



DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR YOUNG NEETS TO INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY



NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF YOUTH WORKERS DEALING WITH YOUNG NEETS

RESEARCH REPORT OCTOBER 2022

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ABOUT PROJECT

According to Euro found (2015), the high number of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) has cost the European economies an estimated €142 billion a year in benefits and foregone earnings and taxes. Moreover, 11% of young people around Europe lost their jobs due to the pandemic, along with 12% stating that is likely to lose their jobs in the forthcoming future.

Considering the highly impacted NEET group and changing needs and requirements of the 21st century and post-covid era, a new perspective in teaching, especially in adult education is highly required, to prepare the European society for the future. An effective way to prepare the people of Europe for the future lies beneath the development of keycompetencies, especially the development of resilient, flexible digital abilities in adults and young adults.

Therefore, "Digital skills development toolkit for young NEETS to increase employability" aims to improve the attention of NEETs by increasing digital competencies, increasing confidence in their ability to utilize information-communication technologies, boosting soft skills to increase employability and effectively solve problems by generating creative, practical solutions.

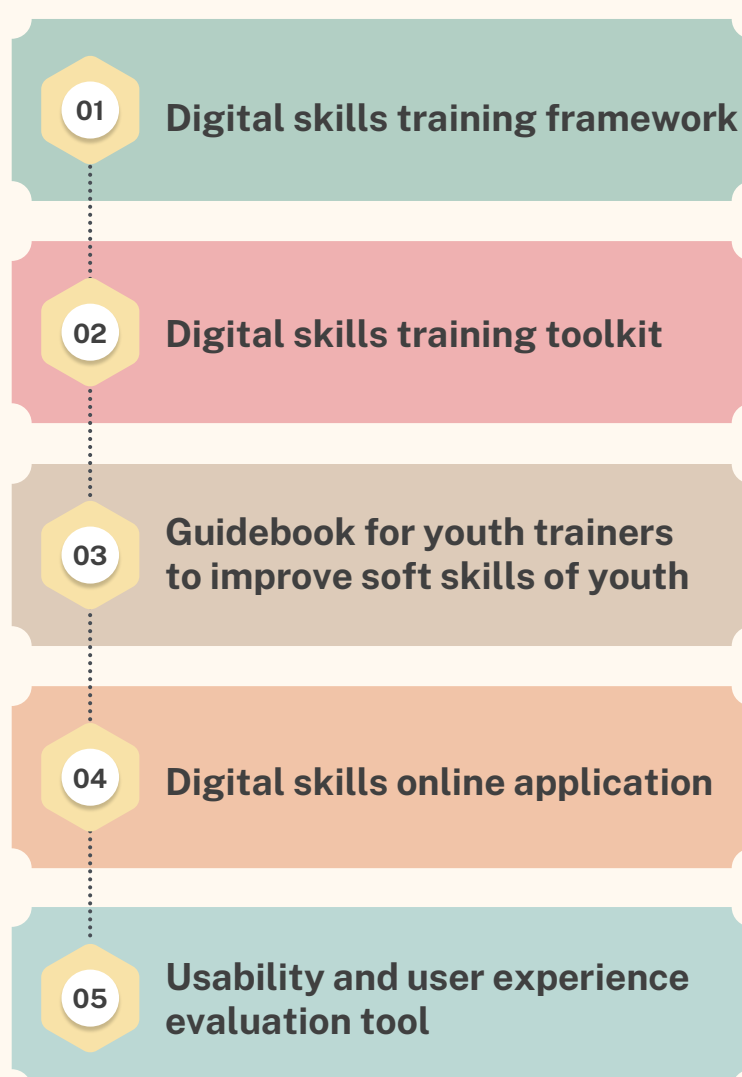
OBJECTIVES

- Increase the quality of education and training of youth staff in project partner countries and Europe: combining higher levelsof excellence and attractiveness in youth education through structured content and tools aimed at raising digital abilities andsoft skills of youth.
- Improve professional competencies of NEETs through developing soft skills via digital skills education and ICT use.
- Expand NEET's ability on problem-solving, creativity, communication
- Increase NEET's time management and team working skills
- Improve NEET's digital skills and use of ICT tools on career development
- Develop employability skills of NEETs through digital skills management and portfolio making
- Develop strategic and integrated use of ICT for NEETs and Youth Trainers

AIMS

"Digi4You" project aims to improve the competence of NEET by increasing digital skills and increasing their employability using ICT tools and soft skills development. Also, it aims to increase their ability to create quality content on online mediums, create their own digital portfolio, produce engaging presentations, and connect with other professionals.

PROJECT RESULTS



INTRODUCTION

In the analysis of the education and employment status of the 18-24 age group in the **Education at a Glance 2022** report published by the **OECD**, it is seen that the country rates of the distribution of young people who are not working in any job and are not involved in any education and training activities, which we call **NEET**, are as follows: **Turkey 32.2%**, **Italy 27.1%**, **Spain 20.3%** and **Austria 11.6%**.



It is also noteworthy that the rate of young people who are not **NEET** and not involved in any education/training and work activities is 27.7% in **Turkey**, 19.0% in **Italy**, 17.6% in **Spain** and 38.0% in **Austria**. The long-term unemployment of these young people carries the risk of long-term disengagement from the labour market. This, unfortunately, means that the increase in the **NEET** rate is likely to be high in the coming years.

After the 2008 crisis, the **NEET** rate peaked in the first quarter of 2013 and was in a downward trend before **Covid-19**. It started to rise with the new shock created by the **Covid-19** pandemic.



It is a fact that there are many types of research and successful projects on **NEET** youth to increase employability. However, there is not much research on competence, skills, training, needs and expectations analyses of youth workers, trainers and youth coordinators involved in the education of **NEET** youth.



It is regrettable that young people, who are critical for both the social and economic development of countries, are unable to realise their potential.

The challenges young **NEETs** face and their preferences and dreams for the future are essential for their personal lives and the social and economic lot of countries.

At this point, it cannot ignore that it is a priority and indispensable to focus on youth workers, educators and coordinators who make efforts and labour to contribute to their employability at least as much as young **NEETs**.

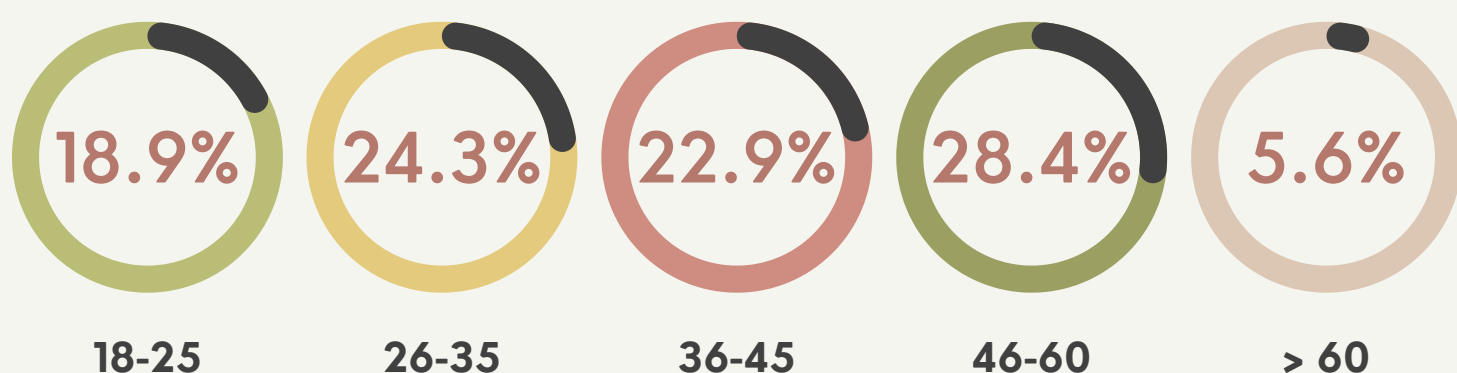


We hope that the survey "Needs and expectations of youth workers dealing with young **NEETs**" survey conducted online in **Turkey, Italy, Spain** and **Austria** with the participation of **436** youth coordinators, educators, and youth workers will shed light on effective practices and policies.



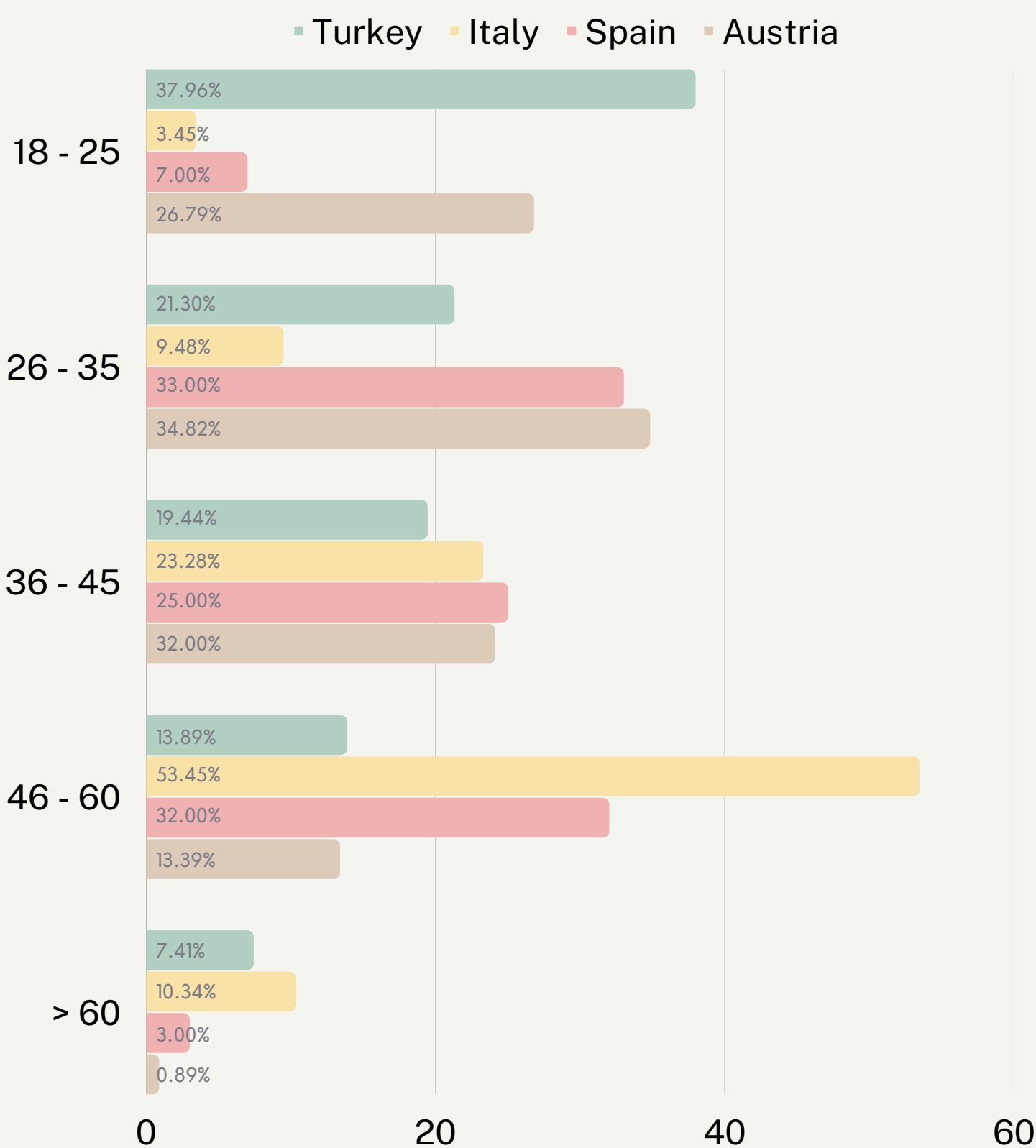
Age

Youth coordinators dealing with the education of young NEETs are experienced individuals with a rate of 56.9%.

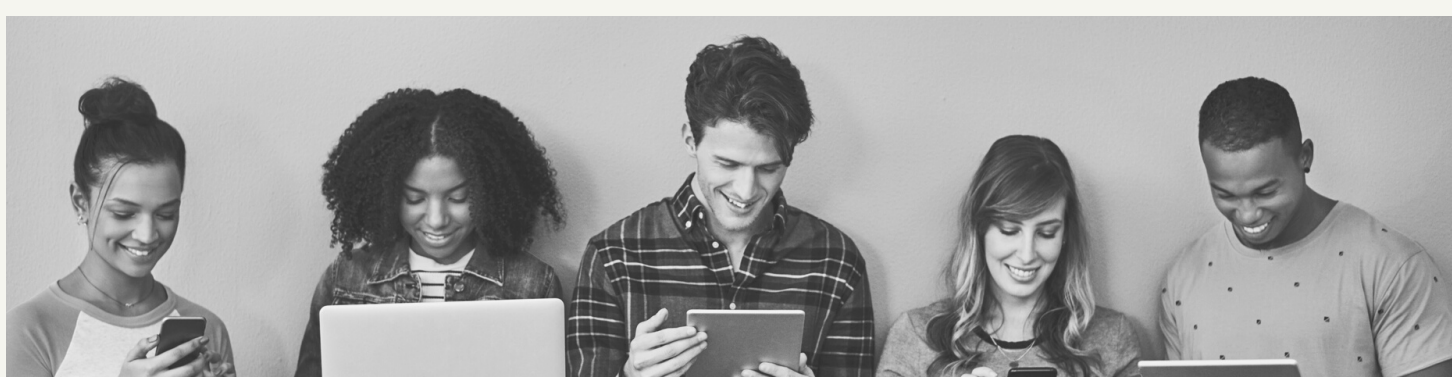


The age group with the highest number of research participants is 46-60 years old, with 28.4%.

Around 57% of youth coordinators in the middle age and above age groups indicate an experienced labour force profile. Although this can be seen as an aging workforce profile, the proportion of youth coordinators in the younger age groups is also promising.

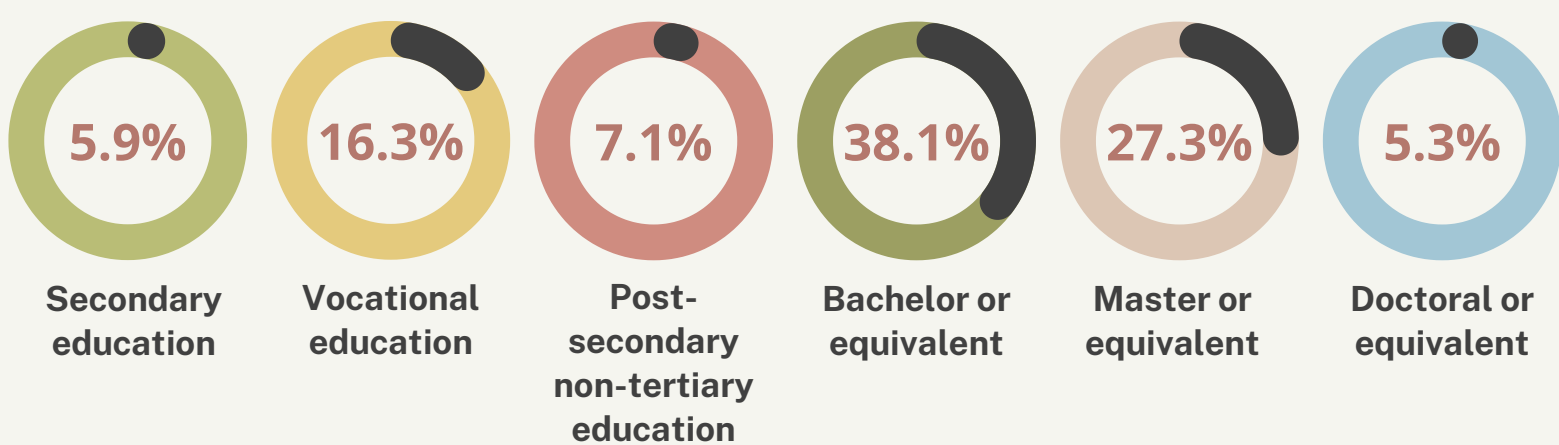


When the age range of youth coordinators is analyzed country-wise; While the 18-25 age group constitutes the intensive distribution range with 37.96% in Turkey, the age group is 46-60, with 53.45% in Italy and 26-35 with 33% in Spain. In Austria, 34.82% of youth coordinators are in the 26-35 age group.

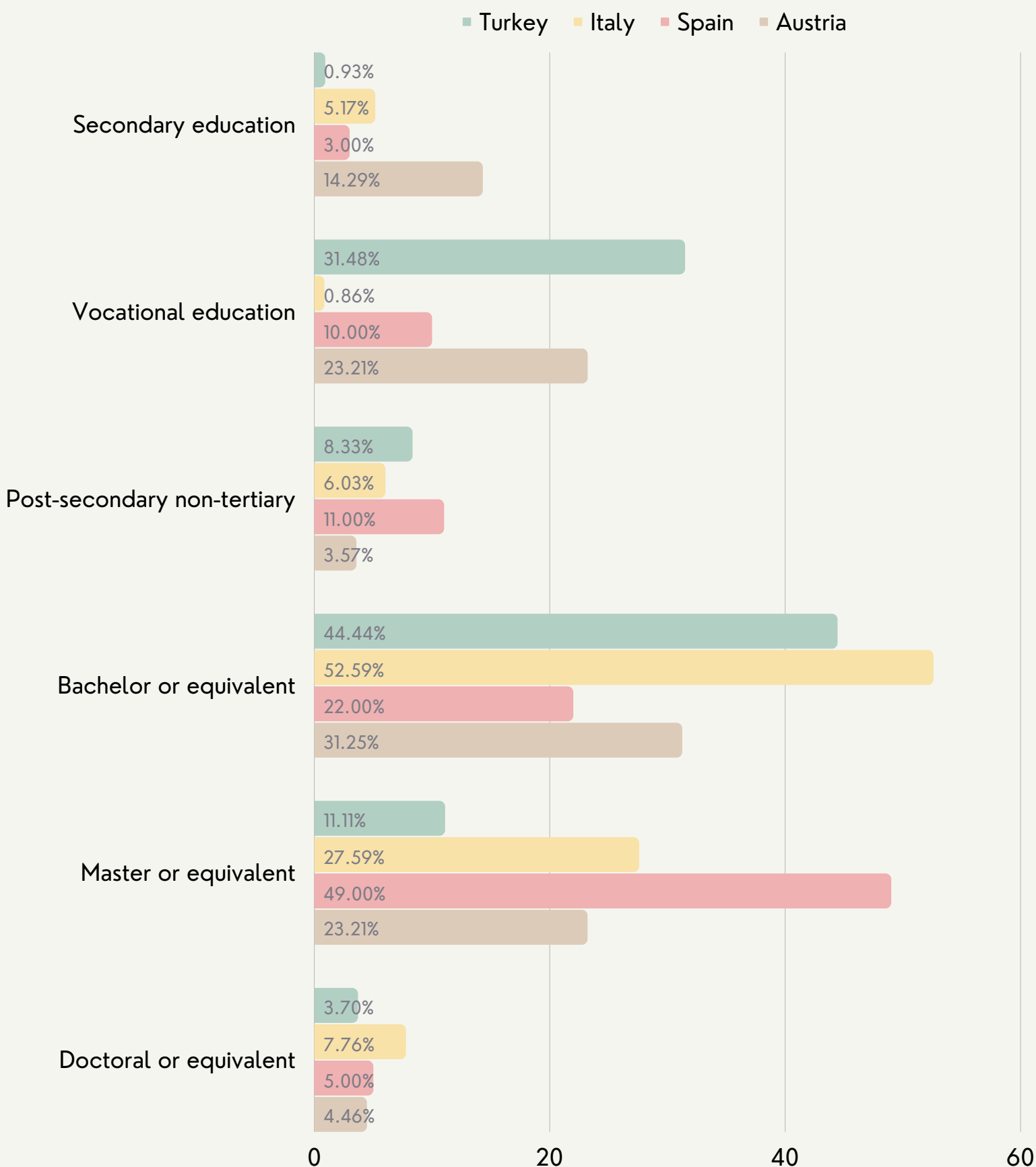


Level of completed education

The education level of youth coordinators is higher education and above, with a rate of 70.64%.



The educational level of youth coordinators dealing with NEET youth is relatively high. Those with a university degree are 38.1%, those with a Master's degree are 27.3% and over 70% have at least a university degree, including 5.3% with a PhD.



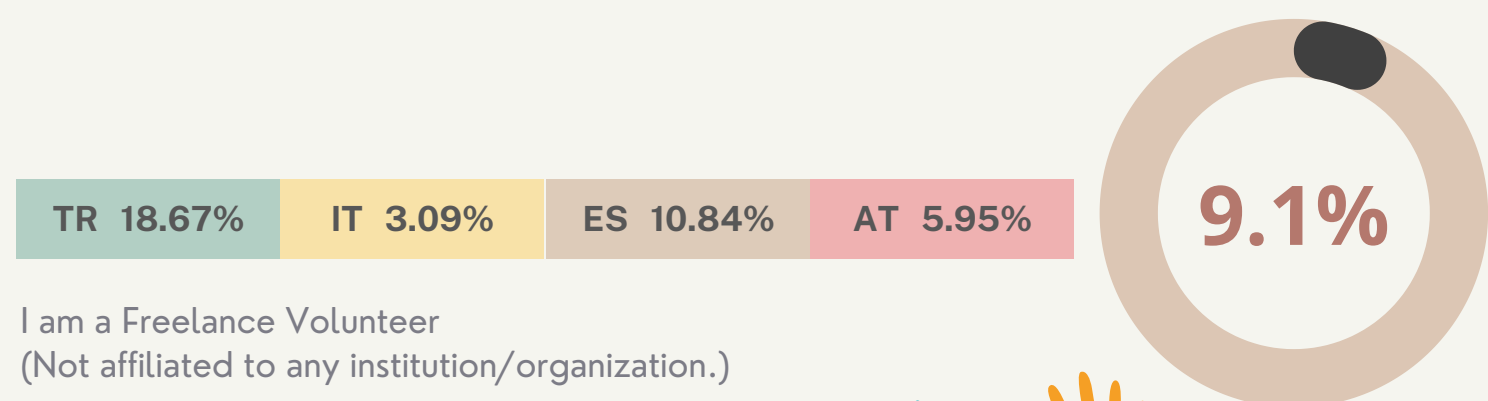
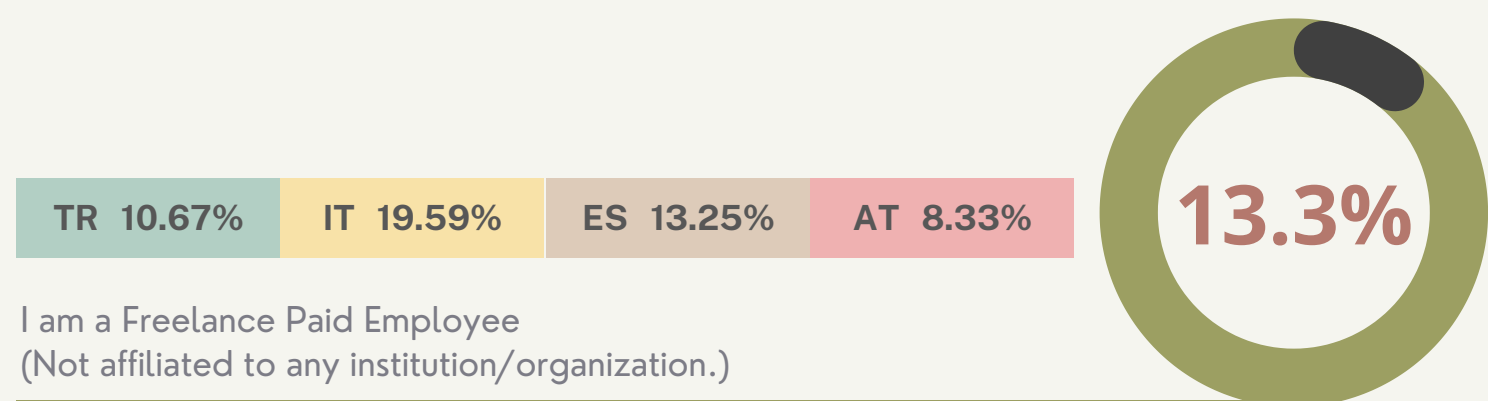
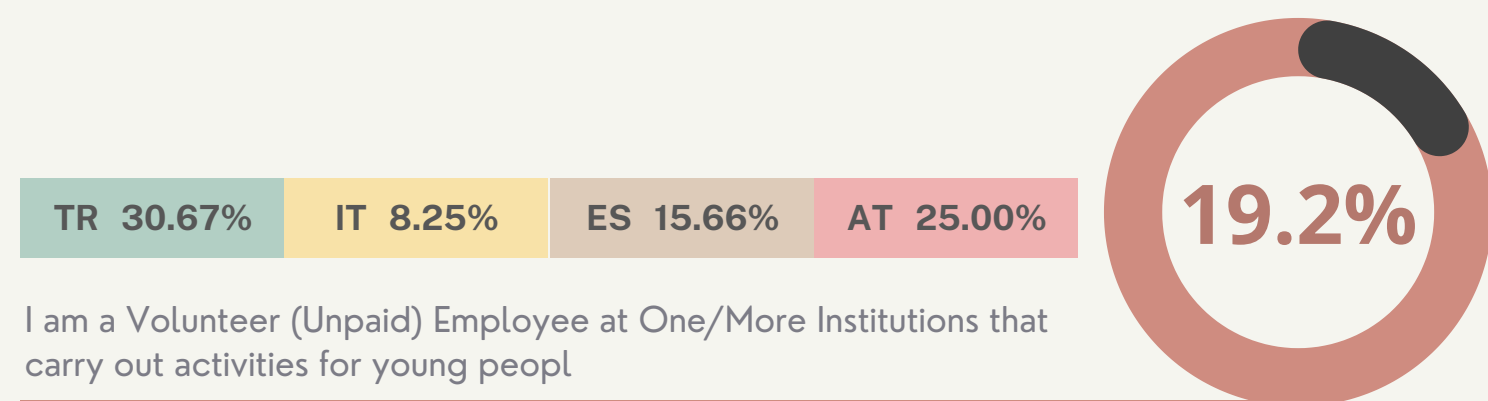
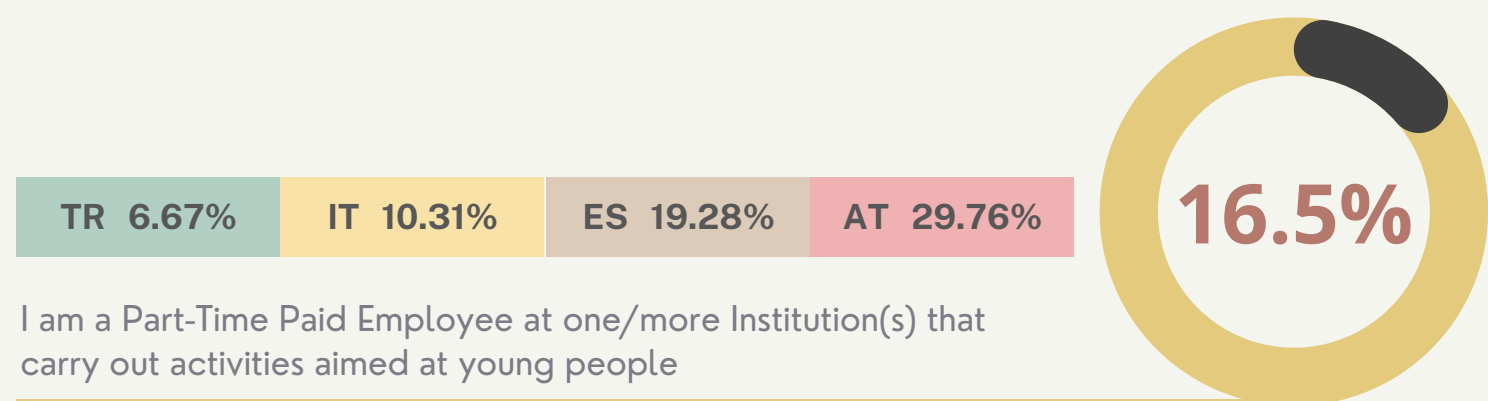
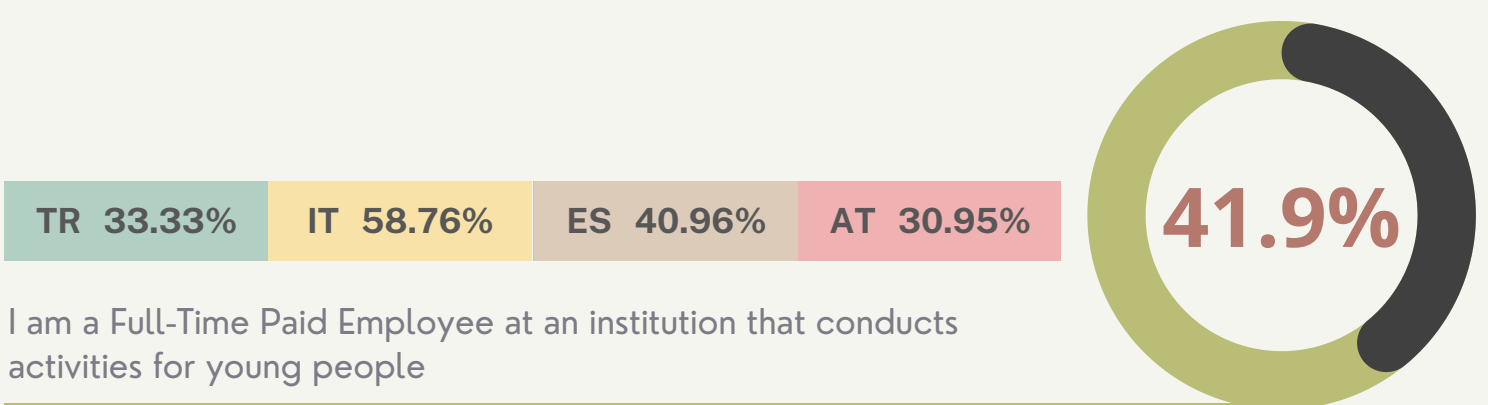
When we look at the education distribution of the youth coordinators and trainers participating in our research by country, it saw that 59.25% in Turkey, 87.93% in Italy, 76% in Spain, and 58.93% in Austria are at least university graduates. This situation shows that individuals in Italy and Spain are introduced to youth work earlier. Considering these data and the fact that the age distribution is middle-aged and above, our research contains value-added results based on high experience.



Work situation of the youth coordinators

When the working practices of youth coordinators dealing with young NEETs are analyzed, a significant portion of them (71.68%) work professionally in this field. In comparison, 28.32% have a working practice voluntarily. The rate of youth coordinators working independently is 22.42 percent.

Considering the proportion of youth coordinators between the ages of 18-35, it is seen that the participants with an average young age worked voluntarily/unpaid in the first years of their youth coordinator career.

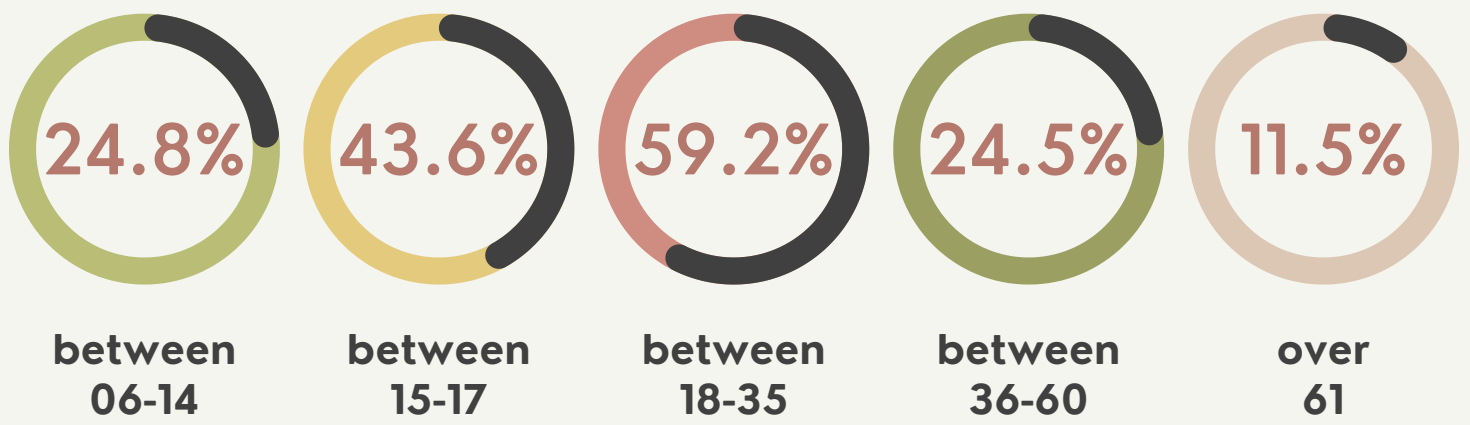


When the working practices of youth coordinators are analyzed in terms of volunteering, the proportion of volunteers is 49.33% in Turkey, 11.34% in Italy, 26.51% in Spain, and 30.95% in Austria.



Youth coordinators and trainers work groups age level in organisations

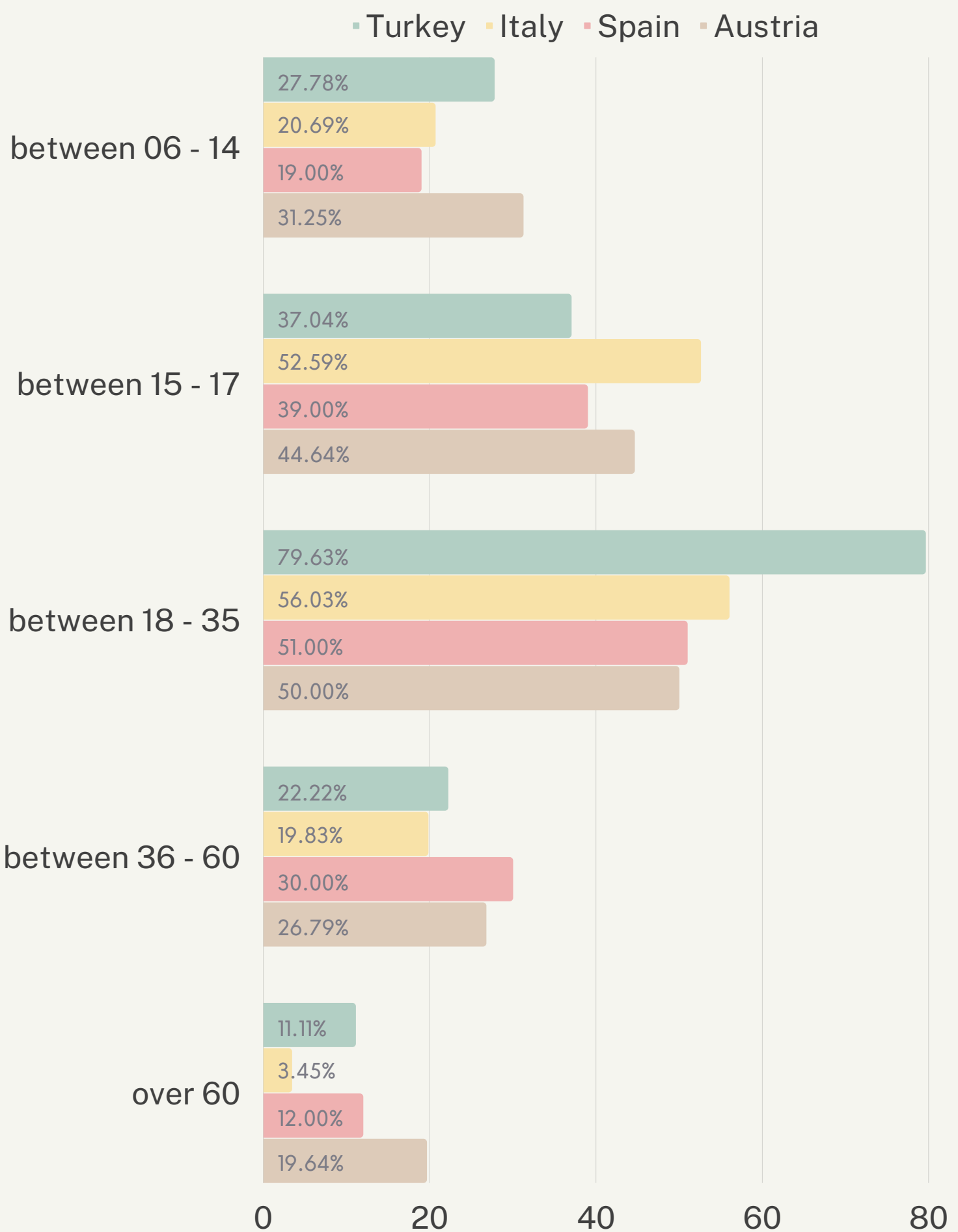
62.8% of youth coordinators and trainers work in organisations working with young people.



The age ranges in which research participants work for their target groups are primarily young people in the 15-35 age group.

In addition to young NEETs, the rate of organizations providing training to middle-aged and older NEETs is 22%.

The presence of NGOs that provide services for all age groups is particularly striking.

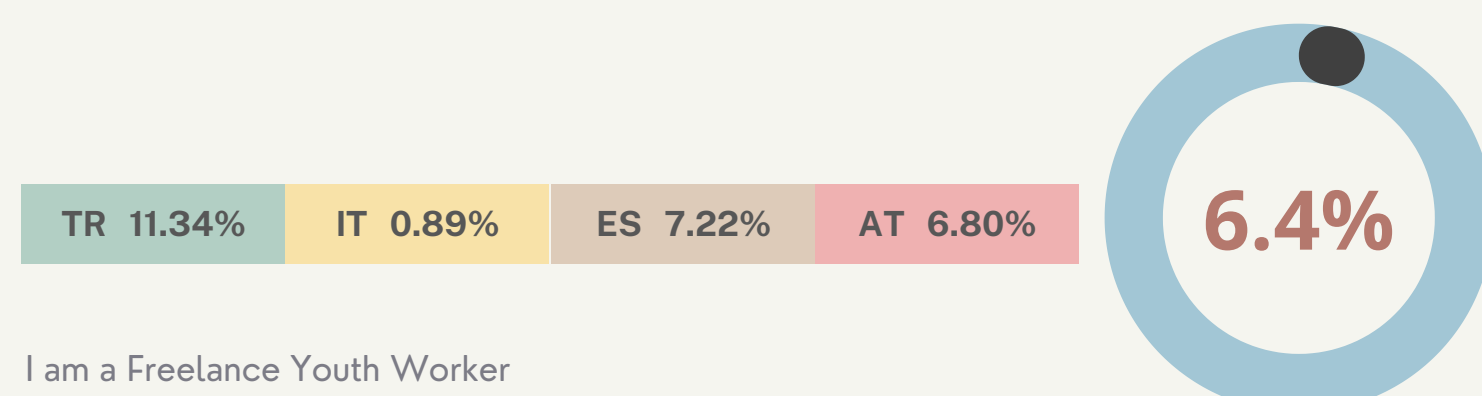
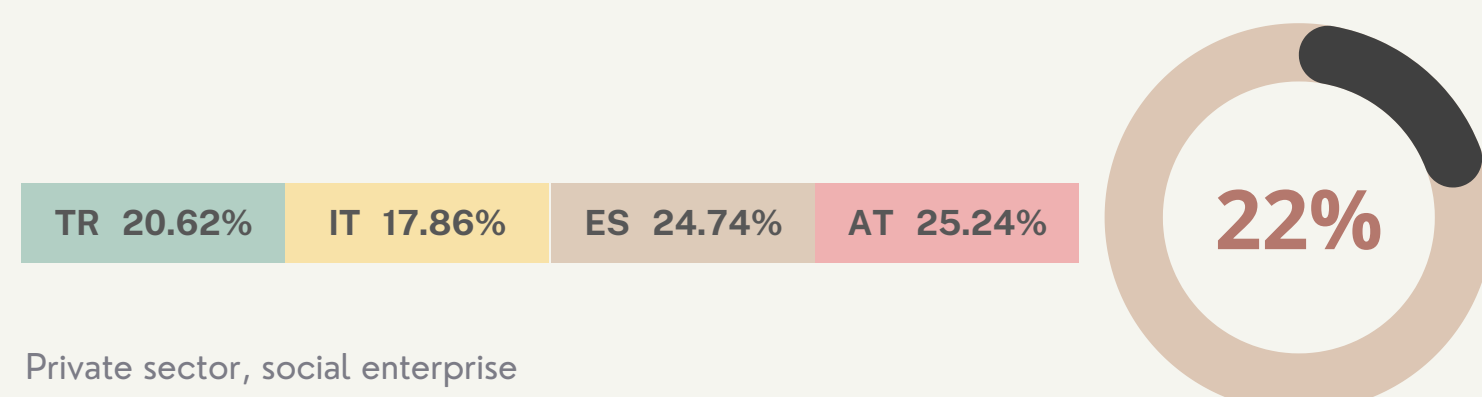
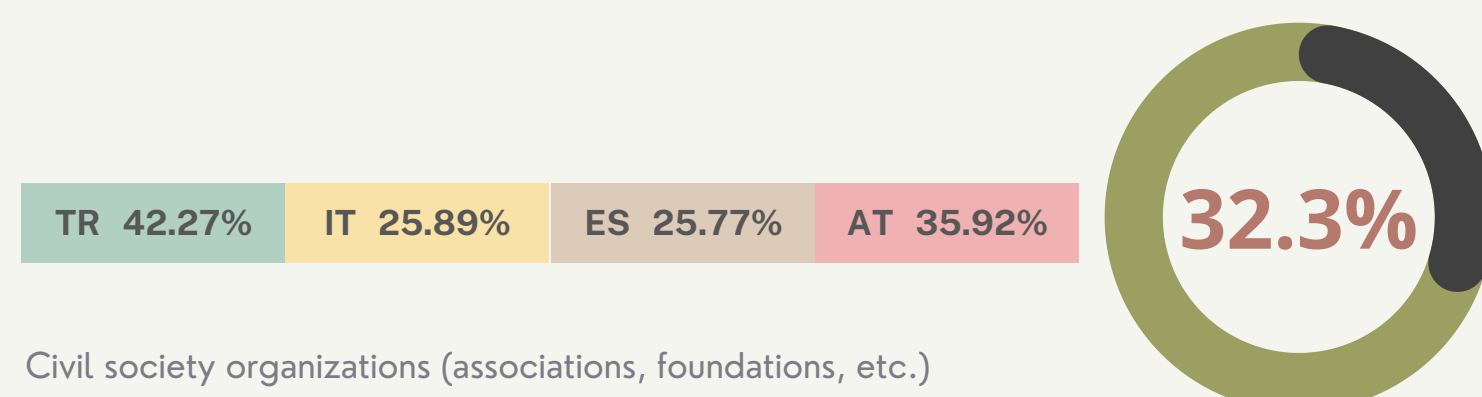
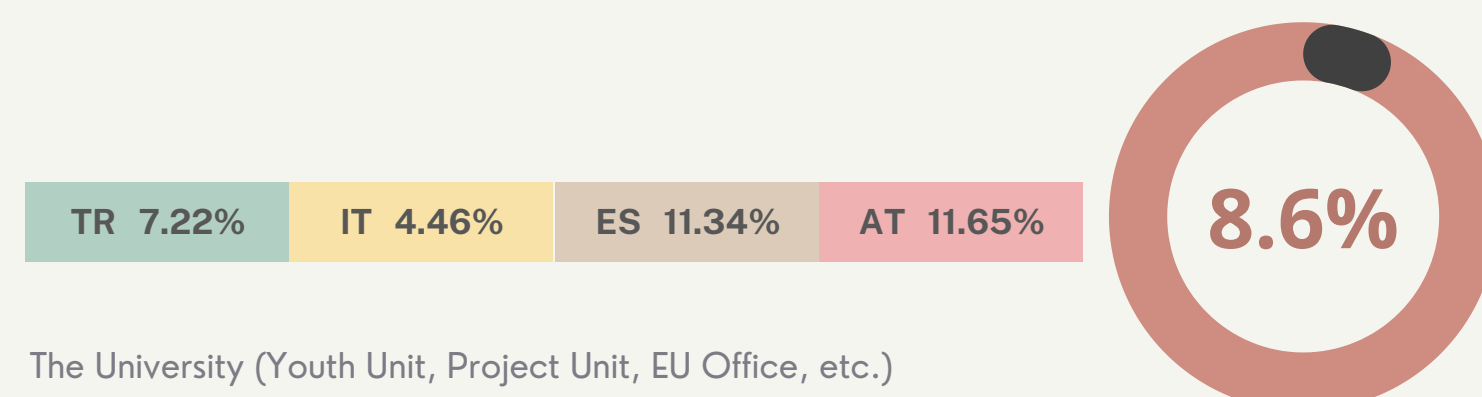
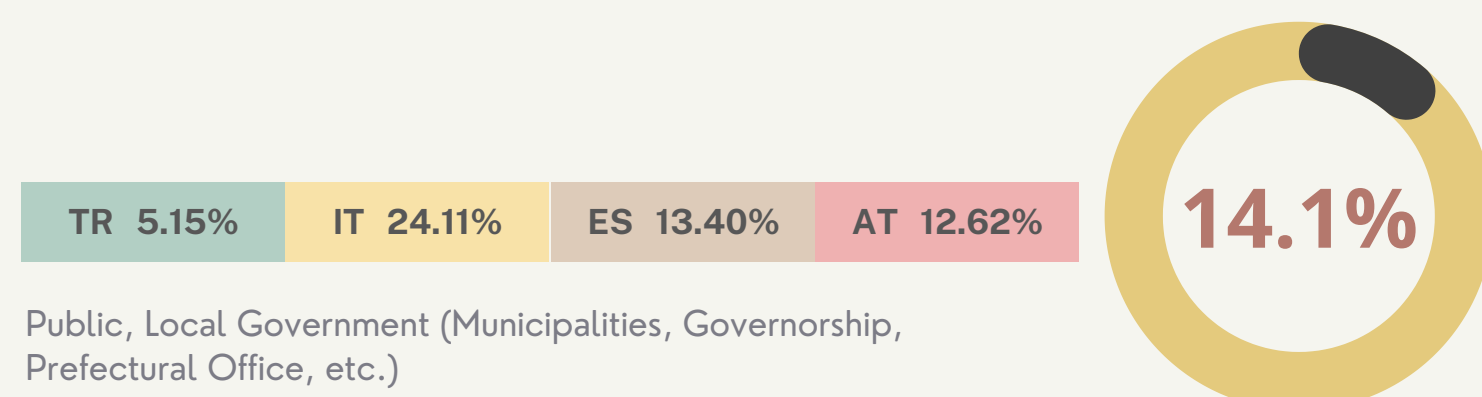
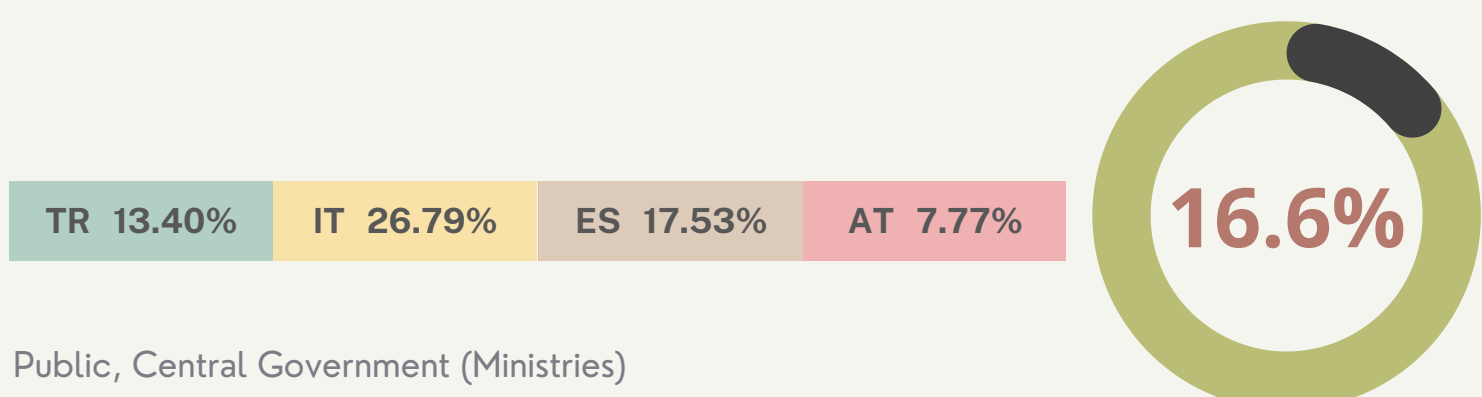


The national distribution of youth coordinators and trainers who provide training for NEETs saw that the majority serve individuals aged 15-35 in Turkey, with 65.62%. This rate is 71.18 percent in Italy, 59.60 percent in Spain, and 54.92 percent in Austria.

Participants provide training to young NEETs as well as middle-aged and older NEETs. However, NGOs especially provide services to groups of all ages in many areas other than NEET training.

Type of institution that youth coordinators are currently working for

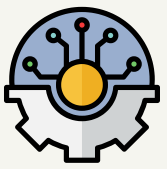
32.3% of the youth coordinators who participated in our research work in NGOs working for young people. 30.8% of youth coordinators work in the public sector (central and local government), and 8.6% work in the youth units of universities and departments such as project and youth offices. In private sector organizations, 22% work in social enterprise clubs, and 6.4% independently run youth activities.



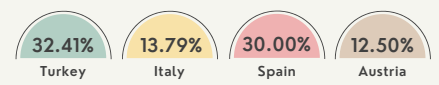
Reasons for a NEET cannot find a job

The problems emphasized by the youth coordinators in the first five ranks when we asked the reason why young NEETs cannot find a job;

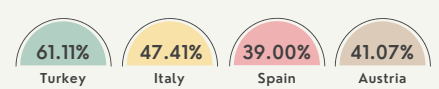
- Deficiencies/inequalities in the education system 47.24%,
- Economic crisis 41.97%,
- Search for work experience in young people 39.67%,
- Insufficient government investment 29.81%,
- Insufficient employment and employment services are 27.52%.



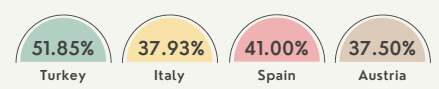
Backwardness in the ICT **(21.78%)**



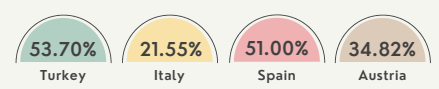
Deficiencies/inequalities in the education system **(47.24%)**



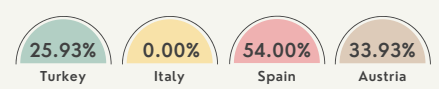
Economic crisis **(41.97%)**



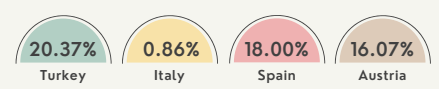
Search for work experience in young people **(39.67%)**



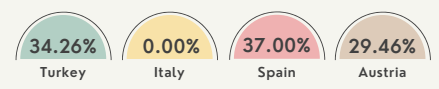
Insufficient employment and employment services **(27.52%)**



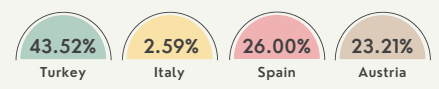
Population growth **(13.53%)**



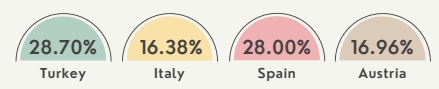
The inadequacy of social policies **(25.54%)**



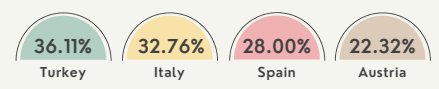
Excess of university graduates **(23.39%)**



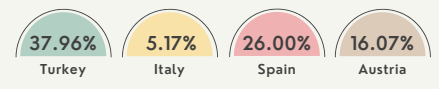
Insufficient private investment **(22.24%)**



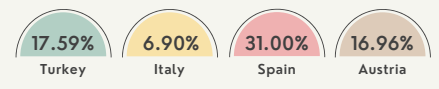
Insufficient government investment **(29.81%)**



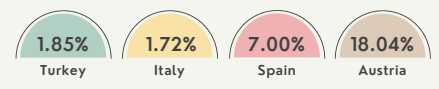
Lack of permanent staff position **(20.87%)**



NEET young people are happy to be home, don't want to work **(17.66%)**

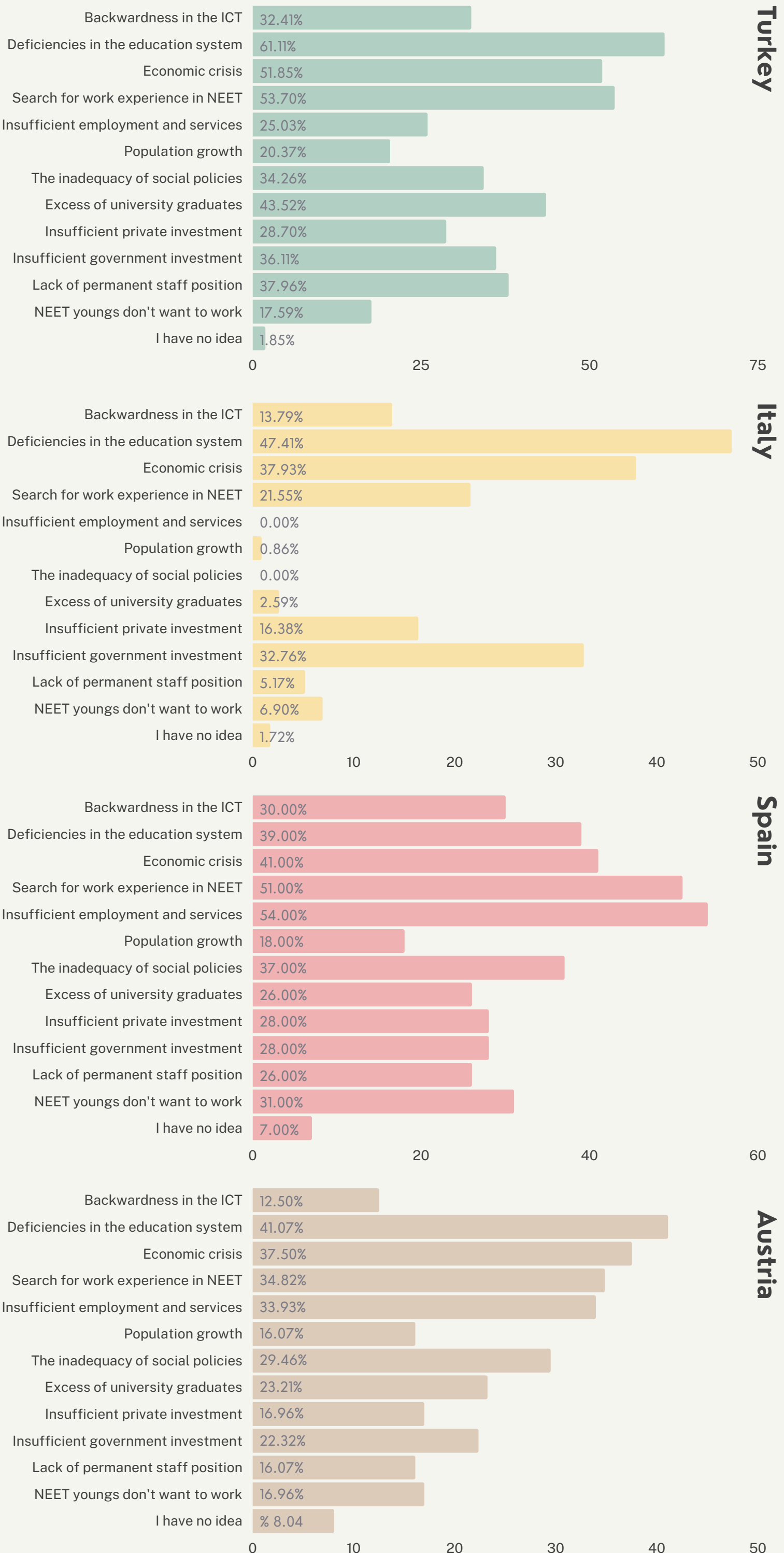


I have no idea **(4.58%)**



Reasons for a NEET cannot find a job

The country-specific distribution of why young NEETs cannot find a job is similar to the general results.

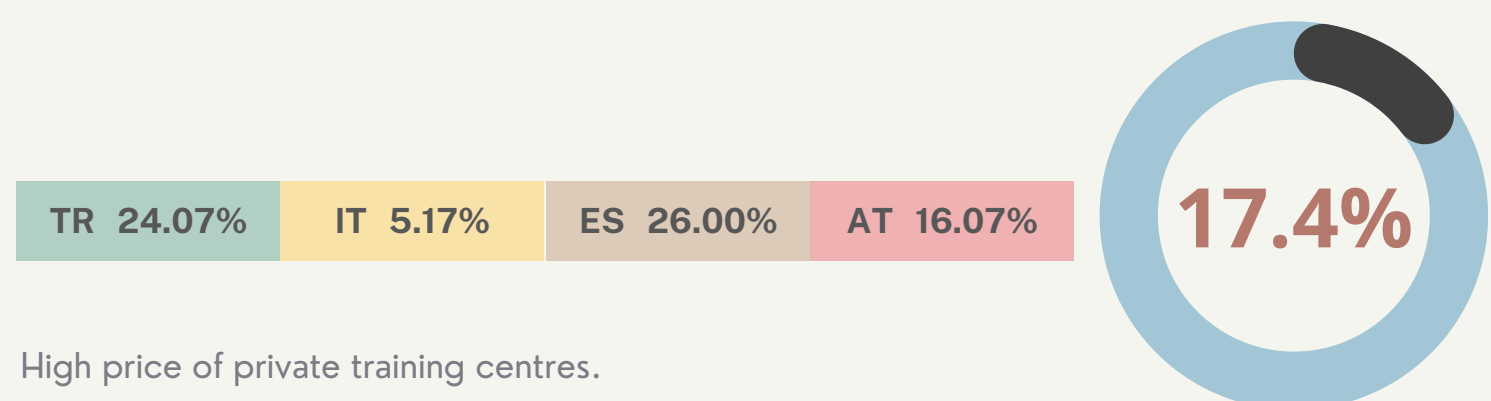
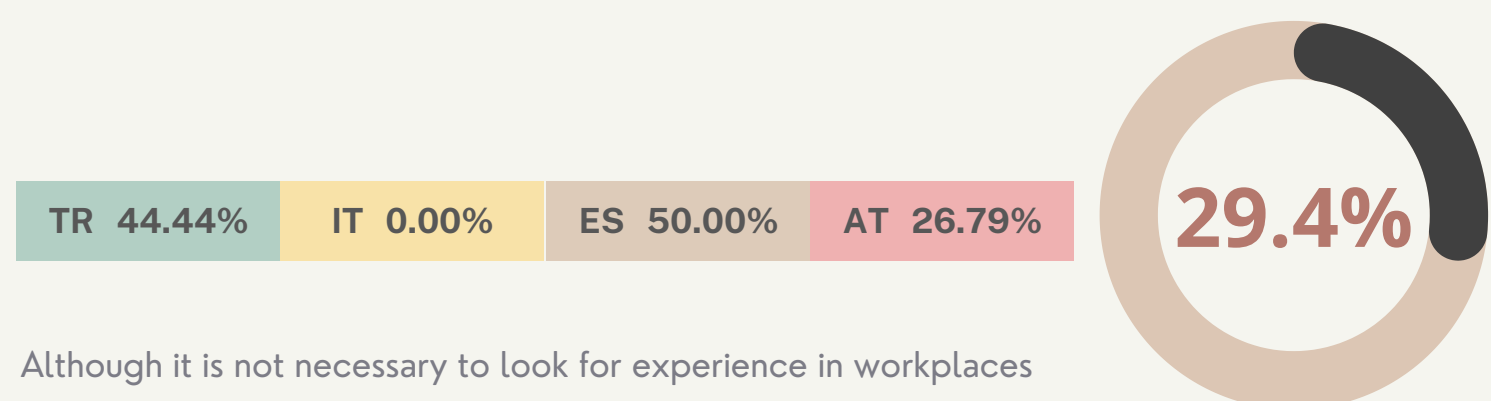
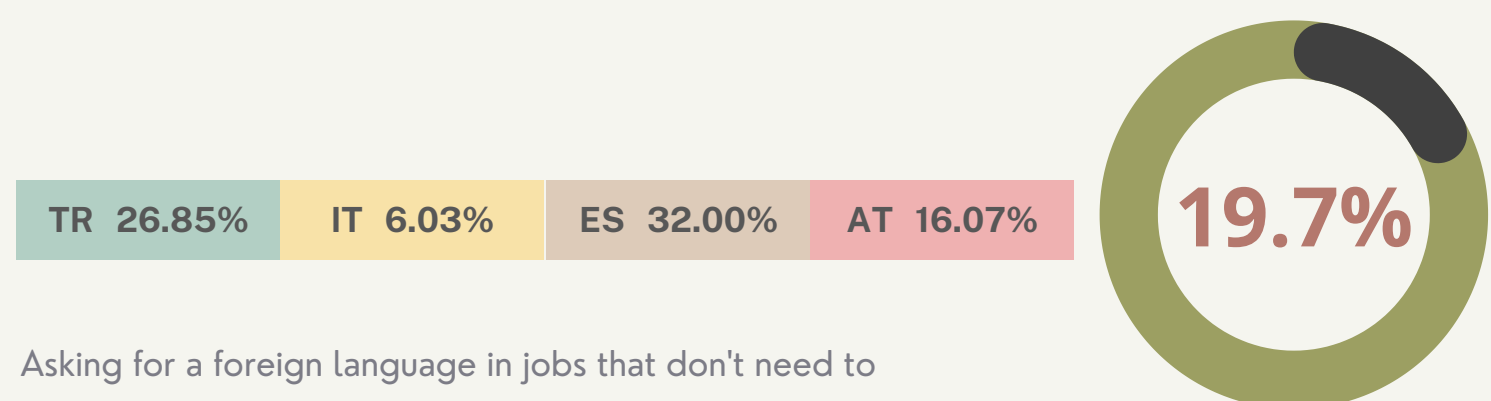
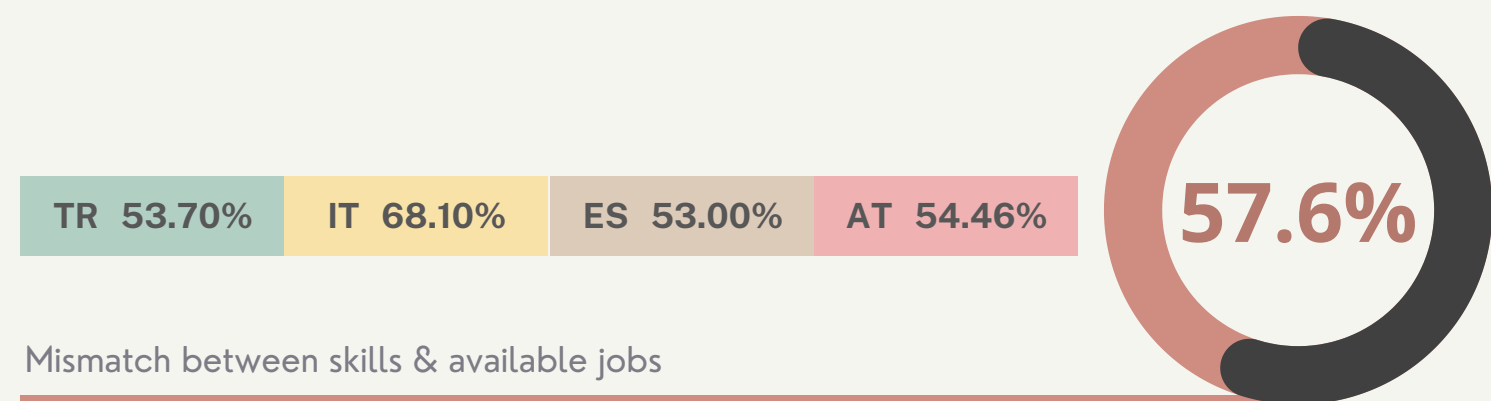
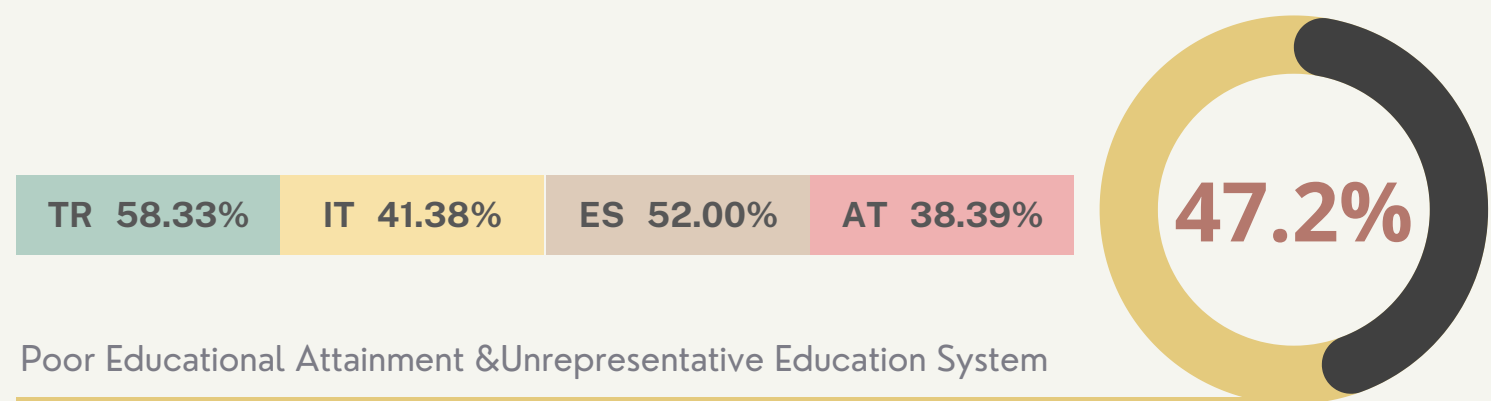
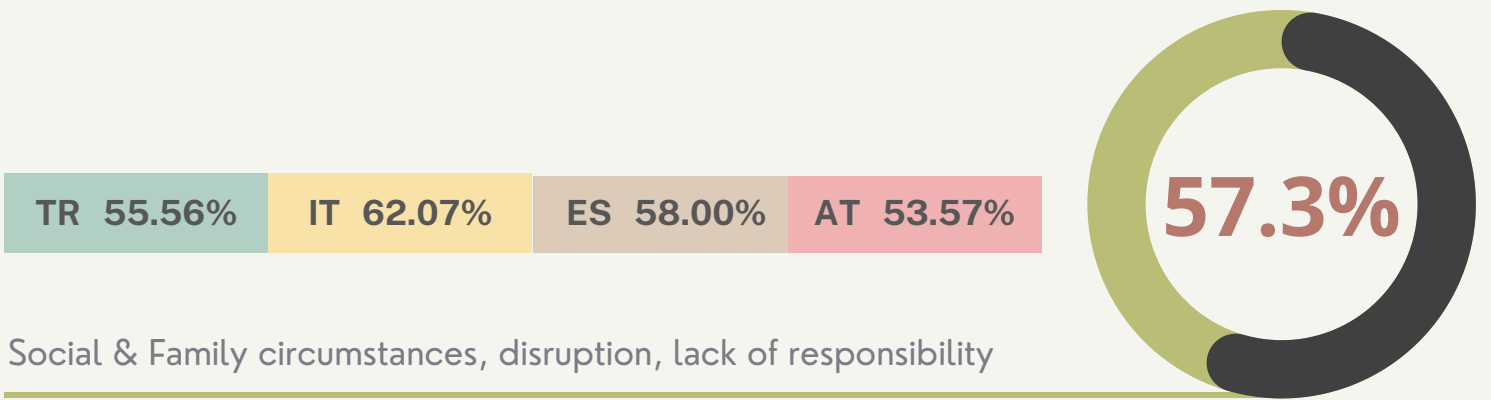


The main reasons that cause the NEET problem in partner countries

In the regions of youth coordinators, it ranks in the top 3 among the topics that cause NEET;

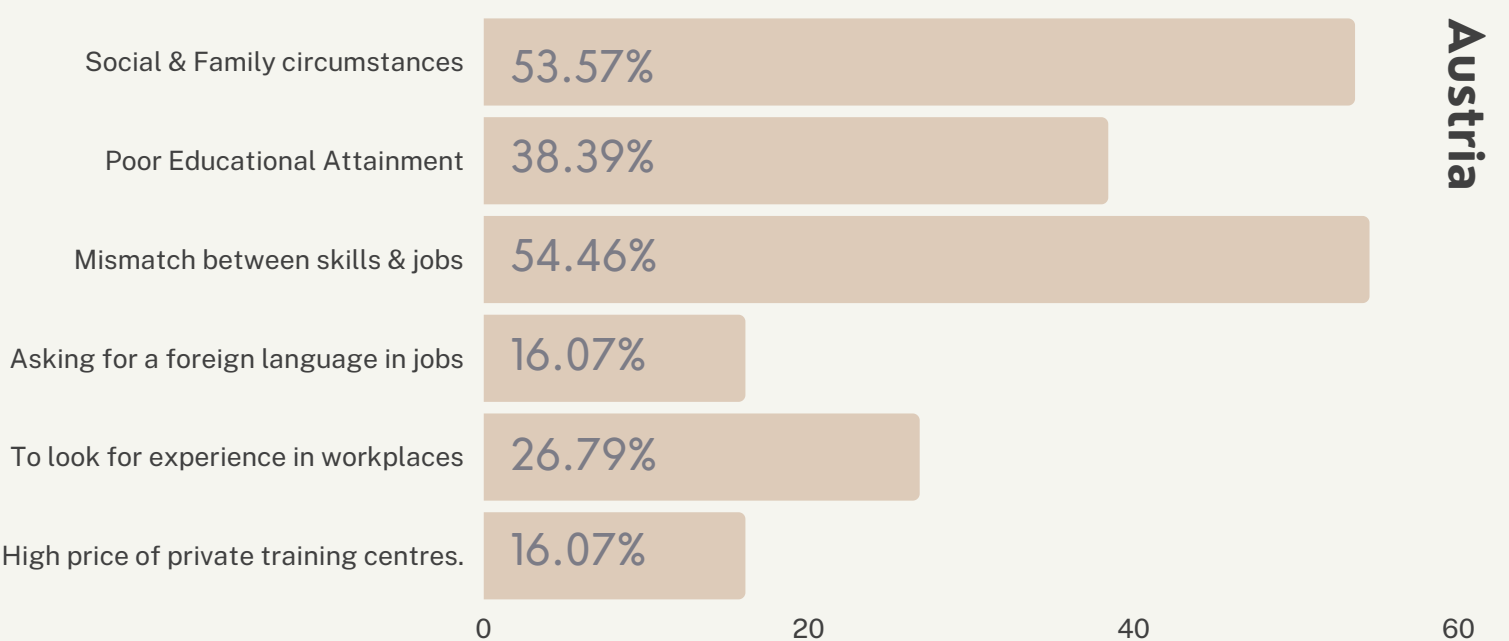
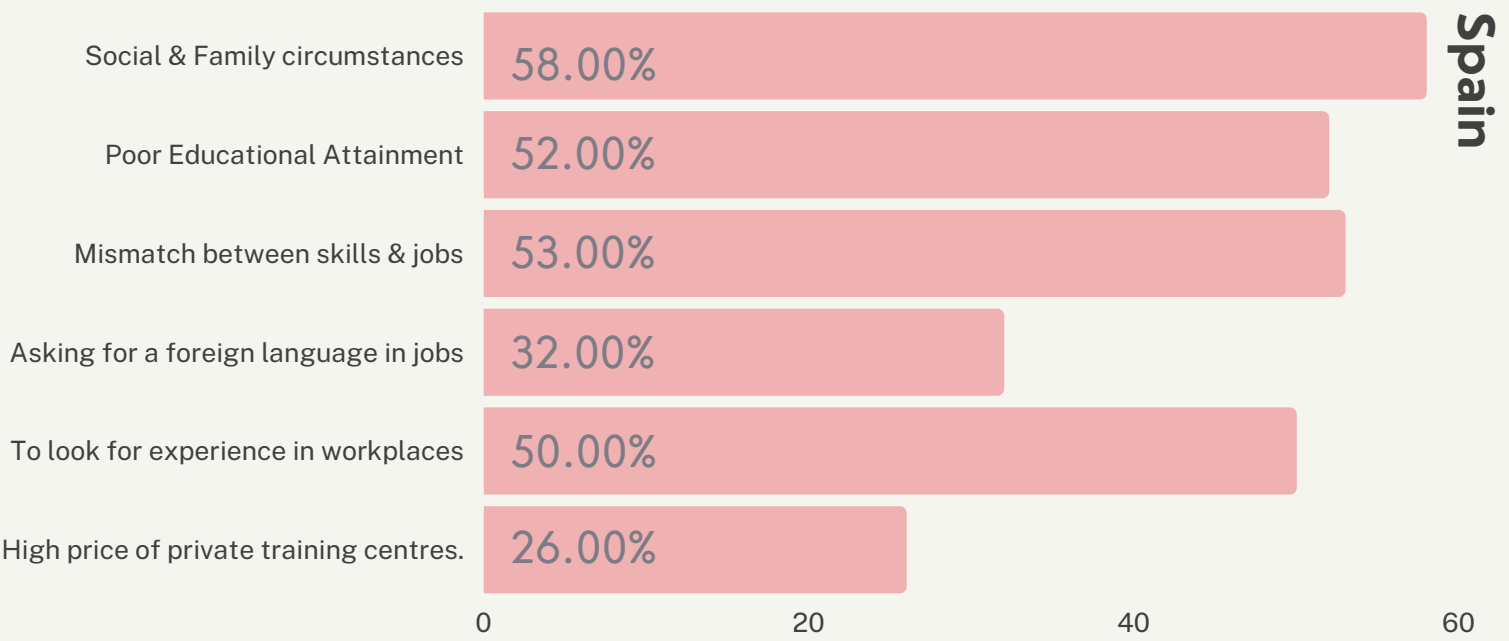
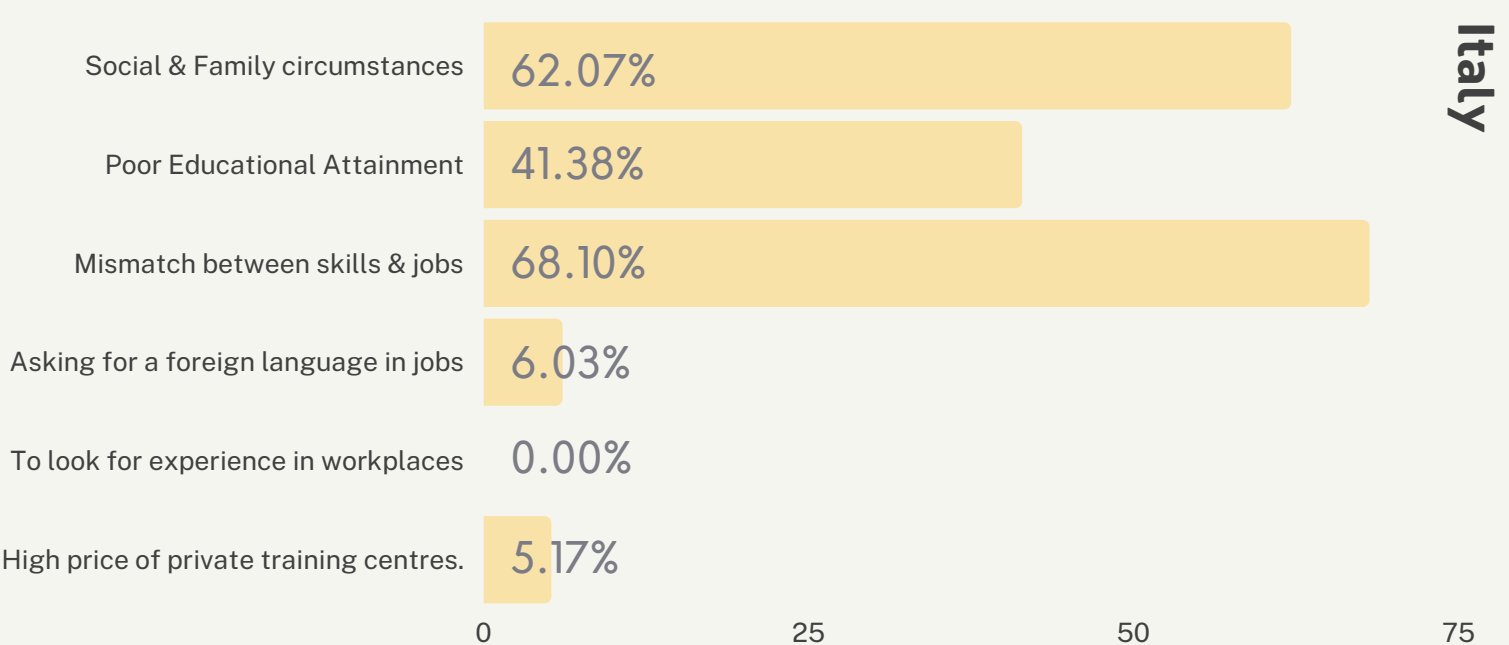
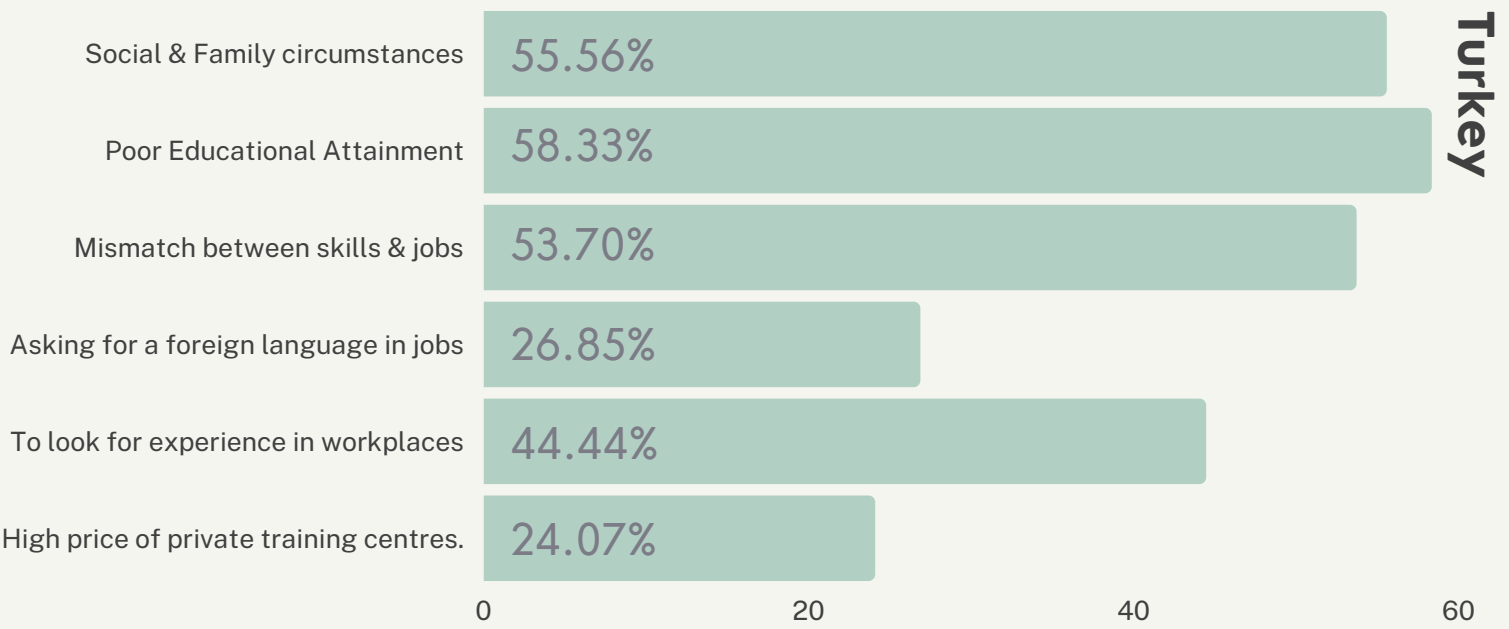
- A mismatch between skills & available jobs 57.57%,
- Social & family circumstances, disruption, lack of responsibility 57.34%,
- Poor educational attainment & unrepresentative education system 47.25%

have expressed their opinions as follows.



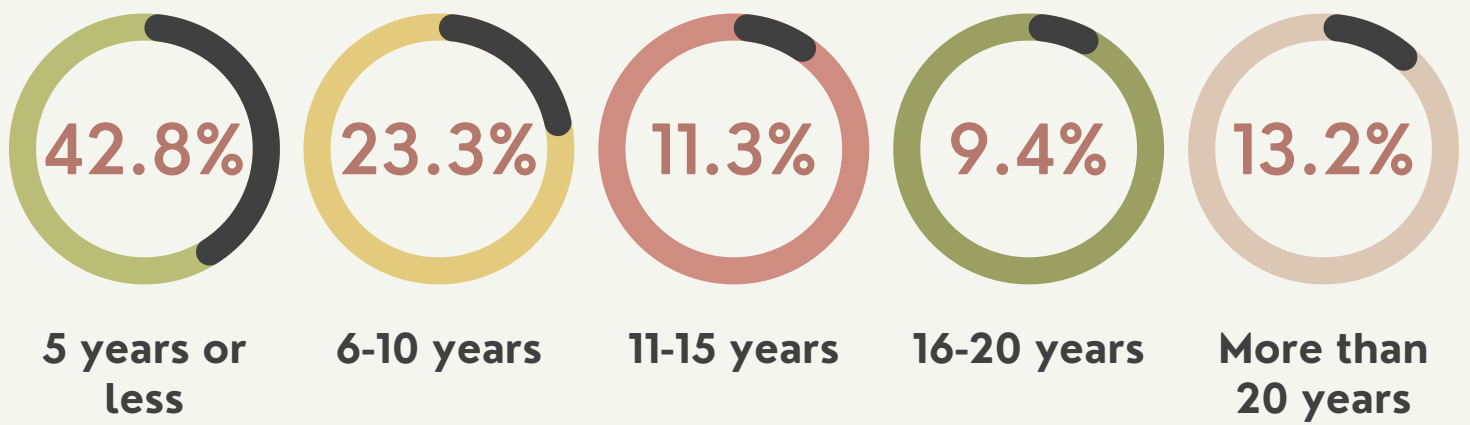
The main reasons that cause the NEET problem in partner countries

When the reasons for being NEET are analyzed country-wise, the first three problems also occur country-specifically.



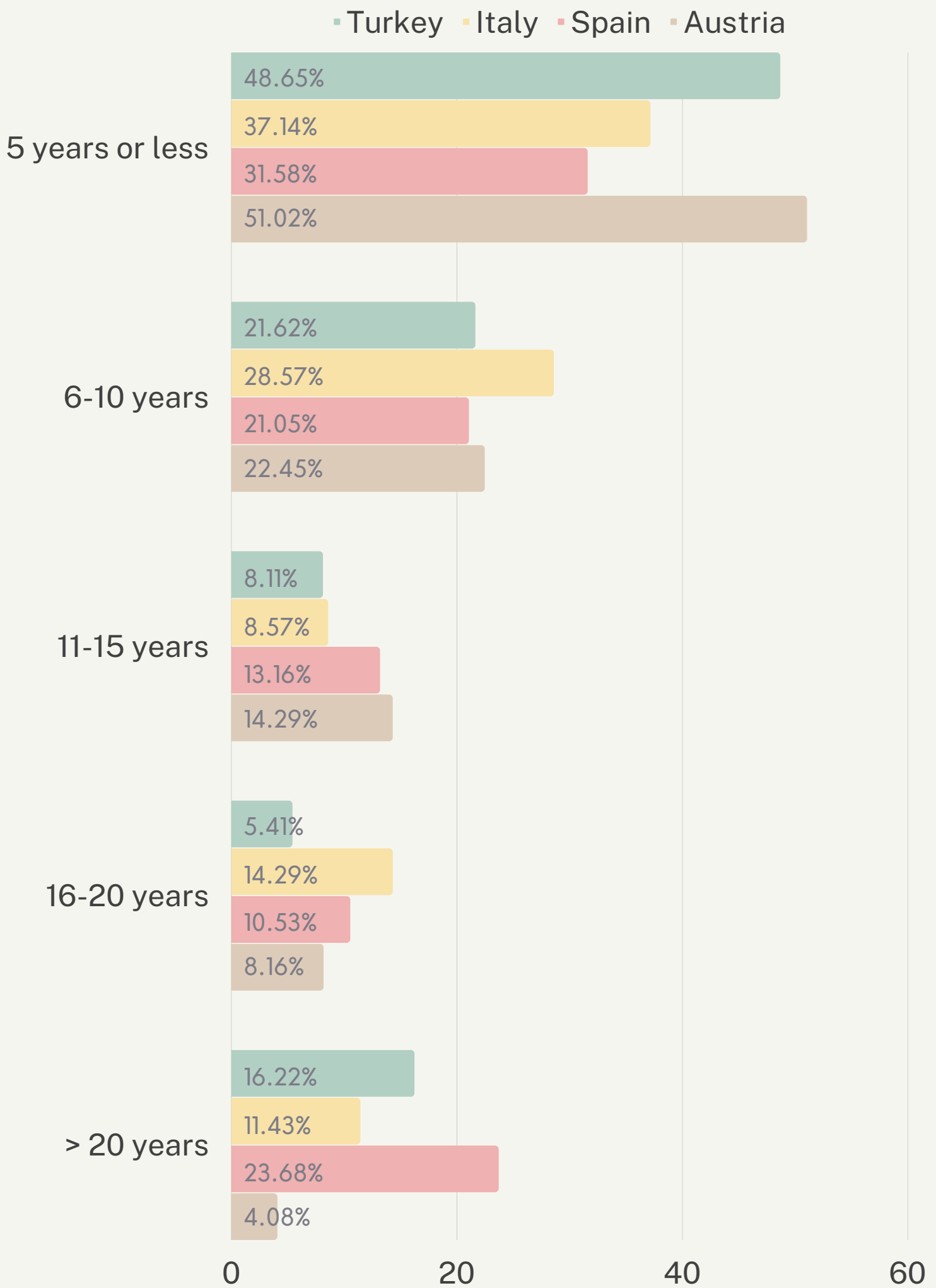
Years of experience in providing training for young NEETs inside the organization

Training organized for NEET youth in the institutions where youth coordinators work has increased in recent years.



The concept of NEET, which started in the early 1990s, has brought along training activities for these groups.

When NEET training, which has increased in recent years, is analyzed in terms of process; 42.77% for 5 years or less, 23.27% for 6 - 10 years, 11.32% for 11 - 15 years. 22.64% of the institutions have provided NEET training for more than 15 years.



When NEET training is analyzed country by country; 70.27% in Turkey, 65.71% in Italy, and 73.47% in Austria have had intensive NEET education for more than ten years.

In Spain, on the other hand, it is seen that the rate of institutions providing education for more than 15 years is 34.21%.

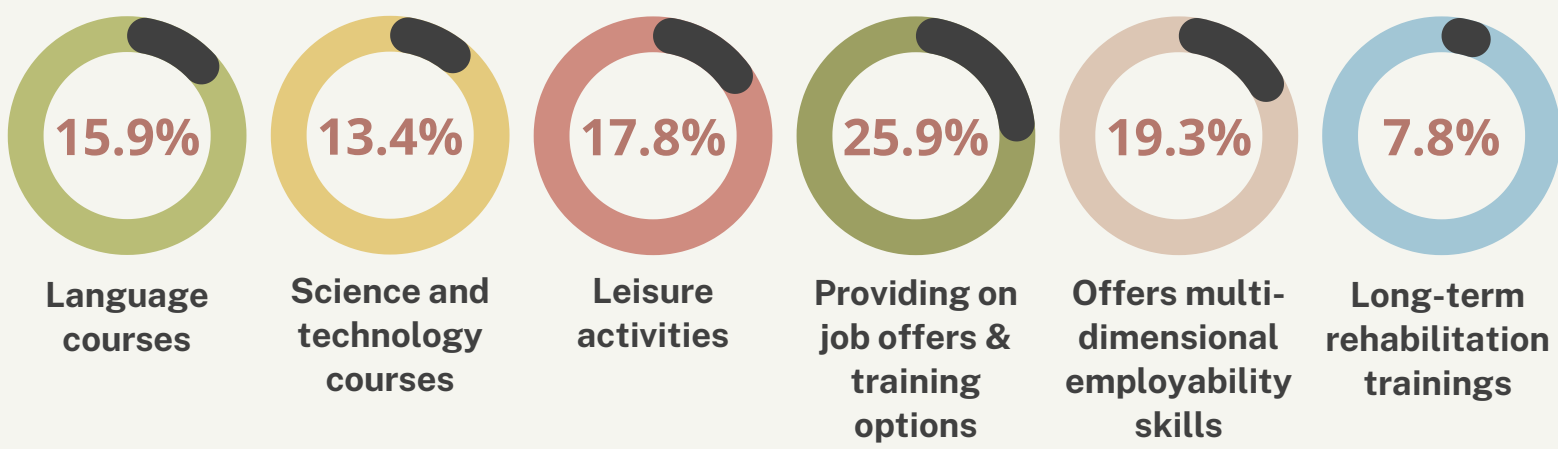
Activities for NEETs inside the organisations

The organizations in which youth coordinators work are predominantly;

- Basic information on job offers and training options 25.86 percent,
- Multidimensional employability skills (Career Management, Personal Development, etc.) 19.31%,
- Leisure time activities 17.76%

they organize training.

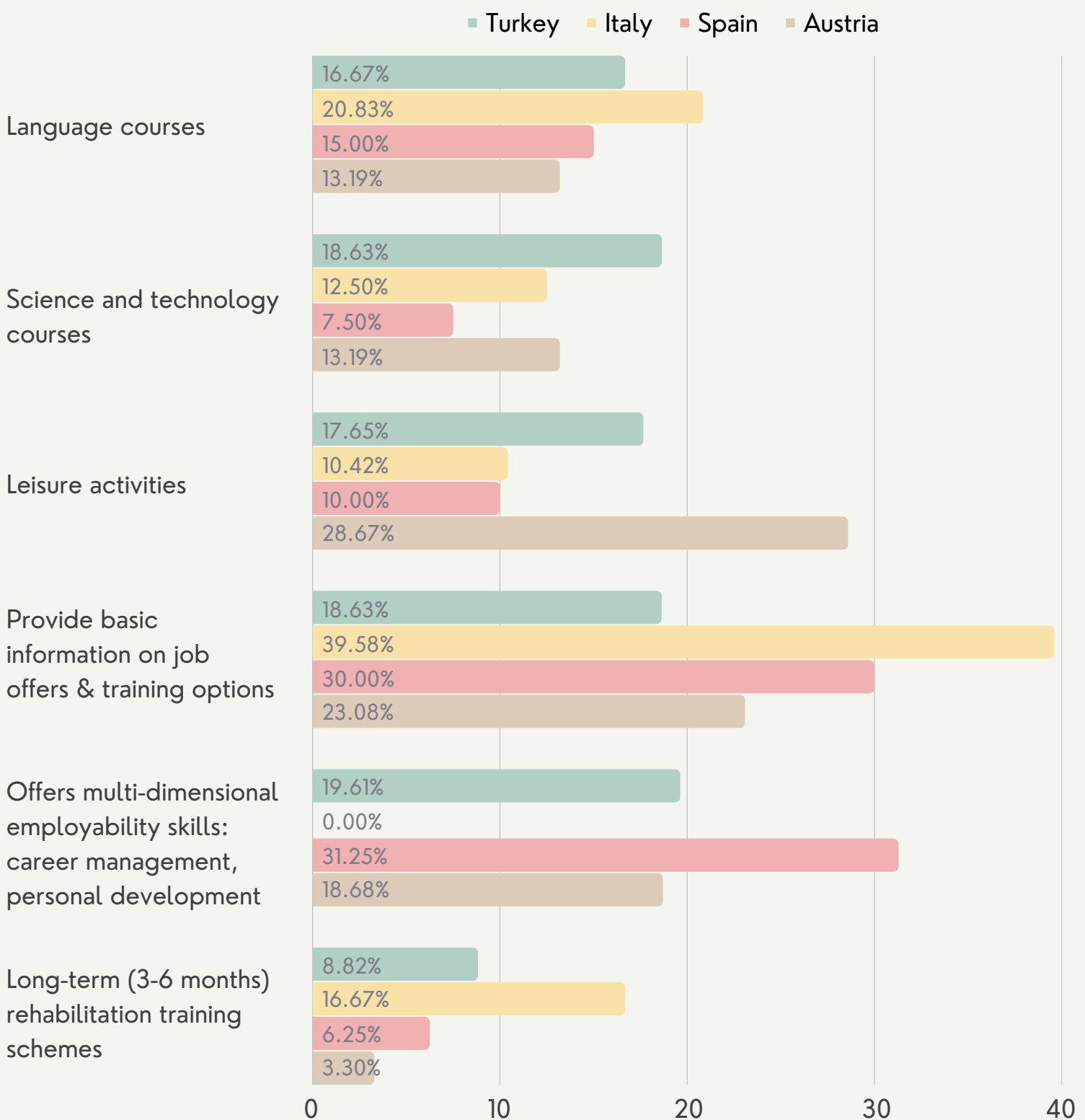
In light of these results, the need for technology and digital skills training, which is one of our project's focal points and is not at the expected level, is obvious.



Much research has recently been conducted on the causes, solutions, etc., for young NEETs.

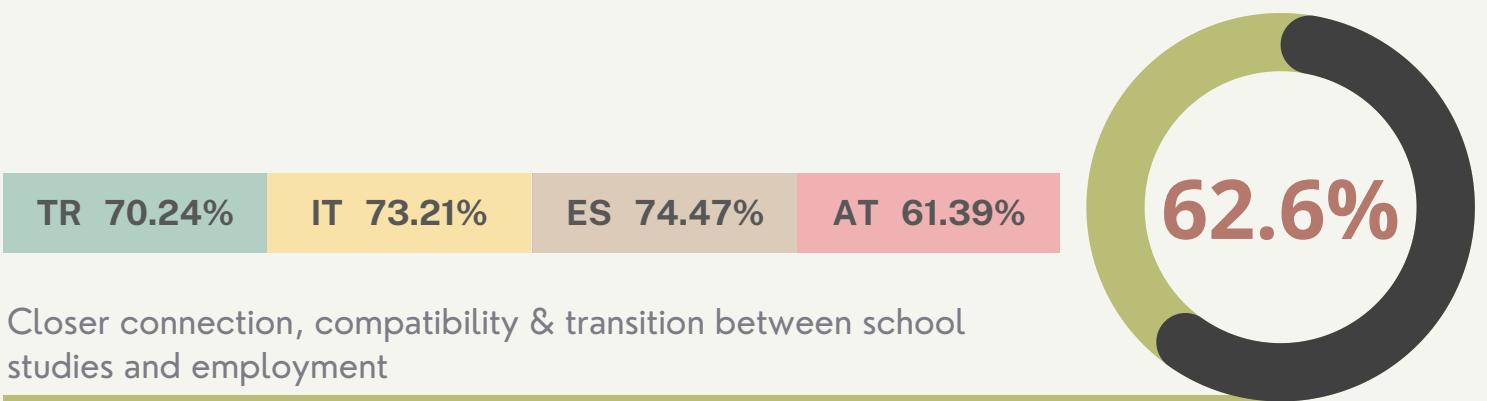
There is a problem with becoming/staying NEET.

It is evident that there is a need to contribute to the solution in terms of comprehensive, result-oriented, continuous training, regulation, work, etc. and that non-governmental organizations have significant responsibilities and duties in this regard.

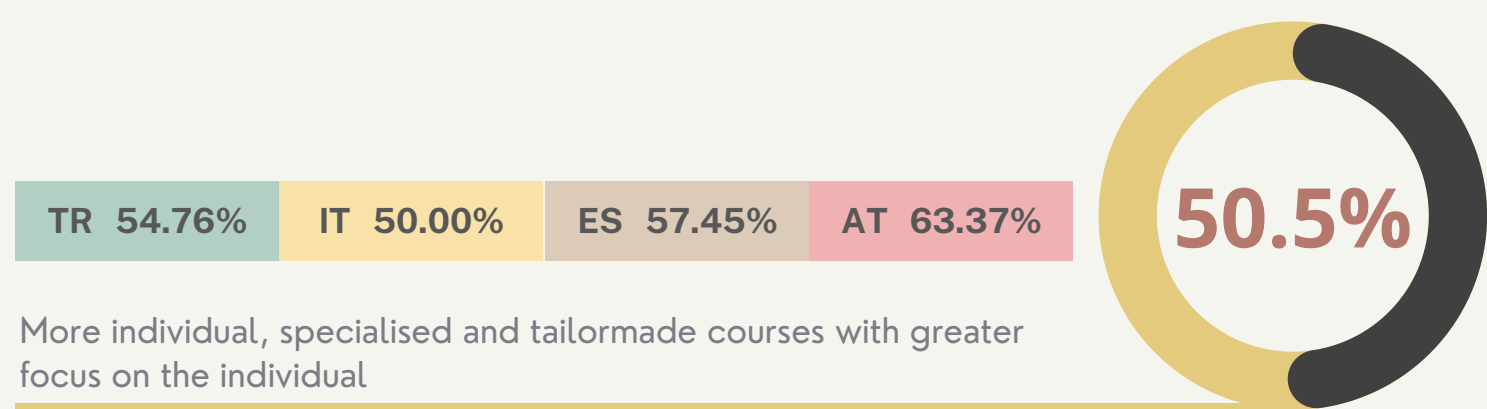


Missing parts in NEET training

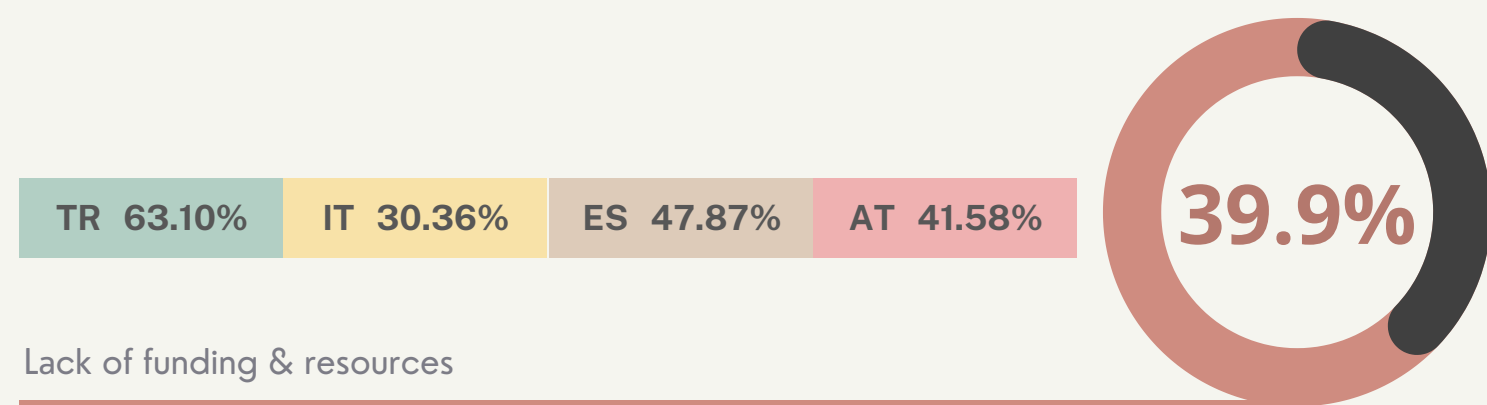
Youth coordinators dealing with young NEETs emphasized the connection between educational institutions and the field of employment in NEET education. According to the respondents, "Closer connection, compatibility and transition between school studies and employment" is problematic, with 62.61 % agreement



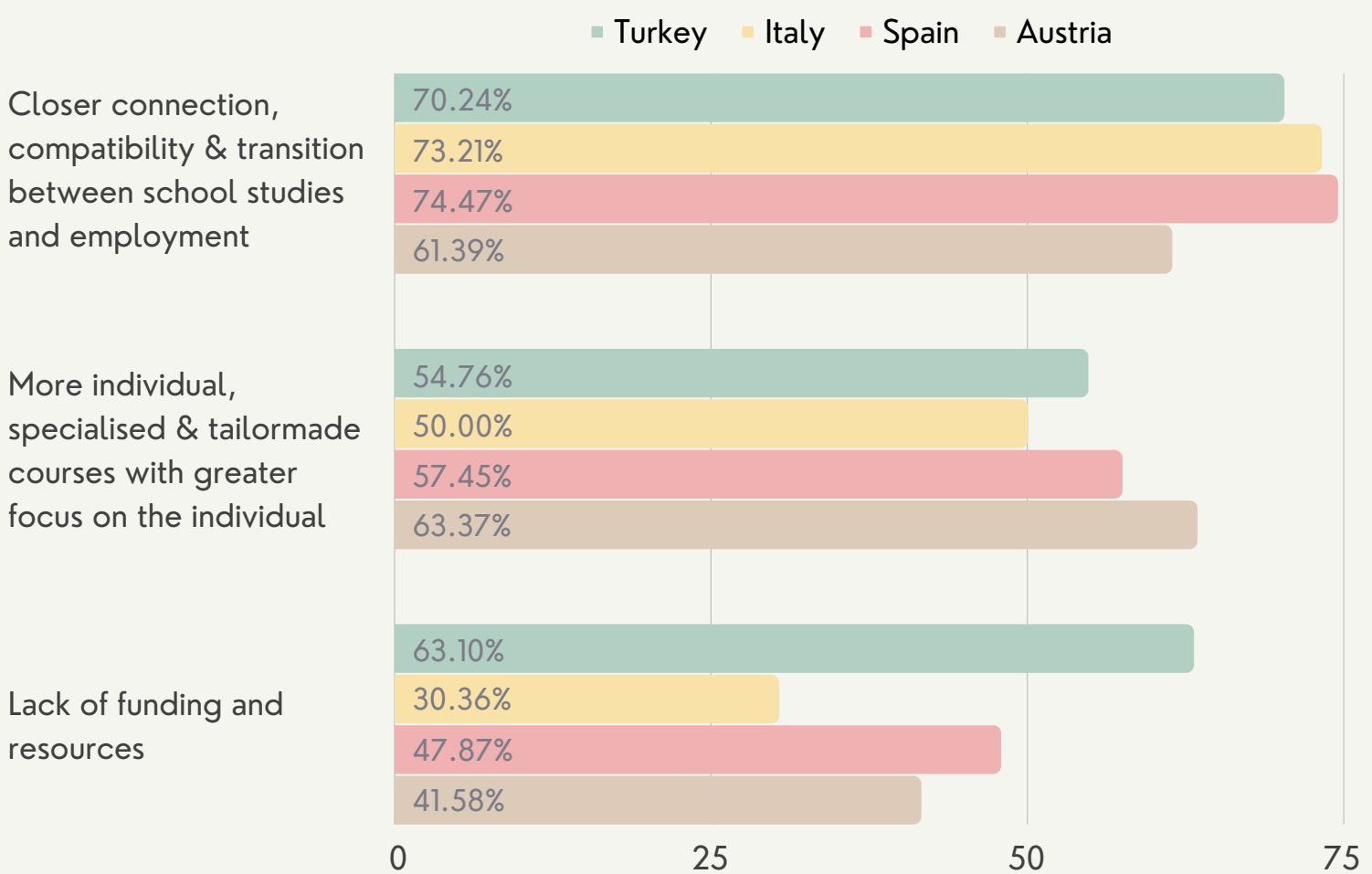
Closer connection, compatibility & transition between school studies and employment



More individual, specialised and tailor-made courses with greater focus on the individual



Lack of funding & resources



Youth coordinators identified the problems that young NEETs see as problematic in their education.

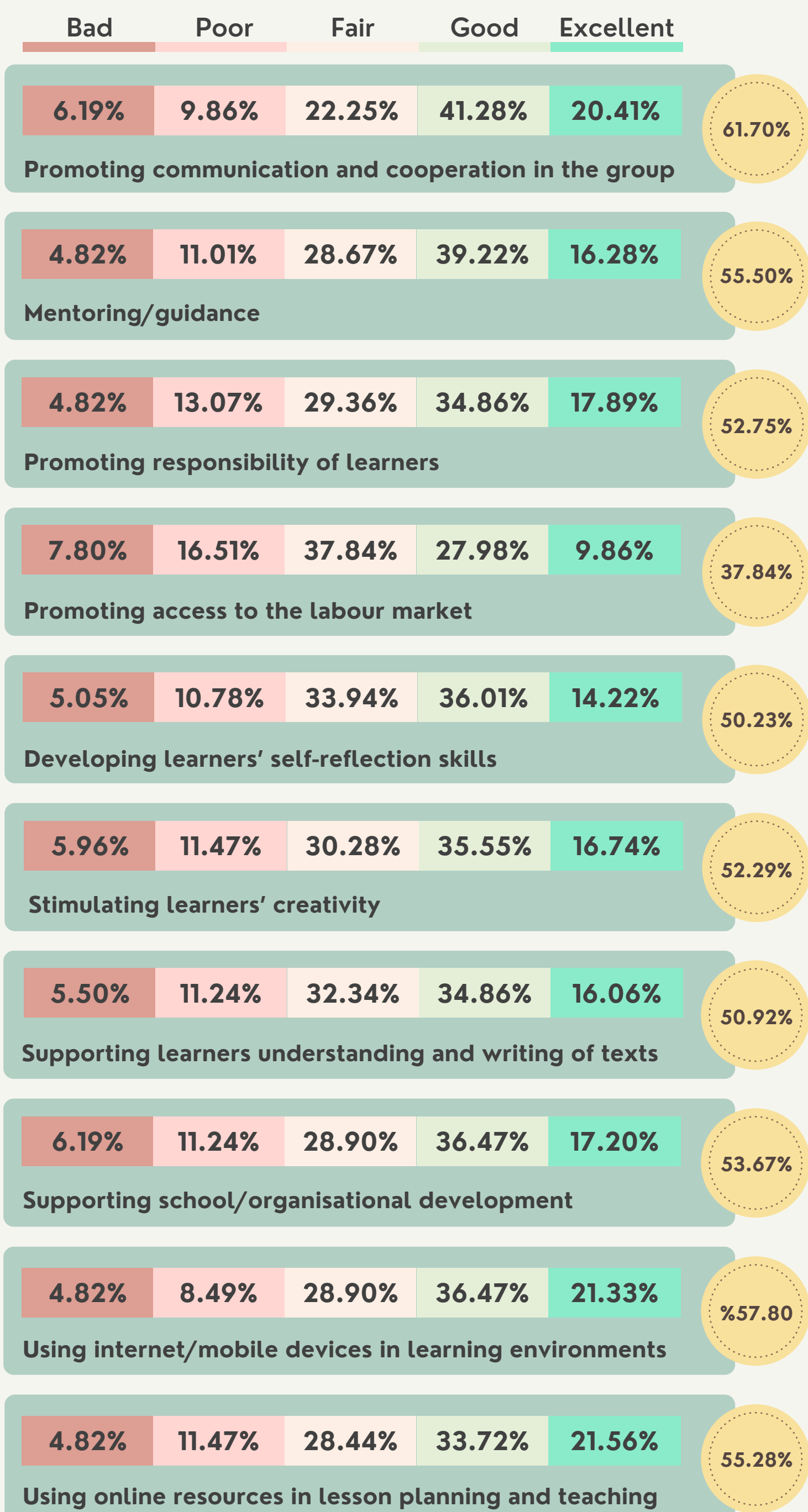
The relationship between training and employment, and specialized courses focussing on the individual were also prioritized country-by-country.

They have displayed a relatively different approach regarding the lack of financing and resources. Turkey 63.10%, Italy 30.36%, Spain 47.87%, Austria 41.58%

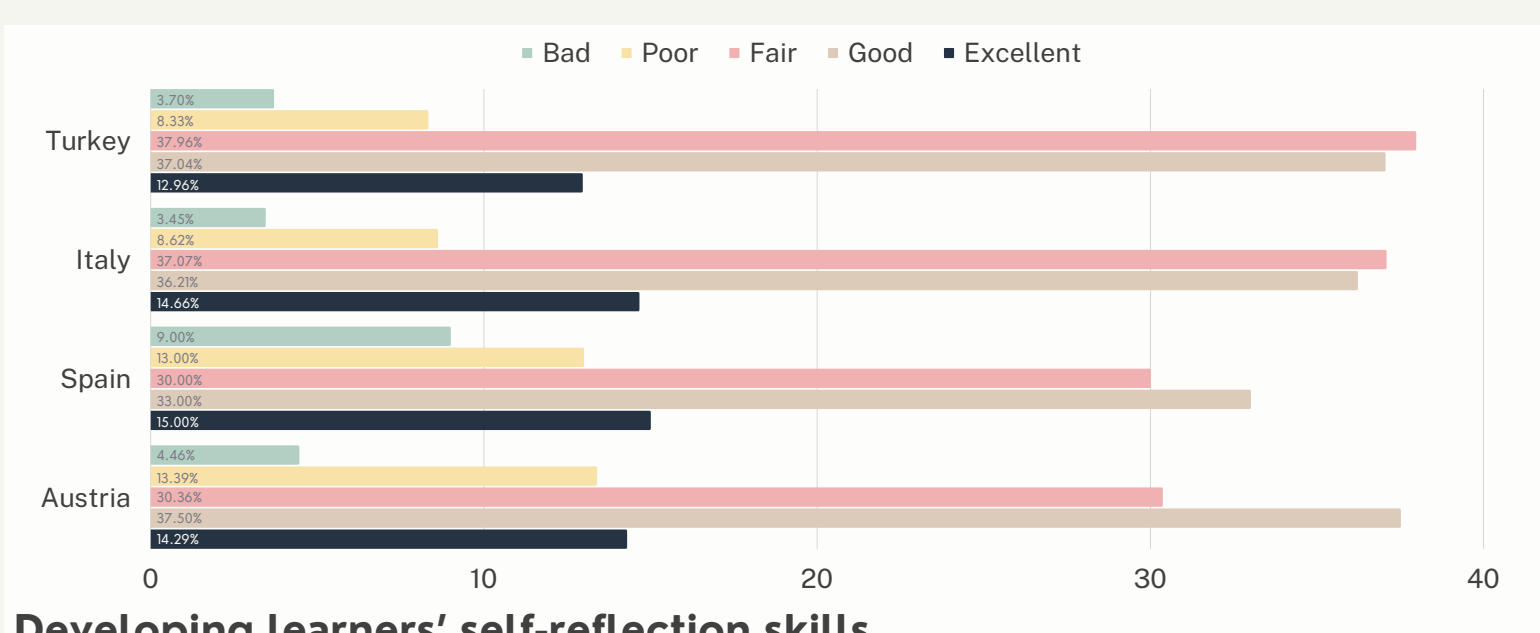
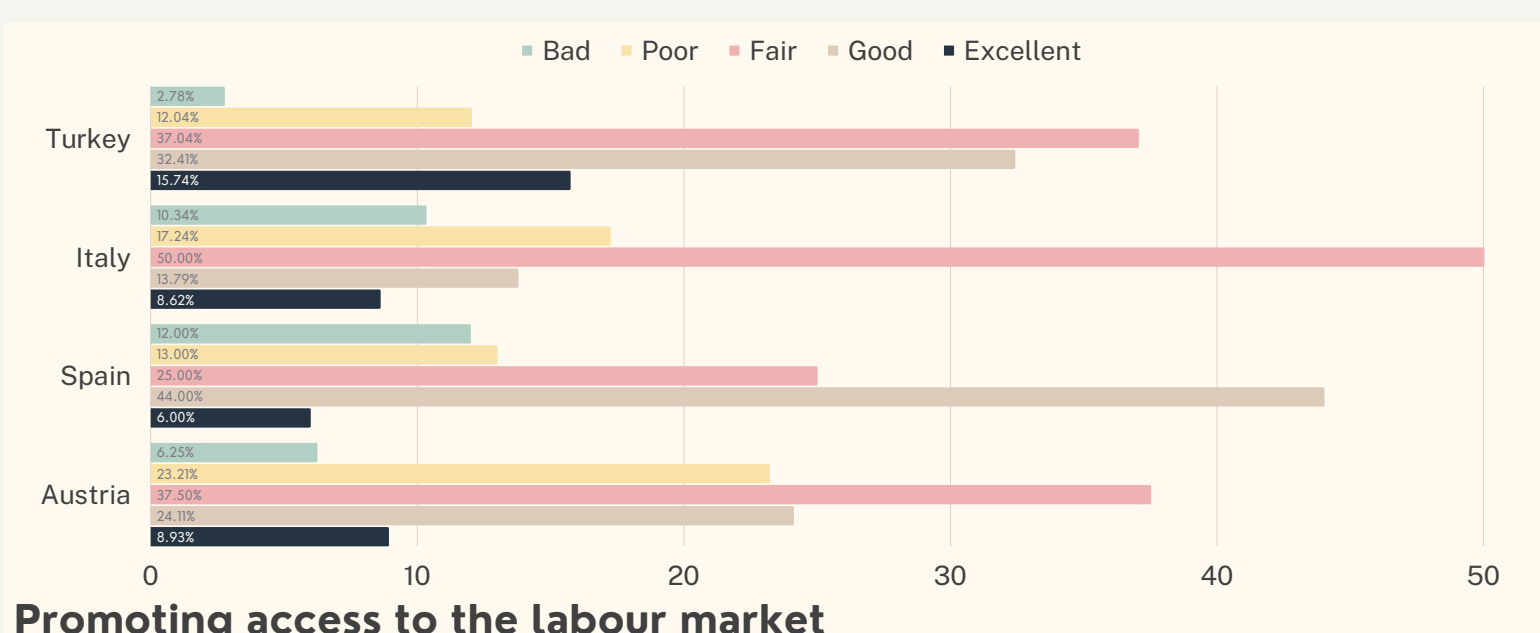
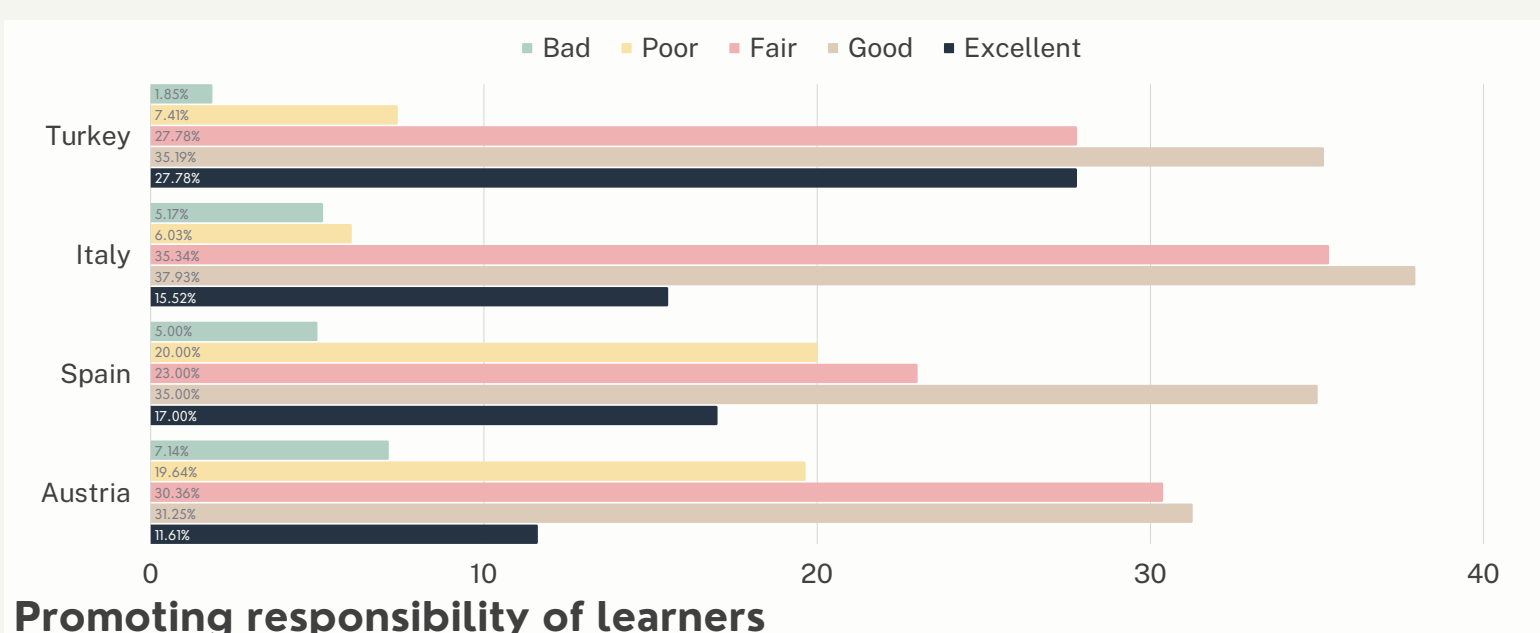
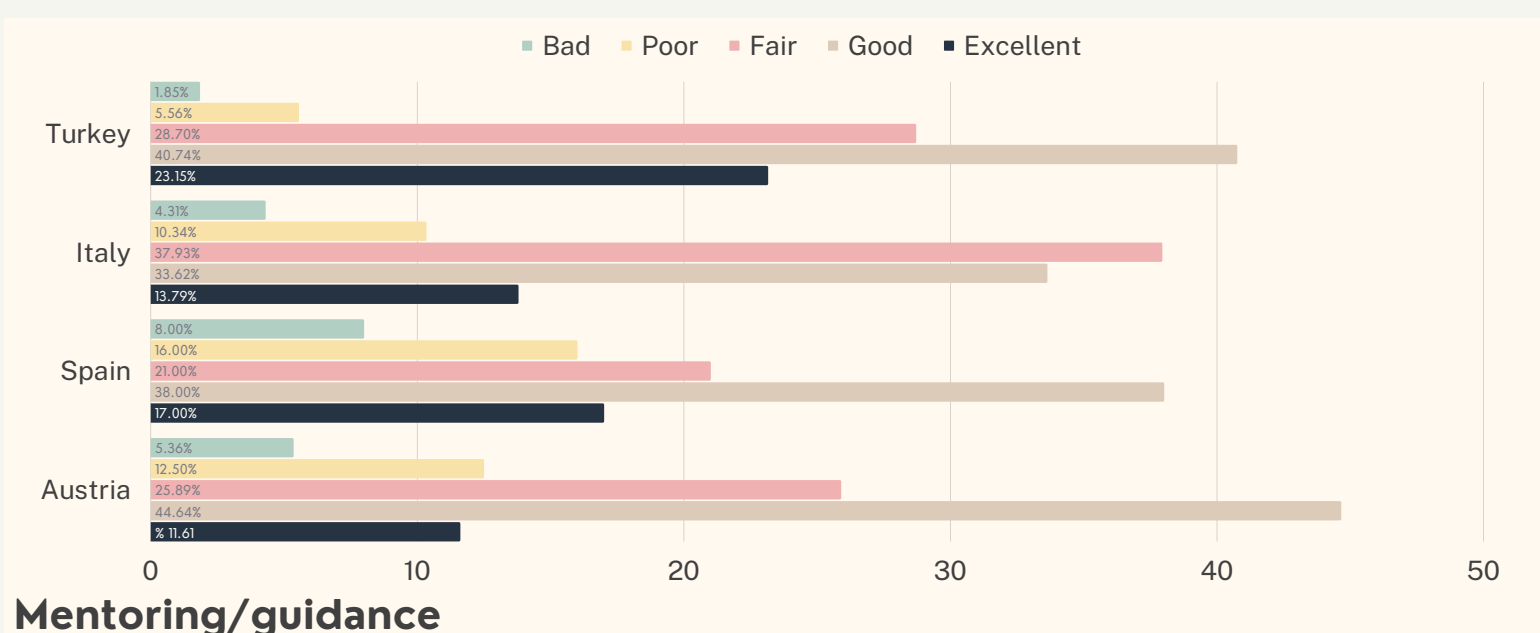
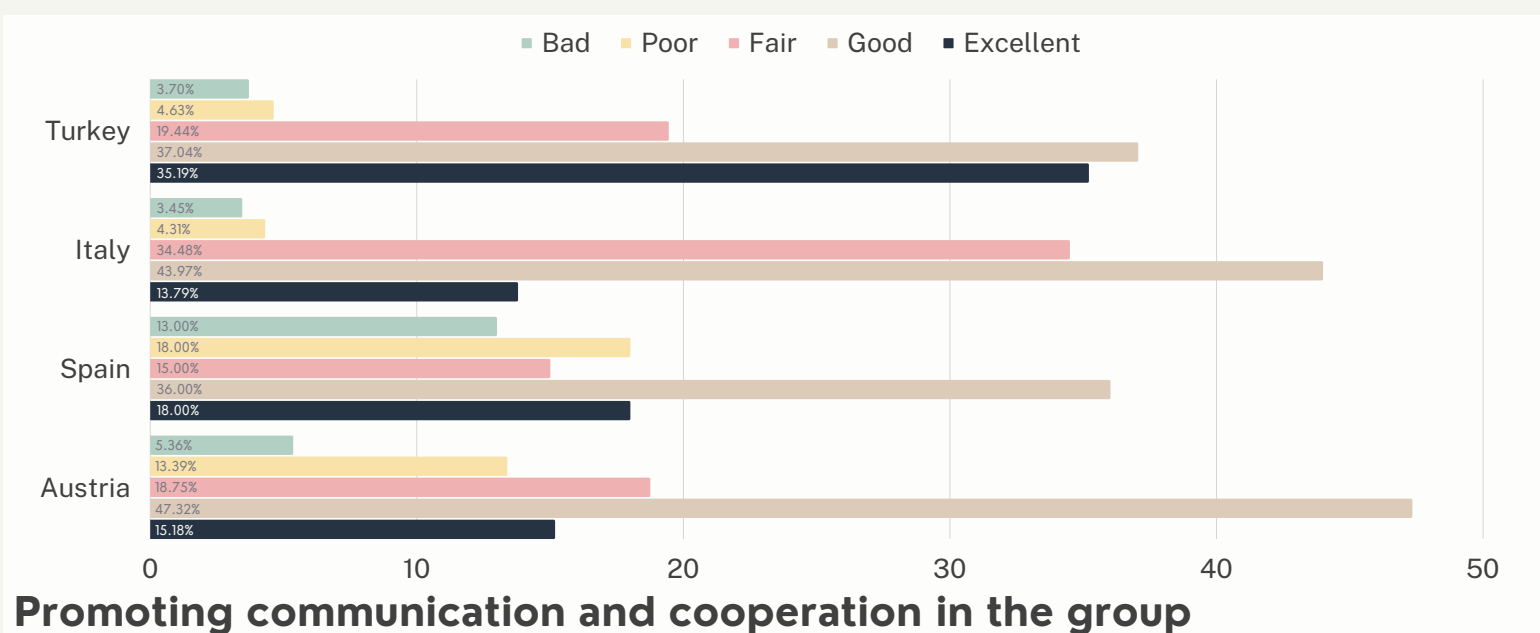
Current competencies and skills of youth coordinators

Youth coordinators have shown a value above the average in all skills and competence options except "Promoting Access to the Labour Market."

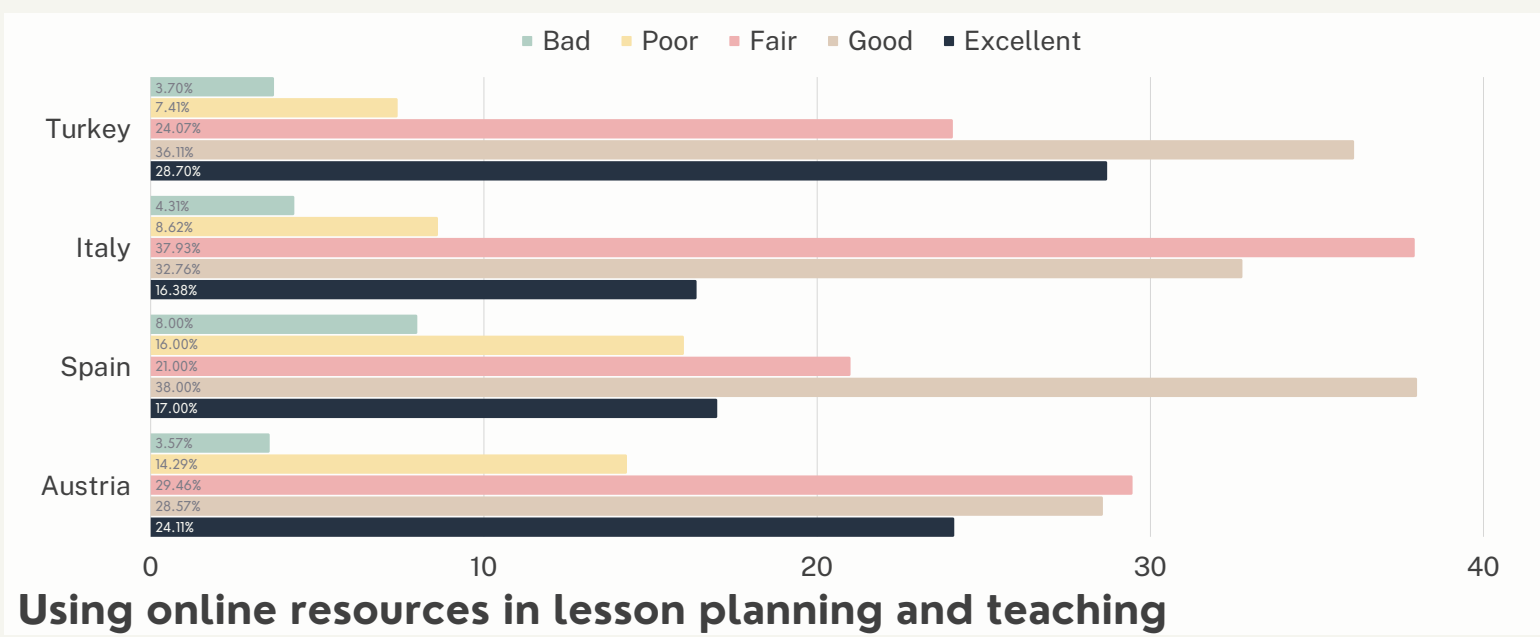
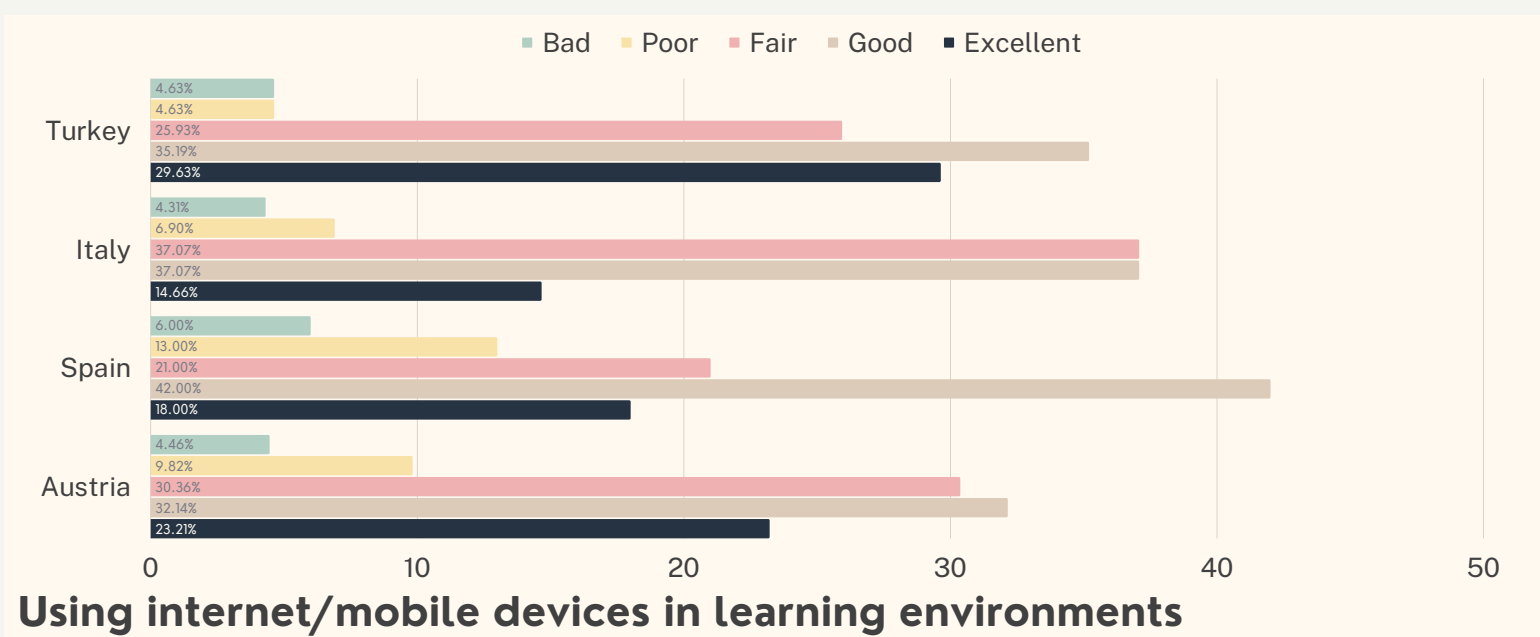
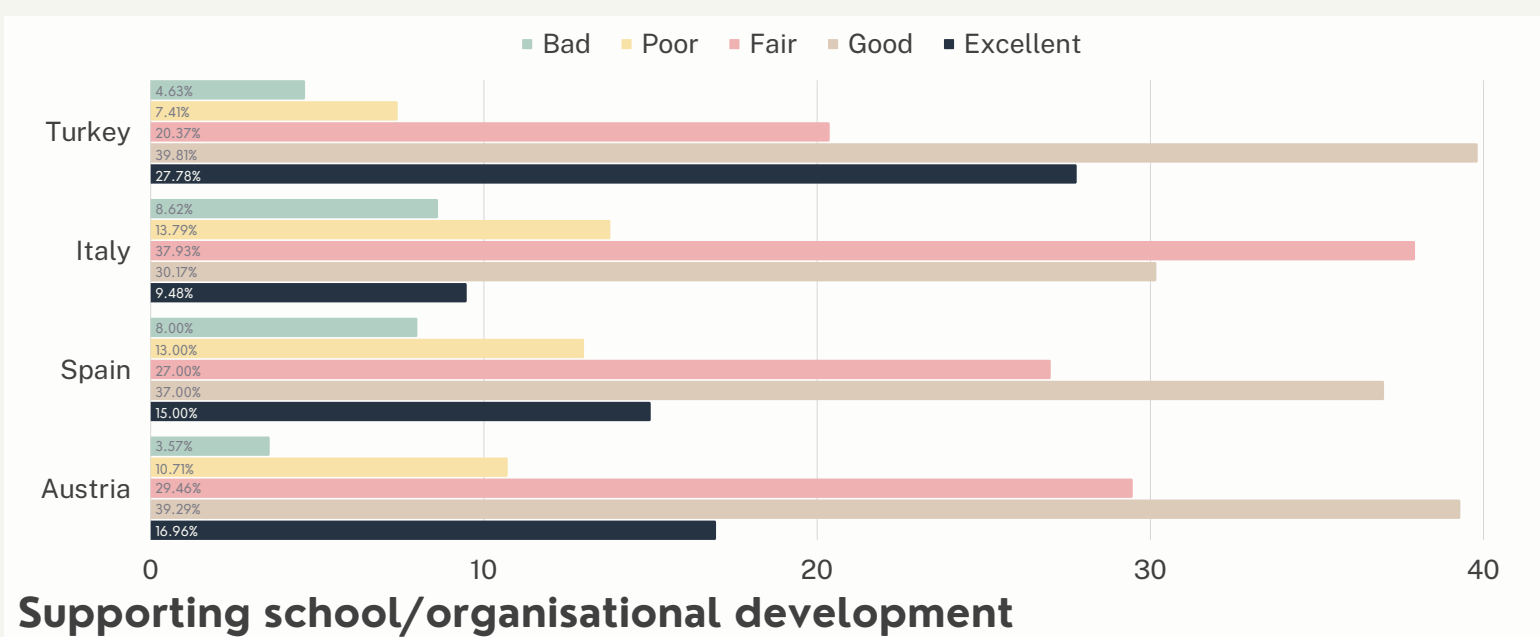
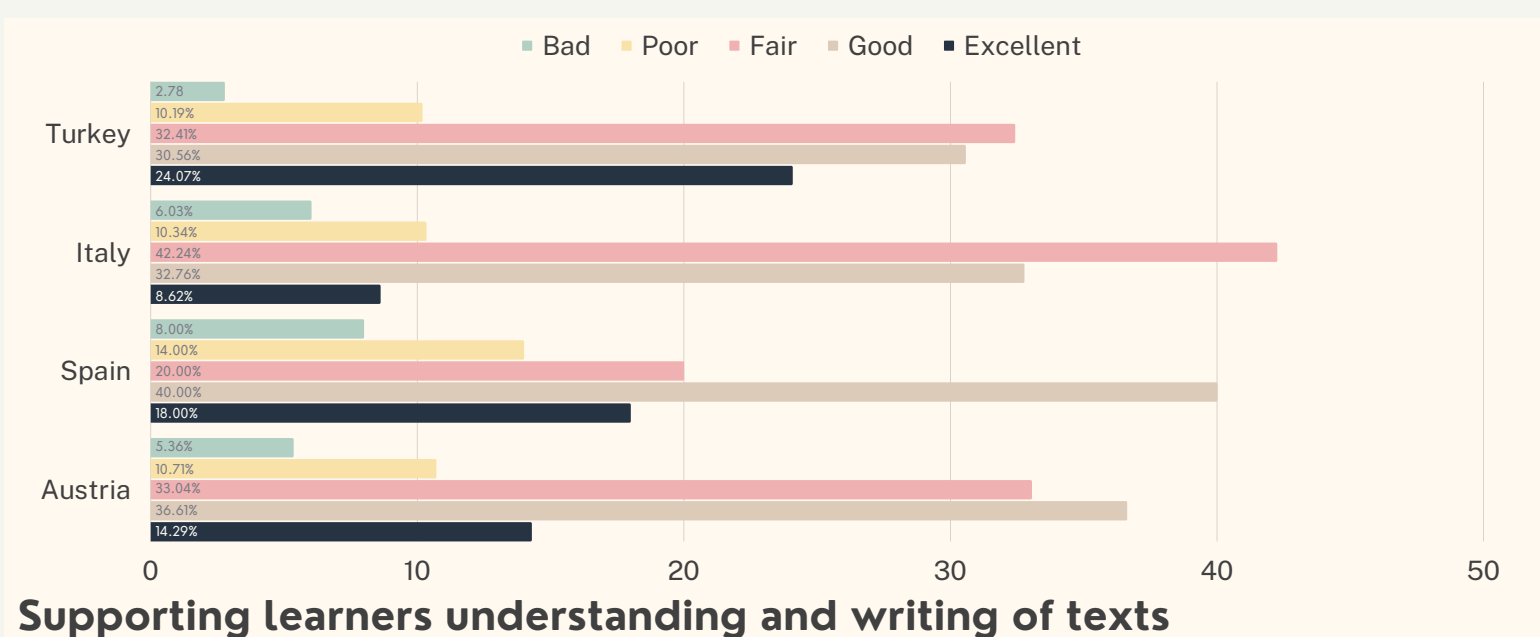
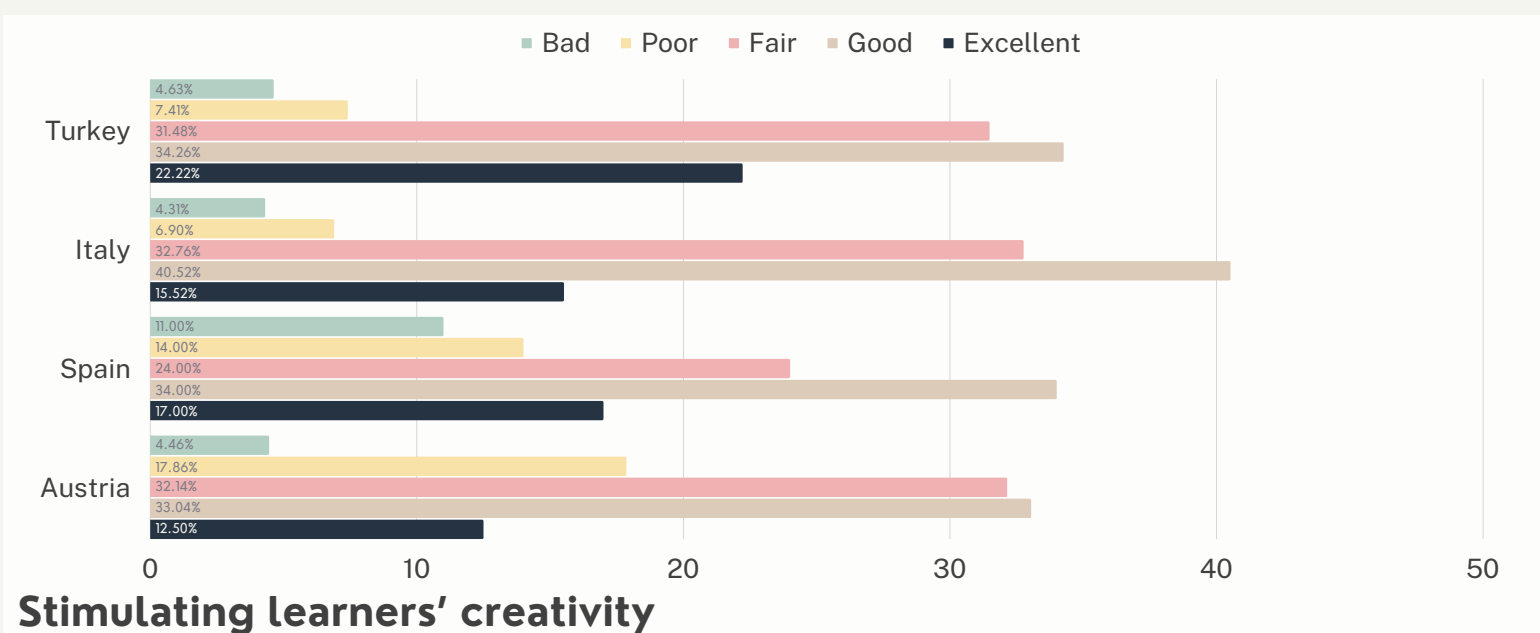
This result indicates that non-governmental organizations, public institutions, educational institutions, etc., should be more in contact with the labor market and employment areas and put forward result-oriented relations and studies.



Current competencies and skills of youth coordinators

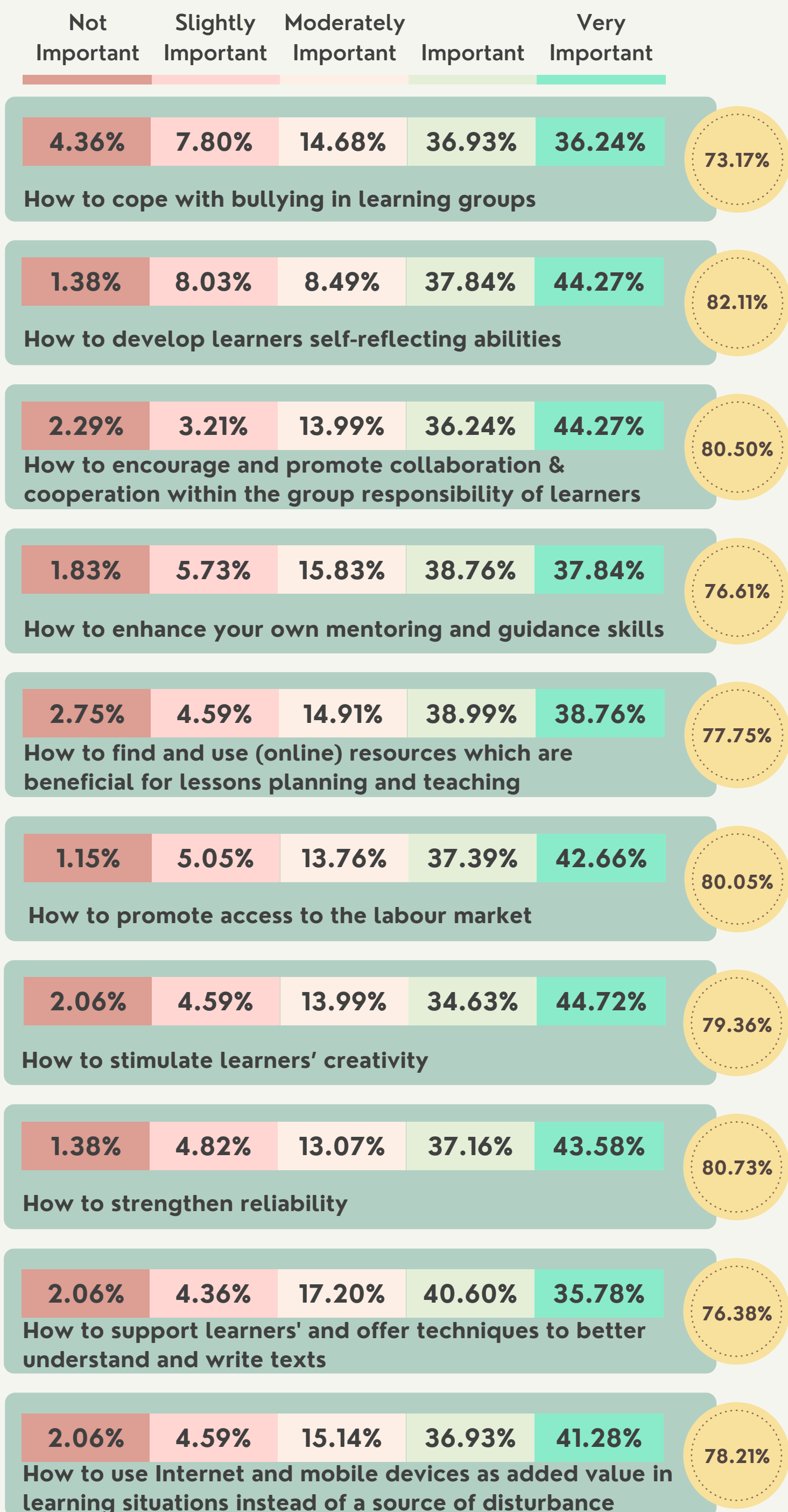


Current competencies and skills of youth coordinators

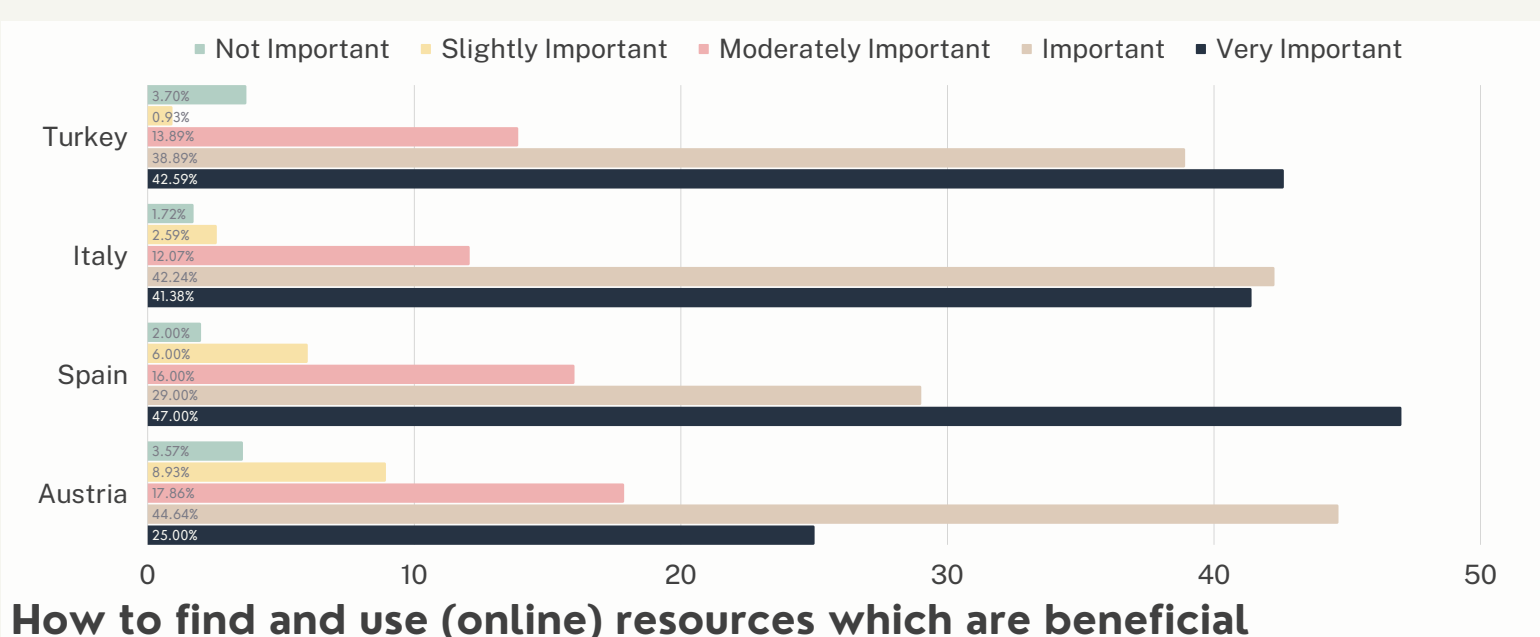
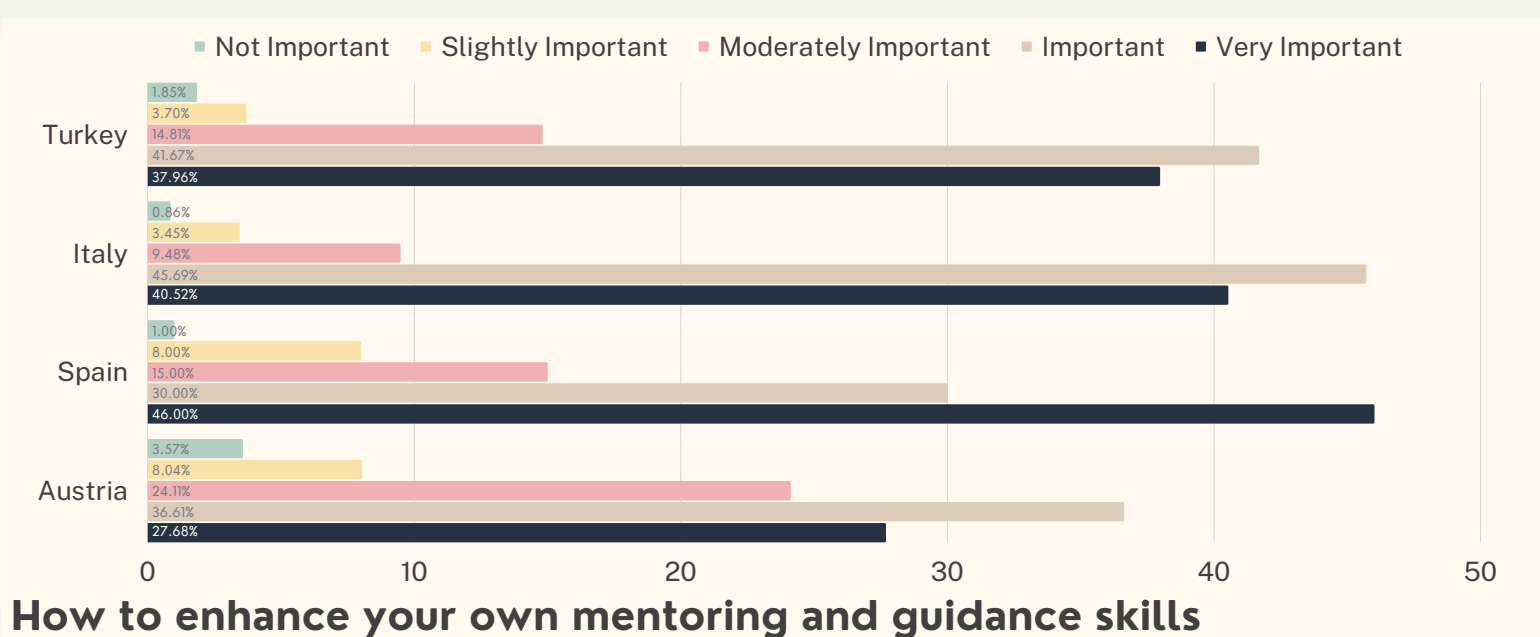
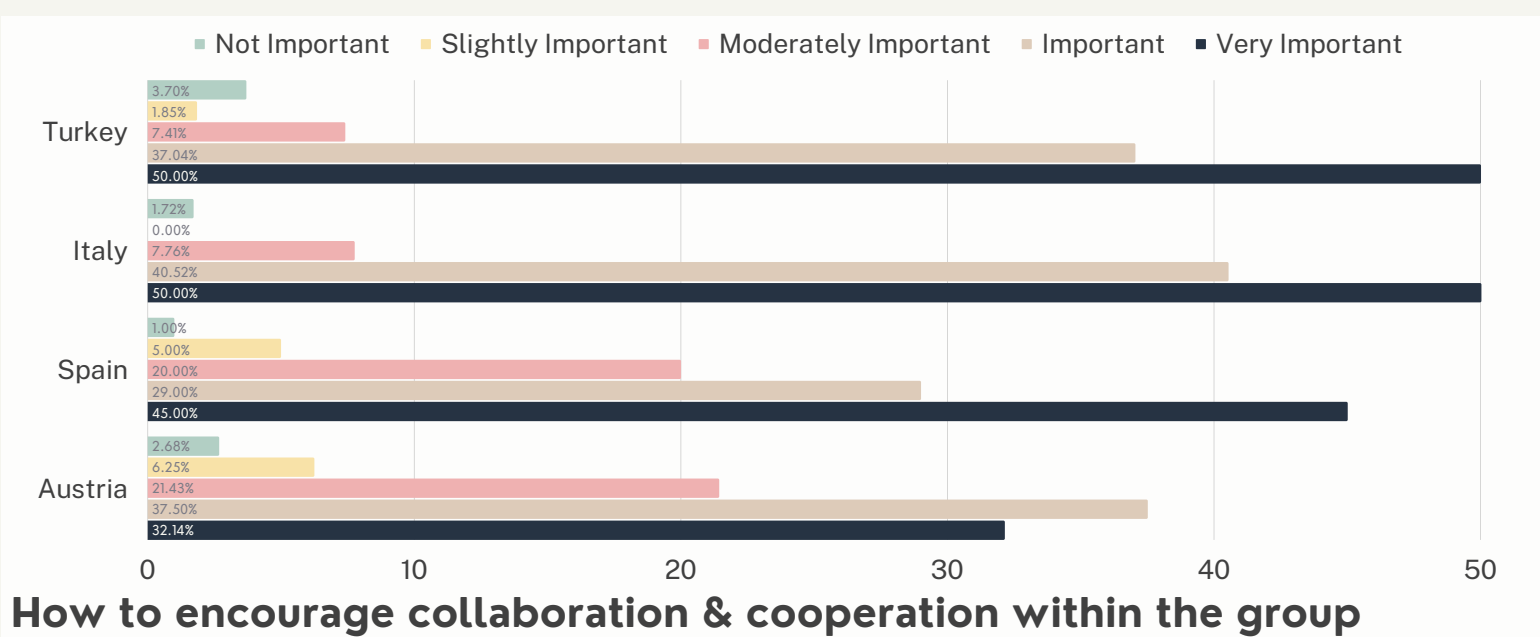
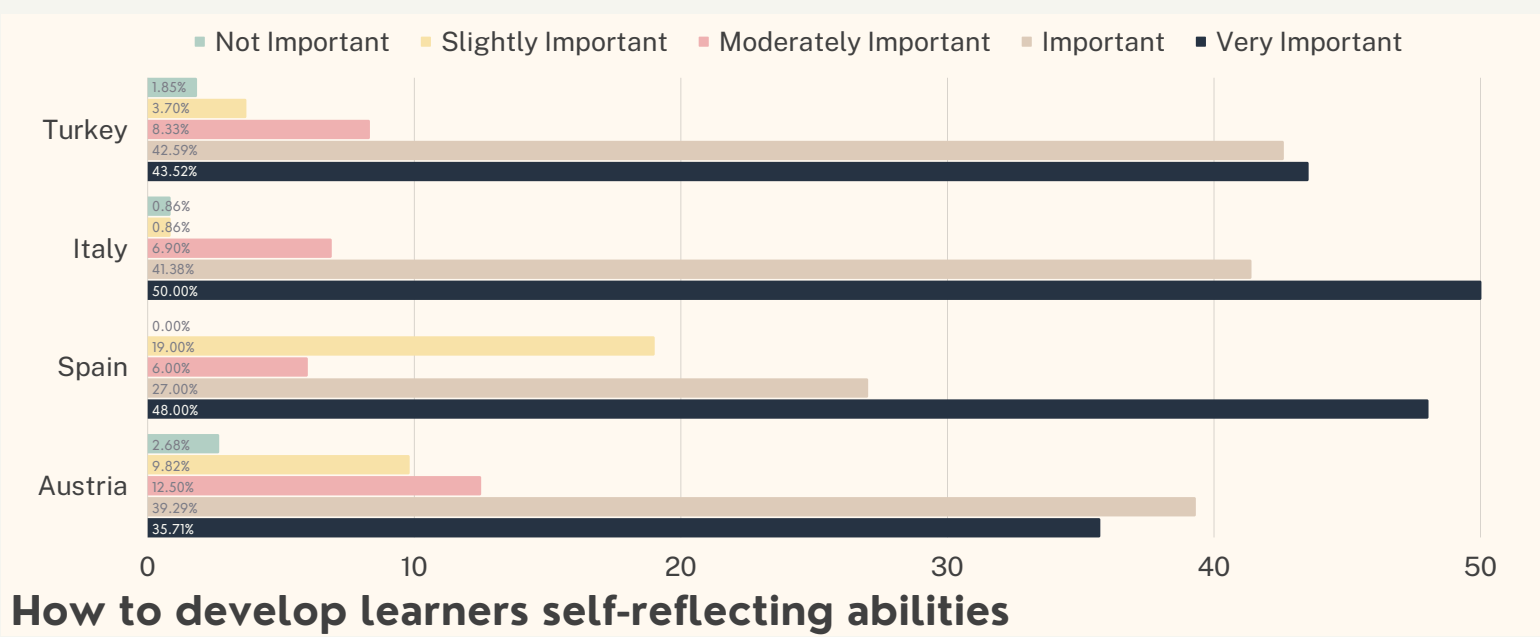
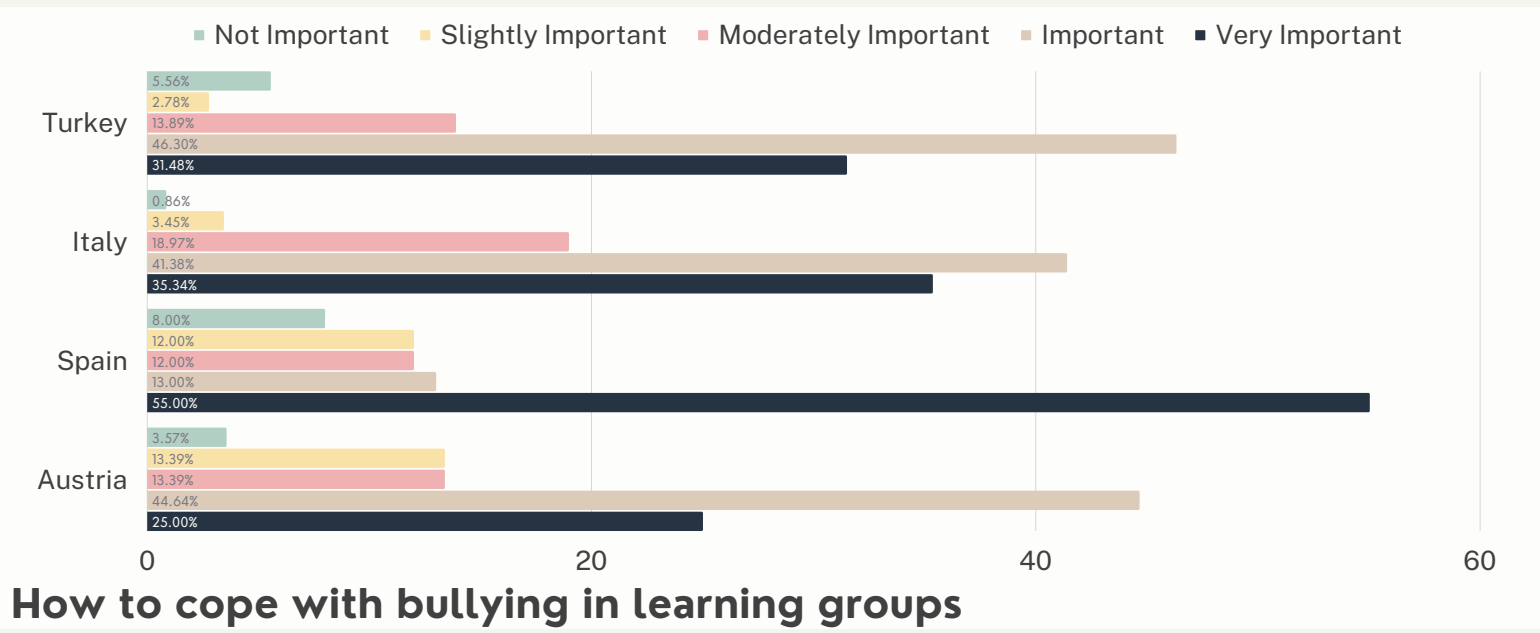


Areas where youth coordinators want to increase their competencies

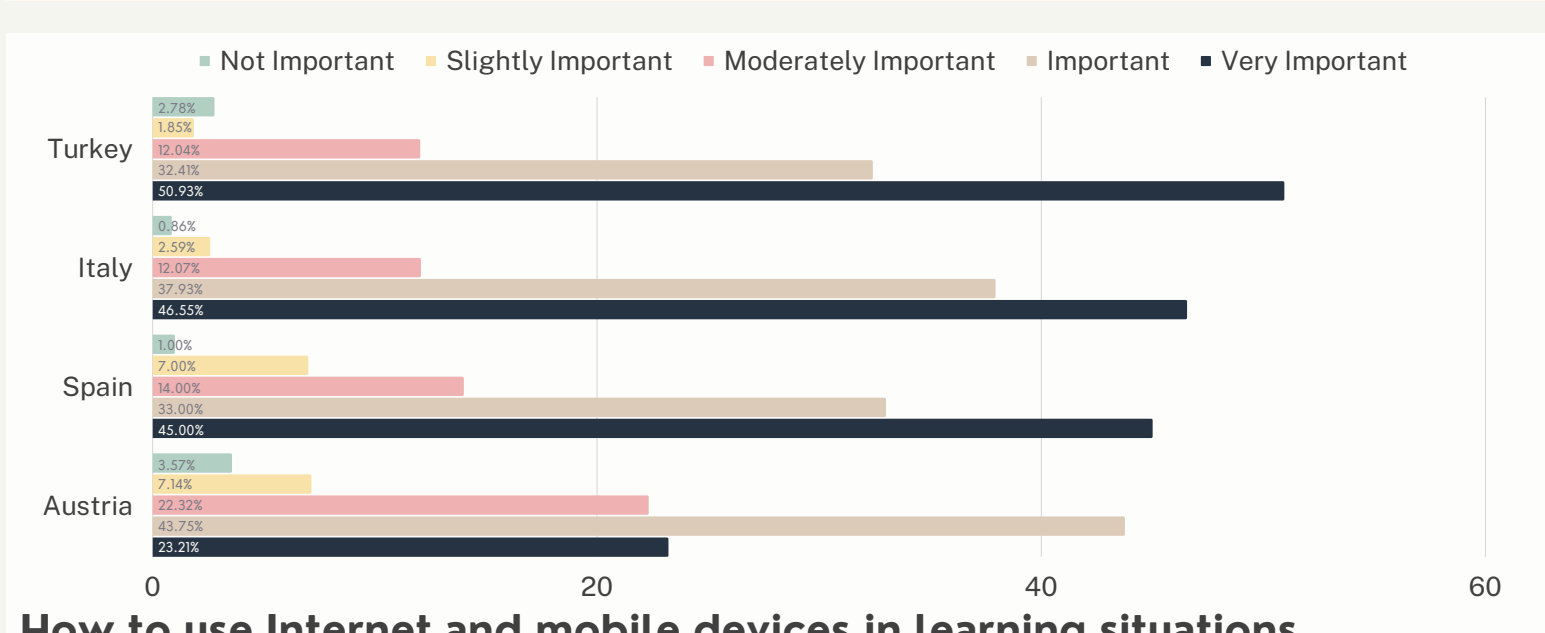
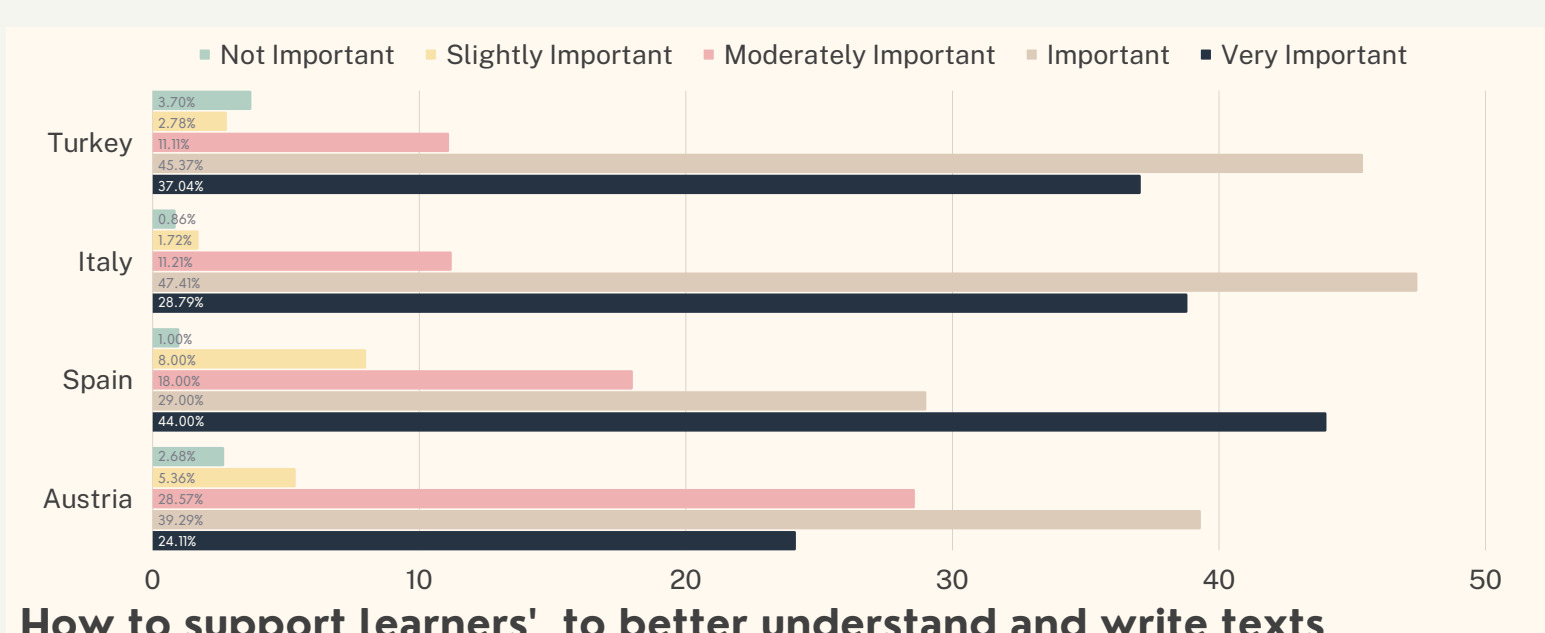
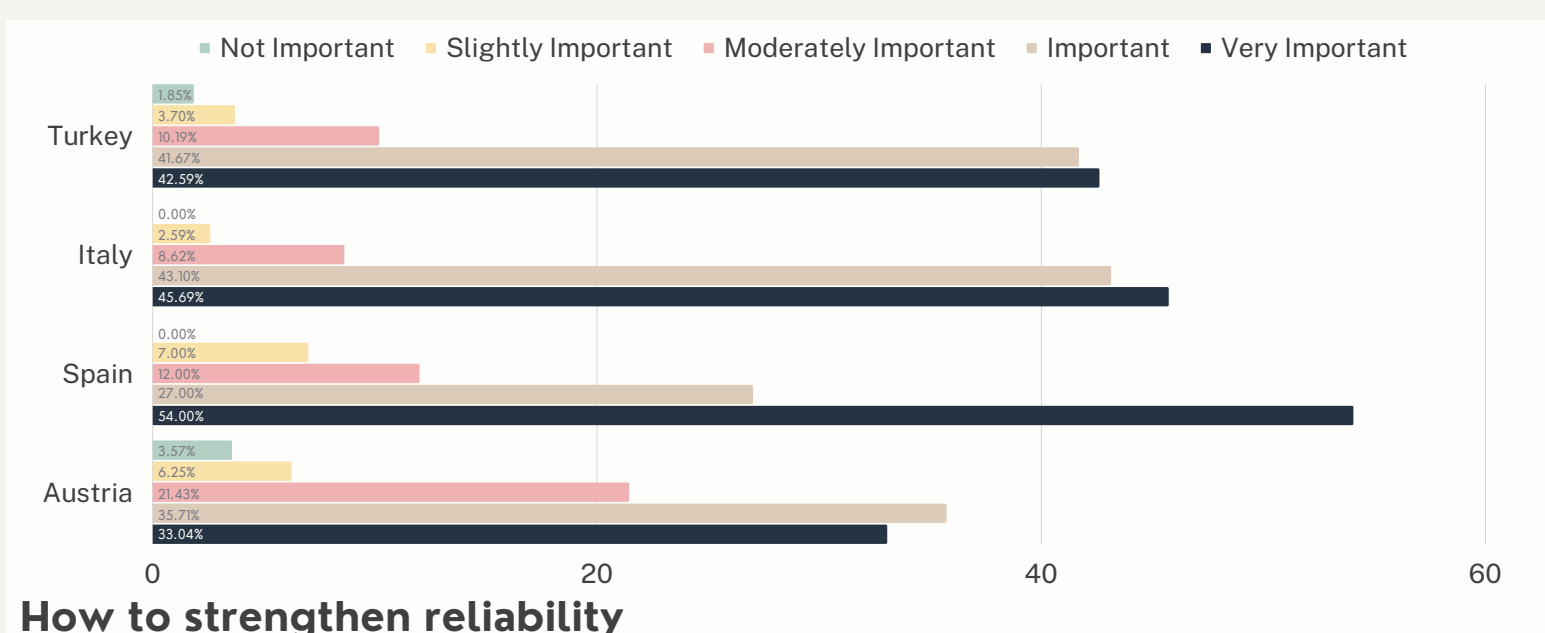
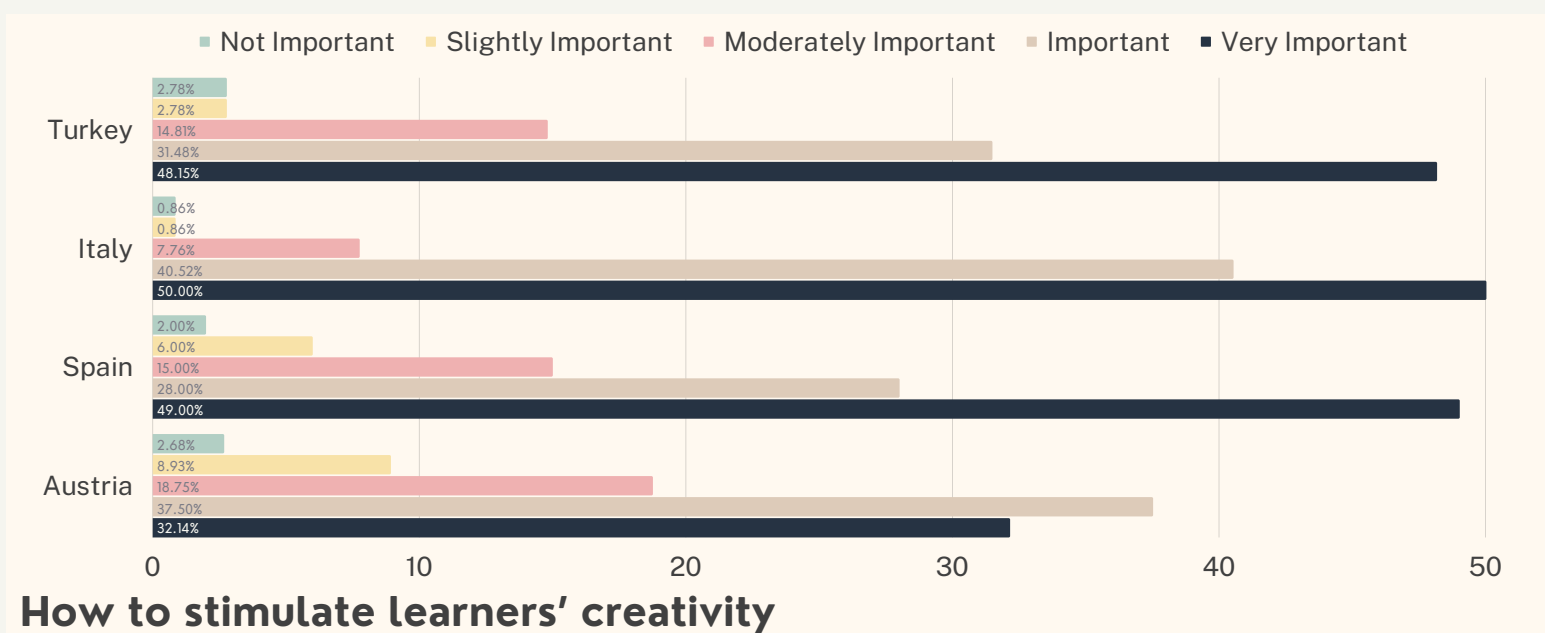
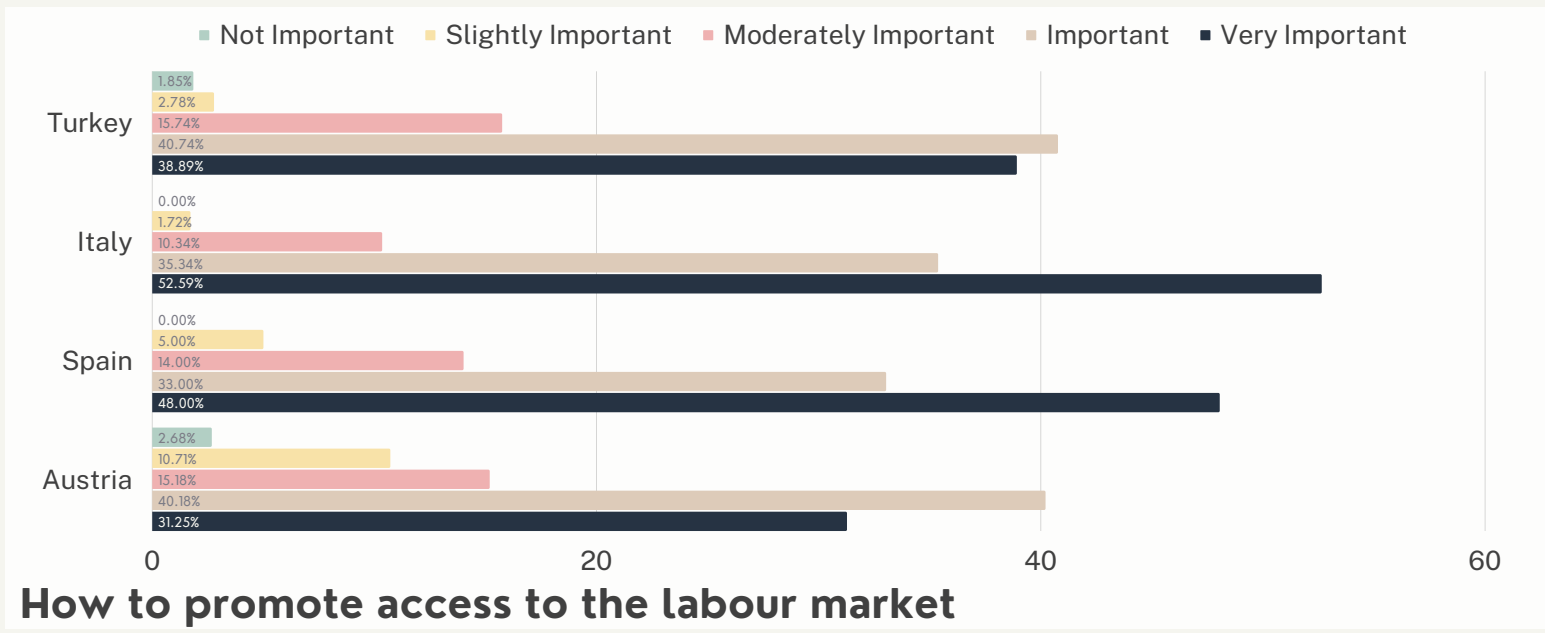
"Competence and training are essential!" from youth coordinators
 Youth coordinators emphasized the importance of competence in all of the options presented to them, with over 70% stressing the importance of competence.



Areas where youth coordinators want to increase their competencies



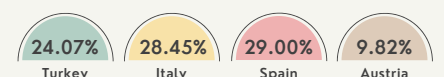
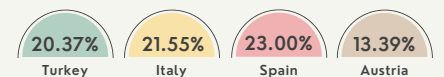
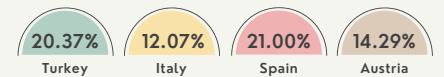
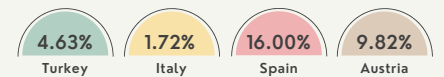
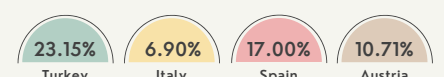
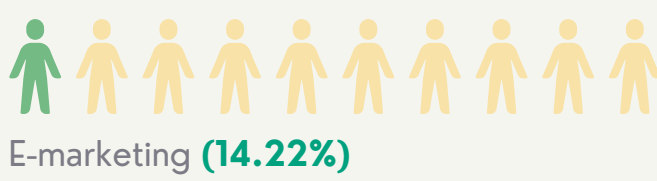
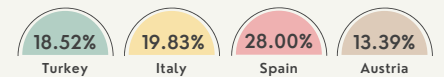
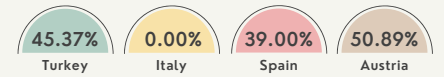
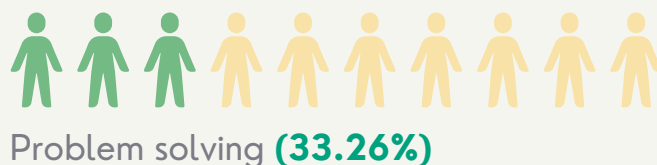
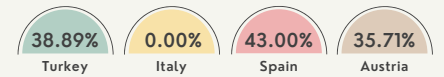
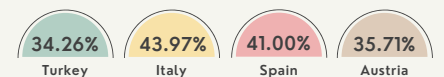
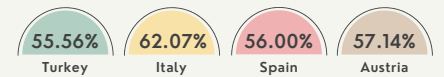
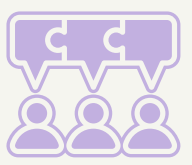
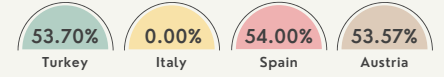
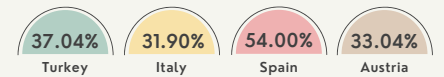
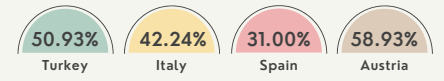
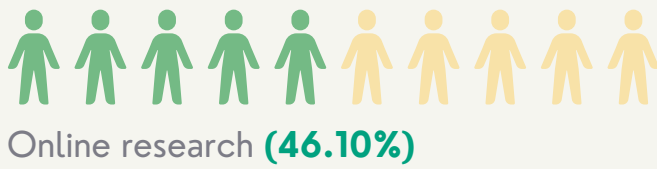
Areas where youth coordinators want to increase their competencies



The most important digital skills for NEET youth

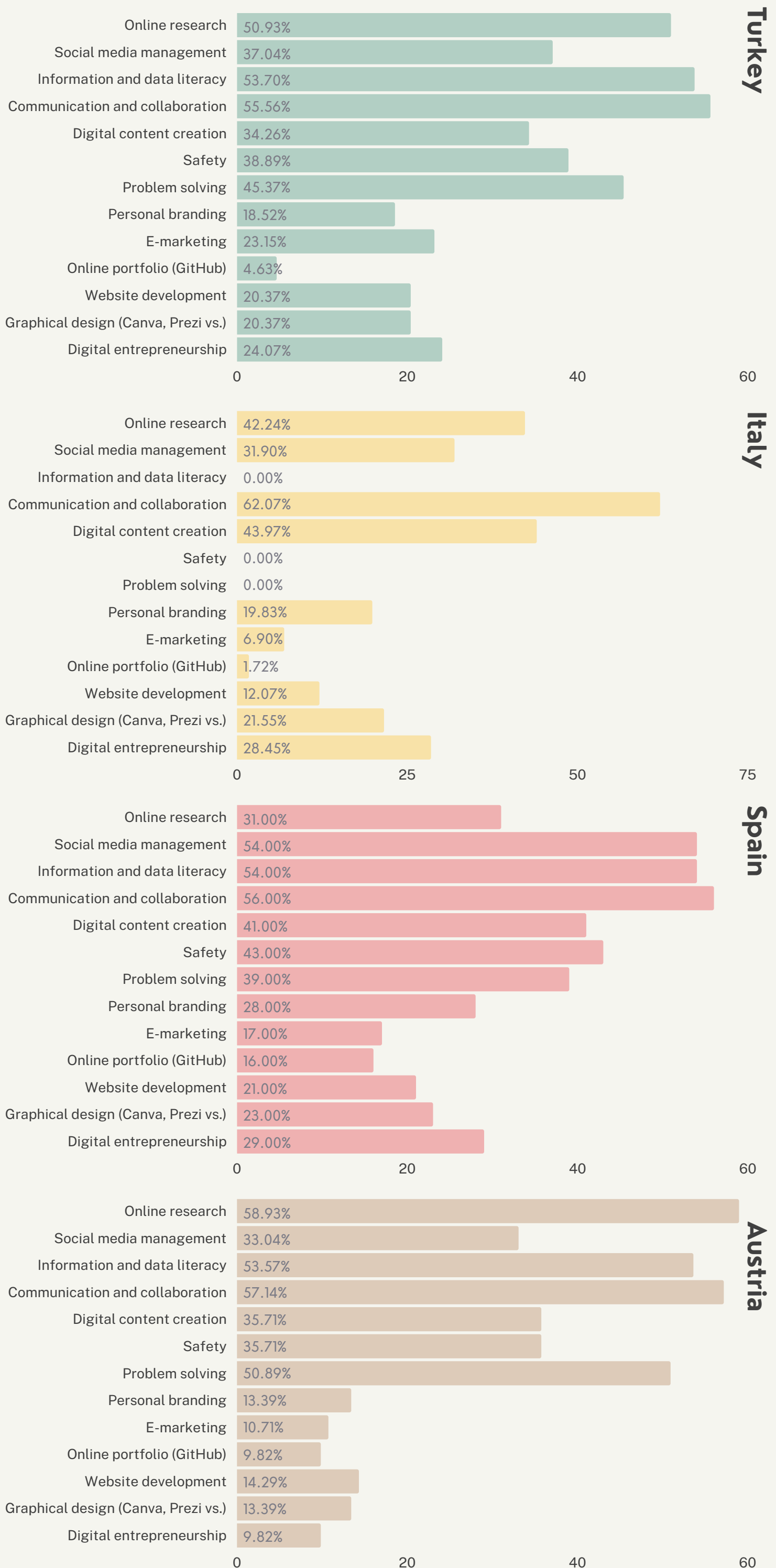
Youth coordinators ranked the top 5 most important digital skills for NEET youth;

- Communication and collaboration 57.80%,
- Online research 46.10%,
- Information and data literacy 39.45%,
- Digital content creation 38.76%,
- Social media management (for personal or business) 38.53%.



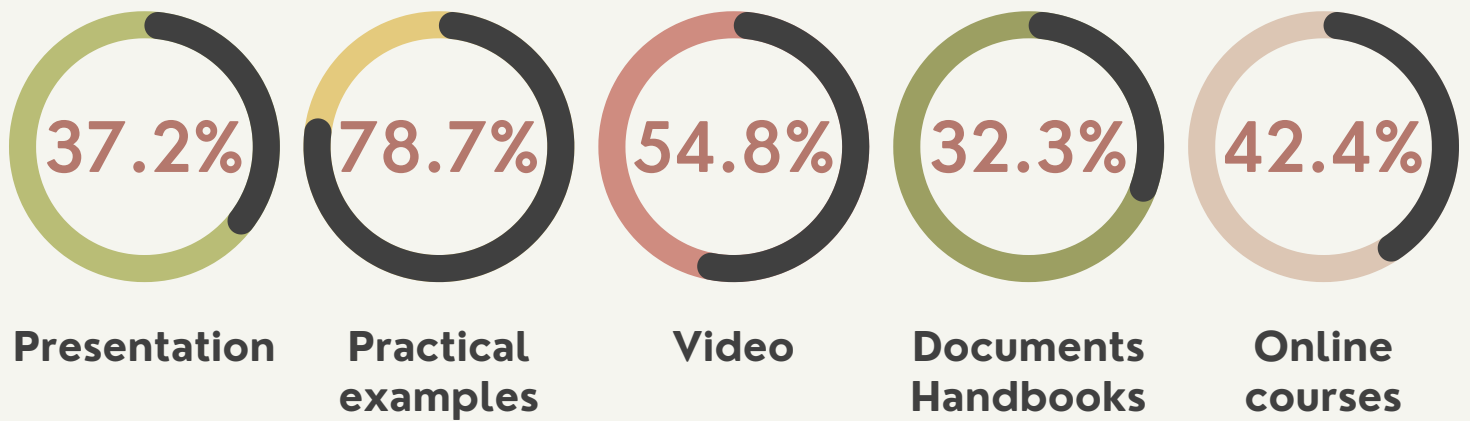
The most important digital skills for NEET youth

When the digital skills required for NEET youth are analyzed country by country, the results align with the general results, and youth coordinators emphasize training and skills development for a wider audience.



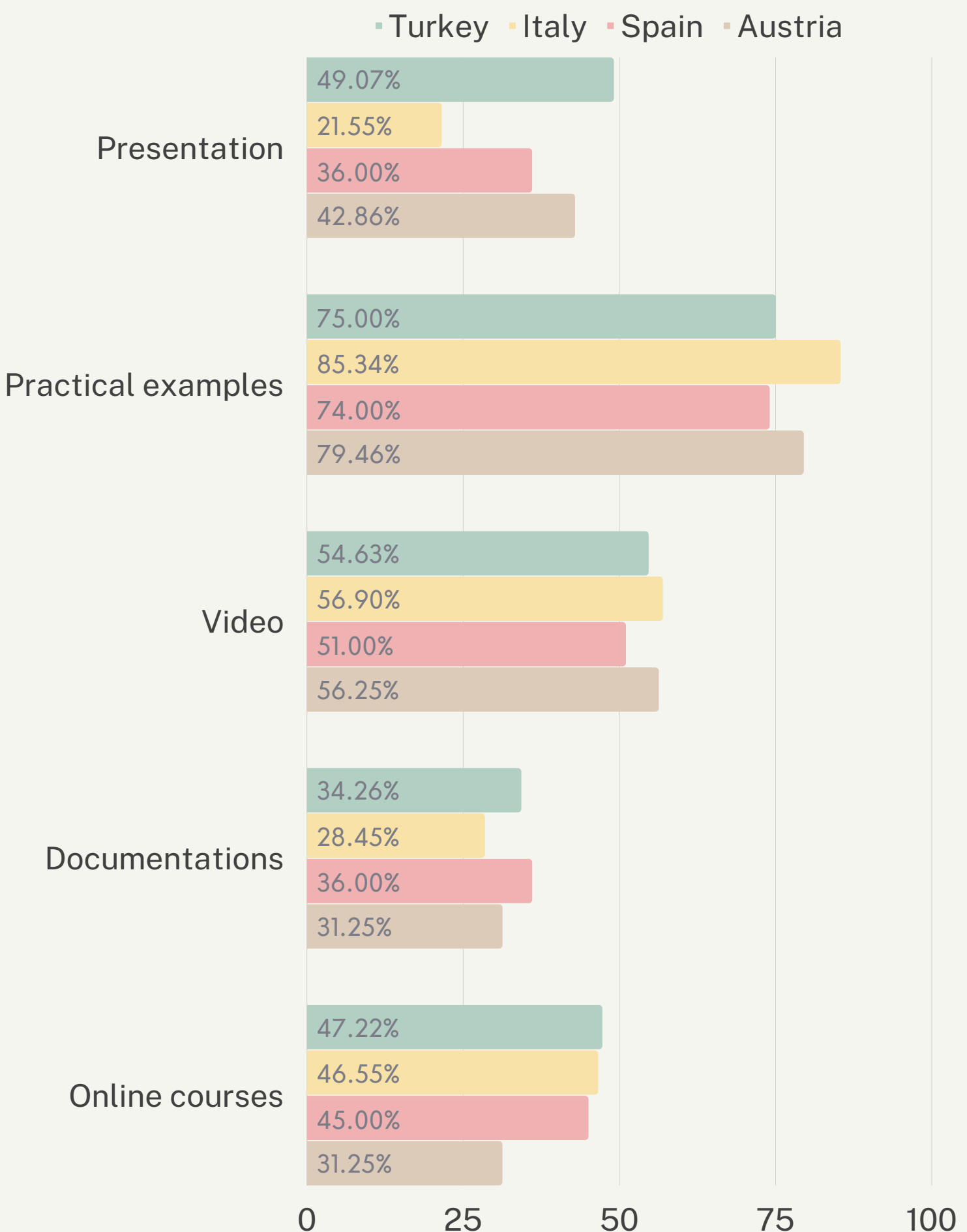
The most useful training materials for youth coordinators

Youth coordinators stated as the most helpful training materials: Practical examples and cases with a rate of 78.67%, Videos with a rate of 54.82%, Online trainings with a rate of 42.43%.



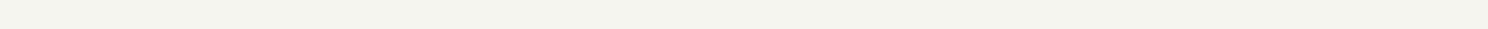
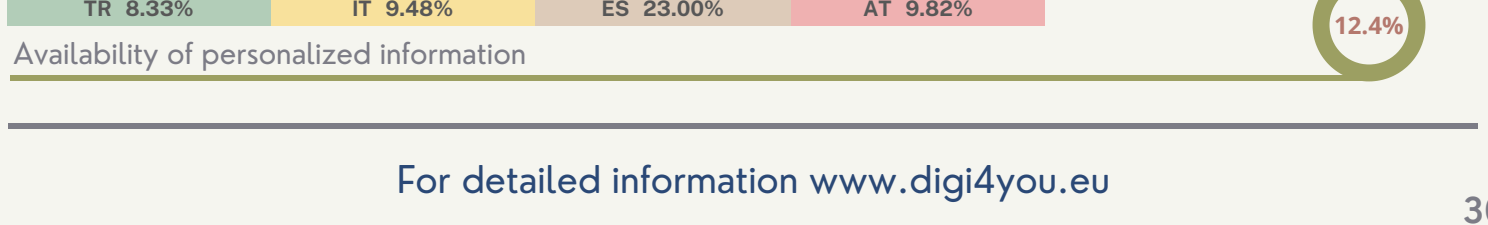
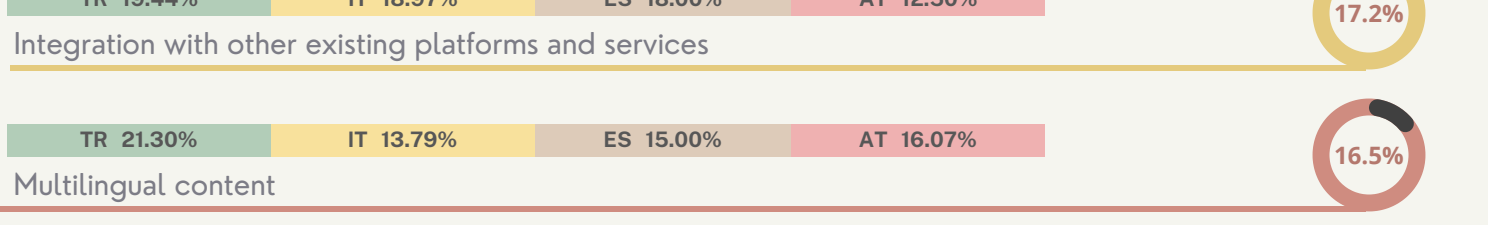
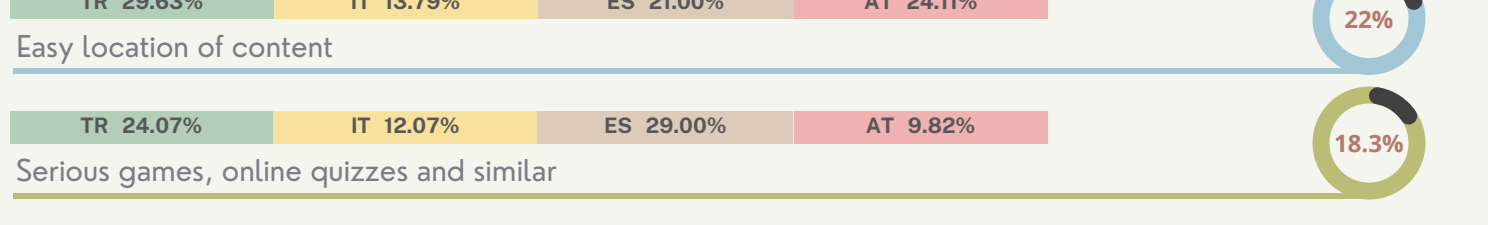
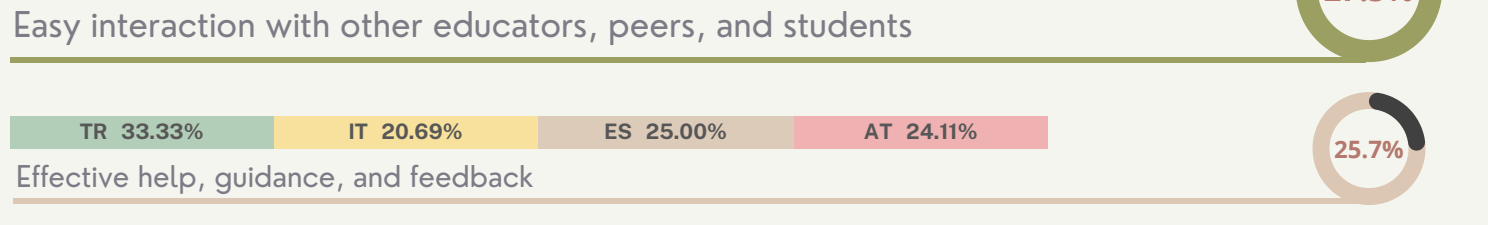
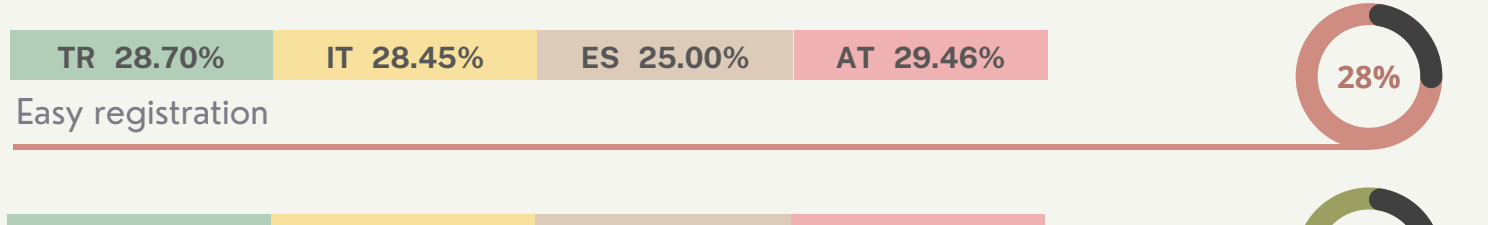
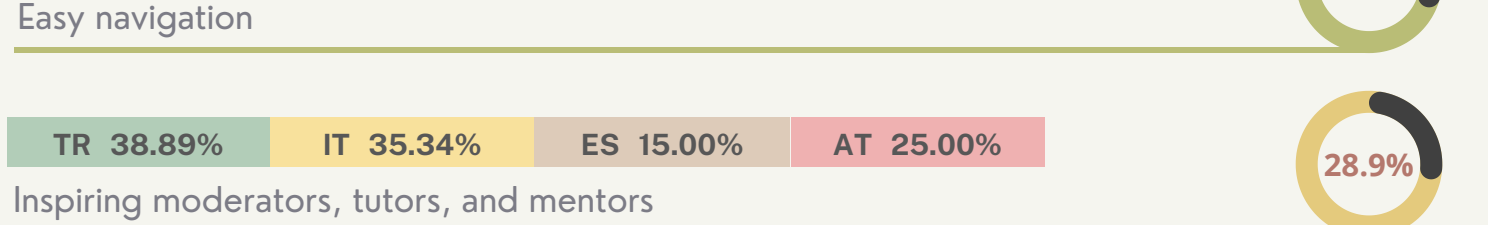
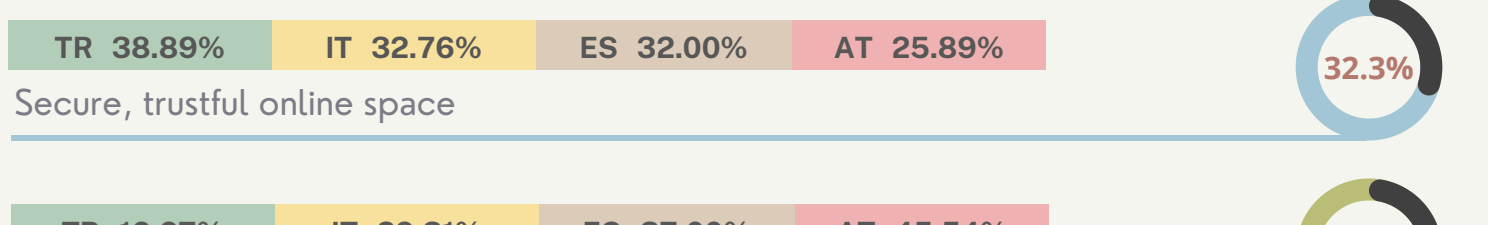
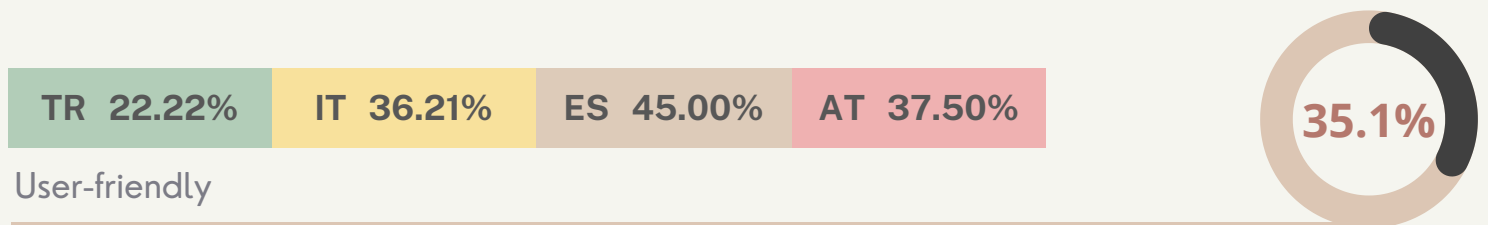
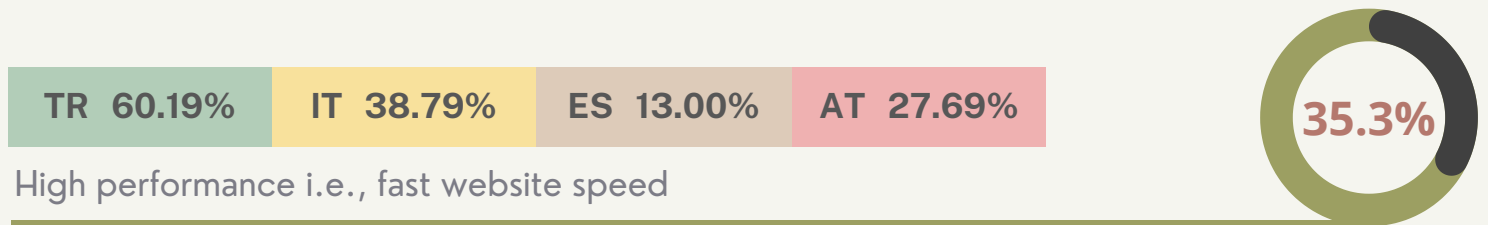
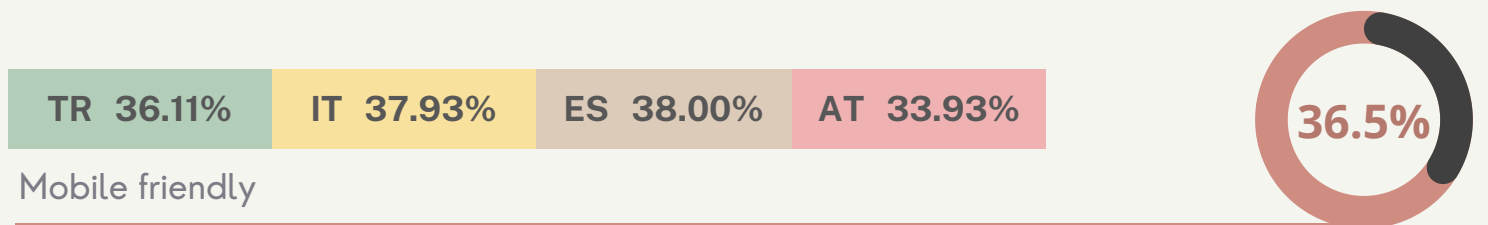
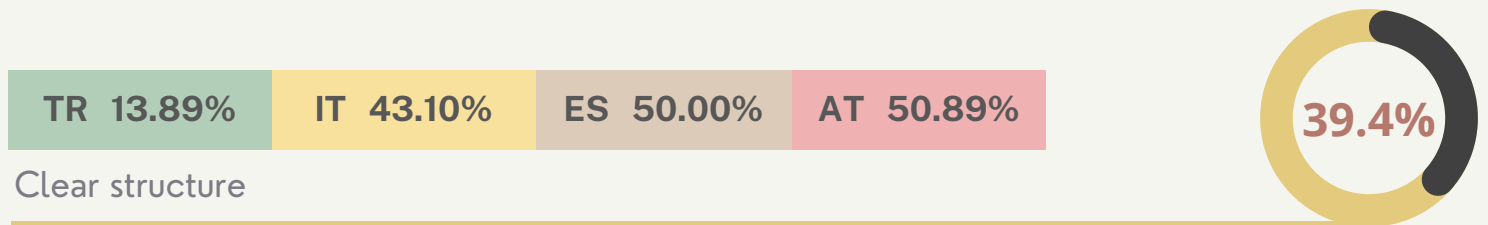
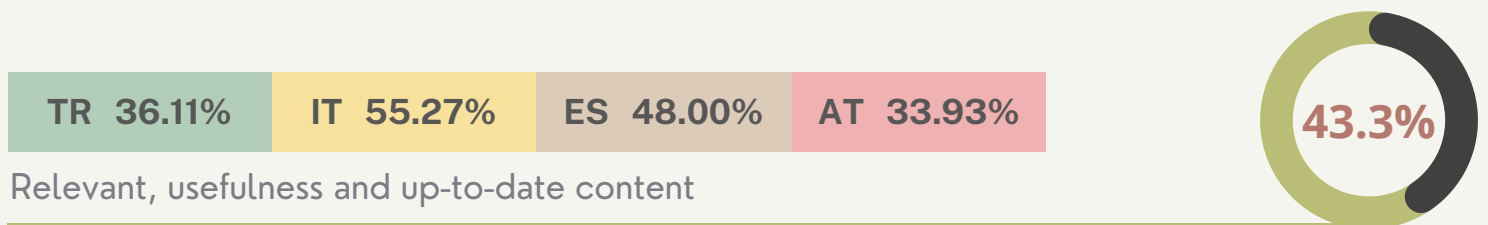
Youth coordinators have emphasized that practical examples and cases with inclusive and individual-focused fiction are essential in training young NEETs on increasing employability, working more efficiently and productively, and developing basic and digital skills using information technologies. They pointed out the importance of videos prepared to take advantage of visual studies' attractive and appealing aspects and the distance education platform built on similar logic.

In addition, presentations and handbooks could not be ignored.



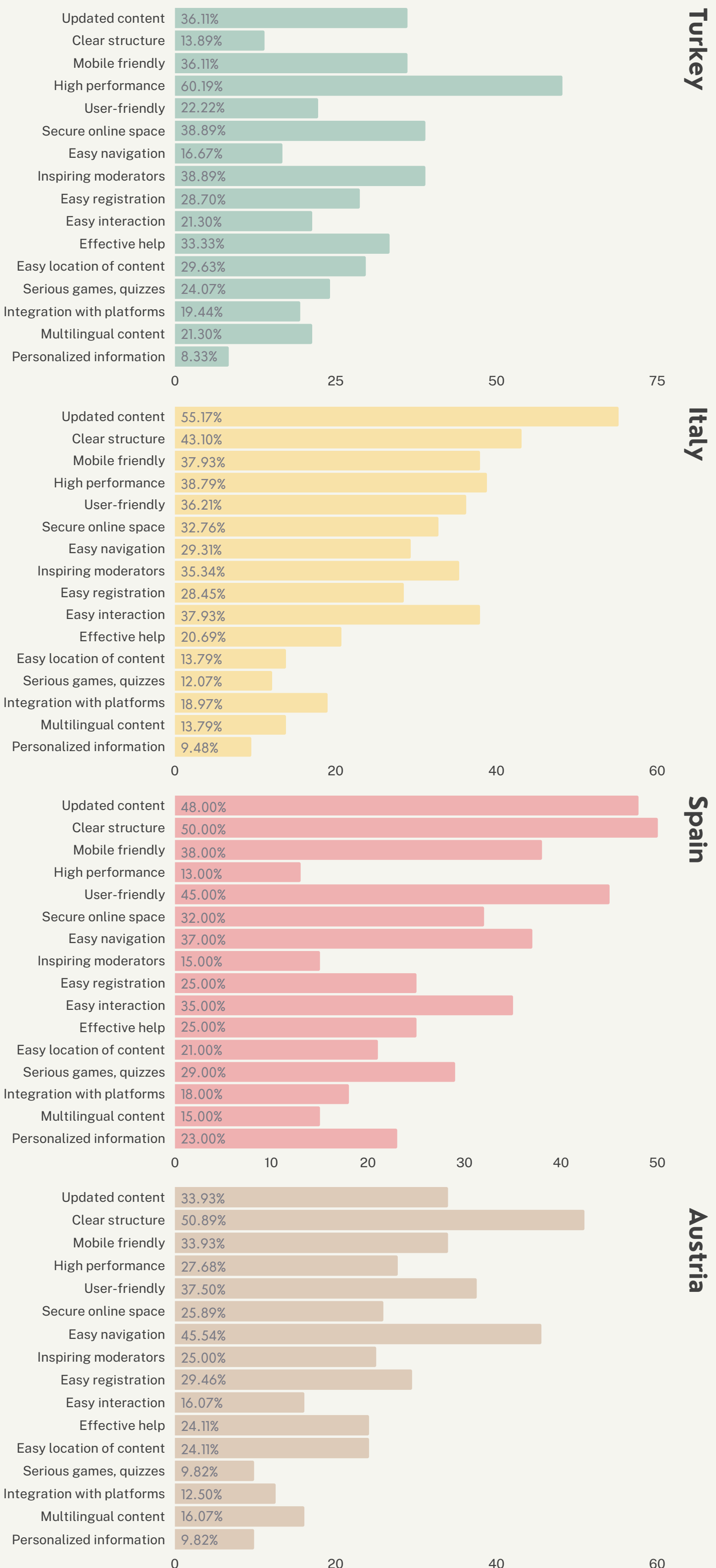
The 5 most important features that youth coordinators expect in an e-learning platform

Youth coordinators expressed their expectations for a distance education platform that is relevant, usefulness and up-to-date content (43.35%), clear structure (39.45%), user-friendly (35.09%), mobile-friendly (36.47%), and high performance (fast speed) (35.32%).



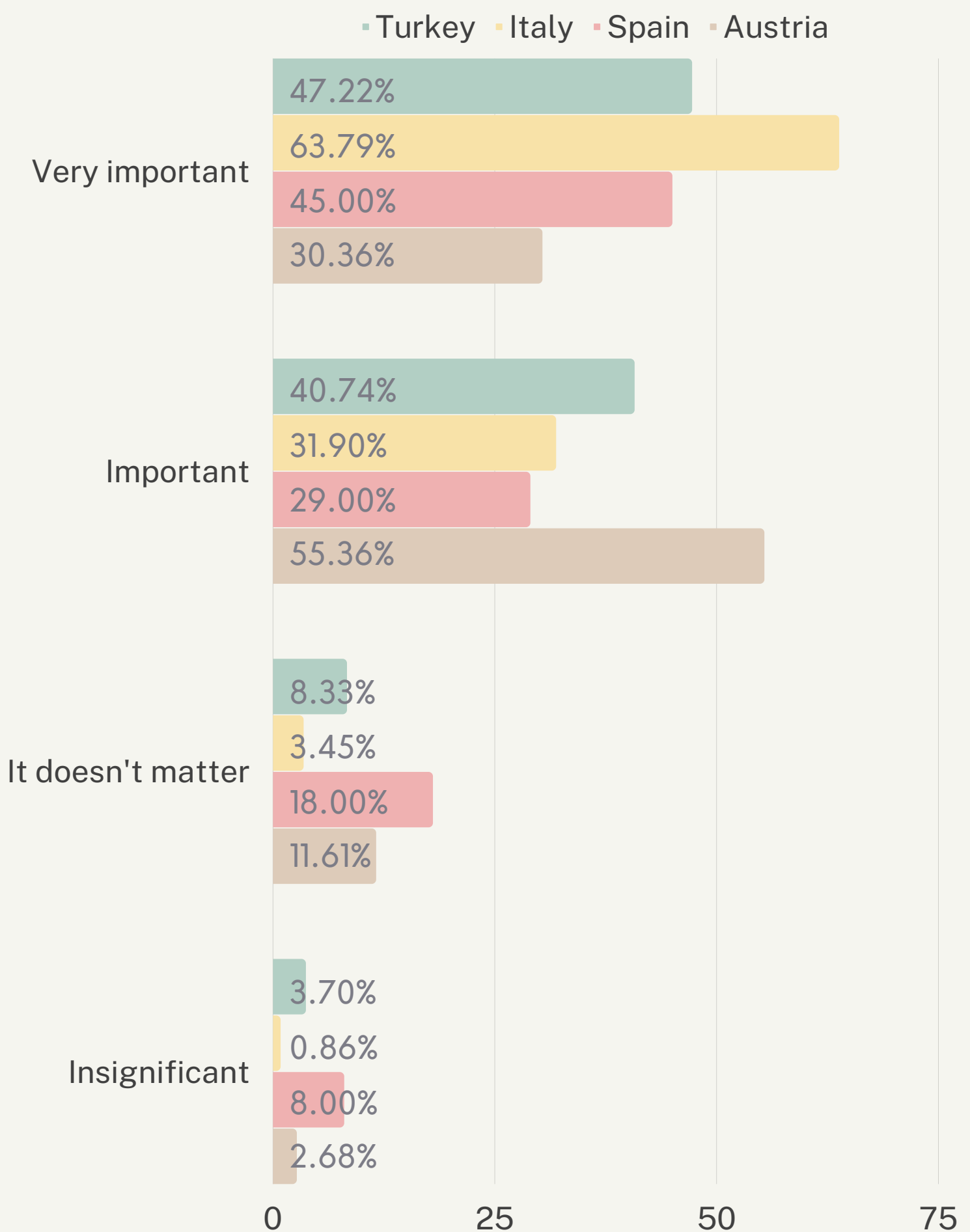
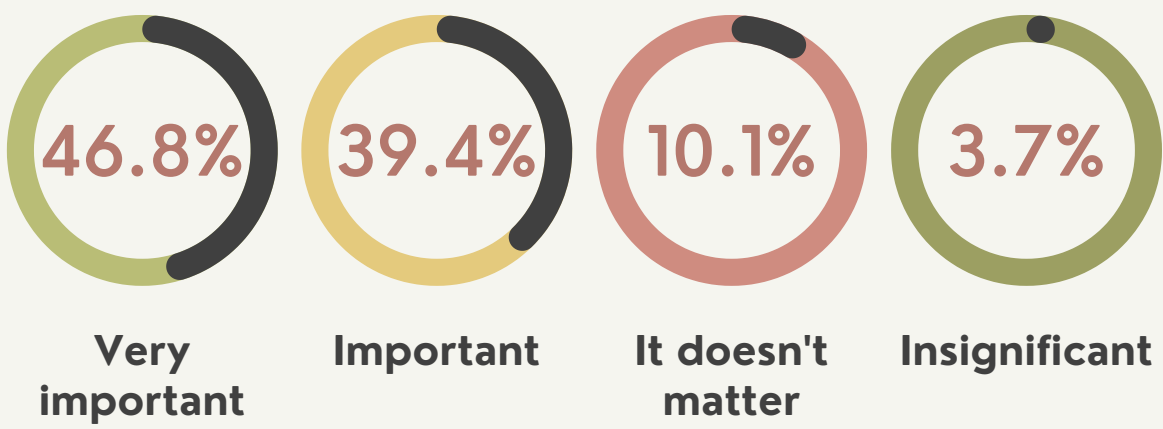
The 5 most important features that youth coordinators expect in an e-learning platform

When the expectations of youth coordinators are analyzed on a country-by-country basis, although close to the general results, a safe and easy-to-navigate platform is emphasized. (32%)



Importance of getting a certificate after completing the training

Youth coordinators consider it essential (86.24%) to be accredited through certification after completing the training.



Conclusion

Considering the demographic structure of European countries, the aim of including the young population, which is proportionally less than the elderly population, in the economic production process with total efficiency has led to the emergence of the term NEET. The term NEET, which characterizes the 15-29 age group who are not enrolled in any education or training and are not employed, has taken an important place in European countries' education, economy, and social policies.

According to the OECD definition, the indicator of youth NEET (not in employment, education or training) represents the ratio of the youth population in a specific age group who are not in employment, education or training to the total youth population in the relevant age group. In addition, young people in non-formal education and very short-term training activities are included in the youth, not in education and training.

The concept of NEET is considered an essential indicator of employment, development, and social inclusion. Young people in this group are not in education or work, and this group may also be under various risks, such as social exclusion in the future.

According to the 2022 OECD report Education at a Glance 2022, the distribution of young people in the 18-24 age group who are not involved in any education/training activity is 32.2% in Turkey, 27.1% in Italy, 20.3% in Spain and 11.6% in Austria.

In order to direct young NEETs towards employability, which has been on the rise since Covid-19 and afterward, it is, of course, necessary to focus on their skills and digital competencies.

It is important to support youth coordinators who undertake the training and development of NEET youth on digital skills and competencies, which can be defined as the knowledge and skills required for the individual to use ICT in achieving the goals in their personal or professional life.

436 youth coordinators participated in our research; Professional Participation, Digital Resources, Teaching and Learning, Measurement and Evaluation, Empowering NEET youth, and Supporting and developing the digital competencies of NEETs came to the fore.

The fact that 70% of the participants have at least a university degree indicates that they can obtain maximum results from the training.

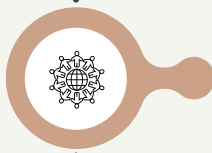
The participants, whose success rates are above 50% in encouraging communication and cooperation, using technology and online resources efficiently in education-learning environments, mentoring, and guidance, attach great importance to post-training certification.

It is crucial to consider issues such as developing the self-reflection skills of young NEETs, strengthening their credibility, encouraging cooperation within the group, promoting access to the labor market, and encouraging creativity. Youth coordinators draw attention to communication and collaboration, online research, information, and data literacy, digital content creation, and social media management among the digital skills they consider essential for NEET youth.

The participants mentioned that practical examples/cases, videos, and online training are among the most important materials in the development of the above personal skills and digital skills and emphasized the importance of reinforcing the exercises with a mobile application and distance education platform.

Recommendations

Non-governmental organizations, public and private sector institutions should be familiar with ICT terminology and invest in the necessary infrastructure.



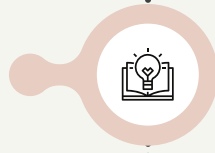
Instead of a distant attitude between educational institutions and employment areas, a structure that encourages and co-operates with each other should be provided.

Digital entrepreneurship opportunities should be increased.



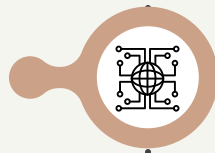
The skills employers need to move their firms to high value-added and innovation-intensive activities should be integrated with the education system and compatible with industrial and skills policies.

The budget allocated to R&D should be increased. New education models based on knowledge and technology should be emphasized.



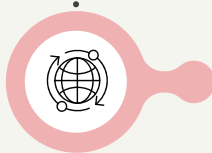
Opening courses and programs should provide incentives to increase digital entrepreneurship.

To train digital human resources, businesses should provide training compatible with digital technologies in university-company cooperation.



The content of the education policy should be revised to raise the youth to the level of knowledge and skills to produce and develop technology that creates added value.

Policies and strategies for NEET youth should be developed.



In order to have internationally recognized digital professions and the digital skills they require training should be organized through digital platforms, and certification should be provided. Following inter-national education platforms should be encouraged.

Learning things online can be strenuous, but keeping them alive and promoting them as a resource for the job-seeking process can be much wearier. Thus, learning about putting the learned items into practice and storing them in an organized, presentable format is crucial for any young person seeking to penetrate the job market.

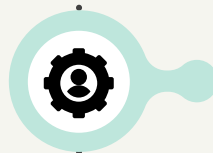
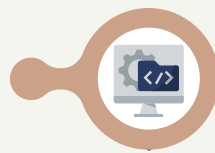


Recommendations

PR2 digital skills training toolkit can include the following topics to increase the youth workers' knowledge, competence, and skills to arrange any individualized or group training program with young NEETs.

1) Digital skills development:
 Develop a digital self
 Enhancing digital performance and virtual teamwork
 Online time management
 Achieving the goals
 Finding and utilizing relevant information for career development

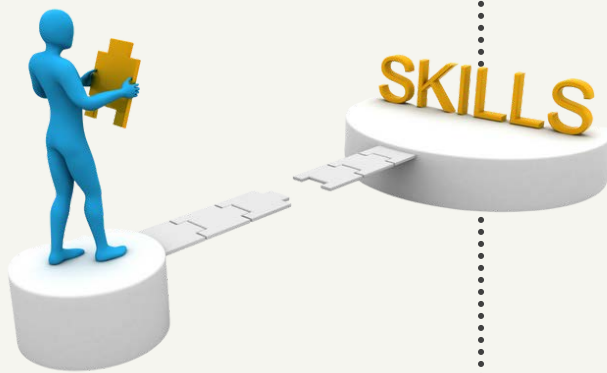
2) Digital contents development:
 Authentic and engaging content creation
 Creating a digital portfolio and training online
 Creating, organizing, and sharing digital resources



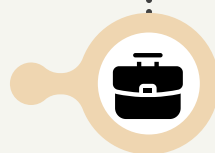
It is necessary to improve youth coordinators' working competencies with digital skills concepts and techniques because it will help them to increase cognitive abilities and soft skills teaching through ICT tools. With the development of the "Guidebook for youth trainers to improve digital soft skills of youth" (PR3), youth workers can start to use digital soft skills development about:

- 1) Digital storytelling
- 2) Creating digital portfolios
- 3) Creating authentic and engaging content
- 4) Virtual teamwork, organizing and sharing resources online
- 5) Online time management and achieving the goals

It will give guidance on how to improve learners' digital and soft skills.



Although used mainly for communication for many, the Internet has become the world's most important field for establishing and creating businesses and connections. Therefore, when creating an online self or any other content that allows for promoting the person or services, it is of utmost importance to develop authentic, relatable content that takes people's attention among millions of others. To be able to have success in establishing online-based businesses and creating connections, methods of creating authentic and engaging content are vital for youth.



With the advent of the 21st century and new concepts, such as the internet of things, virtual workplaces, and online teamwork, have become a much more critical skills required in employees. In addition, the post-covid19 era made concepts such as "work-from-home" much more widely accepted and practiced notions. Therefore, working virtually with others, understanding the working culture in online mediums, and effectively creating, maintaining, and sharing online resources with others became a prerequisite in 2030's job market



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