

## Romania

### Romania – 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)...**

Several local and national VET-programmes presented during the W2L2W mobilities raised interest to the CTANM team. All of these programmes were assessed by the team in terms of feasibility and effectiveness, considering the particular situation of the Romanian workforce market and of the Romanian social welfare system.

The Guarantee for Youth programme has proved to be so successful in Romania. Also, there are sure signs that it will run successfully in the near future. But the Guarantee for Youth is run by the central authorities (Romanian Government and three specialised ministries) and, involuntarily, the particular needs of the local communities are not served completely. On the other hand, the Romanian society is too much used to expect that the central government will solve all the local problems. It is time that local communities to be aware of their important role and to assume certain responsibilities.

Considering this complex situation, the CTANM team focused on one programme presented by the Ballymun Job Centre team from Ireland, respectively the Community Employment programme.

The Community Employment (CE) programme is designed to help people who are long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people to get back to work by offering part-time (half of the working hours of a regular week) and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities for one year in voluntary organisations and public bodies. The extension to one or two years is subject to Department of Social Protection approval.

The programme assists them to enhance and develop both their technical and personal competences which can then be used in the permanent workplace. Training is also available within the scheme and is provided within a Quality Assurance framework. Participants receive a supplementary sum of money on top of their current social welfare payment and they are strongly supported throughout their placement by a CE supervisor. After the placement, participants are encouraged to seek permanent part-time or full-time jobs elsewhere based on the experience and new competences they have gained while in a Community Employment scheme. This offer was very attractive to participants as it was a job, it was more money than on benefit, and there was training.

### **Way to Learn to Work**

Work First is a strategy within welfare to work programmes and is focussed on finding work as quickly as possible. They seek to move people from welfare into unsubsidised jobs as quickly as possible and job searching is a central activity. Work First begins with job searching for most participants using the labour market itself as the test of employability. Then for those who fail to find a job straight away, Work First provides additional activities geared towards addressing those factors which have prevented employment. The aim is not to ensure long term career goal but to reinforce the belief that any job is a first career step no matter how precarious this employment may be. In addition, Work First uses sanctions as a main element rather than trust which is associated more with the human capital development approach.

Work is the stable of society. Without something to do, there is nothing for which to live. It puts our energies to a proper use. It provides us with money for our life. It can make life meaningful. Idleness can be more tiresome and painful than work. Young people who experience unemployment are not a homogenous group however, from the learning of the Youth Guarantee, we see that those who are furthest from the labour market seek programmes that are not classroom based, have a work experience element and can give them a sense of security e.g. Community Employment programme. The aim of the W2L2W project was to look at best practices in partner countries.

### **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)**

The first step in ensuring the effectiveness of the Community Employment programme is raising the awareness of the local communities as entities capable of building their own future. If the family is the basic cell of society, the next level is not the state represented by the central government, but the local community.

The long-term unemployed people are the concern of the state of course, but the negative consequences of their existence are affecting the local community in the first instance. The unemployed are spending less money (they have social benefits that are lower than a regular salary) in the community, so the community is not growing at a faster rate. Because of their spare time and low income, they can be easily attracted in lawless activities that can lower the community's level of life quality. Due to insecurity, the price of properties will decrease and so on.

In order for Community Employment programme to work effectively, the following actions must be performed:

- Raising awareness in the local communities;
- Involve the policy makers of the local communities;
- Analysis and assessment of the local economic activity in order to detect the job opportunities;
- Design a flexible, but detailed framework for the Community Employment programme;
- Design a post-community employment module aimed to prepare the newly-trained unemployed for securing a job (CV drafting, preparing for the interview, communication skills, etc.);
- Involve the local branches of the National Agency of Employment;
- Design a strategy to involve the local employers using different incentives;

- Develop strong and deep contacts with local chamber of commerce and other employers organisations;
- Design the training programme for CE supervisors;
- Establish a national association of NGOs and other social welfare organisation focused on Community Employment programme;
- Finding ways for funding the local Community Employment programme.