy professionals might engage in courses related to financial analysis or economic forecasting.
- Cosmetic Artist, Hairdresser: Individuals in the beauty industry, such as decorative artists and hairdressers, could benefit from advanced training in the latest beauty techniques, salon management, and customer relationship management. Programs could emphasize staying updated with the latest trends, sanitation practices, and client consultation skills to excel in these competitive fields.
- Waiter: Waiters often work in the hospitality sector, which requires excellent customer service and communication skills. Training programs could emphasize customer relations, etiquette, time management, and teamwork. Upskilling in wine or food knowledge could also enhance their career opportunities.
- Medical Sister: The healthcare field provides numerous opportunities for career development. Medical sisters can benefit from specialized training in areas like patient care, nursing techniques, or healthcare administration. Continuous education ensures they are updated with the latest medical practices and technologies.
- Mechanic: Mechanics possess valuable technical skills that could be honed through advanced training in specific areas, such as automotive technology, machinery repair, or specialized vehicle maintenance. Training programs could focus on modern diagnostic techniques, industry certifications, and emerging technologies in the automotive sector.
- Administrator: Administrators often work in office environments where organizational and managerial skills are crucial. Training programs can offer courses in office management, software proficiency, project management, and leadership to enhance their administrative abilities.
- Teacher: Teachers play a pivotal role in education. Continuous professional development is essential for them to stay updated with modern teaching methodologies, curriculum changes, and student engagement strategies. Training programs can offer workshops and courses related to pedagogy, technology integration, and student assessment.

Employment status

The employment status data gathered from the respondents provides valuable insights into their current engagement in the job market. Here is a summary of the responses and potential implications for the report:

Serbia



Republic of Serbia



Republic of North Macedonia

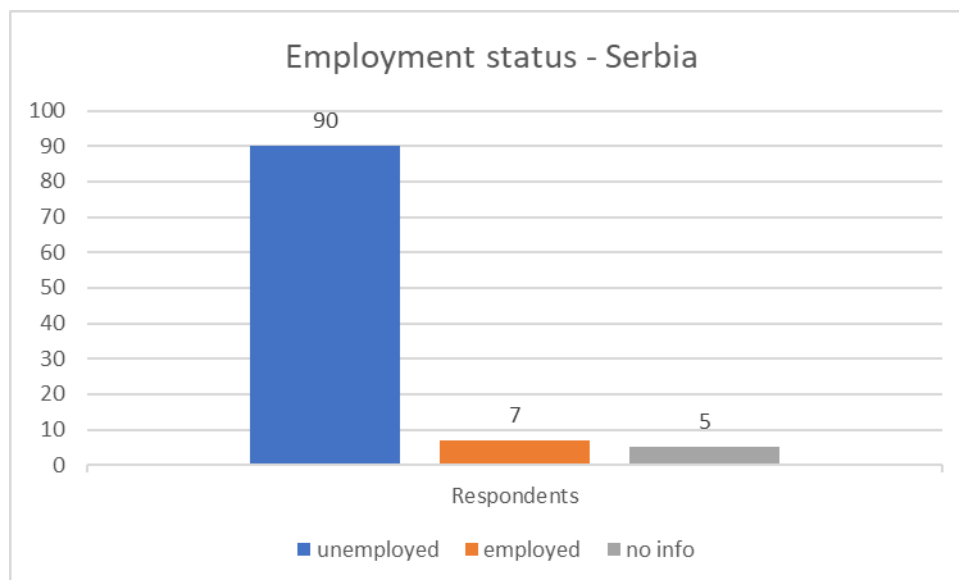


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Unemployed (90 respondents) - The majority of respondents indicated that they are currently unemployed. This highlights a significant challenge the target group faces, as a considerable portion lacks consistent income and opportunities for stable employment. It is essential to emphasize the urgent need for interventions that address this unemployment issue. The further steps should propose strategies and programs focusing on job placement, skill development, and creating pathways to sustainable employment. It's also crucial to explore the underlying reasons for unemployment, such as lack of skills, limited access to job opportunities, or other barriers, in order to develop targeted solutions.

Employed (7 respondents) - A smaller subgroup reported being employed. While their numbers are fewer, understanding the types of jobs they are engaged in can provide insights into sectors with potential employment opportunities for the target group. These insights can guide the development of specialized training programs that align with the demands of these sectors. Additionally, exploring the conditions and terms of their employment can shed light on issues such as job stability, benefits, and wages, which can inform recommendations for improving the quality of work.



No Information (4 respondents) - Respondents who did not provide information about their employment status should be approached for further clarification. Collecting this data is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the current employment landscape among the target group.

The employment status of the respondents from North Macedonia provides valuable insights into the current labour market situation and the challenges individuals seeking employment face. Here is a summary of the employment status based on the responses:



Republic of Serbia



Republic of North Macedonia



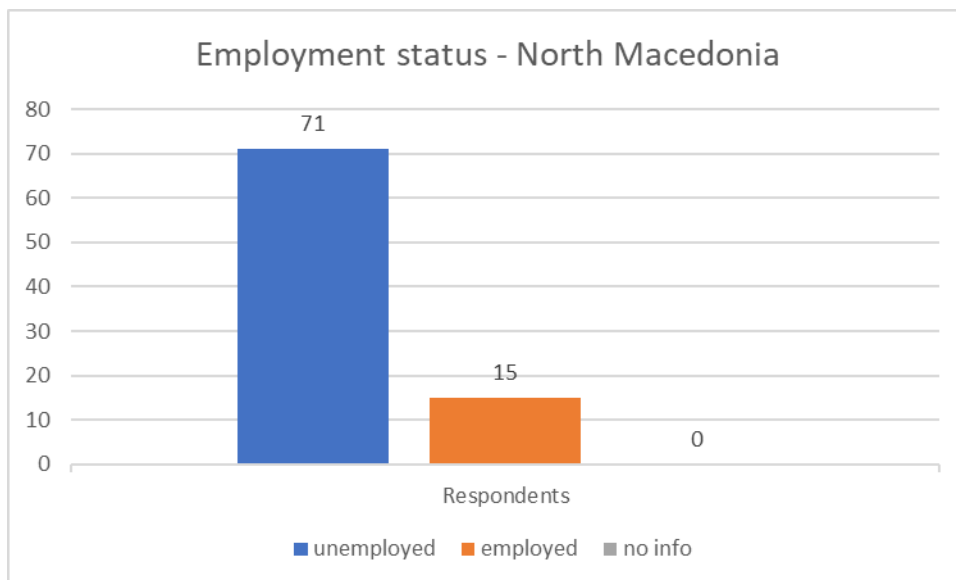
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Unemployed Respondents (71)

A significant number of respondents, 71 in total, reported being unemployed. This highlights a notable proportion of the surveyed population currently without regular employment.

Unemployment can significantly affect individuals' financial well-being, career prospects, and overall quality of life.



Employed Respondents (15)

Fifteen respondents indicated that they are currently employed. While this is a smaller proportion compared to the number of unemployed respondents, it suggests that some individuals have managed to secure employment opportunities. It's important to consider the nature of these jobs, whether full-time, part-time, or temporary, to understand the employment landscape better.

Summary of Preferred Employment Sectors in Macedonia and Serbia

The preferences for employment sectors among NEET youth and individuals in Macedonia and Serbia provide valuable insights into the career aspirations and economic inclinations of the target groups in both countries.

In both countries, respondents displayed a spectrum of sector preferences:

- **Public Sector** - A portion of respondents in both Macedonia and Serbia expressed a preference for working in the public sector. This inclination may stem from the perceived stability and benefits associated with public employment.
- **Private Sector** -The private sector garnered substantial interest among respondents in both countries, indicating openness to diverse job opportunities within private companies.
- **Self-Employed and Small Businesses** - Self-employment and involvement in small businesses emerged as significant preferences in both Macedonia and Serbia. This entrepreneurial spirit reflects a pursuit of independence and potential entrepreneurial opportunities.



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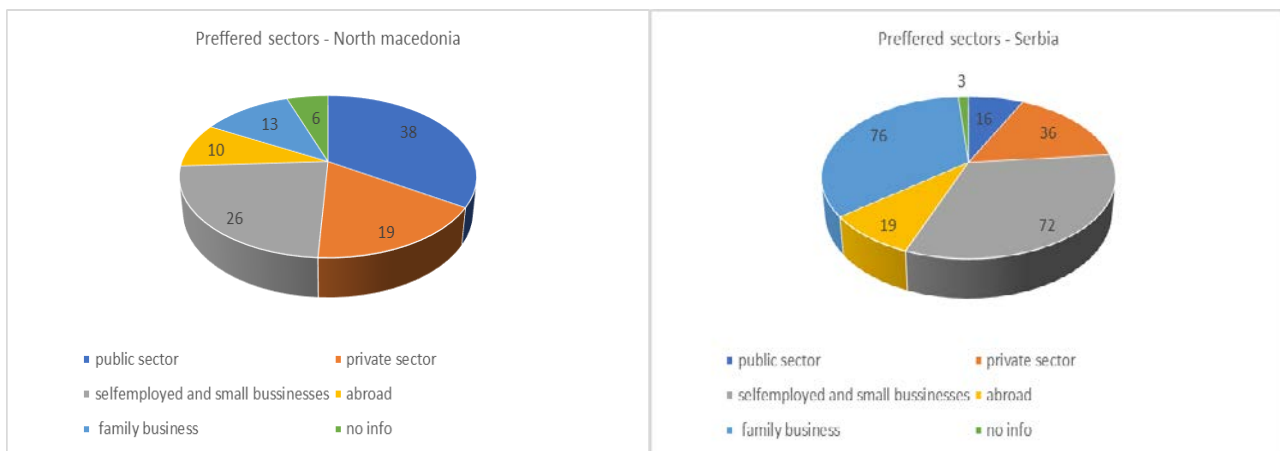


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- **Abroad** - Some respondents in both countries contemplated seeking job opportunities abroad, signalling an openness to international career prospects and cross-border experiences.
- **Small and Family Business** - Working in small or family-owned businesses appealed to respondents in both countries, emphasizing the importance of familial ties and traditional business structures in the region.
- **No Information Provided** - A minority of respondents in both countries did not specify their sector preferences.

These sector preferences reflect the diverse career aspirations and economic inclinations of NEET youth and individuals in both Macedonia and Serbia. Understanding these preferences is crucial for tailoring vocational training and employment support programs to align with the specific needs and interests of the target groups in each country. Such tailored interventions can facilitate smoother transitions into the job market and effectively empower NEET youth and individuals to pursue their desired career paths.



Analysis of Responses Regarding the Significance of Vocational Training

The responses regarding the significance of vocational training among NEET youth and individuals in Serbia and North Macedonia offer valuable insights into their perceptions and expectations of such training programs.

Serbia

- **Last Chance (26 respondents)**- A notable portion of respondents in Serbia view vocational training as a "last chance." This perspective suggests that these individuals likely see vocational training as a lifeline to improve their employability and prospects when other options have been exhausted. It may reflect a sense of urgency and a strong desire to transition into employment or education.
- **Opportunity to Find Out What I Want (70 respondents)** - A substantial majority of respondents in Serbia consider vocational training as an "opportunity to find out what I want." This perception indicates that many NEET youth in Serbia view vocational training as a means to explore their interests, identify their



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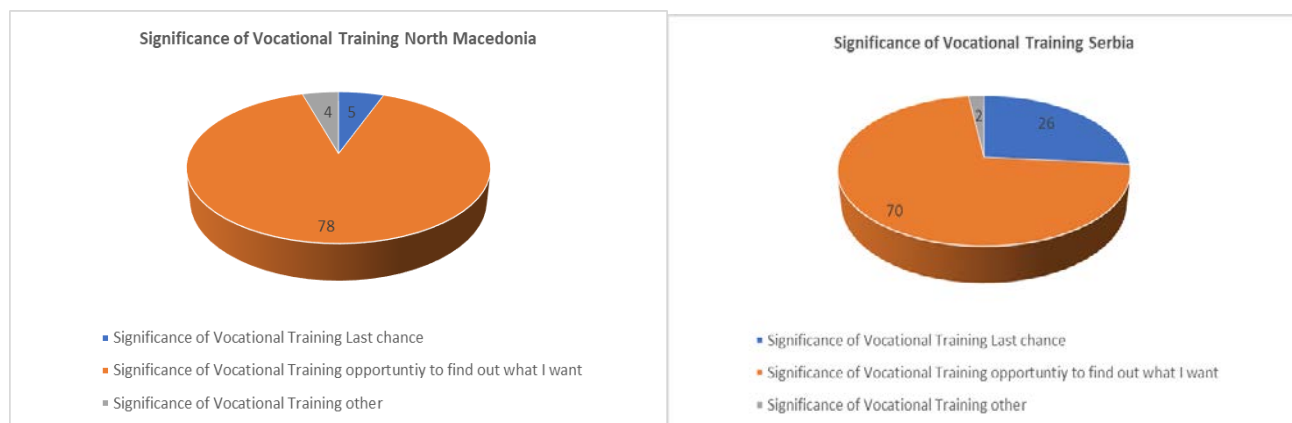
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career goals, and gain clarity about their professional aspirations. It suggests that they see vocational training as a pathway to self-discovery and personal growth.

- **Other (2 respondents)** - A very small number of respondents provided responses categorized as "other." Without specific details on these responses, it is challenging to discern the precise nature of their perspectives.

North Macedonia

- **Last Chance (5 respondents)** - In North Macedonia, a limited number of respondents perceive vocational training as a "last chance." This mirrors the sentiment expressed by some respondents in Serbia, indicating that a subset of NEET youth in North Macedonia may also feel that vocational training represents a crucial opportunity to improve their prospects.
- **Opportunity to Find Out What I Want (78 respondents)** - The overwhelming majority of respondents in North Macedonia view vocational training as an "opportunity to find out what I want." This aligns closely with the perspective of the majority of respondents in Serbia. It underscores the shared sentiment that vocational training is a platform for self-discovery and career exploration among NEET youth in both countries.
- **Other (4 respondents)** - A small number of respondents in North Macedonia provided responses categorized as "other." Similar to the situation in Serbia, the absence of specific details makes interpreting the precise nature of these responses challenging.



Overall, the analysis reveals a common theme in both Serbia and North Macedonia: Vocational training is primarily perceived as an "opportunity to find out what I want" by most respondents in both countries. This shared perspective highlights the importance of designing vocational training programs that impart valuable skills and provide a space for personal and professional development, allowing NEET youth to explore their interests, identify their career goals, and enhance their employability effectively. Understanding these perceptions can inform the development of more relevant and impactful vocational training initiatives for NEET youth in both countries.



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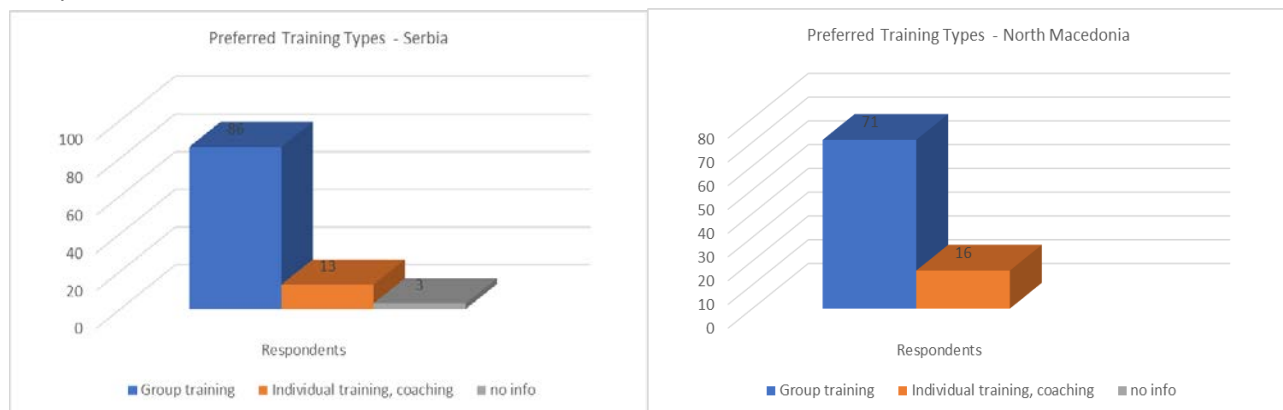
Analysis of Preferred Training Types in Serbia and North Macedonia

The responses regarding preferred types of training among NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth and individuals in both Serbia and North Macedonia indicate shared preferences and trends:

Group Training Preference - Across both countries, a significant majority of respondents express a preference for "Group Training." This prevailing preference highlights the value placed on collaborative and interactive learning experiences within this demographic. Group training environments are opportunities for peer learning, skill sharing, teamwork, and networking. NEET youth in both countries appear to appreciate the social and engaging aspects of group training.

Individual Training, Coaching Preference - While a smaller segment of respondents in Serbia and North Macedonia prefers "Individual Training, Coaching," this preference is still notable. It suggests that some NEET youth in both countries may have specific learning needs or seek personalized guidance. Individual training and coaching are viewed as avenues to effectively address unique challenges and aspirations. This preference underscores the importance of offering flexible training options to cater to diverse learning styles.

No Information Provided- In both countries, a limited number of respondents did not provide information about their preferred training type. Without specific details on these responses, it is challenging to discern the reasons for their lack of response. However, it's important to recognize that this group represents a minority in the overall sample.



Overall, the analysis reveals that NEET youth in both Serbia and North Macedonia share a common preference for "Group Training." The desire for collaborative and interactive learning experiences appears to be a consistent theme. However, the presence of a subset of respondents who prefer "Individual Training, Coaching" highlights the importance of flexibility in training program design. To effectively meet the diverse preferences and learning needs of NEET youth, training initiatives should strive to strike a balance between group learning dynamics and personalized support.



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Analysis of Preferred Training Schedule in Serbia and North Macedonia

The responses regarding the preferred training schedule among NEET youth and individuals in both Serbia and North Macedonia reveal distinct preferences and considerations:

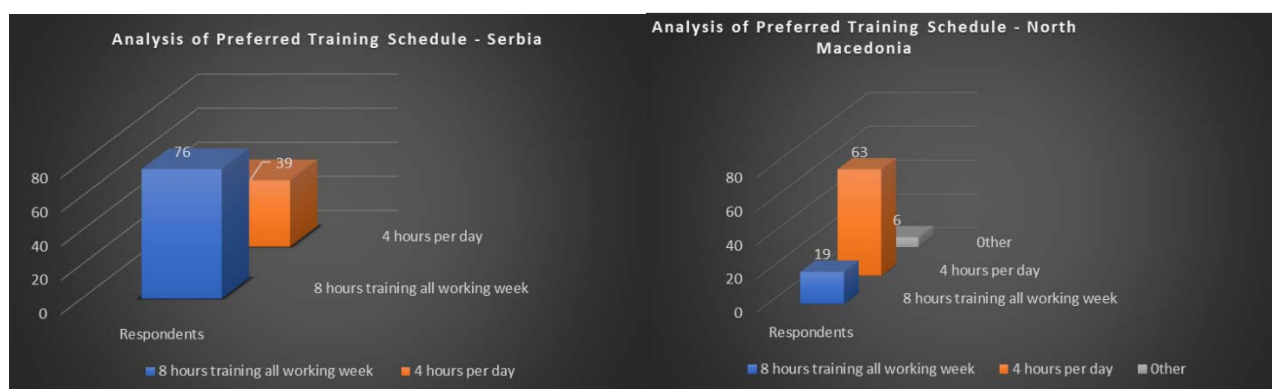
8 Hours Training All Working Week - In Serbia, a significant majority of respondents (76) prefer the option of "8 hours training all working week." This choice suggests that many NEET youth in Serbia are open to dedicating full workdays to training programs. It could indicate a readiness to commit substantial time and effort to skill development and education.

In contrast, a smaller percentage of respondents (19) favors this option in North Macedonia. The preference for this schedule is less pronounced in North Macedonia, indicating that a majority of NEET youth in this country may have different scheduling considerations or commitments that limit their availability for full workweek training.

4 Hours Per Day - In Serbia, 39 respondents prefer "4 hours per day" as their training schedule. This option allows for shorter daily training periods, possibly accommodating other responsibilities or commitments that respondents may have, such as part-time work, caregiving duties, or personal obligations.

Conversely, in North Macedonia, a substantial majority of respondents (63) prefer "4 hours per day." This preference for shorter daily training sessions is notably higher in North Macedonia compared to Serbia. It suggests that NEET youth in North Macedonia may value flexibility and must balance training with other activities or responsibilities.

Other - In North Macedonia, six respondents mentioned "other" preferences for their training schedules. While the specific details of these preferences are not provided, it highlights the diversity of scheduling needs among NEET youth in North Macedonia. These responses might encompass a range of alternative schedules or unique considerations.



The analysis indicates that NEET youth in Serbia tend to favor "8 hours training all working week," whereas those in North Macedonia predominantly prefer "4 hours per day." These preferences likely reflect variations in daily routines, commitments, and lifestyle factors between the two countries. Training program planners should be attentive to these preferences and strive to offer flexible scheduling options to effectively accommodate the needs of NEET youth.



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Analysis of Reasons for Not Taking Courses in Serbia and North Macedonia

The responses in both Serbia and North Macedonia reveal common and distinct factors influencing their decisions not to take courses.

No Transport

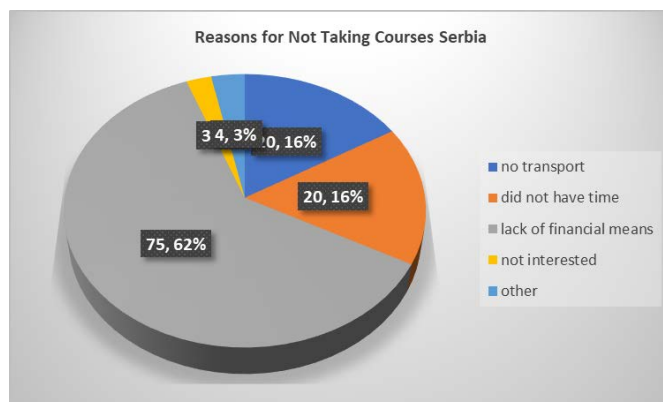
Both countries identified "no transport" as a significant barrier. In Serbia, 20 respondents cited this reason, while 31 respondents mentioned it in North Macedonia. This suggests that transportation challenges are a shared issue among NEET youth in these countries.

Time Constraints

"Did not have time" was cited by 20 respondents in Serbia and 39 respondents in North Macedonia. This common response highlights the time-related barriers NEET youth face in both countries, potentially due to various commitments.

Financial Constraints

In Serbia, 75 respondents mentioned "lack of financial means," indicating that financial barriers are a considerable challenge for NEET youth in the country. In North Macedonia, only 5 respondents cited this reason, implying that financial constraints are less pronounced.



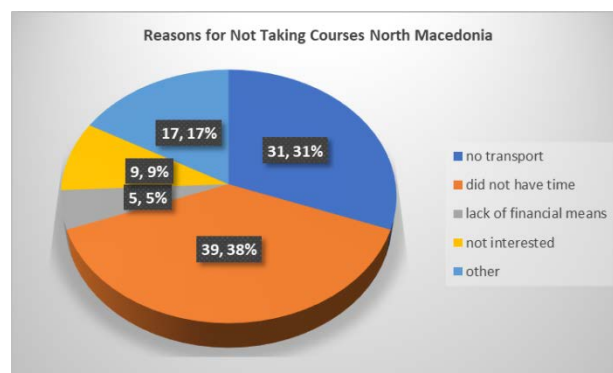
Not Interested

In Serbia, only three respondents indicated "not interested" as a reason for not taking courses, suggesting a relatively small portion of NEET youth lack interest in educational opportunities.

In North Macedonia, a slightly larger number (9) cited "not interested," indicating a comparatively larger group that may require additional motivation to pursue courses.

Other Reasons

Both countries had respondents providing "other" reasons for not taking courses. These could encompass unique and varied barriers not captured by the predefined options.



In summary, transportation issues and time constraints are common challenges NEET youth share in Serbia and North Macedonia. While financial barriers are more prominent in Serbia, a relatively larger portion of NEET youth in North Macedonia expressed disinterest in courses. These findings underscore the need for tailored interventions to address these distinct challenges and effectively motivate NEET youth to engage in education and training programs.

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4.2.4 Key Observations

Serbia

High Unemployment Rate - The relatively high number of unemployed respondents indicates potential challenges in finding suitable job opportunities in the current labour market.

Need for Employment Opportunities - The large portion of unemployed respondents underscores the need for interventions that promote job creation, skill development, and opportunities for economic inclusion.

Also reflected below is a graph illustrating the respondents' aspirations for their desired future jobs:

Addressing the skills gap between available job opportunities and the skills possessed by job seekers is crucial for reducing unemployment rates.

By addressing the unemployment issue and enabling individuals to secure stable employment, there is potential for positive impacts on economic growth and stability.

Implications for Future Activities

Developing skill enhancement programs that align with the job market's needs can empower unemployed individuals with the competencies required by employers.

Creating platforms for job seekers to connect with potential employers or explore networking opportunities can facilitate job placements.

Promoting entrepreneurship and providing resources for starting small businesses could offer alternative avenues for income generation.

Tailoring training programs to address specific industries and sectors with demand for skilled workers can increase employment opportunities.

The findings suggest a need for comprehensive strategies that address unemployment through a combination of skill development, job creation, and support for entrepreneurship. Efforts to align training programs with the demands of the job market and to foster collaborations between educational institutions, employers, and government agencies can contribute to reducing unemployment rates and improving economic prospects for the respondents.

In the report, it's vital to highlight the imbalance between the number of unemployed individuals and those who are employed. This emphasizes the primary challenge of unemployment that the project aims to address. The report should advocate for implementing tailored programs that enhance employability, offer skill-building opportunities, and create connections to potential employers. The project can significantly contribute to their economic empowerment and overall well-being by addressing the high unemployment rate within the target group.

North Macedonia

The significant number of respondents who are unemployed reflects the prevailing challenge of limited job opportunities in the current job market in North Macedonia.

The presence of a considerable number of young unemployed individuals underscores the urgency of addressing youth unemployment and equipping them with relevant skills for the job market.

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The disconnect between available jobs and the skills possessed by job seekers highlights the importance of bridging the skills gap to enhance employability.

The need to create pathways for economic inclusion is evident, particularly for marginalized and disadvantaged groups that face barriers to accessing employment.

Implications for Future Activities

Designing targeted skill development programs that align with industry demands can enhance the employability of individuals and reduce unemployment rates.

Establishing mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities can provide young job seekers with practical experience and a smoother transition into the workforce.

Promoting initiatives encouraging entrepreneurship and offering resources for starting small businesses can diversify income sources and foster economic independence.

Collaborating with industries to shape training programs according to their needs can enhance the relevance of skills acquired and increase job placement rates.

The findings emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach that addresses unemployment through skills enhancement, job creation, and inclusive economic strategies. Tailoring training programs to specific sectors, fostering partnerships between education and industry, and leveraging support from governmental and non-governmental organizations can collectively contribute to reducing unemployment and improving the economic prospects of respondents.

In the report, it's essential to highlight the challenges young job seekers and marginalized groups face in accessing employment opportunities. By advocating for a holistic approach that combines skills development, entrepreneurship support, and industry collaboration, the project can work towards addressing these challenges and creating a more inclusive and economically empowered society. The report should emphasize the significance of equipping individuals with relevant skills to meet job market demands and stress the potential positive impact on individual lives and the country's economic growth.

5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The combined analysis of responses from Serbia and North Macedonia provides valuable insights into the profiles, challenges, and aspirations of NEET youth and individuals in these regions. These conclusions underscore the shared issues and needs across both countries, emphasizing the importance of tailored interventions to address these challenges effectively:

- A significant number of respondents, particularly in Serbia, have completed only elementary school education. This highlights the necessity for customized educational programs aimed at enhancing their skills and qualifications to increase employability.

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- The data indicates persistently high unemployment rates among the target group in both countries. This underscores the urgent need for interventions focused on job creation, vocational training, and career guidance to combat this pressing challenge.
- Many respondents in both countries expressed uncertainty about their future professions or lacked specific professions altogether. This points to a need for career counselling and vocational training programs to provide direction and equip individuals with in-demand skills.
- Despite their current situations, there is a strong desire among respondents in both Serbia and North Macedonia to acquire new skills and engage in training to improve their employability and future prospects.
- A significant portion of respondents in both countries come from families facing economic difficulties, relying on social assistance or seasonal work for survival. This highlights the need for holistic interventions that consider family dynamics and provide support beyond individual skill development.
- In both countries, youth unemployment is a pressing issue. To address this, there is a crucial need to equip young job seekers with relevant skills tailored to the demands of the job market, bridging the gap between available opportunities and their skills.
- Both Serbia and North Macedonia would benefit from comprehensive strategies that involve collaboration among governmental, non-governmental, and industry stakeholders. Initiatives such as awareness campaigns, mentorship programs, and entrepreneurship resources should be encouraged to create an environment conducive to workforce integration.
- Addressing unemployment and skills mismatch challenges benefits individuals and families and contributes to overall economic growth and stability in both countries. The implementation of vocational education and employment training (VEET) programs aligned with industry needs can significantly improve job placement rates.
- Continuous evaluation of VEET program outcomes and adaptability to changing job market demands is vital for creating a more resilient and prosperous workforce in both Serbia and North Macedonia.

In conclusion, the shared challenges of unemployment, skills mismatch, and economic exclusion in Serbia and North Macedonia necessitate a coordinated effort from various stakeholders. By investing in VEET programs, fostering partnerships, and implementing targeted interventions, both countries can empower their citizens with the skills and opportunities needed to navigate the job market effectively, ultimately contributing to the overall economic growth and stability of the regions.

Recommendations

To effectively address the challenges faced by NEET youth and individuals in both Serbia and North Macedonia, a set of comprehensive recommendations has been formulated. These recommendations aim to create tailored solutions that empower the target groups and promote sustainable economic inclusion:

- Develop and implement vocational training programs that align with the specific skills demanded by industries with potential employment opportunities. These programs should cater to the diverse educational backgrounds of the target group and offer a pathway to acquiring practical skills.

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- Offer personalized career counselling services to assist respondents in identifying their strengths, interests, and potential professions. This can help them make informed decisions about their career paths.
- Collaborate with employers and industries to create avenues for job placements. This can include internships, apprenticeships, and entry-level positions that provide practical experience and contribute to addressing the unemployment crisis.
- Incorporate soft skills training into the curriculum to enhance participants' communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability skills. These skills are crucial for success in the workplace.
- NEET youth and individuals in b Serbia and North Macedonia can enhance their communication skills, prepare effectively for job interviews, create compelling CVs and motivation letters, and develop the skills required for successful job acquisition and retention. These efforts will contribute to their employability and socio-economic advancement.
- Offer resources and training for aspiring entrepreneurs within the target group who wish to establish small businesses. This can stimulate economic growth and provide alternative pathways to self-sufficiency.
- Recognize the interconnectedness of family dynamics and economic well-being. Offer support programs that address the challenges faced by entire families, including access to social services and financial literacy education.
- Collaborate with local municipalities, NGOs, and businesses to create a network of support for the target group. Engaging stakeholders ensures a more holistic and sustainable approach to addressing the challenges.
- Continuously monitor the progress of participants who engage in training and employment programs. Collect data on job placements, income levels, and overall well-being to measure the impact of interventions and make informed adjustments.
- Collaborate closely with industries to ensure that vocational education and employment training (VEET) programs are aligned with the specific needs and demands of the job market. Regular industry input and feedback can enhance the relevance and quality of training.
- Invest in well-trained instructors, up-to-date curriculum, and modern training facilities to ensure that VEET programs provide practical and current skills that meet industry standards.
- Launch awareness campaigns targeting students, parents, and employers to highlight the benefits of VEET programs and encourage greater participation and collaboration.
- Develop structured pathways for VEET graduates to transition seamlessly into the workforce, possibly through apprenticeships, internships, or job placement programs.
- Establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to track the outcomes and impact of VEET programs. Regular assessment will help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.
- Given the increasing digitalization of various industries, incorporate digital literacy training within VEET programs to improve graduates' readiness for the modern job market.
- Provide financial assistance or scholarships to disadvantaged individuals who wish to participate in VEET programs. This can ensure equal access to skill development opportunities.
- Offer training and resources that encourage entrepreneurial skills and help aspiring individuals start and manage their own businesses, contributing to job creation and economic growth.



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- Design VEET programs that are flexible and adaptable to evolving industry trends and technological advancements, ensuring graduates remain relevant in a dynamic job market.
- Encourage collaboration between educational institutions, employers, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to effectively create a holistic ecosystem that addresses unemployment challenges.
- Emphasize the importance of continuous learning beyond formal education. Encourage individuals to engage in ongoing skill development to remain competitive in the job market.

By implementing these recommendations collectively in both Serbia and North Macedonia, it is possible to empower NEET youth and individuals, bridge the unemployment gap, and contribute to the overall socio-economic development of these regions.



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Annex 1. Questionnaire for participation in the training cycle

General data for the participant / user

Name:

Date of birth

birth place

Address:

Contact number:

Email:

Civil Status:

Family status:

Number of members in the family:

Education (highest level):

OCCUPATION (if you have it):

Work experience: yes

NO

Job status:

employed

Part time

unemployed

Ethnicity:

Gender:

female

male

I. Family situation

General data (to be completed by the trainer), detailed description of the situation with: family, economic situation, who contributes financially, etc.

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II. Social situation

(more answers are allowed, depending on family members)

Are there people in the family from the following groups - categories:

- unemployed persons (over 18 years old)
- persons receiving social assistance
- persons involved in a specific social assistance program
- pensioner/s
- person/s with special needs
- Others _

Comments / Specifications:

III. Residence/Accommodation

Please indicate what type of accommodation you currently live in:

- Apartment/space for rent To live
- Owned apartment , in a residential building
- Individual residential building (house).
- Institution of public care
- Homeless

Comments / Specifications:

IV. Employment

Where would you like to work if you had a choice? *(choose a maximum of 2 options from those offered)*

- Private sector
- Public sector, public administration
- Work abroad
- Self-employed, small business
- Family business. Please describe the type of business:

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- I have no preference/I don't know

Comments/Specifications:

.....

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.....

v. What is your favorite profession (what do you want to do in the future)?

Please specify:

.....

.....

.....

vi. What does vocational education mean to you?

- Last chance, because I have no other chance due to family reasons and low education so far
- Not very relevant, but I would visit
- An opportunity to discover what I like, find a job and generate income for myself and my family
- Other , please explain:

.....

.....

.....

vii. According to your experience, what type of training do you prefer?

- group work (workshops, trainings)
- individual approach (mentoring)

viii. Mastery of languages

Which languages do you speak fluently? Please tick all that apply:

- English
- Macedonian
- Albanian
- Other (please specify):.....

ix. Availability

What is your availability to attend the training cycle? Please specify:



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- from Monday to Friday, full time (8 hours of training)
- from Monday to Friday, with reduced time (4 hours of training)
- Other (please specify):

x. Barriers to participation

Have you faced any obstacles that have prevented you from participating in training or education programs in the past? Please tick all that apply:

- Lack of transport
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of time
- Disinterest
- Other (please specify):.....

xi. Motivation

What are your expectations from participating in the training cycle for acquiring basic skills for increasing employability?

Please specify:

.....

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