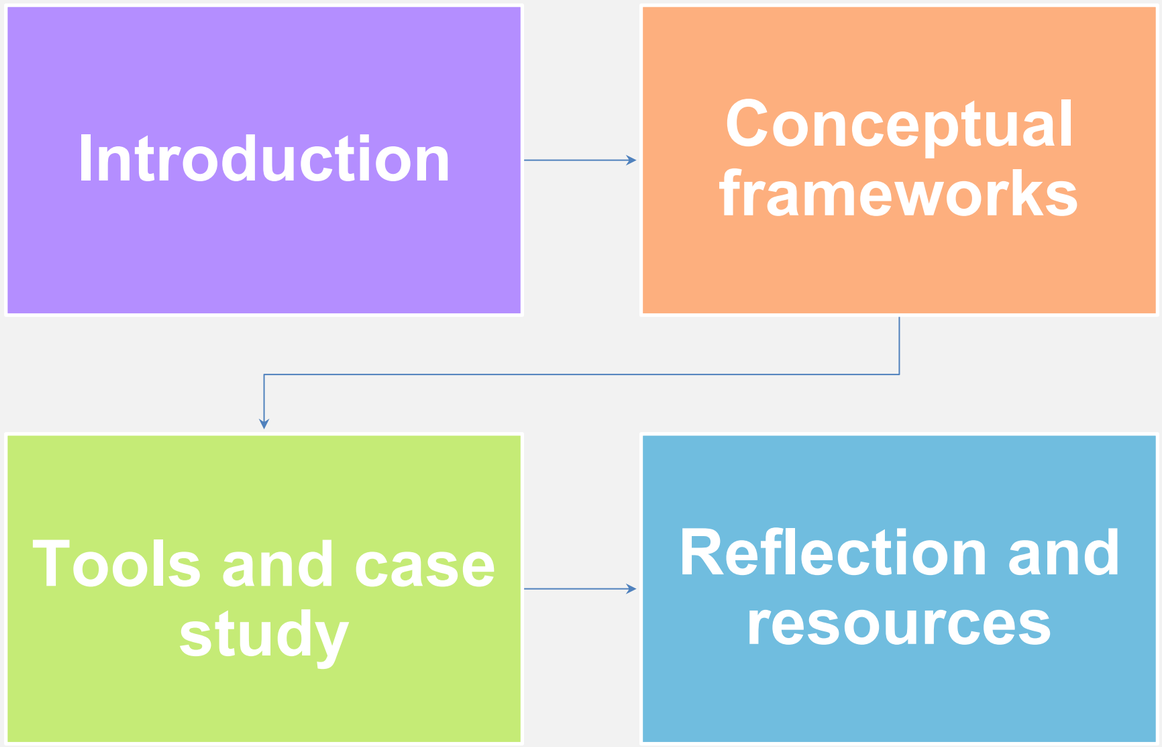
YOUTH in ROUTE

Routes for fostering sense of initiative and active citizenship among disaffiliated youth

Level 2/Session 1 – Engaging Disaffiliated Youth in Real Contexts

Co-funded by the European Union 2024-2-BE04-KA220-YOU-00276965

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Engaging Disaffiliated Youth in Real Contexts

Level 2 – Application | Module 1

Outreach Strategies & First Contact with Vulnerable Youth

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About the Youth in Route Training Programme

Youth in Route is an Erasmus+ project equipping youth workers to understand and address youth disaffiliation across Belgium, France, Portugal and Serbia. Grounded in Robert Castel's theory of social disaffiliation, the training is structured in 3 levels:

- L1 Foundation – Theory & concepts of disaffiliation
- L2 Application – Practical tools & outreach strategies → **YOU ARE HERE**
- L3 Advocacy & Leadership

Position of Module 1 within Level 2

This is the opening module of Level 2. It builds directly on L1's theoretical foundations and introduces the practical reality of working with disaffiliated youth in the field.

- Leads into L2 Module 2 (Creative & Non-Formal Education Methodologies)

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Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- **Knowledge**: Identify the key barriers preventing disaffiliated youth from engaging with services and support systems.
- **Skills**: Apply adapted outreach and first-contact strategies in diverse urban and community contexts.
- **Attitudes**: Adopt a non-judgmental, strengths-based posture when building trust with young people in vulnerable situations



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Key concept

5 key concepts for this module:

1. **Disaffiliation**: The gradual loss of connection to key social institutions (school, work, family, civic life)
2. **Outreach Work**: Proactive strategies that bring youth workers to where young people are
3. **Low-Threshold Services**: Easily accessible services with minimal barriers (no appointment, no judgment)
4. **Trust-Building**: The gradual relational process of establishing safety and credibility with a young person
5. **Motivational Posture**: A non-directive, empathetic communication style that respects young people's autonomy



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Interactive questions

Discuss in pairs after reading each scenario:

Scenario 1 – Brussels: Youssef (17) has been NEET for 6 months. When you approach him he says: “I’m not interested in your programs.”

→ What first-contact strategy would you use?

Scenario 2 – Liege: Amina (19) missed both appointments and doesn’t respond to calls. She has been NEET for over a year.
→ What low-threshold approach would you try? What assumptions should you challenge?

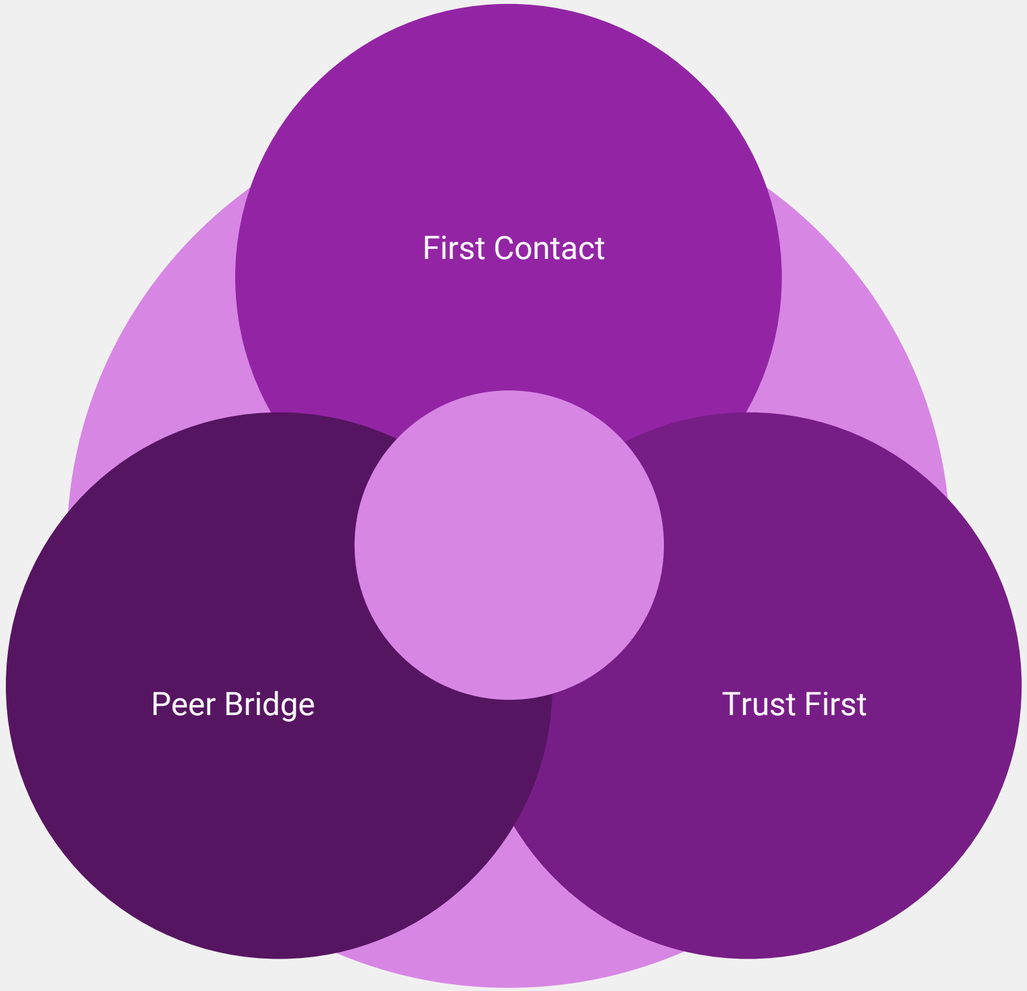


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Meet Them Where They Are

Conduct outreach in spaces young people naturally occupy: parks, social media, community cafés. Never wait for them to come to you.

Example: Schedule weekly informal “presence time” in key neighbourhood spots without any agenda.



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Case Study: Street Outreach in Molenbeek (Brussels, Belgium)

A Brussels youth centre launched a street outreach programme targeting young men aged 15–25 who had dropped out of school and were disengaged from all services. Workers conducted weekly “presence sessions” in public spaces with no agenda other than being available.

Full case study available in the companion Word document: “CS-L2-M1-Molenbeek-Outreach-BE” | Key result: 60% of young people engaged over 6 months re-established contact with at least one support service.



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Reflection



1. Think of a young person you found difficult to engage. What barriers – theirs and yours – were at play?

2. How do you currently manage the tension between institutional reporting demands and building genuine trust with youth?

3. What does “low-threshold” look like in your specific work context, and what one change could you make tomorrow?

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Additional resources

1. VIDEO: "Outreach Youth Work in Urban Contexts" (Council of Europe, 8 min)
2. ARTICLE: EU Youth Wiki – Belgium: Youth Policy & Disaffiliation (3-6 min read)
3. REPORT: Eurofound "NEETs in Europe" 2023 – Chapter on Belgium (advanced reading) | QUIZ:
4. Reflective Scenario Quiz on Outreach Strategies (Kahoot)
5. TOOLKIT: Dynamo International Street Workers Network – Field Guide (practical PDF)

See facilitator notes for links and platform access instructions

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mindshift

CEPORA
CENTER FOR POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Louis Lumière Chelles
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