

Empowering Youth and Women in Lebanon

Stakeholder Consultations Help Shape New Employment Pathways for NEETs

Between **24 January and 23 February 2026**, Business Consultancy and Training Services (**BCTS**) Lebanon conducted a series of stakeholder consultations with leading youth and women's organisations across Lebanon under the **EmpowerNEET project**, funded by the **Interreg NEXT MED Programme**.

These consultations aimed to ensure that the project's upcoming training, employment, and entrepreneurship activities respond directly to the real challenges faced by youth and women classified as NEETs (Not in Employment, Education, or Training).

By engaging organisations working closely with communities, the consultations helped translate field realities into practical solutions that will guide the next stages of the project.

Listening to Organisations Working on the Ground

A total of **seven organisations** participated in the consultation process, representing different regions and areas of expertise related to youth empowerment, women's economic participation, and community development.

The participating organisations included:

- **Committee of Employee Women Union in North Lebanon (CEWU)**: a women-led organisation promoting gender equality and economic empowerment (*1 participant*).
- **Rene Mouawad Foundation (RMF)**: a national NGO active in livelihoods and community development (*1 participant*).
- **Arcenciel (AEC)**: an organisation supporting social inclusion and disability integration (*3 participants*).

EmpowerNEET

- **Grow Foundation:** a social enterprise promoting youth entrepreneurship, sustainability, and skills development through training and community initiatives (*1 participant*).
- **SMART Center:** a non-profit organisation strengthening human and institutional capacities to promote peacebuilding and sustainable development (*2 participants*).
- **Amel Association:** a national organisation active in health, education, and community services (*3 participants*).
- **Sky للتربية والبيئة:** an organisation linking environmental sustainability with youth employment opportunities (*1 participant*).
- **The Giving Tree (TGT):** a community-based organisation promoting youth engagement and civic participation (*3 participants*).

These consultations ensured representation from **North-Lebanon, Beirut and Mount Lebanon, and South-Lebanon**, as well as organisations operating at a national level.

Understanding the Barriers Facing Youth and Women

Stakeholder exchanges confirmed that youth and women across Lebanon face multiple structural barriers to economic participation, particularly in the current context of economic instability.

The consultations highlighted several key challenges:

- ✓ Strong demand for market-relevant skills, especially in digital, green, and vocational sectors
- ✓ Limited structured pathways connecting training to employment opportunities
- ✓ Weak engagement between training initiatives and employers
- ✓ Lack of mentoring, coaching, and long-term follow-up mechanisms
- ✓ Transportation and mobility barriers affecting participation in training programs
- ✓ Persistent gender-based participation constraints
- ✓ Rising youth migration and declining motivation due to limited local opportunities

As one participating organisation noted during the consultations:

“Youth in rural areas do not lack motivation; they lack structured and realistic opportunities to transform their skills into sustainable livelihoods.”

“Skills without opportunities become frustration; opportunities with skills become livelihoods”

EmpowerNEET

“The challenge isn’t youth motivation; it’s the missing bridge from skills to stable livelihoods.”

Turning Insights into Action

The knowledge generated through these consultations will directly shape the next phases of the EmpowerNEET project in Lebanon.

❖ WP3 – Training and Capacity Building

The project will design demand-driven training programs aligned with labour market needs, focusing on digital skills, green economy opportunities, vocational competencies, and essential soft skills required by employers.

❖ WP4 – Employment and Entrepreneurial Support

EmpowerNEET will strengthen pathways from training to employment by supporting employer engagement, mentorship mechanisms, and entrepreneurial coaching to help youth and women develop sustainable income-generating activities.

These actions aim to ensure that training initiatives are not isolated interventions but part of a structured pathway leading to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

A Collaborative Approach to Inclusive Opportunities

Through this consultative process, BCTS reinforced collaboration with civil society organisations and local stakeholders, ensuring that project activities reflect real needs and regional inequalities.

By grounding project implementation in evidence from the field, the EmpowerNEET project in Lebanon contributes to building more inclusive training systems, stronger employment pathways, and sustainable economic opportunities for youth and women across Lebanon.

Disclaimer

This activity was implemented by Business Consultancy and Training Services (BCTS) under the EmpowerNEET project, funded by the European Union through the Interreg NEXT MED Programme.

The content of this article is the sole responsibility of BCTS and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the Programme management structures.