



ENTRE-YOU Qualitative Research Report



Summary

Partner Institutions	3
Introduction	4
I. Research results – Answers from Unemployed Young People	4
Question 1.1.	5
Question 1.2.	6
Question 1.3.	6
Question 1.4.	7
Question 1.5.	7
Question 1.6.	8
Question 1.7.	8
Question 1.8.	9
Question 1.9.	9
II. Research results – Answers from Companies/other Stakeholders	10
Question 2.1.	10
Question 2.2.	11
Question 2.3.	11
Question 2.4.	12
Question 2.5.	13
Question 2.6.	13
Question 2.7.	14
Question 2.8.	14
Final considerations	15

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training

Project Title: ENTRE-YOU - Entrepreneurial Mindset for Young Disadvantaged Jobseekers

Project number: 2015-1-RO01-KA202-015052

Project duration: 24 months, 1 September 2015-31 August 2017

Partner Institutions

Responsible Partner Institution:

Croatia

The City of Zagreb
Andrija Petrović, Expert Adviser

Austria

Die Berater Unternehmensberatungs Gesellschaft mbH
EBC Licensing GmbH

Bulgaria

SBC School of Business Competences Ltd.

Hungary

EBC*Licensing Oktatási és Fejlesztő Intézet Kft

The Netherlands

ORGB Organisatie in Balans

Romania

Liceul Tehnologic "Székely Károly" Miercurea Ciuc

Spain

Educafort S.L. Blancafort Grup Formatiu

Introduction

Period of survey: December 2015- January 2016

Type and method of survey: personal interviews, phone call conversations, open discussions, e-mail conversation

Target groups:

1. Young people (unemployed)
2. Companies /other stakeholders

The aims of this analysis were to collect opinions and attitudes of stakeholders that are directly or indirectly connected with the labour market (Employment agencies, public authorities, social partners and NGOs) as well as for unemployed youth with disadvantaged reason.

The answers and results from this analysis will give us the key answers in the design of new goals and methodological approaches to solving individual problems which faced unemployed youth with disadvantaged reason in the partner countries (Romania, Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, Croatia, Hungary and Bulgaria).

During research in all partner countries we used seventeen questions - nine for unemployed young people and eight for employers. Some offered questions were similar, and the two questions were the same.

For most questions in all partner countries, we obtained the same or similar answers.

All participants gave their answers anonymously. Through anonymous answers we get an objective picture of the situation of unemployed young people in the labour market and employers regard to this problem.

I. Research results – Answers from Unemployed Young People

Questions 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 1.8 and the answers to them we marked as important for this research.

We have interviewed: 147 unemployed young people

Unemployed youth answered to the following questions:

Question 1.1.

Question: What do you think, why are there so many unemployed young people?

The interviewed young persons have almost responded the same way. 100% interviewees of them mentioned the problem of lack of work experience among youth. 70% interviewees of them stated that there are fewer jobs than unemployed people, which also means a disadvantage especially to those with no relevant experience. Others said that youth cannot easily find jobs related to their education or qualification.

For starters, much of the present level of youth unemployment is of a cyclical nature. That means that the large share of the youth unemployment is because of the financial and economic crisis, i.e., a recession that has been going on for six years in partner countries, bad public policies and wrong/government decisions caused by recession. During this time, there were not so many job opportunities (80% interviewees), the overall level of unemployment amplified, with youth unemployment following this negative trend.

Namely, with their lack of work experience (100% interviewees), relatively short or incomplete education, greater instability of the contractual relationship or less contacts for job search they are in much harder position to get a job even in good times, but during a recession they are the first to get fired ('fixed-term contracts') and the last to get hired. Nevertheless, there are other reasons for high youth unemployment other than the recession. There are not so many job opportunities and one of the most-common mentioned causes is the knowledge and skills mismatch, which leads to difficult transition from education to the world of work. They don't know how to write CV and motivation letter and to behave on the job interview.

Or, how to look for a job and have positive attitude about looking for a job?

There is also the labour legislation, together with some other institutional

practices on the labour market, such as collective agreements, that puts young people in an unfavourable position on the labour market. Moreover, there are also non-economic reasons, such as young persons' own and their families' decisions (remittances, non-labour incomes, family ties...) that can influence high youth unemployment (and inactivity). More than a half of the questioned young people think that there are so many unemployed young people because of a lack of motivation towards working.

Question 1.2.

Question: What means being employed to you?

For all young people employment means security and protection against a variety of social risks affecting young people today - it would be motivating, it would give them economic independence, financially secure (92% interviewees). Opportunity to get education in other fields, income needed for basic activities. It means being financially secured so I can provide for my family. It means work experience, new skills, and new opportunities.

Question 1.3.

Question: How does youth unemployment influence the life of the unemployed?

Unemployment slows the independence of young people, leading to poverty, which often ends with social exclusion of individuals who are affected. Long term unemployment leads to depression, stress, lack of motivation and passivity in life or doing nothing "Not in Education, Employment, or Training". Most of them thought (75% interviewees) that the whole unemployment status can grow.

One half of the questioned young people will be affected by the unemployment because their income is too low and income loss possibility for a bright future.

The other half gets a lower self-image, becomes insecure and loses motivation because they don't have work.

Question 1.4.

Question: What makes you happy?

In their teens they are probably happy when they don't have homework, when they have good grades, they go to a concert/match of their idols, or they have their first 'crush'.

Later on, they are happy if they go to college, meet new people, go out often, and don't fail exams. Or, if they don't go to college, they are happy if they find a decent job and have their own source of income with which they can afford some new clothes, new mobile, traveling to abroad or going out with friends, career opportunities, sense of independence, etc.

In their latter age, they are probably happy if they have a good job, can afford a living outside their parental home, have a girlfriend/boyfriend, or even husband/wife and children. Many young people (78% interviewees) happy when they feel productive and when they learn new things.

They are happy if they don't have to assume the obligations that narrows their interests and if they have enough money.

Question 1.5.

Question: What are you afraid of?

Yes, they have their own fears on a daily basis: they will fail an exam; their parents will find out that they did something they shouldn't have, is their boyfriend/girlfriend going to break up with them...Young people explained that they are afraid of a long-term unemployment which could make it difficult to maintain their general lifestyle.

As they get older, their fears become more similar to those of the adults: are they going to be admitted to college; will they find a job; will they be able to afford some basic things such as living on their own (without parents) or going somewhere for holidays; are they going to find the "right" person and get married.

In answering this question, the young are more speculating than they have expressed real fears. Loss of close people and insecurity. Losing a job or those they will find work only at abroad.

Inability to realize own potentials and unclear perspectives after finishing school.

But, 96% interviewees answered that they are afraid of a long-term unemployment which could make it difficult to maintain their general life level.

Question 1.6.

Question: Who is responsible for your happiness? (To which extent do you see becoming a CEO of your own life as empowering?)

Almost all young people (98% interviewees) agree that everybody is responsible for their own happiness.

The most common statements of the interviewees are: "I'm responsible for my own happiness" or "We are all responsible for our own decisions and we themselves decide about our lives". (Source: Statements from interviewees)

Question 1.7.

Question: Could schools prepare young people better? How?

Definitely. Schools are institutions where young people are educated. "Education is the process of facilitating learning. Knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits of a group of people are transferred to other people, through storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, or research." (Source: <https://www.quora.com>)

After analysing the statements of the interviewees the common conclusion of young would be: not only that young people gain specific knowledge in schools, they should also be taught various skills, values, beliefs, and habits; this implies that young people should also be aware of what is waiting for them in the 'real world' when they leave school; they should be equipped with a set of skills for finding a job; with knowledge and skills needed in the modern world, including social and intercultural competences, foreign languages (especially English) and computer literacy; with work habits as of the early age; with the ability to recognize their own innovation and creativity to present ideas to others or to start their own business; with beliefs and values embedded in them that there is no harm in failing and trying again. (Source: Statements from interviewees).

The young unemployed think that they did not learn what they need to find a job.

These are just some examples, but they strongly believe that schools should have stronger role in preparing young people for the labour market (100% respondents) and the 'adult' life. By this they don't mean that they should give them specific knowledge and skills to perform certain tasks, although this is one of the roles that schools definitely have, but that they should also provide them additional set of skills, value, beliefs, and habits needed to survive in the 'adult' world. Early professional orientation starting in the ages of 15 and 16, and more practice related education could help them to find a satisfying job.

Question 1.8.

Question: What does successful mean to you? Who is successful in your opinion?

'Being successful' also has different meanings: enjoy the things you own , food, a family to take care of and having a home , lots of money, achieve something in life, to achieve the goals.

To achieve success is desired, whether it is a business or a private plan.... A successful person is living happily; they build safe and balanced life, they doing things they love.

70% of interviewees answered that success is an experience makes us feel happy, but it does not mean to last forever.

Question 1.9.

Question: What are your personal plans for the next future? What are you going to do next?

We have observed that a lot of young people tried to find a job without success.

In personal opinion of young people, a successful person is the one who is satisfied with her accomplishments, both privately and professionally.

In many job interviews, company's mostly telling young people that they

didn't completed studies and thus have no opportunity to work. That's not true. A very large number of young people in the partner countries have completed a university degree, but are still unemployed.

Young people believe that a balance in life leads to success. It's not all about the money. Yes, we most often consider people on top positions in business, politics, sports or entertainment as successful ones.

After analysing the statements of the interviewees the common conclusion of young would be: a man can be successful if he is a clerk or a CEO, but can be unsuccessful with both if, for example, he has not accomplished all the things he thinks he should have or if he is unsatisfied with his personal life. Of course, you can always achieve more; having goals and ambitions is desirable characteristic, but a man should enjoy his own life no matter what is his occupation (Source: Statements from interviewees).

The main objective is to work and be employed in own country. If they cannot get a job, young people want to go abroad.

But, major part of the unemployed young people answered that he/she plans to obtain a new or another VET qualification and develop his English knowledge. Constantly working, trying and never give up.

II. Research results – Answers from Companies/other Stakeholders

We have interviewed: 74 stakeholders

Questions 2.1, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.8 and the answers to them we marked as important for this research.

Companies'/other stakeholders' answered to the following questions:

Question 2.1.

Question: What reasons do you see for youth unemployment?

When talking about the reasons for the youth unemployment, the companies in partner countries are all in agreement that they are looking for candidates with general or specific experience (100% interviewees).

The education system still doesn't provide enough opportunity for young people to acquire practical skills which would make them more competitive in the labour market after leaving the education system.

They also find that bad quality of training for young people not satisfying or too general.

Lack of internship program, favourable business environment, lack of motivation, economy crisis, lack of experience, not enough are some of the other responses noted by this questioner.

Although there is high unemployment in partner countries, companies cannot find professionals for a concrete job they are offering.

Second fact is that young people are sometimes not motivated enough to try hard, willing to accept a first very low salary. Young people expect others to solve their problems; they have big expectations from society.

They don't want to find a job, it is better to live at home with their parents, and economy crisis is just reason or a justification for it.

Third fact is inflow of cheap employees from foreign countries.

Question 2.2.

Question: What means being employed to young people?

From the companies' and other stakeholders' point of view being employed means responsibility and being part of society to young people which implies, the possibility to develop their skills, to become financially independent, to be more motivated, looking for the future and eventually to start a family if they want to.

Question 2.3.

Question: How does youth unemployment influence the life of the unemployed?

Generally, unemployment means a losing a lot of time but no or very less money available which implies both positive and negative effects.

Positive effects:

- Freedom - to do with free time what they want; more social contacts. In this stage of life it seems to be very important to "hang out" with friends.

Negative effects:

- They have to overcome again disappointments and setbacks which can lead to a situation where they don't dare try to overcome the perceived barriers anymore
- Pressure from different sides, from their parents, by themselves ("They are not stupid, they know that the longer they are unemployed the smaller their chances in the future.")
- Disorientation
- Feeling of worthlessness
- Feeling of being powerless
- Lack of success experiences

Almost all interviewees (more than 96%) agree that young people are usually not able to move away from their parents and become financially independent. They feel unmotivated and even frustrated and see no future for the next period in their life. Also that the lack of available money has its social consequences. The adolescent's unemployment means that they cannot participate in society. They even feel like being in a vicious circle.

Their lives go in a negative direction, they are socially unstable and they are often under stress, they are susceptible to criticism and prone to deviant behaviour and extremism.

Question 2.4.

Question: What do you think, what makes young people happy?

Good recipe for happiness does not exist. Everyone has their own experience.

Young people become happy by passing their exams, making their own money and having a real perspective of their future, having good times with friends - the momentary "feel good".

Opportunity to work which enables young people independence, professional development and career advancement.

Having a job, going out with friends, career opportunities, good interpersonal relationships, sense of independence, etc.

They are also happy through respect for who they are and what they do.

Question 2.5.

Question: What do you think, what are young people afraid of?

The inability to achieve its own potentials.

The impossibility of finding a job which entails question of the possibility to become independent (100% interviewees). They are afraid of taking responsibility. There is a great deal of those who don't want to work and on the other side there is a fear of being unemployment.

They are afraid of failure, of being rejected (or fired, if they work) by potential employers and being socially isolated. They're afraid that they will not be able to take care of themselves in the future.

Question 2.6.

Question: What strategies or actions are beneficial? Which are not?

All comments to this question have in common a tenor of "We should not leave them alone, we have to support these young people".

School and educational measures needed in school age already.

Quality of school education should be appropriate, so that young people that have finished main school and have been assessed positively have the necessary competencies like reading and language skills to cope with the basic requirements for an apprenticeship - It was seen as important by all interviewees to strengthen the link between school and labour market. More practice orientation and the possibility to get insights into and learn from professional life through internships etc. School teachers should inform about possible options for school leavers, vocational orientation, career and training guidance should be strengthened also in compulsory schools.

Most comments related to school education or prevention measures in school age.

Some interviewees call for longer compulsory schooling (at the moment 9 school years), because 15 year old children are not able to take over life themselves and those that continue in education anyway.

It is very important transition from school to working world.

Some strategies are being implemented already, such as preparing young people for the labour market with workshops where they can learn how to write excellent resume, how to make a good impression at a job interview, how to gain self-confidence etc. All strategies or actions must be beneficial for young people; maybe more education possibility for a job, schools could assist more at building a career, a better cooperation between schools and enterprises. More investment in employers needs in education for the youth – experience from project "Boris".

Also, and employers should have a clear strategy of its investment in the education of future employees, for example "Fund for Education".

Mind-set should be changed. Also, parents should consciously educate children to work, they shouldn't "serve" them.

Question 2.7.

Question: Could schools prepare young people better? How?

Yes, definitely (100% interviewees). The whole school system will have to adjust to meet the demands of the labour market. There are researches which suggest that jobs that involve routine tasks are disappearing, while jobs that require non-routine skills (e.g. creative, interpersonal) are more in demand. Schools should make effort to develop such skills, more job relevant training at all levels and offer better qualified teachers.

Question 2.8.

Question: What does successful mean to you? Who is successful in your opinion?

The one who systematically works on his/her skills and is productive at his/her workplace. Success is being satisfied with your life and job, to work something that you love and to inspire other people - balance between personal and professional life. There are many successful

people on global level - they can serve as an example of a compound of hard work and success: Oprah Winfrey.

Final considerations

Unemployment has been rising sharply in the European Union since March 2008 as a result of the economic crisis. In November 2015, 4.553 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the EU 28 (source Eurostat). All partner countries (excluding Austria 10.9% and the Netherlands 11.9%) in the project Entre-YOU have the highest rate of unemployed young people in the EU (Spain 47.5%, Croatia 45.1%, Romania 23.6%, Bulgaria 23.5% and Hungary 18.9%).

Overall, it is clearly visible to that start working and to gain professional experience in Mediterranean and East Europe is especially difficult for today's young generations due to the longer time they spend in education, also because it does not provide them enough measurable work experience that the employers require. Furthermore, companies prefer older and experienced workers because they do not want to invest time and money in training. Whole school system will have to adjust to meet the demands of the labour market since education system still doesn't provide enough opportunity for young people to acquire practical skills.

Also, there is a big need to motivate the young people. De-motivation is often the result of the following circumstances: a lot of young people, who have to find a job without result, try later on to go to university. But that does not solve the problems. In these countries (Spain, Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria) we have a high number of young people with university degrees, and regardless they cannot find a job after finishing their studies.

On the other hand the lack of available job offers in the countryside make it more challenging for young people to take the job they would prefer to do.

And thirdly, young people need positive feedback and confirmation about their knowledge and skills which they could get from their family, friends and loved ones. It could hugely help them not to be frustrated and to keep on searching for new possibilities in the labour - market. Mind-set should be changed.

Without a sense of purpose or strategy, it is very hard for them to find a space they „fit in“ on the labour market.

Faced with a multitude of options and possibilities, young adults are left on their own to decide what is right for them. They are not given sufficient support and have to take on the responsibility of choice on their own.

Responsible Partner Institution:
The City of Zagreb, Croatia
Andrija Petrović, Expert Adviser