

Croatia

Croatia – A Work First Perspective

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A Work First Perspective

- 1. Now we have Explored & Compared used local & national educational VET- programs (used by the partners) focused on (long term) unemployed young adults we have to outline the possibilities to adapt them to a Work first /work placement approach in the country of the partners (to be formalized with certificates)...**

We would have to form an Expert group which would deal with comparative analysis of the model of VET education in all countries (something like the Guidelines we're making) which should, on basis of various models seen in visited countries, create a "unique/ideal" model which would include all other models within. It should contain the Legal framework of the country, current model, key differences and similarities, show the "united" model and give recommendations for each country.

However, the Legal background and models for education in every country is very different so this should also be taken into account, because the model could never be 100% the same and should be flexible enough to enable the use of different strategies and approaches.

- 2. Now we have Explored this please write down the consequences and steps necessary to start a Work First model with VET-programs that operates within the framework of the local, national social system and laws of each partner country (your own country)**

Work First is an established employment strategy in the Netherlands where the primary task of the government is to support the unemployed in getting a job rather than provide them with benefit for the unemployed. The method combines mandatory work activities and increases knowledge and skills of participants. Work activities are short and finite, and stimulate both the development of the participant and his/her movement into regular jobs. Within 24 or 48 hours after his first application he can go to work. One of the key principles is that within the Work First activities there is already an employer-employee relationship. What is important, demand-oriented reintegration projects must rely on a good analysis of the (regional) labour market and local and regional businesses. Before a project is undertaken, there must be a solid cooperation with several employers, branches or economic sectors. The demands of the employers in the region are more important.

Youth unemployment is a huge problem in Croatia. In July 2013. there were 55,4% unemployed young people (up to 25 yrs) in Croatia, which presents the highest percentage up to now. In the first quarter of 2015 the percentage stil still high (48,7%), which puts Croatia to the 3rd place, right behind Greece and Spain.

In Croatia, there is a huge mismatch between supply and demand in the labor market. In order to start above mentioned model in Croatia, it is essential to harmonize the education system with the needs on the labor market.

Specific measures to be taken :

- scholarships for deficit occupations (Master of electrical engineering, medical doctors, pharmacist, Master of Civil Engineering, architecture, master of mathematics, Master of German language and literature, physics, psychology and speech pathology, butchers, electrician, gas installer, baker, chimney sweeper, car body painter, plumber, pastry chef, carpenters, waiters, locksmiths glaziers, joiners, machinists, carpenters, plasterers, bar bender)
- Different incentives for employment stimulation (additional educations and changing the line of work.)- Successful implementation of Youth Guarantee
- Limited enrollment to certain universities (sufficive occupations- Law, Economics)

Investing in a Youth Guarantee is crucial for the EU to preserve its future growth potential. Significant EU financial support is available - most notably from the European Social Fund and in the context of the Youth Employment Initiative. However, to make the Youth Guarantee a reality, Member States must prioritize youth employment measures also in their national budgets.

Croatian Employment Service started with the implementation of Youth guarantee on 1 July 2013 and supplemented a package of incentives for young people, "Young and creative," with an additional 11 incentives primarily aimed at young people up to 29 years. The incentives are aimed at raising the competence and preparation of young people for employment, in particular the strengthening and integration of the youth in entrepreneurship and the development of civil society organizations as a significant stakeholder in the labor market.

Youth Guarantee in Croatia

Youth Guarantee is a new approach to solving the problem of unemployment of young people, used for quick activation of all persons under the age of 25 years (in the Republic of Croatia under the age of 30 years!) on the labor market.

Quick activation on the labor market provides greater motivation for young people looking for work, as well as rapid upgrading of knowledge and acquired during the education.

Quick activation involves getting quality job offers within four months from the time of leaving or completing education or becoming unemployed, regardless of whether the person is registered at the CES or not.

Quality offer applies to: job offer, apprenticeship, traineeship or internships offer or continuation of education with an emphasis on customization of individual abilities and needs of each young person.

The Guarantee itself does not guarantee employment, but represents a structural reform that will enable the rapid activation of young job seekers as soon as possible.

Also, it is important to motivate and activate youth:

- Prepare young people for labor market (soft skills workshops, job-interview simulations, additional education, counseling, encouragement of volunteering etc)
- Implement projects (local, national, regional) for the benefit of the youth- examples of good practice in other countries which can be applied in our country, sharing of different knowledge's, experiences and techniques when working with youth (e.g. mobility projects)
- Promote volunteerism and encourage young people to volunteer (a good way for youth to gain work experience and be useful in their communities)
- Encourage lifelong learning (especially foreign languages) and Improving computer literacy and adoption of new technologies in schools
- Implementation of re-training programs for youth in low-sought occupations in occupations needed on the labor market

And to encourage active participation of SMEs in Local employment partnerships and creation of active labor market incentives for unemployed youth.

Also it is important to:

- Encourage employers to use incentives for employing youth (inform employers on incentives by using media, educate them on how to use the incentives, what are their obligations when using them (organizing workshops for employers), promote them as socially responsible companies if they use incentives, etc)
- Encourage business planning in companies
- Introduction of mentoring system (large companies as mentors to smaller ones)
- Organization of "open door" days in enterprises

So, in order to be able to implement "Work first" approach, Croatia needs to deal with the above mentioned first. Naturally, the approach also needs to be adjusted to the laws and situation in each country.

According to Croatian Government, the implementation of Youth Guarantee is going in the right way: <https://vlada.gov.hr/garancija-za-mlade-znanjem-i-iskustvom-do-zaposlenja/16462>

In the last year and a half, significant progress has been made in the implementation of Youth Guarantee. In 2013. Incentives have been used by 29.803 youth (15-30 yrs). In 2014. The numbers rose to 37.212 young incentive users. It is important to mention that most of youth (24.460)used the incentive "Vocational training for work without employment" ,

while 8.423 youth were employed by other incentives (employment, self-employment , training), and 3.073 young people were included in public work.

During 2015 even greater coverage and better results are expected, because of the additional resources of the European Social Fund and the YEI Fund, and for this purpose about one billion and 100 million Kuna has already been provided.

In the last 3 years, the youth unemployment rate has been reduced by almost 20% and almost 50% of new employees in Croatia are younger than 30 years. Systematically, there is an increment in employment through the mediation of the Croatian Employment Service (CES), so in 2014 there was a record youth employment by mediation of CES - 107.511, or 47.7% of total employed persons were young people. It is important to point out that 92,739 of young people are employed on the basis of employment, which is 6.8% more than in 2013. Also, of those