

# Enhancing Youth Guarantee Outreach and Wrap-Around Support for NEET Youth in Ukraine and Host Countries

European Training Foundation Seminar on  
ADVANCING EFFECTIVE YOUTH GUARANTEE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

*19 May 2026*

# Methodology, scope and limitations

**The aim of this report is to present some effective strategies to reach out to inactive young people to support them back into education and employment, suitable for a war affected context.**

- document the scope and strategic importance of outreach and case management models
- identify and assess transferable models from EU/host countries
- formulate actionable, evidence-based recommendations

**Geographic and programme scope.** Ukraine and selected host countries, namely Poland, Czechia, and Slovakia, and other EU and WB countries

**Population scope: 15-29 years old**

**Methodological approach:**

- Desk review of evaluations, programme documentations, policy and technical briefs, and existing case studies;
- Key informant interviews with representatives of ministries, service providers, UNICEF partners, and implementing organisations;
- One online focus group discussion with members of the UNICEF Youth Advisory Board; and
- A short U-Report-style online survey with 2,733 respondents.

The EU's reinforced Youth Guarantee (YG) obliges states to ensure all young people (aged 15–29) get a quality offer of employment, education, apprenticeship or traineeship within 4 months of unemployment or leaving school.

**Mapping**

Increase data availability and implement preventive measures to reduce early school leaving.

**Preparation**

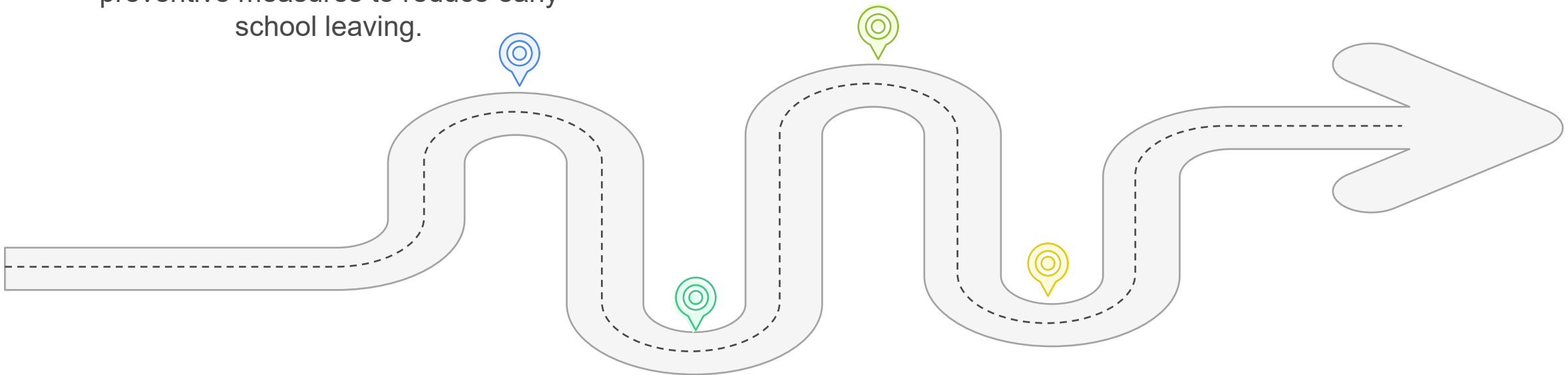
Provide training and guidance to prepare youth for offers.

**Outreach**

Identify and activate NEET youth through local partnerships.

**Offer**

Receive a qualitative offer of employment, education, or training within 4 months.



# Young NEET in Ukraine – what do we know? (HSESS 2023)

Profile	Family-responsibility NEETs (48%)	Discouraged NEETs (5%)	NEETs with disabilities or health limitations (6%)	Other inactive NEETs incl. war-affected (21%)	Long-term unemployed NEETs (5.5%)	Active NEETs (short-term unemployed) (13.9%)
Who are they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainly young women (25–29)</li> <li>Inactive due to childcare or family care</li> <li>Often medium to high education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inactive, previously searched for work</li> <li>Medium education, some work experience</li> <li>Low confidence, weak institutional links</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inactive due to illness or disability</li> <li>Mixed ages and education levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inactive for mixed or unspecified reasons</li> <li>Includes war-related psychological distress (2.7%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployed 12+ months</li> <li>Older youth (25–29), prior work experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployed &lt;12 months</li> <li>Actively seeking work, work-ready</li> </ul>
What do they need?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community and care-based outreach</li> <li>Childcare solutions and flexible, gradual re-entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactive outreach</li> <li>Motivation, counselling, confidence-building before activation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapted outreach and coordination with health and social services</li> <li>Individualised, accessible pathways with job coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low-threshold, trust-based outreach</li> <li>Psychosocial support as an entry point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intensive activation</li> <li>Individual action plans, skills upgrading, targeted employment support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard PES outreach</li> <li>Rapid job matching, training or apprenticeships</li> </ul>

# Young NEET in Ukraine – emerging groups

Children and young people from veteran and military families

Adolescents and young people leaving the care system

Young people returning from temporarily occupied territories.

Children directly affected by military actions

Internally displaced children and youth

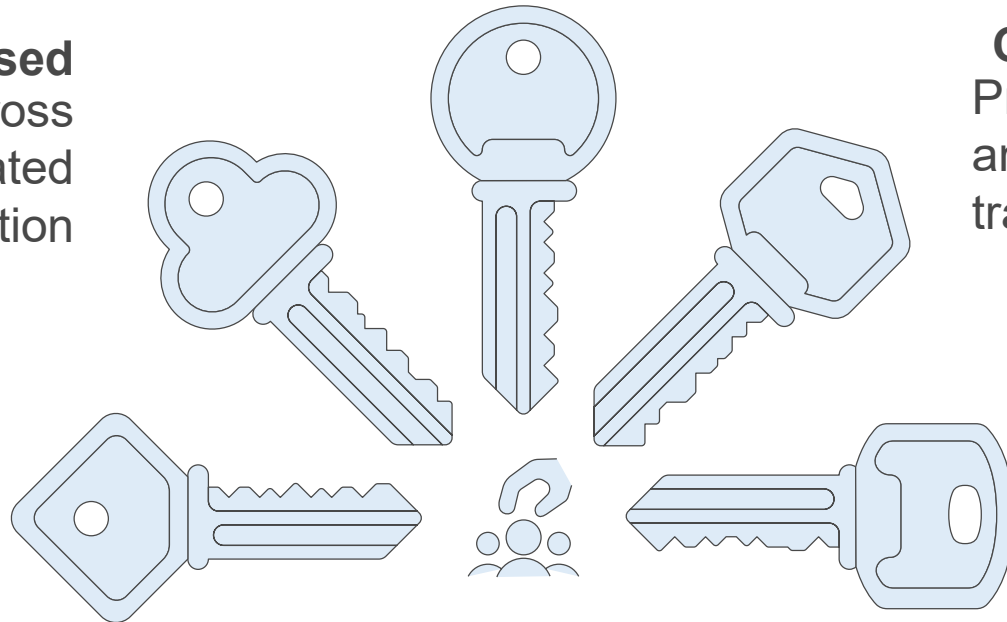
# Key Principles of Effective Youth Outreach

**Trust-building**  
Establishing rapport  
through patient and  
visible benefits

**Partnership-based**  
Collaborating across  
sectors for coordinated  
action

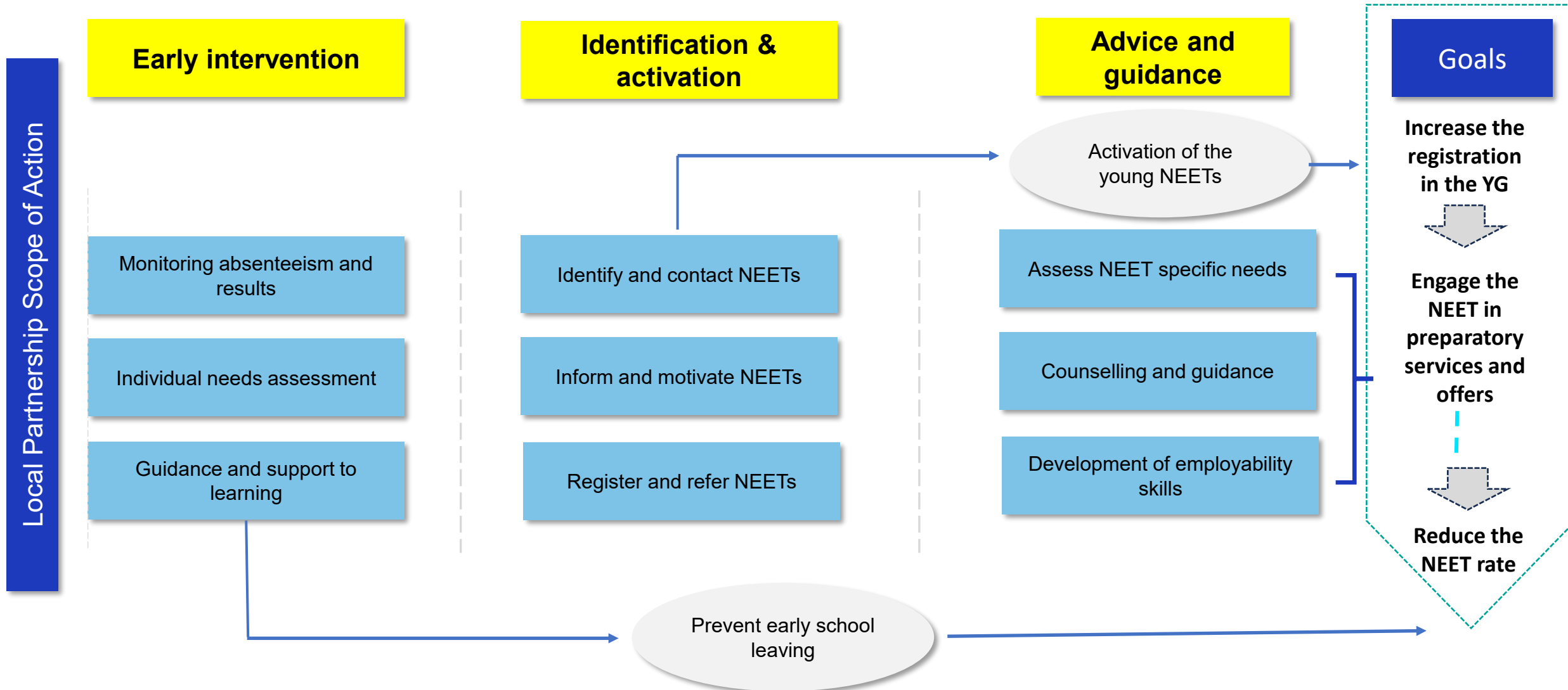
**Continuity of support**  
Providing stable contact  
and seamless service  
transitions

**Differentiated outreach**  
Tailoring approaches to  
meet diverse youth  
needs



**Professionalisation**  
Ensuring staff are  
trained and resourced  
for complex needs

# Main Pillars of the YG outreach model



# Early identification – transferable models

## Regional Integration Teams



**Institutionalised cooperation between NIVAM and NGOs.** coordinated by NIVAM and implemented in close partnership with experienced NGOs.

**Proximity-based support to schools and communities.** Teams work directly with schools in disadvantaged areas and actively identify out of school or at high risk of dropout.

**Integrated, multi-disciplinary service package,** including:

- enrolment and re-enrolment support
- language assistance for children from marginalised and Roma communities
- tutoring and learning support
- career-oriented counselling and transition guidance
- psychosocial and family support

**Intermediary and coordination function.** bridge between schools, families, municipalities, and external service providers.

**Demonstrates how outreach, education support, and social services can be combined at local level to prevent early disengagement and support transitions into further education or training.**

## Early Warning Systems



**Systematic monitoring within schools.** Absenteeism, learning difficulties, and behavioural concerns tracked as part of statutory student welfare duties.

**Multi-professional student welfare teams.** Teachers, school counsellors, psychologists, social workers, and health professionals jointly assess risks and agree on actions.

**Early, individualised intervention.** Tailored support measures including learning support, counselling, mentoring, and psychosocial assistance.

**Family engagement and coordinated follow-up.** Close cooperation with families and links to external social and health services when needed.

**Clear legal and institutional framework.** Mandatory cooperation between education, social, and health services underpins consistent implementation.

**Early warning in schools linked to guidance services, youth work, and alternative learning or employment pathways to prevent transition into NEET status.**

# Identification and Activation— transferable models

## Data driven identification of inactive NEET



**Formal inter-institutional data-sharing framework.** Cooperation agreement between the ministries of Education and Labour, the PES, and the pension insurance system to track young people after exit from formal education.

**Sequential matching of administrative datasets.** School leavers are cross-checked against employment and unemployment registers to assign a clear status: student, employed, unemployed, or inactive.

**Clear identification of inactive NEETs.** Not found, classified as inactive NEETs.

**Progressive expansion of data sources** Additional datasets integrated from the Ministry of Interior, Tax Authority, and Paying Agency for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development to capture informal, seasonal, and agricultural work.

**Operational register managed by PES.** National register of inactive persons, for targeted outreach, activation, and referral to YG.

**Demonstrates how robust identification systems can underpin proactive outreach and prevent prolonged inactivity before young people self-register with services.**

## Unique national YG Portal. ohjaamot.fi



**Single national entry point for youth (online and physical).** Access guidance on education, training, employment, social services, and wellbeing through one portal, without needing to know institutional mandates.

**Integrated multi-sector services.** Content and referrals PES, education pathways, social and health support, youth work, and local service.

**Low-threshold, youth-friendly design.** Plain language, chat-based support, and self-navigation options reduce barriers for inactive or unregistered youth.

**Strong link to local delivery.** The portal connects young people to local Ohjaamo centres and services, ensuring follow-up beyond digital contact.

**Functions as a national entry point for identification, guidance, and referral, supporting early engagement before young people become long-term NEETs.**

# Advice and Guidance – transferable models

## Youth One-stop-Shop



**Integrated, low-threshold entry point for youth.** One physical access point combining employment-related guidance with social, psychosocial, and youth work, delivered by regions, based on nationally approved models.

**Strong outreach and engagement function.** Active outreach to disengaged, inactive, and unregistered youth, including early school leavers, NEETs with complex needs, and displaced Ukrainian youth.

**Multi-disciplinary teams and service mix.** Career guidance and counselling, language support, mental health and psychosocial support, peer and youth work activities, safeguarding and child protection referrals.

**Case-based support and referral pathways.** Individualised assessment, short-term case management, and structured referrals to PES, education providers, health and social services.

**Formal integration into Youth Guarantee via ESF+.** Embedded in national YG implementation through Programme Slovakia, ensuring stable financing beyond pilot phase.

## Skills activation pathways



**Low-threshold engagement for youth distant from formal systems,** combining outreach, mentoring, skills development, and youth-led project implementation in partnership with national and local actors (e.g. upshift)

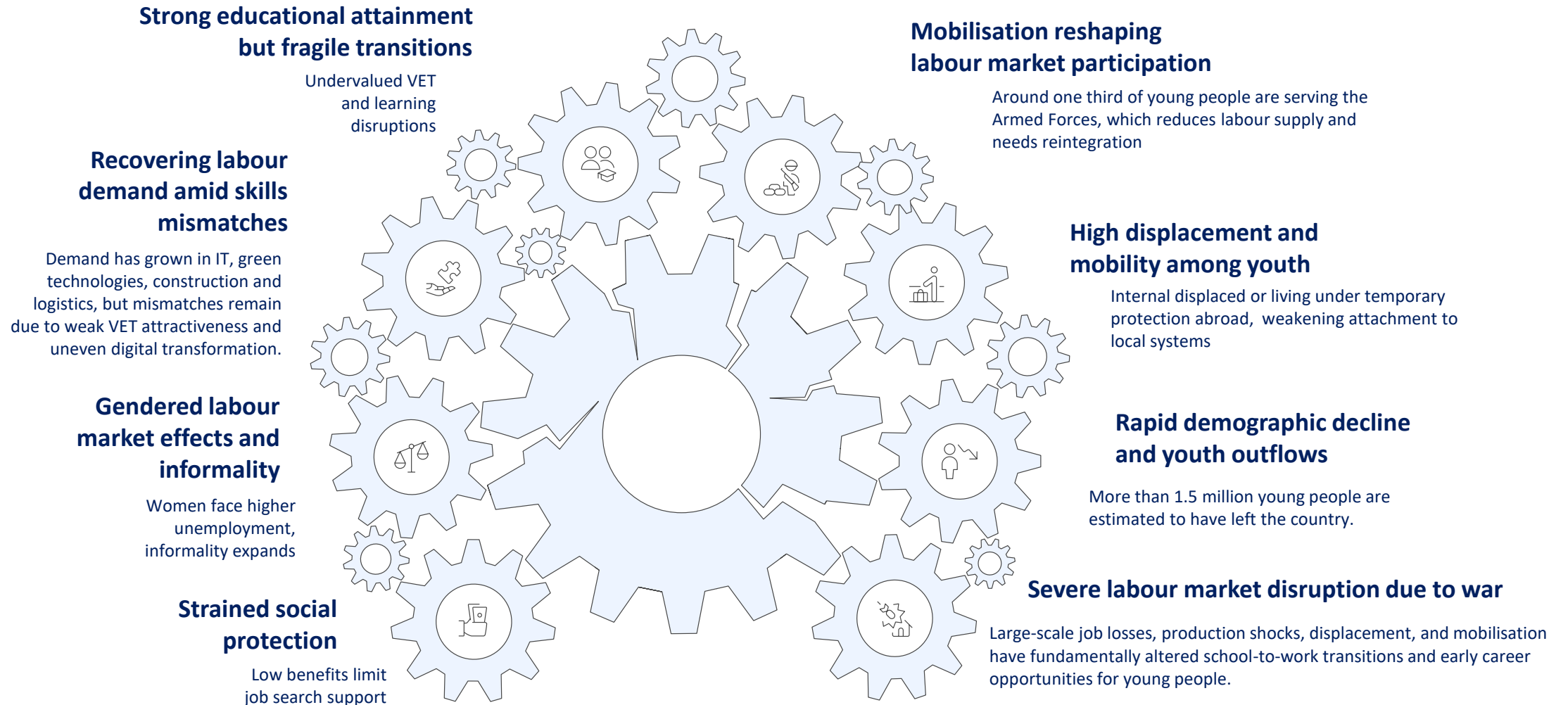
**Focus on readiness and confidence-building** Emphasises peer learning, teamwork, problem-solving, and transversal skills, while addressing motivation and psychosocial needs.

**Effective bridge to formal services** Supports young people to clarify interests, rebuild trust in institutions, and prepare for engagement with guidance, education, or employment services.

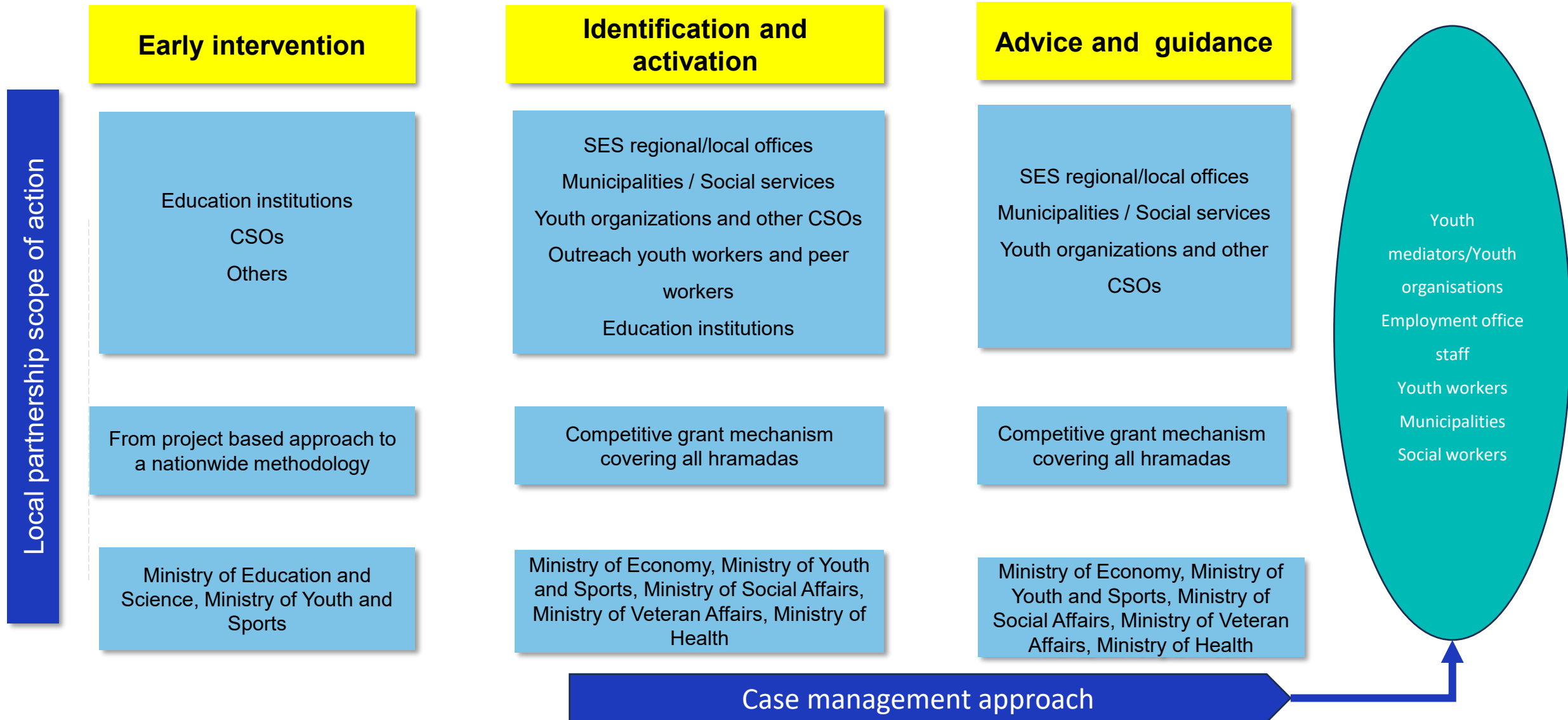
**Youth Guarantee relevance.** It could function as a pre-activation and readiness-building pathway, complementing guidance, counselling, and case management.

**Clear referral arrangements between youth centres, NGOs, UPSHIFT implementers, and employment services, with participation recognised as a meaningful activation step.**

# Ukraine's Youth Guarantee must operate in a context of war, demographic decline, displacement and mobilisation, where outreach, skills validation and trust-based engagement are as critical as labour market instruments



# Which are the institutions involved in this model?



# Grant scheme to finance outreach through partnerships



Local Partnership Scope of Action

## Identification and activation

- **Contact young people** in community youth activities **through youth mediators.**
- **Organize youth activities** that allow informal communication with young people and awareness about the YG.
- **Organize collective information sessions** to present the Youth Guarantee and mobilize young people to register in the scheme.
- **Collect information about the social and economic status of the NEET**
- **Individual assessment**

Grant Scheme Lot 1

Individual plan analysis and decision about referral

Case management approach

## Advice, guidance and pre-preparation

- **Assessment of individual** social and economic needs
- Individual **preferences and vocational assessment.**
- **Identification of available opportunities** for qualification and employment.
- **Counselling and guidance** through preparatory services.
- Mediate access to social support measures
- Developing soft skills for the people for whom this service is suitable (short training courses).
- Other innovative responses

Grant Scheme Lot 2

# Grant scheme to finance outreach through partnerships



## Criteria for the granting mechanism

- The proposed initiatives will have to demonstrate partnership and integrated approaches in the implementation and contribute to a strengthened communication and interaction between local level actors.
- At least two partners must apply.
- Eligible partners are non-for-profit making organization, municipalities, social enterprises, non-public training providers.
- At least one among the lead applicant or co-applicants must be actively operating in the target municipalities.
- Must hire, for the period of the grant, at least a youngster between 20 and 29 years old to act as mediator and support the development of the activities. The mediator's role is established in the profile approved by Youth Guarantee Executive Coordinator It's the partners responsibility to provide training and capacitate the youngster to act as mediator.
- Have previous experience in implementing similar actions in scope and objectives.

**The duration** of each proposed action are 12 months

## Requirements

Each grant beneficiary is contractually required to meet

- the minimum targets, including the number of NEETs to be contacted, informed, and referred,
- the number of Individual Referral and Personal Plans to be developed
- the number of NEETs to receive pre-preparatory and preparatory services

## Budget and financing

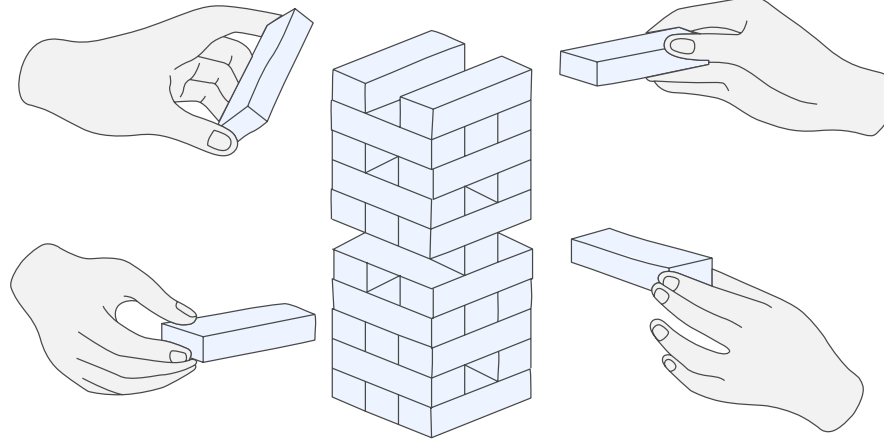
- The minimum amount: USD 50,000 (approx. 4,377,000 ALL)
- The maximum amount: USD 150,000 (approx. 13,131,000 ALL).

Activities are funded based on predefined performance levels, with financial adjustments applied accordingly.

# Cross-cutting Enablers for the Youth Guarantee Outreach

## Multi-Actor Coordination

- Outreach cannot be delivered by single institutions
- Legal basis exists (Youth Law, IAWG) but roles remain fragmented
- Need for **clear local coordinators** and formalised partnership protocols
- Youth centres are critical community entry points but unevenly operational



## Robust Data Systems

- NEET data fragmented across education, employment and social systems
- War and displacement increase invisibility of inactive youth
- Priority: **pragmatic, consent-based data exchange** to identify unregistered youth
- Start with a **simple Youth Guarantee monitoring dashboard**, aligned with EU indicators

## Secure Funding

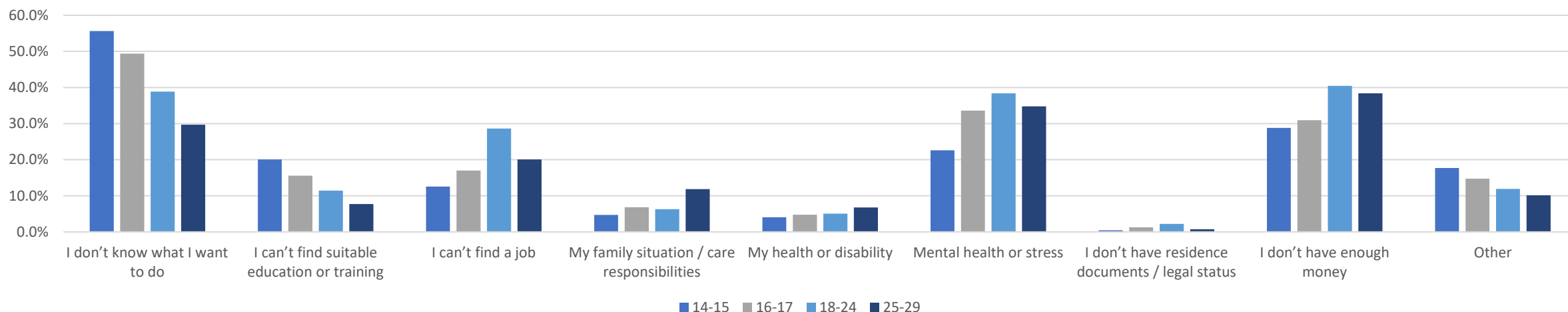
- Public funding is limited; outreach largely donor-driven, project-based
- Strong opportunity to leverage the **Ukrainian Youth Fund** as a national funding hub
- Need to embed outreach in **state and local budgets**, even at modest scale
- Donor funding should reinforce, not substitute, institutional systems

## Youth Engagement

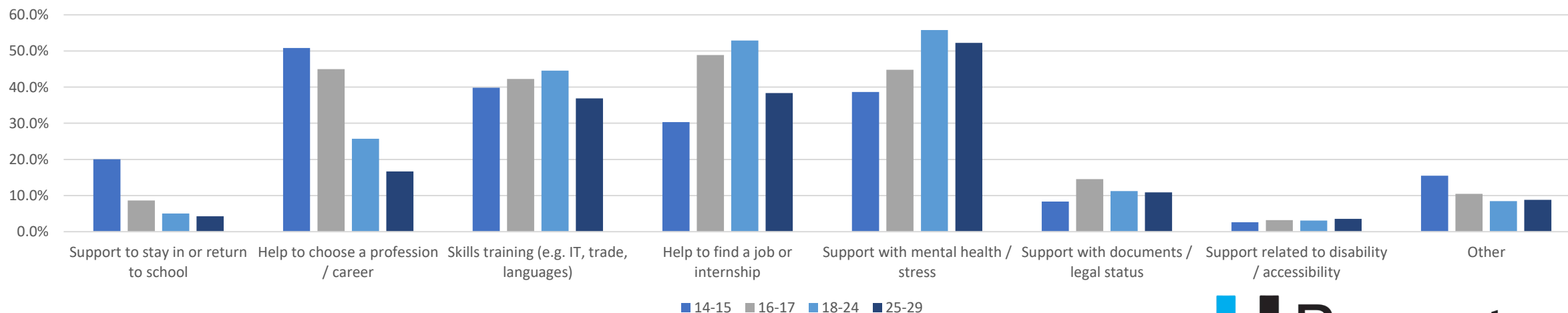
- Formal youth participation structures exist but are underused
- Co-designed outreach **with youth** is more effective
- Peer and youth-led outreach builds trust and expands reach
- Youth engagement must lead to **visible, practical changes** to build credibility

# Youth Voices in Ukraine – U-report results (n=2,733; 14-29 years old)

Right now, what is your biggest challenge related to school, training or work?

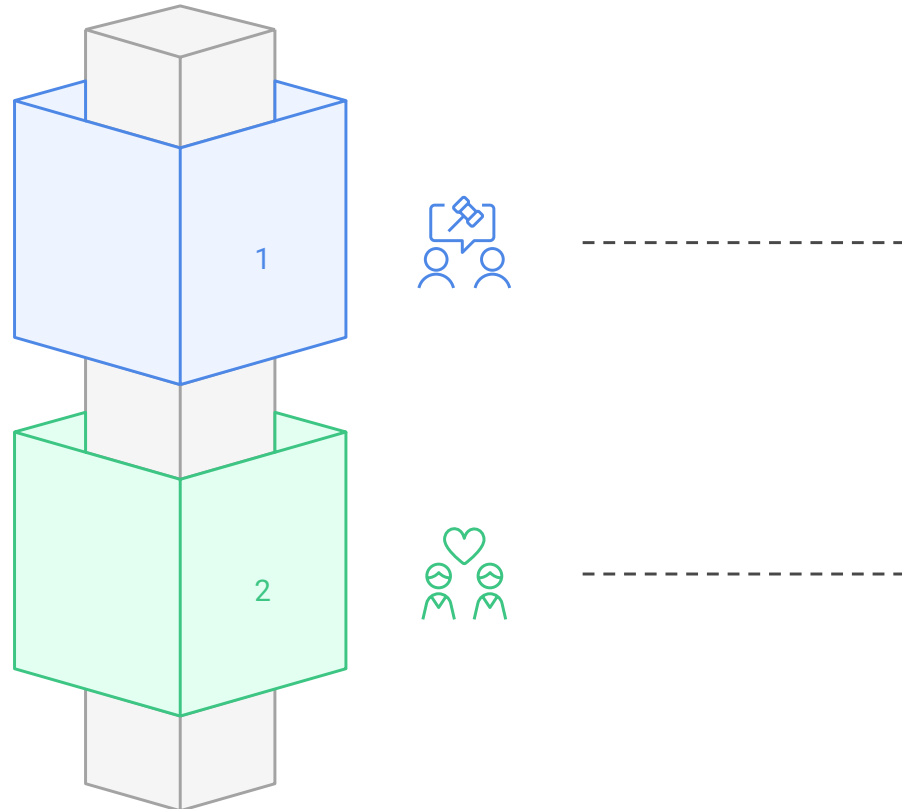


What kind of support would help you most in the next year?



# Youth Guarantee Action Plan in Ukraine

## Recommendations for the outreach phase



### System Reforms

Reforms create the conditions

- Align laws, roles and financing
- Regulations, operational manuals etc.
- Enable coordination and accountability

### Delivery Initiatives

Initiatives deliver results

- Test operational models
- Scale what works through pilots

# Five key Takeaways from the Assessment:

## **1. Outreach is the main entry point to the Youth Guarantee**

Strong outreach is essential to reach the most excluded young people; without it, the system mainly serves those already close to institutions.

## **2. Highly differentiated NEET profiles require tailored support packages**

NEET youth in Ukraine face very different barriers, requiring differentiated outreach approaches and tailored support.

## **3. Outreach works best as a continuum**

Effective systems combine early intervention, identification and activation, and advice and wrap-around support, allowing gradual engagement.

## **4. Local, cross-sectoral partnerships, supported by data and monitoring, are essential for delivery**

Outreach depends on coordination across youth, education, employment, social, health, and veterans' services, with youth centres as key entry points.

## **5. Mental health and wrap-around support are central, not optional**

Youth voices show mental health and wellbeing are priority needs and must be integrated into outreach and activation pathways.

# Enhancing Youth Guarantee Outreach and Wrap-Around Support for NEET Youth in Ukraine and Host Countries

[Pathways for Ukrainian youth | UNICEF Europe and Central Asia](#)