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EMPLOY

mEntoring prograMme for young People at risk for Labour fOrce entrY

Policy Toolkit



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EMPLOY POLICY TOOLKIT

Leading Partner

EMINA Career Guidance
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Law and Internet

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Table of Contents

Part I: Summaries

1.	Short summary and vision of the current project	1
1.1	Background of the project	1
1.2	Key points of the project	1
1.3	Main challenges during the implementation of the project	2
2.	Main findings of the Joint Staff Training.	4
2.1	Revelations of the Joint Staff Training	5
3.	Summary of the lessons learnt from the blended mobility	7
4.	Feedback of mentoring sessions provided through the mentoring e-Hub	10
4.1	Summary of suggestions of mentor to future mentees and mentors	10
5.	Summary of the communication during the project with the target groups and other stakeholders	13
5.1	Summary of the communication during the project with the target groups	13
6.	Synthesising the information gathered in the process of elaboration of the EMPLOY Skills and Competences Handbook	16

Part II: National statuses

7.	Good practices and policy relevant evidence base - key effects from main project activities that can open up insights for systematic improvements The EU and national processes in the field, societal demands and current situation and circumstances on national level: current situation and circumstances on project partners national level	17
7.1	Slovenia	17
7.2	Italy	19
7.3	Turkey	20
7.4	Hungary	21
7.5	Bulgaria	22
8	Future implications – concrete ideas and steps in policy development field	25

1

Short summary and vision of the current project

Employ - mEntoring prograMme for young People at risk for Labour fOrce entrY

Background of the project

Youth unemployment has been one of the biggest problems not only in the European Union but also worldwide. It has been proven that the unemployment of young people has lifelong effects on income and employment stability in every country. Moreover, affected young people start out with weaker early-career credentials, and show lower confidence and resilience in dealing with labor market opportunities and setbacks over the course of their working lives.

In the European Union the youth unemployment is persistently higher than for other age groups. For youths from groups at risks the issue is even more serious because they are facing increasingly more obstacles when it comes to entering into the labor market. Furthermore, young people with fewer opportunities, NEETS, economically disadvantaged people, and young migrants are expected to demonstrate strong employability skills in order to get and keep a job. Actually, the main challenge before them is that there are not many options available for receiving career guidance advice, acquiring new skills & competences and preparation for the labor market in order to become more qualified and competitive enough.

Key points of the project

The partner consortium of EMPLOY which consists of 6 organizations from five different countries (the Higher Institute of Insurance and Finance (VUZF) and Law and Internet Foundation(LIF) from Bulgaria, Celje Youth Center (MCC) from Slovenia, TDM 2000 from Italy, EMINA Career Guidance Foundation from Hungary and Yasar University from Turkey) designed the EMPLOY project to guide young people who face challenges and difficulties when entering into the labor market. The overall objective of the project is to guide young people to their entering into the labor market by providing them with skills, competences and advices from professional mentors. This objective will be completed by establishing an online platform for virtual mentoring- e-Hub; developing EMPLOY Skills and Competences Hand-book which emphasizes on the skills and competences that young people need for increasing employability and developing a Policy Toolkit that sheds light on the paths that could be followed by the decision-makers in the field of youth unemployment.



Main challenges during the implementation of the project

The project has produced so far two intellectual outputs which are the base for guidance of the young unemployment people. The developed EMPLOY mentoring e-Hub: <https://employprogramme.eu/> is a virtual community for mentorship which contributes to the promotion of open and innovative practices in the digital environment, empowering young people at risk to successfully prepare for the labor market and in this way reducing the youth unemployment in the EU in a long-term aspect.

The EMPLOY Skills and Competences Handbook reveals a set of key skills and competences that empower young people when entering the labor market. The key skills and competences covered in EMPLOY Skills and Competences Handbook are identified and elaborated based on the in-sights from young people, who have experienced unemployment, as well as from mentors, career advisors and experts in the field of youth unemployment. The most important skills and competences are selected and elaborated, providing mentees quick tips and relevant resources to improve them further.

The biggest challenge for the project's implementation has been the implication of the widespread COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the partners, being education and service providers, had to transform their daily work as COVID-19 affected negatively their activities, which consumed a lot of working time. The main difficulty which has arisen before the consortium is the inability to conduct face-to-face project meetings and multiplier events in certain periods. However, with joint efforts the partners succeeded in implementing all activities properly. It has been conducted a Joint-Staff training and a project meeting in Izmir, Turkey, as well a Blended mobility in Celje, Slovenia and Multiplier events in the partners' countries.



On the bases of the evaluation surveys, partners provided the textual analysis of the feedback of team members participated in the Joint Staff Training, both online and face to face.

As a complement to actions dedicated to addressing the problem of youth unemployment at national and EU level, the provision of tailored counseling to underprivileged youth, NEETS, economically disadvantaged people and young migrants has significant potential to empower them. The purpose of the EMPLOY Joint Staff Training was to develop the capacity of youth workers and partners' representatives to counsel young people from the aforementioned target groups by using the EMPLOY Mentoring Hub and EMPLOY Skills & Competences Handbook. Various topics, including career guidance, pre-employment preparations, communication and networking, public speaking, learning styles, self-assessment, mentoring double disadvantaged groups, design thinking approach, were discussed in the context of how to successfully deliver mentoring to the target groups of the project. The content and functionalities/tools of the EMPLOY e-Hub and the EMPLOY Skills and Competences Handbook were explored and discussed intensively.

All participants have given positive feedback on the training. Most of them reflected that the content of the training broadened their vision. The profound impact of harmonizing mentors and youth workers from different fields, cultures and with diverse mentoring skills was expressed by all the participants. According to the results of the evaluation questionnaire distributed at the end of the training, all participants expressed their interest in participating in Blended Mobility Training and using EMPLOY mentoring e-Hub and Skills and Competences Handbook in their mentoring everyday activities.

The project partners agreed that in addition to the development of mentoring skills, the online and especially the face-to-face training contributed to the development of teamwork & intercultural communication skills among the participants. The project partners agreed that in addition to the development of mentoring skills, the online & especially the face-to-face training contributed to the development of teamwork and intercultural communication skills among the participants.



Revelations of the Joint Staff Training

During the program, participants were able to learn about the skills and competencies handbook, as well as how these, alongside practical guidance, can be used to guide young people in the job market and through their own personal development. Moreover, motivation and empowerment of young people were a key factor during the whole program and, when facing complicated situations, concrete tips which were provided revealed themselves to be truly useful for the participants.

A full training on e-Hub in combination with the EMPLOY Handbook and all the former's features was done and participants can now navigate and use the website in the most efficient way. Partakers showed themselves to be highly motivated both to the online and face-to-face parts of the program, especially appreciating the direct correlation between the topics covered by the mentors and the daily work done. The mentors also had the opportunity to self-assess their mentoring skills and to draw a path for improvement. The engaging discussions amongst peers and fellow mentors after the conclusion of the topics gave participants the opportunity to hear and take on the methods used by various other mentors and taught them how to effectively coach, as well as all the necessary features to be a good mentor. Furthermore, the mentors had the opportunity to self-assess their mentoring skills and to draw a path for improvement, as they learned how to motivate themselves and the mentees, which is an essential part of the mentoring process.

What is more, the sessions devoted to time management and mentoring simulations turned out to be precious and gave a clear picture of the mentoring process and the ways to create a maximum value for the mentees.

In the end, participants claimed to have a much clearer picture of the project as a whole and confidence they were provided with all the right tools to find material and support if needed.



3

Summary of the lessons learnt from the blended mobility

Textual analysis and summary of lessons learnt based on the blendedmobility activities held in Slovenia

The Blended mobility of the EMPLOY project was held between the 23rd and the 27th of August 2021 in Celje, Slovenia. This activity had the purpose of establishing direct training with the target groups thus enabling a direct learning experience between the mentees and the mentors furthermore encouraging the mentees to become future mentors. Not only did the face-to-face blended mobility join together 5 mentors and 20 mentees in person but we made it possible that two mentees from Turkey joined online. Additionally to this we streamed live session from the Blended mobility via the project EMPLOY Facebook page, thus making the content of the training available to other users via only. We have produced 11 live session via Facebook which were all together viewed 231 times. Also, the sessions of the blended mobility were professionally filmed and the videos are available on the E-HUB as additional sources of learning in the courses provided by the E-HUB.

At the beginning of the bended mobility, the participants were resented by the Youthpass and its importance as a non-formal tool of evaluating and describing the competencies learned during the training session. All participants also wrote down their individual learning plans on the first day in accordance to the agenda and the topics delivered in order to evaluate the existing knowledge and level of competencies in different topics. The individual learning plans were added on the last day as new knowledge and competencies were enhanced as a direct result of the participation in this blended mobility. This reflection resulted on the completion of Youthpasses for all participants and those were issued to all by the hosting organization the Celjski mladinski center, Slovenia.

The topics that were covered during the blended mobility were the following:

- Presentation on CVs and Interviews execution
- Role playing on interviews,
- Communication skills - presentational skills, networking skills
- Presentation on Team work and problem solving
- How to - social media representation, LinkedIn
- Development of virtual sessions for E-HUB, working directly via EMPLOY e-Hub
- Development of virtual sessions for E-HUB, part 2, working directly via EMPLOY e-Hub
- Youthpass diary presentation – individual learning plans
- Presentation of mentors functions and field expertise and mentor – mentee relationship
- Thinking hats
- Setting and reaching goals



The lessons learned from the blended mobility can be summarized by the Youthpasses issued and by the self-evaluation process the mentees and the mentors took as a result of the blended mobility and their individual learning plans.

We could summarize some of the lessons learned best by quoting participants and their evaluation described in the Youthpasses.

“I expressed my ideas, opinions and challenges in a foreign language. Also, I had the opportunity to listen and reflect on the challenges, needs and options of my peers during the training.”

“The training contributed to develop our understanding of being creative and inclusive.”

“Usually, I am good at self-motivating, taking responsibility for myself and working in groups. When working with other people you can see lots of different points of view which is refreshing that’s why I like it. When I was first reading about this project, I liked it because it gives you a important knowledge about your future career, for example how to write CV, how to properly communicate, how to present yourself. I am happy because I managed to understand and learn how to do all of the things said in a previous sentence. Surely enough a few of the mentors helped me with understanding how start ups work, how to mediate and how to pitch ideas. I discovered that I can do more than I anticipated and that I shouldn’t underestimate myself.”

“I achieved my mentoring goals. I think I managed to motivate and fulfil the expectations of the mentees.”

“She improved her knowledge about specifics in interviews in the workshop by role playing interviews. After consulting with a mentor now she is capable of writing a proper motivational letter. She knows how to address it, when and what she is suppose to write in it and importance of the structure.”

“I achieved my personal goals and the learning objectives I set at the beginning of the blended mobility.”

“To be able to organize, manage and monitor own learning and knowledge.

To be able to apply achieved competences & experiences in personal, professional and social life.

To listen and respect the opinion of the others, to help and to work with the other participants not only as a team, but also during the individual practical exercises.”



Feedback of mentoring sessions provided through the mentoring e-Hub

based on interest of mentees

In general, all sessions were found interesting and appealing, with special highlight to how sessions on development of soft skills for employability were particularly useful. Other aspects such as sessions related to a more practical approach on how to get a job, with CV making or the process concerning cover letters, were very well received by the participants. What is more, partakers also appreciated, as it seems an urgent topic, all the sessions dedicated to active job hunting and career guidance.

Furthermore, all the sessions associated with the acquirement of practical skills as well as all the steps and tips in the pre-employment phase were highly appreciated by the mentees, as they felt they were provided with all the skills and qualities necessary for a future job interview preparation process.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the Public Speaking and Presentation Skills were also genuinely valued by the mentees, just as the Networking and Business Communication Techniques.

All in all, the mentees were mostly interested in the topics related to communication, job interviews preparation and CV making.

However, as some mentees felt there is a significant lack of knowledge regarding entrepreneurship and startups, the development of more sessions on these topics was requested.

Additionally, mentors felt it was extremely important for them to provide as useful information to the young mentees as possible.

Also, one of the most useful aspect of the e-Hub was that it provided the mentees with the opportunity to communicate with the different mentors in order to get familiar with their different approaches. Both parts agreed it was a priceless chance to have mentors sharing first-hand examples and experiences with the mentees.

Regarding the language, the sessions were conducted, in general, either in partners national languages, but some notions and terms were in English.

Summary of suggestions of mentor to future mentees and mentors

Mentors would suggest for future mentees to make use of the e-Hub's full potential, as the mentoring courses and topics covered have a lot to offer. According to some, each course has not only a theoretical part, but also a practical one.

Some of the mentors would also recommend the mentees to complete the self-evaluation tool at the time of their registration, as well as to make use of the "networking" section through which mentors and mentees can communicate.



Moreover, it was suggested that the mentors should use videos and other different interactive features in order to make the mentoring process more appealing to young people.

Courses should also be structured in a way that fits the audience and the mentors ought to be prepared to be asked several questions.

In pursuance of achieving the best results possible, both mentors and mentees should as well be patient and dedicated. They shall embrace the project with openness, willingness to learn and teach as well as care for others.

Mentees should never stop looking for improvements as there is always a chance to learn more. Failure must not mean frustration or tiredness and the mentees are strongly encouraged to ask for support and as many questions as they want.





Summary of the communication during the project with the target groups and other stakeholders

General online group sessions and one-to-one conversations were held with the intention of getting the young people used to the skills required for job-hunting and for their professional life.

The young people who recently graduated and have been facing the difficult conditions of the highly competitive market were informed about the project, the e-Hub and the Skills and Competences Handbook.

In general, the participants who completed the forms were mainly representatives of state institutions. According to the results, correspondents found mentoring topics, the self-evaluation tool and the Skills and Competences Handbook as important as having a positive and significant impact on the mentoring process.

Moreover, the Youthpass certificate was an extra motivation for the mentees to enroll and complete the course.

Overall, the partakers in the event were in favor of the main idea, objectives, and methods of the EMPLOY project.

Besides this, participants recommended making full use of the variety of conventional and unconventional methods of dissemination in order to reach a younger public who might be interested in this EMPLOY mentoring program.

Some of the participants shared their feedback on the program and several considered that the development and implementation of the mentoring program for unemployed young people is a truly powerful tool for inclusion into both the social and working life.

Several stakeholders were contacted during the time of the project and one of the most relevant organizations was the Institute for Cultural Relations Policy based in Budapest, with which many possible outcomes for training and selecting upcoming youngsters were shared.

Other stakeholders with whom most of the information was shared, like the International Alliance for Cultural Relations, were also contacted. With all the stakeholders which were contacted, possible outcomes for training and selecting upcoming youngsters for new job opportunities were shared. Some, like CASMI, showed their interest in augmenting the number of mentors whereas others, like TDM International, showed themselves ready to enlarge the geographical scope with its members from other European countries.

Summary of the communication during the project with the target groups

- Channels used for the communication with the target group
- Main communication content

The project and its outputs were communicated with target groups (NEETs) by using online meeting tools, emails, social media posts,



press releases and one-to-one conversations.

The intellectual outputs were disseminated through the national as well as the regional media. Apart from this, websites and social media accounts, specially Facebook, were also used and the partakers were directly approached via these platforms.

A variety of communication tools was used during the project and the target groups and stakeholders were mainly reached through digital communication tools. As a part of the multiplier events, the more relevant stakeholders were directly contacted.

Moreover, phone calls and messaging apps were also used in order to instantly answer the questions placed by the mentees and other interested parties.

The results and updates related to EMPLOY's implementation were disseminated by using websites and other social media.

When it comes to how the number of people was measured, social media stats were used, but people were also asked directly to complete the list of participants when joining events.

Other measured the number of people reached by the number of participants who browsed the information on the website of the university. What is more, the number of target groups reached was measured by the number of registered mentees on the e-Hub platforms and those who took part in the training.

The main communication content was related to the development and implementation of the project. Others' main communication content was focused on the dissemination of the e-Hub platform which was the main tool of the EMPLOY mentoring program.



6

Synthesizing the information gathered in the process of elaboration of the EMPLOY Skills and Competences Handbook

- Sources used in the handbook
- Methodology
- Main challenges in the process of creation of the Handbook
- Strong and weak points of the Handbook

Desk research, the qualitative interviews conducted by EMPLOY project partners and synthesizing previous experiences in the field of mentoring were the main methods which have been used in the creation of the Handbook. Both primary and secondary resources were used.

The main challenge was to synthesize different experiences and capacities when creating the Handbook.

The strong points of the Handbook are as follows:

- Providing important insights about the national and EU level regulations and interventions in the field of youth unemployment
- Presenting the most needed skills and competences in the job market, as resulted from the project's qualitative interviews, in a ready-to-consume format together with practical tips and further learning opportunities.
- Promoting the EMPLOY Mentoring e-Hub and how it can be used in combination with the Handbook to support the learning of the registered mentees.
- Being directly based on experiences of mentors and target groups. The content of the Handbook was shaped by the results of the qualitative interviews which project partners conducted to reveal the most up-to-date challenges and opportunities in the field.
- Being connected to the EMPLOY Mentoring e-Hub. The strong connection between the Handbook and the EMPLOY Mentoring e-Hub renders a unique opportunity as it allows theory to turn into practice, supporting both mentors and mentees.
- Being provided in all national languages of the project partners. Given that the language barrier is one of the most important obstacles for young people who would like to improve themselves yet have limited access to the necessary resources, the multilingualism of the Handbook indicates a strong reason for preference for young people as well as youth workers.

The weak points of the Handbook are as follows:

- The Handbook is a static material in its nature, yet the field of mentoring on which the Handbook intends to influence is not. Therefore, the need for updating the Handbook might become significant in the medium-term period.



Good practices and policy relevant evidence base

key effects from main project activities that can open up insights for systematic improvements
EU and national processes in the field, societal demands and current situation and circumstances on national level

7.1 Slovenia

In the Republic of Slovenia (RS), the Employment Agency of the Republic of Slovenia (ZRSZ) is a key institution in the labour market. It is an autonomous legal entity with the status of a public institution, which operates uniformly throughout the territory of the Republic of Slovenia. The ZRSZ operates at three levels: at the headquarters of the Employment Service, with its management and Central Service, and in the regional services, with labour offices located in all administrative districts. The main activities of the ZRSZ are job placement and employment counselling, career orientation, unemployment insurance, active employment policy measures, issuing work permits and employment of foreigners, production of analytical, developmental and other professional materials in the field of activities of the ZRSZ, and information on the labour market. The users of the ZRSZ's services are the unemployed, employers, persons in need of professional assistance in employment and vocational guidance, professional institutions and providers of employment programmes, social partners and the general public.

ZRSZ implements, among other things, the Operational Programme for the Implementation of the European Cohesion Policy. As a financial partner, it is involved in the implementation of project activities in international projects co-financed by various EU programmes and other funds, such as the Targeted Mobility Scheme, EURADRIA 2020-2021, Decent work for all, HECAT, EUREVITA and Your first EURES job.

In 2020, after a good start to the year, economic trends turned negative in the spring months, as both the global and domestic economies were hit hard by covid-19, affecting labour market conditions. The main contractions in labour activity in 2020 were in the real estate and hospitality sectors. In 2020, employers were looking for job applicants for 114,671 vacancies.

At the end of November 2020, 889,758 people were employed, a decrease of 1.3% compared to November 2019. The registered unemployment rate was 8.6% in November 2020, an increase of 1.2% percentage points compared to November 2019. At the end of December 2020, 87,283 persons were unemployed, an increase of 15.9% compared to December 2019. In 2020, compared to the same period of 2019, there was an increase of 31.3% in the registration of newly unemployed persons. In 2020, 98,244 newly unemployed persons registered



for unemployment. There were 86,253 de-registrations, an increase of 10.5% compared to the same period in 2019.

The structure of unemployment has changed compared to 2019, due to the increase in applications and de-registrations. A comparison between December 2019 and December 2020 shows that the share of redundant workers and bankrupts has increased by 4.7%. There was a 1.5% increase in the unemployed aged 30-39, a 1.3% increase in the unemployed aged 40-49 and a 0.9% increase in the unemployed aged under 29. The share of unemployed women also increased by 1.2%. The share of older unemployed (50 years and over) decreased by 3.6%. The shares of long-term unemployed and first-time jobseekers also decreased. The educational structure of the unemployed has not changed markedly. On average, 85,003 persons were unemployed per month in 2020, 14.6% more than in 2019.

Currently (August 2021), there are 69,292 registered unemployed persons in the RS, of which 51.7% are women and 48.3% are men. Of these, the share of young people is 17.5%, while the share of people over 50 is 39.2%. First-time jobseekers account for 14% of all registered unemployed persons, while the long-term unemployed account for 58.2%. The share of disabled persons among the total registered is 16.4%.

At national level, the unemployment rate is 7.3%. In the youth category (15-29 years), unemployment is at 9.5%, in the over-50s category at 9%, and in the over-55s at 11.4%. Of the total working capable population, 6.5% of men and 8.2% of women are unemployed. The share of the long-term unemployed is at 4.3%. In 2021, there were 40,247 newly registered unemployed and 58,238 unemployed persons who have checked out.

In 2019, 17,030 work permits were issued to foreigners, 15,636 in 2020 and 13,821 in 2021 (until September 2021). Currently, the total number of valid work permits for foreigners is at 42,562.

Employers in Slovenia are positive about employment trends in the second half of 2021, forecasting a 2.1% growth in the number of employees and projecting around 29,000 jobs.

This is according to the results of the latest Employment Forecaster survey, which surveyed almost 3,300 employers with ten or more employees from all over Slovenia in April and May 2021.

Employers in the Maribor (2.8%) and Koper (2.7%) Regional Offices forecast the highest growth in the number of employees. Employers in Celje (2.5%), Ptuj (2.4%) and Kranj (2.3% employment growth forecast) are also above average. No regional services are forecasting a decline in employment. The highest employment forecasts are for the Ljubljana (10,793) and Maribor (3,770) regional offices, given the size of the regional offices, the number of employees and the concentration of the headquarters of the business entities. The most positive forecasts for employment trends are in the hospitality, construction, real estate and other diversified business activities. Over the next six months, the most sought-after occupations will be heavy truck and tractor-trailer drivers, simple manufacturing workers, welders, bricklayers and sales workers.



7.2 Italy

The issue of employability of youth at risk is in Italy an historic challenge, with different programs, strategies and laws being drafted and put into practice during the years, with alternate success.

Italy has one of the worse rate of youth employment in Europe, and it's living currently a moment of reforms and revolution.

The institution of the short salary for unemployed, and the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, made the situation a bit unclear, with many youngster confused and looking for some new understanding.

For this reason it was challenging to identify soft skills and competences, as we live in a world constantly evolving where demands are changing quite often, and not always are easy to understand.

The project helps because it provides a platform and tools that are clearly identifiable and can help in providing alternative ways to get insights on these aspects. Also reaching for people that otherwise would have never have this chance.

In this sense, online mentoring is not a very used and trusted tool today in our society, but none the less, the pandemic made more people aware of the power of online tools.

All in all it was useful, but not in a systematic way, yet! Due to the pandemic the times were a bit different, and we need to still work more on the inclusion of more stakeholders in the process.

The main challenge when developing the topics was to identify the most needed skills and competences which almost every young people can benefit from regardless of their background & expectations.



According to latest data, 25,4% of the young population is unemployed in Turkey. When we look at the general population regardless of age, the rate of unemployment is 13%, which indicates that youth unemployment is a significant issue in the country. The youth unemployment is more prominent in young females (30,6%) compared to young males (22,5%). Only 22% of university graduates find their first job within the first six months after graduation. 26% of young inhabitants are not in employment, education or training (NEET). On the other hand, problems continue for those who have already found a job. According to a recent nation wide survey, 49,8% of the employed are satisfied with their salary and 62% of the employed are satisfied with the education that they had received.

Presidency of Strategy and Budget (formerly, T. C. Ministry of Development) prepares special expertise commission reports on youth unemployment as reference sources for the national five year development plans. These reports aim to provide a clear vision and a road map regarding the national youth unemployment issue which is especially problematic for more vulnerable young groups such as NEETs, young refugees, migrant and young Syrians under temporary protection, and young with disabilities. The latest special expertise commission report on youth unemployment states that special measures should be taken for abovementioned groups as they tend to be employed in unhealthy conditions such as unpredictable continuity, insufficient income, and lack of social and legal protection (i.e. informal employment). The report attaches a special emphasis on NEETs and the incompatibility between training and job market regarding young

population. The report also states lack of professional network and limited soft skills as other important obstacles for young people who hunt for a job for the first time.

This project, together with its intellectual outputs and dissemination activities, directly addresses the abovementioned issues, namely the problem of limited soft and hard skills about professional life as well as job hunting via the Skills and Competences Handbook, and problem of limited professional network via the Mentoring e-HUB. Both the mentoring sessions held during the project implementation period and the opportunity that the e-Hub is created as an interactive environment that will be available even after the end of the project for those who want to participate and continue in the mentoring process indicate the potential of the project to contribute to the systematic improvement of the youth employment.

The main challenge when developing the topics was to identify the most needed skills and competences which almost every young people can benefit from regardless of their background and expectations.



7.4 Hungary

The unemployment in Hungary has grown considerably after accession to the EU. In 2013 there were 449,000 unemployed in Hungary, compared to 252,000 in 2004.

Following 2010 the level remained high until 2012 when it began to decrease thanks to the efforts of the government through launching workfare programs – which is also called „fostered workers”. Participation in this program is compulsory for the unemployed, and those who participate in it are called “fostered workers”. Since 2012, according to the modified labour law, all jobs that the labour offices offer to the unemployed persons are to be accepted by them even if the job has much lower qualification than the unemployed person has. The workfare program has involved more and more unemployed people since 2010, reaching 129,100 people on average in 2013 and 178,700 people on average in the first half of 2014. The workfare program offers cheap labour to the government and to those private sector employers who take part in the program. The unemployed, especially in disadvantaged regions where regular and formal employment can hardly be found, are usually thankful for the possibility of secure employment in the program and they hope it will continue.

The situation of young people in the labour market has also deteriorated during the years of membership. The number of young unemployed under 25 years of age was 56,000 in 2004 and 84,000 in 2013. However, their share in total unemployment had been decreasing until 2011 more or less continuously. Then it began to rise and reach the pre-crisis level

In the last few years the government did very little to prevent this compared with the efforts to push the public deficit under three percent, which it did successfully. Besides, the government aims to reduce national debt and retrieve a substantial part of the economy from foreign owners and into Hungarian private and public hands.

In 2021 the unemployment rate was 4%. In June there were 193 000 unemployed, which is less than it was at the same time last year (in June, 2020 it was 236 000 unemployed), but this number is also more than it was in May, 2021 with 4000 people.



-Many of the member states of the European Union suffer high levels of youth unemployment. The Public Employment Services (PES) of the European Commission applies different approaches for supporting the long-term unemployed young people. Some approaches include profiling, mentoring schemes, one-stop-shops and etc.

Good practice from the national Labor offices in Bulgaria in the field of mentoring unemployed young people has been implemented since 2019. The Labor offices offer the service of “family labor consultant” for families with more than one unemployed person. The other option is a mentor for the young people after starting a new job. The mentor gives appropriate advices for further development and support the newly employed young person through his/her first months in the new workplace.

-The levels of youth unemployment in Bulgaria are higher than the unemployment of adults. That makes the young people one of the most risk groups for entering into the labor market. Moreover, the solving of the youth unemployment problem an important challenge for the Republic of Bulgaria. According to the report of the National Statistics Institute, the employment in 2020 is declining compared to the same period of 2019, and unemployment is rising: unemployed young people for the second trimester of 2020 at age between 15 and 24 years are 22 300, and at the age between 24-34 years - 46 000. Significant influence on the dynamics of the registered unemployment is the state of emergency and the containment measures taken by the government in Bulgaria in order to limit the spread of coronavirus in the country. From March 2020 to April 2020, after the state of emergency, Bulgaria reports an increase in youth unemployment of 7.5 % up to 20.8 % within a month, so the total number of young people without a job increases by 15 000 to 36 000.

-The project has been enabling the young unemployed people who are a risk group for entering into the labor market to improve their employability skills, to collect ideas and find solutions for different issues regarding the employability. The online mentoring platform (e-Hub) provided by the EMPLOY consortium is a great option for young unemployed people who wants to have a mentor through their journey of finding a job and developing of new skills and competences. The platform has been proved to be really useful for online communication especially in a time of a crisis such as the pandemic of COVID-19. In Bulgaria, most of the young people work in the private sector. During the pandemic of COVID-19 a lot of young people lost their jobs. The platform was useful tool for those who wanted to have an advice, gain new skills or find solutions to their employment issues. Moreover, the youth workers that have been providing mentoring through the platform improved their awareness on the issues faced by the young unemployed people and enhanced their motivation to support young people from this group.

- The project has definitely contributed to the systematic improvement of employability. By motivating the young people to develop their skills and competences, the mentors managed to motivate the young people to also search for different options for employability.



The e-Hub platform presents different ideas for improving employability. Moreover, the online communication enhanced the social networking. The EMPLOY Skills and Competences Handbook that was developed by the consortium identifies the key skills and competences that are important for successful employability and give further insight in the current employability situation in the different partner countries.

- The main challenge was to be identified the skills and competences that are most useful for employability. The consortium tried to analyze those skills and competences that improve the employability and make the job seekers more competitive. The main objective of the consortium was to provide the young people with the necessary skills and competences for the labor market.

Future implications – ideas and steps in policy development field

Results of the project can be base for recommendations for policy development as it offers a new set of evidence collected through the implementation of all project activities.

- Moreover, all the resulting findings from the project and collected in the Policy Toolkit can serve as a base for discussion on policies for successful inclusion of youngsters at risk regarding the labor force.

- Furthermore, mentoring programmes can be truly useful tools for supporting young people getting properly prepared for the challenges they may face on the labor world. As the implementation of the project has shown, mentoring programmes can be a successful and beneficial approach, especially for younger people looking for their first job.

- Such programmes provide the necessary information, guidance and support which are imperative for the specific target groups. By implementing this approach, regional/national governing bodies will foster not only the employability of young people, but also their development as individuals.

As usually these people are in need of more information and guidance regarding job hunting, including mentoring programmes in the approaches to youngsters unemployed could enhance the successful arrival at the labor market. Moreover, mentoring programmes also magnify career and personal development as the young can benefit from professionals.

- All the institutions which worked closely in this project, such as the Higher Institute of Insurance and Finance or the Law and Internet Foundation feel that the results from the EMPLOY project can be used not only for further personal and career development of their students, but also for the build out of new projects which aim at supporting young people seeking an opportunity in the labor world.

- Furthermore, the good collaboration established between the project partners could be a key in further cooperation in the same field.

- What is more, the outcomes of the project will be put to use in some institutions' work and future projects, which concern the enhancement of young people's employability, since they offer a good basis on which we can further elaborate. In addition, the project results can also set an example of good practices and support the mission related to the promoting of mentoring, quality education, entrepreneurship and digital solutions when dealing with social issues.



Future implications – concrete ideas and steps in policy development field

The Policy Toolkit can serve as a base for recommendations and discussions for policy development and for successful inclusion of young people at risk into the labour market because it compiles the findings and evidence that were gathered throughout the project implementation. Indeed, the findings collected throughout the project can be a good basis for policy discussions in regard to young people at risk for labour market entry because they are up-to-date and comprehensive.

As the implementation of the project has shown, mentoring programmes are a successful and beneficial approach especially for young people at risk of labour force entry. The latter stems from the fact that such programmes provide the necessary information, guidance and support which are of high eminence for the specific target groups. By implementing this approach regional/ national governing bodies will foster and enhance not only the successful entering into the labour market but also their development as individuals since mentoring programmes enhance career and personal development as the young people could have appropriate advices from professionals.

Partner organisations believe that stemming from their all-encompassing expertise and activities there is a variety of ways in which we can utilize the results from the EMPLOY project. In particular, the outcomes of the project will be put to use in our work on future projects that concern the enhancement of young people's employability since they offer a good basis on which organisations can further elaborate. Moreover, the project results can be used as an example of good practices and support mission related to the promotion of mentoring, quality education, entrepreneurship and digital solutions when dealing with social issues.

Among the partners are also universities those are cooperating with hundreds of students and young people. The results from EMPLOY project are base not only for further personal and career development of students, but also can give a base how to support young people and young people at risks for successful employability. The results of the project could be useful as well for other stakeholders such as career guidance platforms, mentoring communities, youth training providers, Youth organizations, civil society employment offices, migration offices, refugee support centres and career support organizations working at local, regional and national levels, as well as youth workers, career advisors and mentors can benefit from this Toolkit.



Partners with the rich experience of work with young people, those have various backgrounds and face different barriers, find that mentoring young people at risk should start with identifying youth's needs, capacities and vision, in collaboration with young people themselves, and continue with empowering them to achieve their vision by introducing valuable and purposeful opportunities.

National and regional governing bodies should provide the necessary infrastructure and funding for mentoring, the supportive environment for both youth workers and young people to maintain the mentoring process, and encourage government agencies for employment and education to work collaboratively to contribute to the solution of youth unemployment.

Recommendations given for policy development at local, regional and national levels:

- Initiate making changes and offering inclusive mentoring programmes at local level.
- Initiating and/or supporting research efforts to identify the barriers and enablers for young people at risk when entering job market.
- Developing policies recognizing that different barriers and backgrounds of young people will create different conditions of risk and that these risk conditions may translate into different needs and capacities.
- Identifying the potential reflections of future economic, social, political and technological developments on labour markets, and tailoring education and training policies for young people taking emergent skills and competences into consideration.
- Taking into account digital transformation adaptation strategies when developing policies for youth unemployment.
- Establishing solid internship and mentoring systems for young people at risk, in collaboration with youth workers, educational organizations and the relevant sectors in order to address education-job mismatch.
- Providing trainings for youth to improve their job hunting and career planning skills, as well as their entrepreneurship skills.
- Taking youth-specific actions to address the problems caused by informal economy.



- Taking advantage of available digital tools created by youth organizations and mentors (like the EMPLOY e-Hub and EMPLOY Skills and Competences Handbook) for supporting and offering free mentoring online services to youth.

- Integrate a mentorship scheme/ programme at your institution, facility, educational process, workplace or your business to allow employees to take responsibility of their personal and professional development. Through growth employees exercise having a trustworthy resource with whom to consult for advice to avoid stagnation.

- Define the Purpose & Goals. Is employee engagement low? Are talented graduates leaving? Is your gender balance uneven? Or you are aiming to hire young people from risk group?

- Identify key reasons and motivations for people to sign up to the mentoring program. A mentee might sign up because they're looking to get a promotion, or build their confidence or a mentor might sign up because they want to hone their leadership qualities.

- What are you looking to achieve from the mentoring program? And how can you measure success?

So why policy makers should be interested in integration of mentoring programmes?

Because 21st century is full of challenges and most importantly for youth those are just establishing their careers. Youth unemployment is in crisis in numerous regions of the world due to different political social and economic circumstances.

These reasons of crises affect individuals and groups to make decisions about investments in human capital which further effects and leads to have large numbers of young people at risk for labour market entry.

To avoid having a significant amount of young people out of work that can negatively impact a community's economic growth and development, policy makers should take immediate steps to eliminate further unemployment raise since policy makers are critical to creating sustainable change.

Policy toolkit recommends to initiate long-term strategy for positive community change that supports young people at risk for labour market entry. Change is not expected to see overnight. But we do expect that by developing community in a way that supports youth, will bring significant improvements in outcomes for youth by many different measures.



