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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FINAL REPORT

“With a good tool competence is a craft”



USAID's Sustainable Local Development Project (SLDP)

"With a good tool competence is a craft"

Building system of non-formal education services to reduce gap between young peoples' existing skills and the labor market needs

17th October 2013 -25th October 2014

October 2014

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction and background.....	4
2. Achievements of specific objectives	6
2.1. RESULT 1. <i>Built capacities of 35 youth office coordinators and CSO representatives from 30 municipalities for the provision of NFE services for youth employment, through which 270 young people increased competencies for employability in line with USAID-SLDP New Criteria Projects</i>	
2.1.1. <i>Methodology of multi-modular training and validation of previously attained competencies.....</i>	7
2.1.2. <i>Implemented activities of multimodular training and validation of previously attained competencies</i>	7
2.1.3. <i>Achievements and challenges.....</i>	29
2.1.4. <i>Success story</i>	31
2.2. RESULT 2. <i>Tool for recognition of young people's competences gained through non-formal education tailored to meet employer's needs for recruitment and harmonized with EU practices.</i>	
2.2.1. <i>Implementation of the EU Mapping study</i>	33
2.2.2. <i>Implementation of the Research on the impact of NFE in youth work on youth employability.....</i>	40
2.2.3. <i>Development of the mechanism/tool</i>	51
2.2.4. <i>Challenges</i>	59
2.3. RESULT 3. <i>Competence recognition tool for NFE recognized by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, employers, CSOs and Youth offices and they are expressing commitment for future usage</i>	
2.3.1. <i>Competence recognition tool recognized by relevant stakeholders</i>	60
2.3.2. <i>Implementation of the final conference</i>	60
2.3.3. <i>Ensuring social recognition, informing relevant target groups on the project's progress through social media and the media.....</i>	62
3. Lessons learned	65

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

National Employment Service statistics showed that 42% of young people are unemployed. The Ministry of Youth and Sport warned that the issue goes beyond the field of employment and noted that it applies equally to education and acquiring the skills necessary to adapt to changing requirements of modern society.

According to research “Analyses of Labor Market and forecasting of labor market needs ” (2012) supported by the USAID-SLDP, there is a finding that employers are unable to obtain workers with the right mix of skills, especially lacking ‘soft’ skills needed to enable increased productivity and competitiveness to overcome the economic downturn. It has been suggested in a number of professions, that soft skills may be more important over the long term than occupational skills and are sought out by employers in addition to standard qualifications. These skills include: *communication skills, conflict resolution and negotiation, personal effectiveness, creative problem solving, strategic thinking, team work, influencing skills, selling skills, etc.*

European Youth Forum’s “Study on the impact of NFE on young people’s employability” (2012) states that there is a close match between the soft skills demanded by employers and those developed through NFE learning. Within the European goal of achieving the “knowledge-based society” (2000) through lifelong learning agenda, EU institutions have called for better “valuing all forms of learning” (2001) and developing ways for better validation of competencies gained in NFE learning. Additionally, on the 7th of March 2013, European Commission made a statement, identifying top 10 the most burdensome EU laws by SMEs, and one of them refers to Recognition of professional qualifications. In the youth field, this led to development of relevant policies and recognition tools both in the EU and the CoE that foster youth employability. The commitment to recognition of NFE learning in the youth field was re-confirmed at the Symposium “Recognition of NFE in the youth field” (Strasbourg, November 2011). In the South East Europe, as a direct follow up of the “Strasbourg process” a similar Symposium was held in Tirana in October 2012. (At the symposium NAPOR participated as best practice case of quality assurance mechanism for NFE for youth). This event underlined the need to further strengthen the national level initiatives towards better recognition of NFE that will lead to increase of youth employability in the countries of South East Europe (including Serbia). The recommendation included call for all relevant stakeholders to create joint initiatives in developing national level systems for putting competence recognition into practice. European Commission conducted impact study on EU competence recognition tool - the Youthpass (“Youthpass impact study on young people personal development and employment”). Findings highlight that 75 % of young people use “Youthpass” when applying for a job and 48 % when setting own business. Looking at Serbia, despite the large number of NFE services, where more than 200,000 young people are included (NAPOR research 2010), there was no system (tool) developed for competence recognition. This is seen as a great lose and it is a question of effective use of existing resources that contribute to youth employability and better recruitment of competent work force. Important aspect establishing cooperation among relevant stakeholders (primarily employers, NFE providers, government institutions) in order to jointly review existing problem of youth employment. The focus should be on seeking potential solutions, especially on valuing NFE learning and matching employer’s needs with NFE services.

Therefore, in line with Symposium conclusion, this project was developed in strategic partnership with USAID-SLDP and Ministry of youth and sport (MoYS) that co-financed this project.

As stated, full potential, applicability and impact of NFE in the youth field has not yet been fully explored and neither recognition reached adequate level. This problem is also defined in Agenda 2020, which highlights the need to conduct researches in this field to address this issue at European level. Although, NFE exist in Serbia over 20 years, there was no research carried out referring to which exact soft skills are built through this education, and how it can be

improved in order to better respond to employers needs. Also, it is important for Serbia to be harmonized with EU. The recognition tool should lean on the EU models through which bussines sector benefit, and more important learn from the processes that EU countries went through. Thus, EU mapping study that refers to these aspects is crucial.

When referring to provision of NFE services in the youth field, there is a question of quality. Institutional structure in youth development in Serbia is very young, existing necessary expert capacities and structures on the national, regional and local level are not sufficient. The competency of representatives of local government (further in the text - youth office coordinators) and CSO as main service providers of NFE in the youth field vary widely, which often results with the poor impact on building young people skills. One of the greatest needs is professionalization of NFE service providers in order to provide quality services for youth employability. MoYS and NAPOR developed standards in order to assure this. Additionally, NAPOR developed capacity building mechanisms for reaching these standards:

- Multi-modular training curricula
- Validation of previously gained competencies

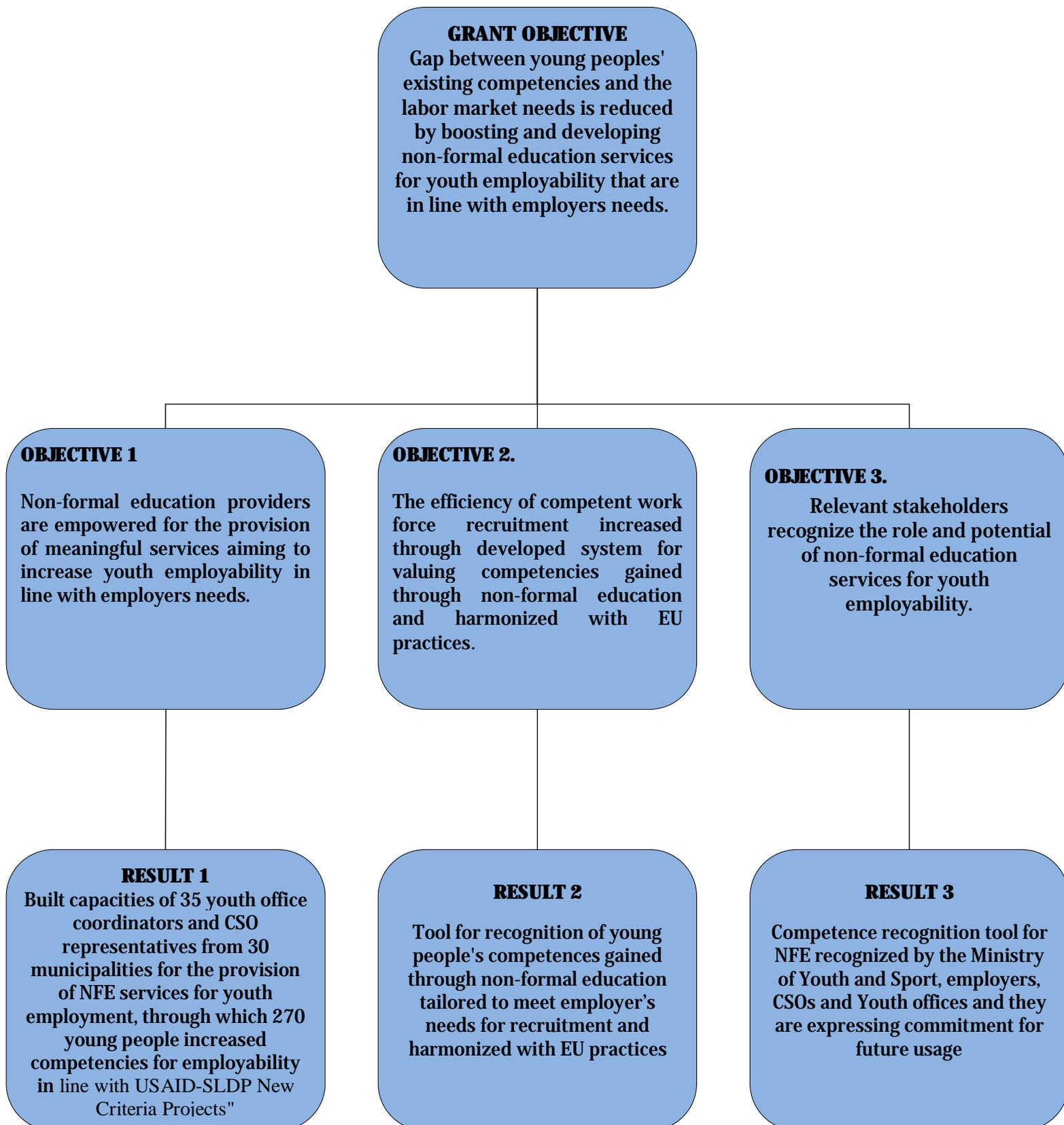
MoYS recognized "mechanisms" and stated that all NFE service providers need to undertake training or validation to become enabled for implementing meaningful services for youth employability. The "mechnisms" are in line with National Vocational Qualification System (Community Youth Worker).

In 2012, NAPOR with the support of USAID-SLDP implemented project "Quality Youth service – step toward sustainable local development" where 24 youth office representatives from 17 municipalities were included, from which 21 were certified. Within this project it was implemented number of NFE services focused on youth employability - successfully connecting employers, local government and young people. Based on this experience, where it was demonstrated that this kind of services have positive impact on community development - this project had strong focus on youth employability in line with identified needs by USAID-SLDP New Criteria Project. Additionally, due to local elections number of municipalities' established Youth offices for the first time (Kraljevo, Subotica, Cacak), while many others replaced Youth office coordinators (9 out of 21 coordinator). There was a need to build basic capacities of the NFE service providers. Contrasting last project 2011/12, beside Youth office coordinators, representatives of CSOs were also included. This is done in order to boost cross sector cooperation and by it increase impact on community development.

The approach which NAPOR proposed in order to respond to this complex issue is comprehensive and includes: a) developing system for competence recognition at national level, fostering cooperation among relevant stakeholders (business sector, government, CSOs) in strategic partnership with Ministry of Youth and Sport, b) capacity building of service providers (CSOs and Youth office coordinators) at grass root level. NAPOR believe that only with such a comprehensive approach, qualitative change in the field of youth employability can be made.

2. ACHIEVEMENT OF SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

Scheme - logic of intervention



2.1. RESULT 1

Built capacities of 35 youth office coordinators and CSO representatives from 30 municipalities for the provision of NFE services for youth employment, through which 270 young people increased competencies for employability in line with USAID-SLDP New Criteria Projects

2.1.1. Methodology of multi-modular training and validation of previously attained competencies

Methodology of the multi-modular trainings and validation included discussions, debates, individual work, pair and small group work, workshops, simulations, role plays, problem solving, case studies, research, essays writing, consultation meetings, etc. Using non-formal and creative methods future service providers gained competencies for effective delivery of a range of services that are fostering economic community development.

2.1.2. Implemented activities of multimodular training and validation

In October 2013 open call has been launched for recruitment of representatives of Youth Offices and CSOs, targeting 32 municipalities that USAID-SLDP has been signed contract with, along to other municipalities that are conditioned by second donor – Ministry of Youth and Sport. In total it has been received 52 applications from which 41 have been from USAID-SLDP targeted municipalities and 11 from other municipalities. After screening process of the candidates, the following structure of the participants is made:

Multi-modular training:

- a) 21 candidates from 19 USAID-SLDP municipalities; Novi Sad, Vrnja ka Banja, Niš, Bujanovac, Vranje, Sremski Karlovci, Prijepolje, Priboj, Subotica, Kikinda, Vladi in Han, Zrenjanin, Novi Be ej, Sombor, Beo in, Raška, Tutin, Užice, Sjenica (9 representatives of CSOs, 11 representatives of Youth Offices, 10 female, 11 male).
- b) 5 candidates from MoYS municipalities; Kragujevac, Kruševac, Kula, Beograd, Be ej (4 female, 1 male; all 5 candidates are representatives of CSOs – NAPOR member organizations)

In total there are 26 participants from which: 14 representatives of CSOs, 12 representatives of Youth offices, 14 female, 12 male.

Validation of previously attained competencies:

- a) 9 candidates are from 5 USAID-SLDP municipalities; Novi Sad, Kikinda, Niš, Subotica, Sremski Karlovci (2 candidates are representatives from Youth Offices, 7 candidates are representatives of CSOs as NAPOR member organizations, 6 male/3 female)
- b) 4 candidates from MoYS municipalities; Loznica, Leskovac, Be ej (2 male/3 female, all candidates are representatives from NAPOR member organizations).

With each selected participant, NAPOR signed scholarship agreement, obliging candi-

dates to complete training or validation. In total 39 scholarship agreements were signed.

Five modules have been implemented within **MULTI-MODULAR TRAINING**:

1st module: “NFE services - Community youth work”(25th – 30th of November 2013). The trainers for the module were Marijana Rodic and Mirjana Gavric Hopic from Centre for Youth Work. The usefulness of the module has been evaluated by the participants with average score of 4.47 on the scale 1 to 5 where 5 is indicated as maximum.

During the module participants developed following competences: understanding of the concept, methods and principals of NFE services (youth work) for youth employability. They learned how to identify needs of young people and community and how to respond to them with NFE services. They are able to identify actors (business sector, CSOs and government/institutional representatives) and mobilize them for community development as precondition for youth employability and fulfillment of employer’s and labor market demands.



Additionally, within 1st module, 26 individual mentorship meetings with training participants took place. The mentorship meetings were held by the licensed NAPOR mentors and supervisors of practical placements Marijana Jovic and Zoran Zlatkovic on behalf of NAPOR member organization OKO. The first mentorship meeting has been focused on: introduction to mentorship, personal and professional development plan of candidates, reflection on the module and its practical applicability.

2nd module: “Training skills” (25th -30th of January). The trainers Suzana Krstic and Marko Pejovic from NAPOR member organization:”Hajde da...” The module was evaluated by the participants with average score of 4.43 from maximum 5 points.

Following competences were developed: skill to design NFE services, setting up appropriate learning outcomes in line with identified needs (from 1st module) and what methods to use. On this module they learned how to transfer skills to young people and the community. This module represented bases for creating multiplying effect in the community and building young people soft skills as future competent work force.



In the first week of March (1st - 6th of March), implementation of the 3rd module took place; **“Leadership and conflict transformation”**. The module was implemented by NAPOR licensed trainers: Ivana Volf and Snezana Baclija Knoch on behalf NAPOR member organization BalkanIDEA Novi Sad. The module was evaluated with average score of 4,6 where 5 is the maximum

Future service providers developed leadership skills and different leadership styles, which they transferred to young people. Consequently, this contributed to building self-confidence and self-initiative of young people. They were encouraged to be proactive, to start up new developmental initiatives and implement business ideas. Knowledge and skills about conflict transformation contributed to dealing with interpersonal challenges and working in teams in efficient and effective way. This was transferred to young people during small scale projects, ensuring healthy and successful working environments, as well as stimulus for development of new and vigorous business partnerships.



Additionally, within this module 24 mentorship meetings took place by licensed mentors Zoran Zlatkovic and Marijana Jovic on behalf of NAPOR member organization OKO. The major subjects covered were following: *Reflection on the modules and gained competencies, Preparation for the implementation of practical placements (small scale projects), Personal development needs, focus on specific competencies and additional support and Reflection on the group process and the relationships in the group.*

*Parallel to residential modules, participants went through the **online module “Youth employability”**.* The module was consistent of different topics:

a) Career development (8th-13th December 2013); b) Career guidance of young people (9th -15th January 2014); c) Methods for cooperation with employers (5th -16th February 2014); d) Active job search (6th -12th April 2014). This module was delivered by Jelena Manic Radoicic and Tamara Kljajic from Open school Belgrade. These modules were evaluated with average score of **3.98** on the scale 1 to 5 where 5 is indicated as maximum. Module was of great importance as it gave participants base to understand employability of young people, providing various range of methods to deal with it. The tasks given after each covered topic were gradually leading participants into development of their practical placements (small scale projects). Participants strengthen capacities and became ready to facilitate activities that enhanced employability of the young people they worked with.



PERSONAL CAREER ACTION PLAN

Building career is lifelong process. This plan represents only one step in that process. Try to identify your goals and steps that lead to its fulfilment and then follow the steps to achieve the goals...

This should be repeated from time to time and for various goals in different life periods. You can also adjust this plan if your ideas and plans change in over the time.

- My GOAL for the period of one year is:

 - To fulfil it, I need to plan and then follow next STEPS:
 - FIRST STEP (timeframe)

 - SECOND STEP (timeframe)

 - THIRD STEP (timeframe)
-

 **Jelena Manić Radoičić**
13 February

Radne prakse su nezaobilazna tema kada god se pokrene pitanje poboljšanja zapošljivosti mladih kroz sticanje radnog iskustva, ali i pomoći poslodavcima da dođu do adekvatnih kadrova. Molim vas da istražite malo pa navedete primere programa radnih ili profesionalnih praksi koji su po vama uspešni (možete da kopirate link ili opišete), i objasnite ostalima zašto ste odabrali baš taj primer i šta je to što ga po vama čini uspešnim?
Bojana Pejović Mirjana Prolic Vladimir Vu Budja Матија Симовић Renata Eremic

Like · Comment

✓ Seen by 29

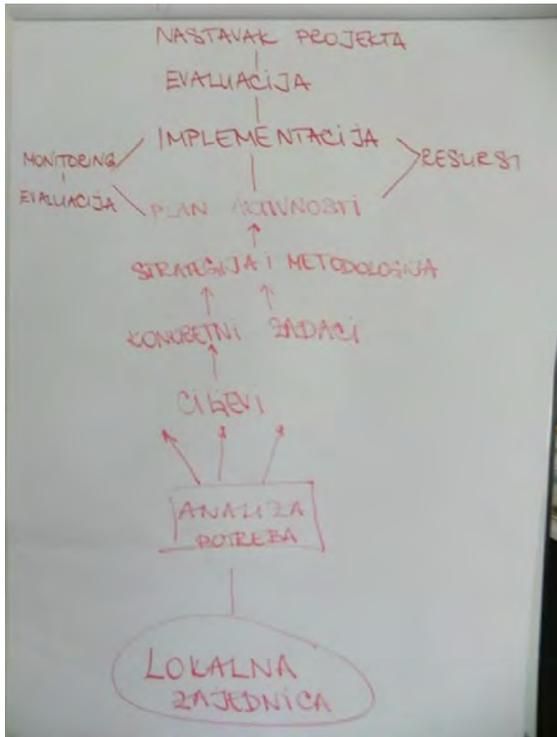
 **Adrijana Milosavljević** ja nisam tagovana ovde ali bih podelila sa vama svoje prvo radno iskustvo. Svoje prve "radne" korake napravila sam u PR agenciji koja se zove Bovan consulting u BGu u okviru četvoromesečne prakse (koja je meni produžena na 6 meseci)... svaki praktikant je imao svoj sto, komp, tv... prvog dana nas je čekao folder dobrodošlice na desktopu sa dokumentima tipa "welcome book" itd... s praktikantima se baš ozbiljno radilo, dobijali su svog mentora koji im je davao dnevne i nedeljne zadatke, organizovali smo događaje, pisali vesti za nedeljni online bilten, saopštenja za medije, kontaktirali medije telefonom ugovarali gostovanja itd... evo linka koga bude zanimalo
<http://bovan.eu/>
13 February at 19:19 · Like ·  2

 **Jelena Manić Radoičić** Eto kako firme mogu da izgrade dobar imidž kroz programe praksi odnosno zadovoljne praktikante 😊 Da li je praksa bila plaćena? Šta je tebi kao praktikantu bilo najkorisnije?
14 February at 19:01 · Like

 **Adrijana Milosavljević** Nije bila placena. Ali smo ucestvovali u organizaciji i prisustvovali okruglim stolovima, koktelima, sastancima Srpske asocijacije menadžera kroz to. Neki praktikanti su odatle otisli sa nekim iskustvom i kontaktima, a neki su dobili i posao ili preporuku
14 February at 19:04 · Like

The last face to face module: “Project management” that took place from 15th - 24th of April in Sremski Karlovci held by trainers Ivana Volf and Snezana Baclija Knoch on behalf NAPOR member organization BalkanIDEA. The module was evaluated with average score of 4.3 where 5 is the maximum.

The module covered topics of management skills, including resources, information, goods, infrastructure, finances and human resource management. The module had two components: the first focusing on enabling service providers to carry out NFE services in an efficient and effective way from a management perspective, while the second aspect is about transferring these soft skills to young people. The education ensured getting familiar with creation of business plan, approaches and mechanisms for risk management and effective achievement of tangible results - skills that are vital for any employers when it comes to economic development.



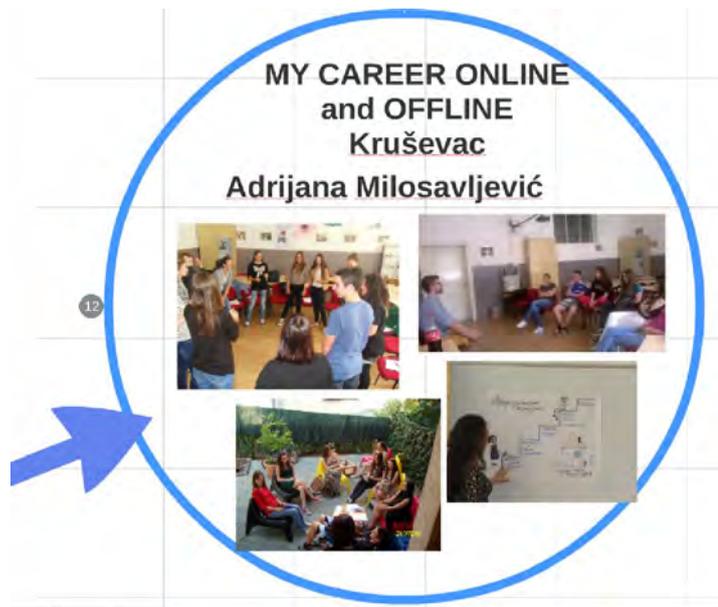
With this module, face-to-face group learning of the multi-modular training has been finalized. In order to gain their certificates, participants in the following months need to finalize their practical placements and to have one more supervision meeting. Starting from April, participants could start with implementation of their practical placements focused on youth employability in line with USAID-SLDP NCP.

During **implementation of practical placements** (small scale projects) participants were focused on putting into the practice everything they learned during the modules, transferring their skills to the groups of young people they worked with.

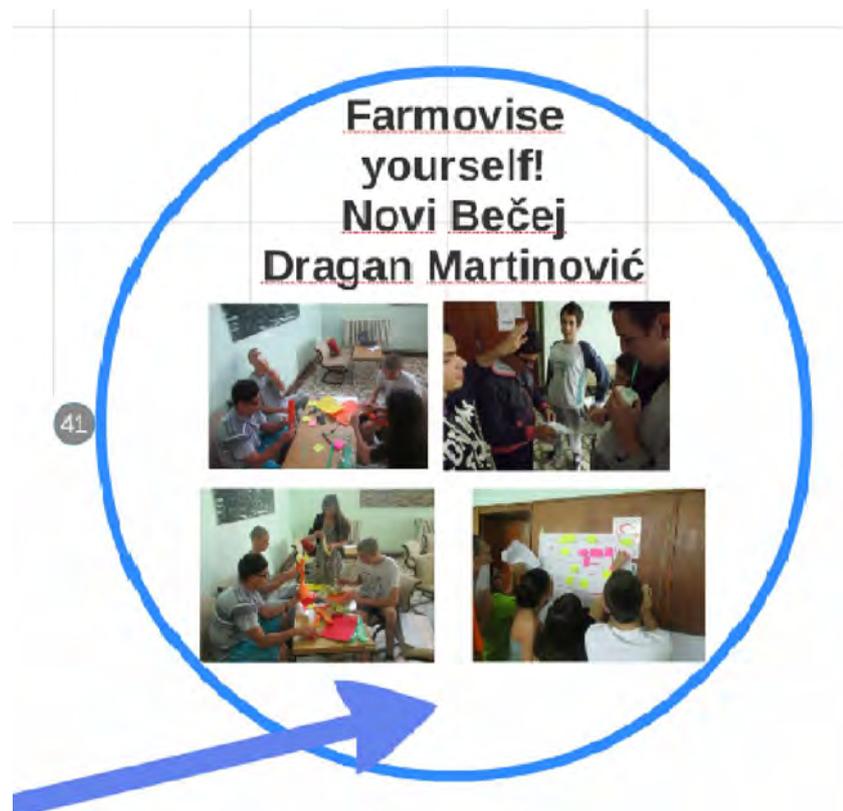
Following is the overview of small scale projects:

Empowering youth through the acquisition of competencies for employability is achieved through a set of activities ranging from workshops for team building, workshops aimed at developing individual competencies to increase employability, live meetings with representatives of different professions, film screenings and discussions

on important topics in the field of employment. The workshops were attended by 10 high school students. There were two live meetings organized, one job shadowing (Ana Babic, a student of journalism and media, Sonja, a librarian , Dejan Rakezi , marketing manager and web designer). Moreover, a public event (lecture and panel) was successfully implemented. Ten high school students wrote CV and taught to write a motivation letter, and seven of them opened the LinkedIn account. All participants are interested in the continuation of a similar non - formal education. The project was implemented in cooperation with: the College of Professional Studies for Teachers, the National Library and the Youth Office from Krusevac.



The main objective of the project, raising the competence of youth for employability, is achieved through series of workshops based on the standards and principles of youth work and NFE, through which young people acquired skills needed for self presentation at job market, recognizing their capabilities as well as available resources for running the business. Visit to the farm was implemented in order to explore organic production in the Taros. A group of 9 young people was gathered in cooperation with the National Employment Agency and School for secondary education from Novi Becej. During the project activities are implemented in partnership with the Youth Office, the Tourist Organiza-



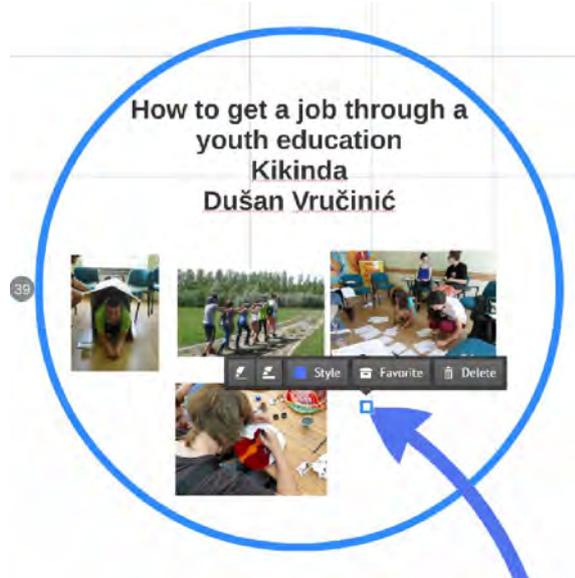
tion and the local community Novi Becej.

A group of 10 young people aged 17-23 years went through a series of workshops covering issues such as team collaboration , communication, perception, conflict transformation (in school, firm , society) , time management , personal career plans, presentation skills etc. . In addition, the group had meetings with employers from the local community to whom they obtained the necessary information about private sector, as well as exchanged. Employers had the opportunity to hear from the participants some very constructive ideas for improving their private business. Young people had the opportunity to attend presentations and workshops on the topic of "Internet business" where they got very good information about the jobs that can be done over the internet , which is one of the modern ways of doing business . They had a chance to talk with a representative of the "Business Incubator Center" from Vranje who explained them ways of collecting funds for the implementation of their business ideas . Same activities within the project have a positive impact on them and forced it deeper and better think about their business future . The project was implemented in cooperation with high school "Sveti Sava" from Bujanovac, Youth Office and organization " Citizens' Initiative" from Bujanovac .



The goal of the program "How to get a job through a youth education " is fully realized through the provided education and training for the acquisition and development of skills that contribute to employability of young people in the municipality of Kikinda. A group of thirteen youth , after a month and a half of encouragement and empowerment possess the following skills and knowledge: the technique of analysis (SWOT) know how to elaborate the problem before starting the process of decision-making; prepare and run meetings that are associated with the adoption of concrete decisions; know clearly to define needs and find the ways to fullfil them; how to think critically and convincingly argue; better communicate ; listen actively; using the skills and techniques of negotiation; recognize the conflict and possible solutions; know what career is and

how to link with it; how to organize an event ; know how to make a good CV as well as to present the business to an interview; plan future actions and face the worries; use a reflective diary. Direct beneficiaries of the project was a group of thirteen young people from the municipality of Kikinda. The project was implemented in cooperation with: National Employment Service, High Schools: Gymnasium, School for Technics, Chemistry and Technology, The school for education teachers the Office for Youth, the organization "Youth initiatives from Kikinda" , Rubin TV , RTV VK, and company Banini Kikinda. During the project, the participants visited the cattle farm owned by Oliver Latinovi , which is in the possession of 120 caws and a daily production of 1000 liters of milk.



The main objectives of the project were related to raising competence of 8 youngsters for (self-) employability through the acquisition of various skills and knowledge that make them more competitive in the labor market , inter-sectoral cooperation and mobilizing broader community to reduce youth unemployment , with emphasis on the agricultural sector . Through workshops the young people acquired the necessary skills,



knowledge and information for their recognition of opportunities and resources available to launch the initiative, rehearsed negotiation, filling in form , writing proposals, gain confidence , connected with each other and networked with relevant stakeholders. The project was implemented in cooperation with various stakeholders: Elijah Vojnovic - an initiative on the establishment of urban community garden in Zrenjanin; Foul Eremi - an expert in the restoration of metallic objects; Zorica Radiši - a

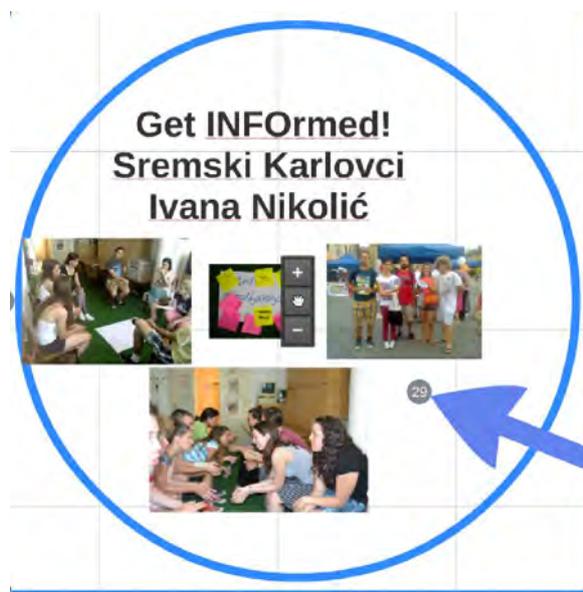
professor of biology and civic activist for environmental protection; Jasmina Krecul Reljin - journalist involved in establishing cross-border internet television Zrenjanin - Timisoara ; Jelena Djordjevic Perc - PR of City public library , Srdjan Djuric Papic , journalist - founder of the Pannonian activist organizations ; Ana Vujinov , engineer - Project Manager for the Office of Local Economic Development ; Dragana Dorožan , engineer - project manager at the Regional Development Centre Banat ; Mirjana Bogdanovic, a psychologist - (former) Acting Director of the National Employment Service , a branch of Zrenjanin; Snezana Ognjenovic, author of books on organic food production , representatives of agricultural cluster "Imperial Garden" from Muzije, organic farms " Šokši " from Taras and urban garden community " Baštalište " from Belgrade.

Through the project FORWARD! a group of 13 youngsters was informed about work of the private sector in the municipality of Raška. They were informed about opportunities for volunteering or doing internship in local companies. For the first time this kind of project was implemented in Raska, connecting youth and the bussines sector. Through this project young people



are empowered and have developed competencies in order to increase their chances in the labor market. Until reaching that goal they come through a series of activities that were involving differet stakeholders (young, local employers, the municipality of Raška, NAPOR, USAID). Some of the skills that young people acquire are: project proposal writing, teamwork, communication skills and CV writing , time management and event planning . Additionally, the two job shadowing were organized in "Unique by Catherine" local company (project participants ur ina and Andrea, followed the process at one of the local entrepreneurs), as well as visits to local companies - Slovenian company " Primat " Baljevac over the Ibar River . Most of the expected results are achieved including the unplanned: job shadowing carried out by one of girls in the biggest local company -" Milkop ". Partners in the project are the high school from Raska - High School and School of Mechanical Engineering from where a large part of the participants of the project came. Youth Office Raška was a partner in the technical and financial part.

The aim of the program was to increase the employability of youth through the acquisition of transferable skills within the information-communication technologies. The



program started with selection of 11 young people who participated in workshops at the Environmental Center “Radulova ki” in Sremski Karlovci, . Participants had the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills through non-formal education and practical application in writing articles for web portals and media. An additional component of the program was to be conducted on the principles of youth work which enabled young people to properly spend their free time and contributed to their personal development. They learned how they can get the actual job and how to

apply for grants. They have acquired the skills that will facilitate their employability, such as how to behave at a business interview, as well as the use of previously acquired knowledge in a proper way. They are familiar with how to showcase their strengths in a fair manner. The project was implemented in cooperation with other organizations: Pokret Gorana Vojvodina, Pokret Gorana Novi Sad, Balkan idea Novi Sad and Youth Center CK13 ; Secondary schools IT school in Karlovci and Karlovci Grammar School and Youth Office of Sremski Karlovci.

Project "In Focus: young people in the business world" was realized in Kragujevac during June and July 2014. The aim of the project was to develop skills that young people don't acquire during formal education, the skills that match with needs of the labor market and expectations of modern employers. The project was designed following identified skills of young people involved in the project and on the labor market demands. The project was implemented for 13 youth, through a series of creative workshops that resulted in the increase of soft skills among young people, and increasing the employability of young people. During the project, the youth had the



opportunity to develop critical thinking , questioning their own role in a team, learn about the benefits of assertive communication, improve their communication skills , gain new knowledge about the process and the outcome of the negotiation stages, become familiar with current labor market through real encounters with employers and chat with them . The ultimate outcome of the training was to develop skills of negotiation, the development of organizational skills of the participants, the ability of writing CVs and cover letter and better access to analysis and job market. Partners in the project were: High School "Nikola Tesla", Office for Youth Bato ina, Center for Social Work "Solidarity ," counseling marriage and family, JAZAS Kragujevac. Visits were organized to the following companies: Creative Box, QPO Soft and Pyxis, as well as to National employment services, Job search club , the Youth Office Kragujevac and the Business Innovation Center.

Project activities were focused on the development of competencies for employability of participants, ranging from writing project, writing a CV, cover letter and motivation, teamwork, active listening, visits to local businesses , meetings with employers and business enterprises at the local level. The aim of the project , increasing the employability of 11 youth , is fully realized .

During the project different visits were carried out to Conection Centre, Office for Local Economic Development, visit the company Jumko and plant timber industry Dn company from Vladicin Han.



The "Step by Step" was implemented with the aim of raising the employability of young people (primarily in agriculture) in order to be competitive in the labor market. Within the project, a group of nine young people went through a series of 10 workshops and one -day training in order to acquire additional knowledge and soft skills. Participants then independently, with the support of youth workers, had organized additional workshops on self-employment, held by trainees from the National Employment Service branch Sombor. They organized also two group visits to agricultural and professional service in Sombor and Secondary school for economics, food and agriculture .

By the end of project implementation, one participant got a job as a waiter in a cafe , three of the participants were on probation work, one participant began to work as a seasonal worker on a construction site, one participant has applied for EVS in Poland and one participant was trained in peer educators and become a leader in the "Be a man" club in Sombor,



During this project young people had the opportunity to visit companies that are in line with their interests and to obtain additional information regarding a specific vacancy. The activities started with a gathering of young people, followed with 10 workshops: Introduction and formation of groups, teamwork, communication and active listening , writing a CV and cover letter, career information, presentation skills , Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship , Stereotypes and prejudice in employment, the Networking internet , Innovation in Business and Introduction to working practices.

There was a two-day visit to the tourist agency "Montenegro" in Ulcinj where the

director talked about innovation in business, and the participants got familiar with the basics of entrepreneurship and ways of doing business. There was also organised visit to local raspberries producer , who talked about how they are grown raspberries , their quality and further transport to market. Many of the workshop were implemented in the classroom of elementary school "Svetozar Markovic" Brodarevo. As a result, young people are more acquainted with skills, they are introduced with non-formal education which was very new to them. They learned to be open to some joint activities, making small steps for them and their community,

The "First innovative step" brought together 12 young people from Vrnjacka Banja, who participated in the workshops on employability during the three months and then had organized visits to companies and hotels in Vrnjacka Banja. They visited businesses that exemplify good business practices and on participants initiative, we visited a couple of hotels that use innovation and who have demonstrated success in the last two years . Exept from getting opportunity to became very informed about innovations that companies implemet, project participants were able to create the possibility for future cooperation with these companies.

At the end of the project participants were actively involved in organization of the opening ceremony for Youth Office having opportunity to practically apply the skills acquired in the workshops.



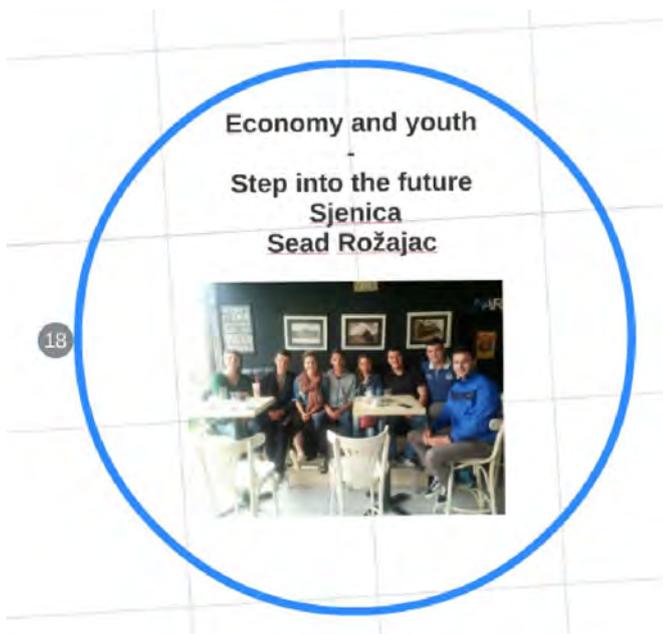
The project aimed to primarily encourage the development of those skills that employers today seen as important in hiring. The group of young people from Nis worked on different subjects: teamwork, leadership skills, ability to learn from different situations, communication skills and so on. as well as to encourage them to present to their peers agriculture as the economic sector in the expansion, which creates employment opportunities. Job shadowing (which was primarily planned in UNIJAPAK) was transformed into an activity that gave participants closer look to the practice. According to their needs it was agreed to join organization of the festival



Escape into nature. The group decided to continue to work together after the project and applied for project written independently by them. Their project is aiming to motivate association of tenants in buildings to work on the roofs and to grow organic herbs, which will also bring them closer. “Do something skillfully” was implemented in cooperation with organizations Cultural Ambassadors, Youth open club, BAUK and Youth Office of the city of Nis.

Through this project, the level of awareness of eight young people was raised on current trends in the labor market. Participants developed the skills in line with the identified needs of the market. The project was implemented by conducting a series of activities and lectures on various topic. The main results is empowered young people that

actively seek work with newly gained skills. Some of the activities were: Presentation and public speaking, active listening, Business Communication, Teamwork, Nonviolent Communication, Negotiation Skills, Confidence Building, Writing a CV and cover letter , Stereotypes and Prejudice in Employment, Vocational Guidance, Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship. Young people are better acquainted himself, gained new friends through workshops and met with non -formal education. The participants were able to visit the regional center for agriculture where they were able



to get the information on how to run their own business. Also, the participants were able to visit the various manufacturers who produce milk and meat and to become familiarised with the work, production, processing and standards- the conditions to be met to launch their own production. The project was implemented in cooperation with National Employment Service , YO Arbour and Agricultural High School from Sjenica.



Project aimed to strengthen the visibility and promotion of 14 youngsters directed through formal education to manufacturing and IT sector. The project was pursued through a series of activities. Expected results was empowerment of youth in order to increase their employability and it was fully achieved. A group of 14 young people have the skills and knowledge to : better communicate; are better in conflict situations; are able

to analyze their needs and expectations through the SWOT analysis; can define their feelings; clearly observe the stereotypes and prejudices and their impact on the business environment; are aware of their attitudes and youth employability; know how to make a better CV and a personal action plan; know the techniques of nonviolent communication as active listening; recognize mobbing at work and know how to react; know how to recognize conflict; know the basics of mediation with an emphasis on mediation in cases of mobbing; can get a quality business performances; are informed about the basics of first aid. The project was implemented in cooperation with various stakeholders: SOS Women's Center Novi Sad, National Employment Service, Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad, IT companies: "Homepage" and "The Logos Vision" , newspapers; Dnevnik and 24 –hours, TV Novi Sad, RTV radio television of Vojvodina.

The project, whose main objective is to raise the employability of young people by encouraging inter-sectoral cooperation of IT and metal workers in Temerin, brought together 11 young people with IT or economics profession, which during the three months went through a series of 12 workshops on communication, presentation, public speaking and organizing events, as well as live meetings. They visited the company and agreed to participate in the local fair, presenting themselves through CVs and interest presentation. They participated in the promotional and organizational activities during the fair organized in close cooperation with Vojvodina Metal Cluster and Development Agency of Temerin.

Partners in the project were: organization VOGRAM Novi Sad , National Employment Service - branch Temerin, and during the project involved the following experts: Agnes Curcic Aszód, expert in project management in IT, Duro Curcic computer technician for computer networks, Vladimir Biljnja, IPA Coordinator for project of cross-border cooperation between Serbia and Croatia; Zoran Pekez , project coordinator of Vojvodina Metal Cluster.



Aj TI! - skills for greater employability of young people in the IT sector
Novi Sad
Agneš Ćurčić Asodi



The aim of "AJ TI" project was to connect firms / companies that are using ICT in their work in different ways and young people who are through their formal education focused on professions related to ICT. Of the 17 young people who participated in the training, 15 of them is to be formally educated about IT. Young people have learned that in addition to the programming, they can work as project managers, content creators, testers, etc.. Some of the people who came to live meetings had a very

interesting professional lives, some have not completed a college and some completed two of which none of them was related to the job they are engaged in. It is these stories that emphasized soft skills as carriers of career development - communication, negotiation skills, teamwork, problem solving. In all these areas we worked in the workshops and there was a constant feedback between theory and practical things that young people are heard. They had opportunity for real encounters with seven experts in the field: android developer, system administrator, Facebook content manager, IT project manager, SEO expert, graphic designer and visited four companies that in their work use ICT (Yapi Ltd., Net, Studio Moderna, Vega IT sourcing). The company Yapi LTD is invited three young people on summer internship, which showed the most interest during the visit.

Empowering high school students for further education and employment and raise awareness of them on the possibilities of possibilities in these fields. The project was conducted through a multidisciplinary training, research status of young people, writing journalistic articles, visit local businesses, institutions and public sector organizations, as well as the media of the territory of the municipality of Becej. The main results are increased level of young people competences for employment and informed group of 10 youngsters in

Safe steps towards the right choice!
Becej
Bojana Pejović



order to make decisions about further education /employment .

During the project there was a organized visit to entrepreneurs, institutions and organizations in the public sector, and the media in the local community: Beauty salon " Nefertiti", "Fadip" Ltd. , Printing House "Sitograf ", Tourist Organization of Subotica, City Theatre municipality of Subotica, Portal "MojBe ej " National Employment Service , " Novalja "doo for accounting services , "Pixel" action computer equipment, Radio "Aktiv".

The project was designed to provide support to young Roma people but also the general population in the process of career development in order to increase their employability.



At its core project of career guidance and counseling was based on methods that combine running a workshop, case studies, use of artistic forms in presenting yourself, live meetings with employers and professionals. Direct beneficiaries of the project is group of 5 young Roma and the general population from Belgrade. During the project 10 clips were realized and encounters with professionals and employers to provide opportunities for young people to become better acquainted with the desired professions and real work conditions in Serbia. The visits and discussions were implemented with the Institute for Socio-

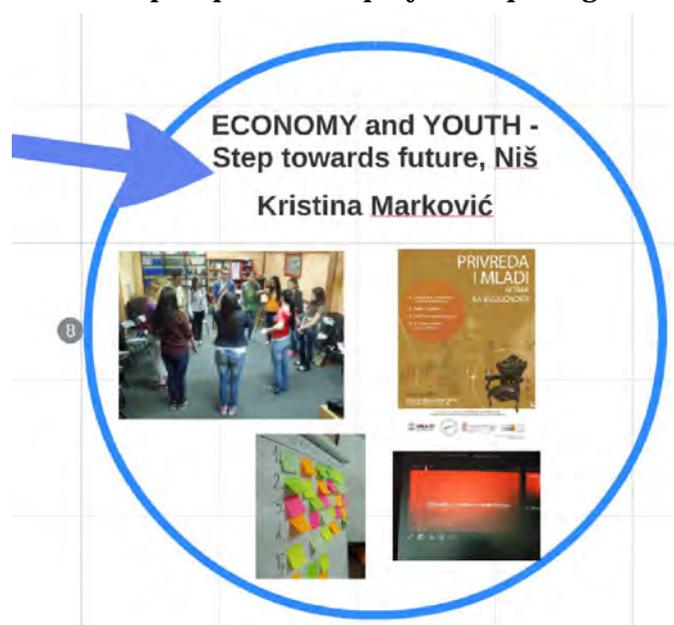
logical Research, Ipsos Strategic Marketing agency, theater director, film director, multimedia artist and translator. Among the additional results of the project is the partnership coupled with digital study DEMAGOG, recognized and awarded for the development of socially responsible gaming within civil society organizations. The group of young people participated in the creation of educational video games on the theme of discrimination in education and employment of young Roma population and it will be completed in autumn 2014.



During the project, which lasted from April to June 2014, 10 participants attended a series of workshops aimed at empowering and motivate them to became active in labor market. Activities were conducted in the premises of the Youth Office in Subotica city. In addition to the workshops where youngsters gained soft skills necessary for employment, participants became familiar

with the topics in the field of agriculture: organic food, fruit growing and viticulture, beekeeping and how to spurt honey. During the project, there were organized visits to the farm, vineyards, wineries " Zvonko Bogdan" and a dairy farm of Kocma family. As a product of the entire work , the group became strengthened in the areas of employment and developed different mechanisms of soft skills. Moreover, just before the end of the process a few participants found employment through the youth cooperative in "Nektar" as seasonal workers.

The project was realized through creative workshops which required active participation of young people: working together in a group, verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, setting short and long-term goals, expectations of career, working conditions, strengthen the capacity of participants to significant and persistent active job search as well as rules of communication to a prospective employer, acquiring new knowledge about negotiation stages, basic knowledge and skills for writing a business plan and key elements of the company's identity and their significance for identifying and presenting to the market. During the project young people have visited the conference BIZNIS where they met with young entrepreneurs and their companies as well as commercial and economic life of Nis city. The aim was to introduce participants to the basics of promoting products via the Internet (website and social networks), strengthening their capacity to write a business, marketing and distribution of products plan and product marketing via social networks. Partners in the project: Hospitality and Tourism School, Gymnasium, 9 May, Nis's First gymnasium Stevan Sremac, Young Ambassadors and numerous associates .



There were also two small local projects that haven't been finished until the end of NAPOR project. Both projects were addressing young people, aiming to raise their competences in order to be competitive in the labor market.



During the implementation of practical placements participants had significant support by their supervisors Marijana Jovic and Zoran Zlatkovic and NAPOR team in order to overcome obstacles regarding implementation of the projects and challenges when it comes to direct work with young people. The support was given through on-line communication and supervision field visits. **Field visits to practical placements** were taken by the supervisors. The main purpose of the field visits was to monitor progress of the projects implementation and to assure that they are in line with submitted project proposals. Additionally, supervisors provided support and feedback to participants regarding their competencies when it comes to direct work with young people. As a part of field visits, final 3rd tutorial (individual supervision session) with participants took place.

Moreover, Danijela Jovic, Team Leader for Youth Development and Participatory Mechanism on behalf of USAID-SLDP and Jelena Stojanovic on behalf of NAPOR undertook **monitoring field visits** to small scale projects as well.

In August, 21 participants of the multi-modular training finalized all their obligations in line with curricula and by it gained conditions for entering into final stage of their **competence assessment for receiving (or not) their certification**. Based on the received documentations and evaluation by the trainers, the expert committee made final assessment of the participants at 7-8th of August 2014. The expert committee was consisted from 5 members; Zoran Zlatkovic, Marijana Jovic, as supervisors, Ivana Volf as trainer, Jelena Stojanovic and Vanja Kalaba on behalf of NAPOR. The committee assessed participants whether they fulfil all necessary components of the course and which level of competencies participants satisfy (*1. Assistant coordinator of youth work programs; 2. Coordinator of youth work programs*). **Out of 26 participants; 14 participants earned certificate for Coordinator of Youth Work programs, 5 participants earned certificate for Assistant coordinator of youth work programs, 7 participants received certificate for participation on multi-modular training.**

VALIDATION of previously gained competences

When it comes to **validation of the previously attained competencies**, 13 candidates started their validation process in December 2013, mentored by Suzana Krstic and Snezana Pupovac. It was originally planned to target 10 candidates from 10 municipali-

ties. Due to high quality candidates, project team decided to enroll 3 additional candidates pro bono.

The 1st phase of the process – Portfolio writing was successfully finished. Through portfolios, mentors gained insight of the existing candidates' competencies. Based on the candidate's portfolio, mentors identified competences/areas that need to be improved by candidate. Candidates deepened their competence by exploring various literature and sources and writing essay on defined subject, completing 2nd phase of validation process. As a final stage of process for validation of the previously attained competencies, "final assessment day" took place from 16th -19th of June 2014. The expert committee was consisted from 4 members (Suzana Krstic, Snezana Pupovac, Marijana Jovic and Vanja Kalaba). Out of 13 candidates, 12 candidates full field requirements to be invited to Final assessment day. After facing the expert committee for an interview, candidates had to perform workshops with the group of 9 to 13 young people in front of the committee. This challenge was successfully completed and resulted in **11 certificates for Coordinators of youth work programs and 1 certificate for Assistant coordinator of youth work programs.**



2.1.3. Achievements and challenges

The major achievements regarding this result are:

- 19 certified youth office coordinators and CSO representatives are enabled through multi-modular training for implementation of NFE services for youth employability, while 6 participants will receive participation certificate (age range: 22-37, female:13, male 12; from 20 municipalities).

Through multimodular training participants gained competencies on:

- a) Understanding the concept, methods and principals of NFE services (youth work); identifying the needs of young people/community and mobilizing relevant actors for community development as a precondition for youth employability.*
- b) How to transfer skills to young people and community members. These competencies are the basis for creating a multiplying effect in the community and building young peoples' soft skills as future competent work force.*
- c) Methods within NFE services for youth employment including: a) how to make*

- partnerships with employers, b) career guidance of young people c) career development, b) active job search*
- d) Leadership's skills and different leadership styles, which will be transferred to young people. Consequently, this will contribute to building self-confidence and self-initiative of young people. They will be encouraged to be proactive, to start up new developmental initiatives and implement business ideas which will contribute to overall economic development. Knowledge and skills about conflict transformation will contribute to dealing with interpersonal challenges and working in teams in efficient and effective way. This will ensure healthy and successful working environments, as well as stimulus for development of new and vigorous business partnerships.*
- e) Project management skills, including resources, information, goods, infrastructure, finances and human resource management. Participants are enabled to carry out NFE services in an efficient and effective way from a management perspective and to transferring these soft skills to young people*
- f) With practical placements (small projects) participants transferred gained knowledge into practice.*
- Activity *validation of the competencies* has been finalized in June. Originally, by the project it has been planned 10 candidates, while NAPOR team decided to enrol 3 extra candidates that will undertake the process *pro bona*. Out of 13 candidates (9 candidates are from 5 USAID-SLDP municipalities and 4 from MoYS municipalities), 12 candidates validated their competencies (11 candidates have been validated for 2nd level – coordinator for youth work programs, 1 candidate has been validated for 1st level – assistant coordinator for youth work programs).
 - 23 practical placements were implemented. The projects mobilized relevant stakeholders in the community, including building young people soft skills in line with market needs and USAID -SLDP New Criteria Projects. Projects were design in a way to foster dialog with employers, local government and civil sector.
 - Through 23 projects approximately 270 young people gained skills through 23 small-scale projects (age range: 18-30, female: 140, male 130 from 20 municipalities) in line with market needs. These skills include: communication skills, conflict resolution and negotiation, management skills, personal effectiveness, creative problem solving, strategic thinking, team building, influencing skills, selling skills, self initiative, etc.

When it comes to **challenges**, the first one that project team faced was connected to recruitment process. 26 participants (21 candidates from 19 USAID-SLDP municipalities and 5 participants from MoYS municipalities) are enrolled at multi-modular training. There was a minor under-reach when it comes to No. of USAID-SLDP municipalities and reason behind is that even though in the process of selection, all candidates confirmed their participation in requested time-frame, at the last day, some of the candidates cancelled participation due to different personal and professional reasons. Place was immediately offered to candidates from USAID-SLDP municipalities that were at the waiting list. Yet, conditioned by the last minute invitation, they could not accept the participation in the training course.

At the end of the process, out of predicted 39 representatives of youth office coordinators and CSO representatives, 31 have been certified through multi-modular training and validation of competencies. Due to the fact that this is a long term process, some of the participants could not complete it due to personal reasons such as employment, health reasons, change of the residence, etc. Yet, all participants that did not complete the process received participation certificate. Intention is to create possibilities for these participants to be able to complete the process in the future and by it receive certification for youth workers.

Regarding validation, the challenge has been faced in reaching defined number of participants from USAID-SLDP municipalities. Most of the USAID-SLDP municipalities did not have previous opportunity for human resource capacity building in youth field, therefore it was challenging to find candidates that satisfy criteria for validation of previously attained competences.

2.1.4. Success stories



"This training provides me safe and stimulating environment for learning. The kind of learning I did not had opportunity to gain in any other education. The training gives me practical skills and too for work and constantly reminds me of basic concepts that I personally tend to ignore. For the first time I faced some of the topics and concepts and this training stimulate me to further explore and study this issues."

***Natalija, Temerin,
participant of multi-
modular training***



Aleksandar Trudi – went through validation of attained competencies, earning 2nd level – Coordinator for youth work programs

The process was great. It was very usefull to sistemze everithing what I know in direct work with young people. You get support, you learn and reflect on theory and especially on the practice and own experiance.

***Part of the speech given at the final conference
by Djordje Radoicic, participant of multi-
modular training***

... "Newly acquired knowledge and skills are largely the result of quality training that we went through during NAPOR's education. We had an opportunity to learn how to deal with young people: working responsibly and systematically. An interactive approach with interesting and effective methods of working, unselfish transfer of theoretical and empirical knowledge, promotion and creation of a sense of unity y in the group, are just some of the features of the program through which we passed. Professionalism, dedication, responsibility towards young people and ourselves. The above characteristics should adorn everyone who is a youth worker!"...



2.2. RESULT 2

Tool for recognition of young people's competences gained through non-formal education tailored to meet employer's needs for recruitment and harmonized with EU practices

2.2.1. Implementation of the Mapping study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for the employability of young people (methodology, purpose and key findings)

The *Mapping Study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for the employability of young people* serves as a basis for national level activities towards the development of a tool for recognition of competences gained through non-formal education/learning (hereinafter NFE/L) in the youth field. Such a tool is to be consulted with and negotiated by other relevant actors, e.g. employers, government representatives and educators.

Since the mid 1990s, the relevance and importance of NFE/L has become a key issue on the agenda of the European institutions, with a clear political kick-off in 2000 with the first *Symposium on Non-Formal Education and Learning* of the Council of Europe and in 2001 with the European Commission's *White Paper: A new impetus for European youth*. Both contributed to paving the way towards not only recognition of [the value of] non-formal [and informal] education/learning in Europe, but also the recognition of youth work as undoubtedly contributing to the acquisition of competences¹ through NFE/L, providing young people with learning spaces and opportunities to get equipped with skills needed at work and in civic or private life.

Indeed, there is nowadays a much bigger awareness of the educational shift from knowledge to competences, including soft skills. As an important provider of NFE/L, youth work does have to adjust to continuously changing educational paradigms though with the main aim to favour young people's personal, social and professional development. This partly implies that youth work/youth CSOs should make the learning that is taking place in their programmes and activities visible and understood. Moreover, to increase confidence in and reliability of the youth field will contribute to better emphasise the positive outcomes and impact of relevant activities both on the level of individual young people as to the society as such, including the employment sector.

The adoption of policy documents such as the *Key competences for lifelong learning* (2006), the *future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020* (2008) or the *EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering* (2009) have also put a bigger on the link

¹ *Competences* in this document are to be understood as an overall system of values, attitudes and beliefs as well as skills and knowledge, which can be put into practice to manage diverse complex situations and tasks successfully. Sources: *Trainers for Active Learning in Europe - TALE* (2008-2010) and *Set of competences for trainers working at European and international level* (2013) developed by SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre.

between youth work, NFE/L and employability of young people. The so-called economic crisis that has started in 2008 also contributed to shed a different light on the overall recognition process and on skills gained through youth work and NFE/L.

Hence and in addition to the very first aim of recognition of youth work and NFE/L, one can notice the increasing attention put on the employability of young people. In line with that objective, recent political, social and economical challenges have required putting more attention on complementary and alternative educational approaches and paths and on the related learning outcomes. This means that in addition to issues such as participation, inclusion and citizenship, considered some of the core issues addressed in youth work, the employability of young people, the possibility to demonstrate, describe, illustrate, use, validate, transfer and to some extent, certify how and what young people learned, became another point on the European and national agendas.

In the context of Serbia, youth work had a dynamic development since mid 90s and reached the point where issues such as quality assurance, professionalization and recognition of learning processes and outcomes have become the priority of the agenda of both relevant state institutions and youth CSOs. Taking the opportunity of the recent work on quality of youth work and youth work practitioners, as well as an openness from policy makers and other stakeholders to embark in the development of a recognition strategy, Serbia has decided to take its initial steps towards establishing a national mechanism for recognition of competences gained by young people through NFE/L in youth work, which should also support the employability of young people.

The Mapping Study aims at informing and inspiring the national recognition process in Serbia and at helping key actors involved set the most effective steps in the development process, thus leading towards legitimate recognition mechanisms acknowledged and supported by civil society, potential employers and young people themselves.

The Mapping Study is one of the first actions taken in order to develop a mechanism and tool for recognition of young people's competences gained through youth services and non-formal learning and education that is recognised by the relevant stakeholders.

The Mapping Study contributed to:

1. Gaining greater legitimacy of importance of the issue when advocating among relevant stakeholders at national level;
2. Getting a better overview of different existing mechanisms and policies at EU and national levels that will be referred to or accommodated for Serbia;
3. Assuring the harmonisation of processes and tools developed in other contexts, which will later on contribute to greater recognition and mobility of young people's competences and employability.

The logic of intervention was to present the Mapping Study along with data resulting from the *Research on the impact of non-formal learning in youth work on young people's employability* carried on by NAPOR in partnership with the Serbian Ministry of youth and sport and USAID –SLDP to key actors at national level.

The two documents are seen as complementary to one another: the Mapping Study provides examples of good practices for the development of recognition tools and processes at national and EU level, while the Research provides data on impact of non-formal learning in youth work on young people's employability in Serbia. The outcomes

from these two documents presented the core bases that will be used for further development of the national recognition tool and its systematic institutional recognition among employers, governmental institutions, civil society organisations and young people.

Approach and methodology

The Mapping Study is based on existing recommendations, studies, researches and documentation with regard to non-formal education/learning, youth work, recognition and young people's employability as well as analysis of existing recognition tools and mechanisms at European and national level.

Two in-depth interviews were conducted with the persons in charge or at the origin of the tools and processes from the Czech Republic (*Keys for Life*) and Luxembourg (*Engagement Portfolio*). Phone conversations took place with the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education with regard to the *Competence Portfolio* developed by the Danish National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning.

Prior encounters and cooperation had already taken place with regard to the *Youthpass Certificate* developed by SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre in the frame of the Youth in Action Programme 2007-2013, or other developments such as the Strasbourg process, initiated in 2011.

Besides interviews and meetings with relevant key persons behind or linked to the above-mentioned processes, the Mapping Study mainly consists in desk-research and analysis of other documents (recommendations, studies, researches and documentation) developed at European level.

Main tools explored

The Youthpass Certificate - European level

The **Youthpass Certificate** is a tool for participants of projects funded by the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013), now included in the new integrated Programme Erasmus + (2014-2020).

Youthpass is at the same time a tool and a strategy of the EU to promote the recognition of NFE/L within youth work. The aim of this strategic approach is to raise awareness, and support a professional and public debate concerning individual, social, formal, and political dimensions for the recognition of NFE/L and youth work. As a tool, Youthpass can be seen as combining a process and a Certificate that make the learning in Erasmus+ Youth in Action projects conscious for the participant and the learning value visible to the outside world. It supports individual reflections, active citizenship of young people, social recognition of youth work, and the employability of young people and youth workers.

The Youthpass Certificate was developed by SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre² (Germany).

For more information about Youthpass (in English): www.youthpass.eu

For more information about SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre (in English): <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/>

Keys for Life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time and Non Formal Education - The Czech Republic

Keys for Life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time and Non-Formal Education was a large-scale multi-annual project of the National Institute for Children and Youth. It aimed at strengthening continuous training of persons working in this sector, thus improving the quality of leisure education and NFE opportunities for children and young people in the Czech Republic.

The project had several strands of activities ranging from research about the state of play of NFE and leisure education, through delivery of training, recognition of prior learning, to development of quality standards for organisations.

Keys for Life was developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) and the National Institute of Children and Youth (NICY) of the Czech Republic.

For more information about Key for Life (in English and Czech language):

<http://www.nidm.cz/projekty/realizace-projektu/klice-pro-zivot/klice-pro-zivot-2009/project-keys-for-life-2009>

For more information about the National Institute of Children and Youth (in Czech language): <http://www.nidm.cz/>

The Engagement Portfolio - Luxembourg

The **Engagement Portfolio** is a tool aiming at providing assistance to youth organisations and youth movements in the development of an official document attesting one's engagement/commitment and competences acquired through non-formal education [activities and projects].

It encompasses two main elements: the 'Portfolio', a personal folder that allows the young person to keep track of the volunteer work experiences, and the 'Attestation' which is an official recognition mechanism of the competences acquired during a young person's engagement as volunteer or in youth work activities, designed from the experience made in 2006 and 2007 with the project *certification of skills acquired in the framework of non-formal education*.

The Luxembourgish National Youth Service, in cooperation with other stakeholders, developed the Engagement Portfolio.

² SALTO stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities.

For more information about the Engagement Portfolio (in French):

http://www.snj.public.lu/sites/default/files/publications/flyer_attestation%20de%20l%27engagement.pdf

For more information about the Luxembourgish National Youth Service (in French):

<http://www.snj.public.lu/fr>

My Competence Portfolio - Denmark

'My Competence Portfolio' was developed in the frame of the implementation of the new legislation with regard to Recognition of Prior Learning in Denmark. The tool helps individuals to describe and record prior learning experiences, through information and documentation of their competences, such as: certificates from completed programmes or classes, employment contract, employer statement, a list of offices held within a trade organisation or other group, certificates from Folk High School stays, as well as statements from teachers and headmasters and statements from leaders of civil society groups, including sports coaches.

My Competence Portfolio is to be seen mainly from the perspective of education (VET, formal, adult and continuing education and training), even though it offers the possibility to describe competences acquired through NFE/L and informal learning.

The tool was developed by the Danish National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning, which operates under the authority and funding of the Danish Ministry of Education.

For more information about My Competence Portfolio (in English):

<https://minkompetencemappe.dk/>

For more information about the Danish National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning (in English): <http://www.viauc.dk/projekter/NVR/sider/english.aspx>

Main conclusions

The comparative analysis presented in the Mapping Study allowed developing a series of conclusions, based on common features of the tools such as approaches, structures, target groups, processes, and challenges.

With regard to the ***approach to NFE/L and youth work*** and when considering the context the tools refer to, what they are based on and whom they address, the influential common element is perhaps not so much who are the youth work practitioners but the fact that all providers see their work through NFE/L values and principles – generally clearly defined and explained.

The different types of ***cooperation with other stakeholders*** all reflect the willingness from those behind the tools to open it as much as possible, hence very much in line with not only the issue of young people's employability on European and national agendas but also with the process of recognition on NFE/L and youth work. The degree of

participation and involvement of the different stakeholders undoubtedly vary but this generally results from the nature and the purpose of the tools developed, as well as whom they address.

While looking at whether the processes of the development of the tools were *youth-led initiatives*, it appears that out of four, only one tool is totally youth-led: the Engagement Portfolio (Luxembourg). All other initiatives are partially or totally led by national institutions or European ones. The reasons behind are generally very transparent and understandable, for they are connected to the nature and the context of the tools, their target group and of course, their purpose.

Each tool has been developed based on a specific *competence framework* with generally very similar approaches and in some cases, similar sources of inspiration. Youthpass and the Engagement Portfolio are based on European initiatives, being the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning or those proposed in Europass, although Luxembourg has adjusted its list according to the purpose of its tool and to its potential users. This is also partly the case of the Personal Competence Portfolio of Keys for Life, that also relates to the national reality and the process of NQF.

All the tools are based on a *self-assessment* of the competences developed, though two of them also include a dialogue process (Youthpass and the Engagement Portfolio). The Danish Competence Portfolio is also meant to undergo an additional assessment for recognition of prior learning purpose.

Every single tool has *young people's employability* as one of its objectives. For instance, Youthpass supports, among other things, employability of young people and youth workers and the degree of importance and relevance of the tool for employability purpose has been highlighted in the Youthpass Impact Study. Such link is also clearly exposed and dealt with in the three other tools. At the same time, each tool succeeds remaining committed to the nature of the field they address (youth work, work with children and young people or education and training) though avoiding developing around the solely job requirements.

All the tools went through a *similar path* with regard to their development process. It generally started upon a formal decision or upon the request coming from the field of youth work. A steering group/commission/committee was created, leading the first steps of the overall process, which included a pilot phase/test phase of approximately one year. After an evaluation, the tools were revised and adjusted. New features and developments were proposed, examined and, if relevant, implemented. Overall, the processes have had a duration going from three to seven years. The tools have been developed over a period going from two to four years.

It is relatively complex to compare the *impact* of the tools for they neither have all the exact same purpose, nor address the same users or are led by the same type of structures. Nevertheless, all of them contributed to a better knowledge and understanding of youth work and NFE/L, to a bigger awareness of the competences developed and of the learning process, to more cooperation with key stakeholders (though in some cases this appeared as being more challenging with regard to employers or social partners), to concrete products and tools, such as portfolios or self-assessment tools, and even to some changes in laws and regulations.

The biggest *challenge* appears to be the communication and cooperation with social partners and the labour market, even though intentions from both sides initiated a collaboration path that should intensify in the future. Moreover, there is a clear need for bigger efforts in communication and dissemination of information with regard to the tools. In the case of the Engagement Portfolio, for instance, it remains seldom known – and therefore hardly used, by the youth field. The need for easier access to some of the tools as well as for more guidance and support (e.g. through training strategies) were also mentioned in some cases (e.g. in Youthpass).

Recommendations for developing the national recognition tool in Serbia

- Ensure a user-friendly language: the competence framework and the tool as such should be user-friendly to support young people working with it. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that the terminology is ‘corporate orientated’ enough, to ensure its support and recognition by employers and social partners.
- Involve as many stakeholders as possible in the overall process but also and particularly with regard to the development of the competences framework (with a special focus on employers). Moreover, such cooperation should be seen from three different perspectives: the development of the tool as such, the recognition of youth work and NFE/L, and the employability of young people.
- Ensure planning from the very beginning a proper monitoring of the process, especially after the pilot phase and the possible adjustments to be made, in order to guarantee the dissemination, knowledge, sustainability and the further development of the tool.
- Develop a recognition tool with time. Based on the experiences explored in the Mapping Study, this varies from two to four years for the tool as such and can go up to seven years with regard to the overall process.
- Ensure the ownership of the process and of its outcomes, meaning not only of the tool but also of other dimensions linked to cooperation with other stakeholders or to recognition of youth work and NFE/L. No matter the formal recognition of the tool, no matter the financial resources invested and no matter its final format, the tool will neither be used to a great extent nor be as useful as expected if there is no sense of ownership.
- The tool ought to be easy to access and easy to work with. Hence, questions such as online or offline, with support/guidance or without, with a high level of requirements or rather ‘free of use’ have their relevance. These questions and how to approach them will also depend on the purpose of the tool as such and whom it addresses, on the expectations and objectives of those involved in the process, and on the Serbian reality, amongst others.

2.2.2. Implementation of the Research of the impact of non-formal education in youth work on acquiring competences for better employability of young people (Purpose, methodology and key findings)

According to the latest Labour Force Survey³ in the Republic of Serbia, the unemployment rate of young people (15-24) reached a dramatic 49.1% in 2013. At the same time, research conducted with employers point to the paradoxical situation that "a major part of the reported staffing needs remains unfilled⁴." According to the employers, young people after leaving the educational system often lack not only expertise but also appropriate "wider competences" including the so-called "soft skills". Among the competencies that employers cite as a very important they state, among other things: communication skills, team work ability, sense of initiative, independence, decision making, organizational skills, willingness to continuously learn, and so on⁵.

On the other hand, a large number of young people in addition to regular education (or without it) participate in a variety of non-formal education activities conducted by youth organizations and associations for youth and their umbrella associations. To illustrate, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, as part of its measures to implement the National Strategy for Youth, funds an average of 220 projects annually (of which the vast majority have non-formal educational character)⁶. At the same time, youth associations and associations for youth in Serbia, in the period from 2007 to 2012, withdrew € 4,261,832.65 for the implementation of 242 international non-formal educational projects⁷ within the "Youth in Action" programme of the European Union. Although most of these projects do not directly address youth employability (in terms of gaining professional qualifications), non-formal education in the field of youth work enables young people to acquire competencies that contribute not only to their personal development and active participation in society, but also to the increase of their employability. The importance of the competences acquired through the programs of youth work to increase the employability of young people is highlighted in the study by the European Youth Forum, which states that "*there is a significant correlation and overlap between transferable skills and competencies that are required by employers and those which young people gain through youth organizations*"⁸. *As this study clearly showed, even 5 of the 6 "soft skills" most wanted by the employers are successfully developed through participation in non-formal education for young people: communica-*

³ Republic of Serbia Labour Force Survey, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, number 359 – year LXIII, 30.12.2013.

⁴ Ristić, Z., Pavlović, Lj. (2012): Potrebe tržišta rada i položaj mladih nezaposlenih lica, Unija poslodavaca Srbije, Beograd

⁵ Analiza tržišta rada i prognoziranje potreba na tržištu rada u Republici Srbiji, Nacionalna služba za zapošljavanje (2012); Istraživanje „Šta poslodavci danas oekuju od mladih stru njaka i od Univerziteta u Srbiji“, Careers projekat (2012) <http://www.careers.ac.rs/>

⁶ Izveštaj o sprovođenju nacionalnog plana za sprovođenje nacionalne strategije za mlade tokom 2011. i 2012. Godine, Ministarstvo omladine i sporta, 2013

⁷ Ranković, J., Mitrović, S. i dr. (2013): Mladi u Akciji u Srbiji, Grupa Hajde da..., Beograd, http://www.mladiuakciji.rs/pdf/MuA_Srbija-web_SR.pdf

⁸ Bath University/GHK Consulting (2012): Research Study on the Impact of Non-Formal Education in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability. European Youth Forum

tion skills, decision-making skills, teamwork skills, self-confidence and organizational skills.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of appropriate mechanisms for recognizing competencies that young people develop in the field of non-formal education in youth work, in Serbia they most often remain nearly invisible to potential employers.

This problem is not a specific situation in our country, but is significantly recognized at European level, which indicates the need for establishing a "reality of lifelong learning", as well as greater recognition and validation of competences acquired through all forms of education (formal, non-formal and informal). In the past 15 years significant steps have been made in this area, both at European and at national level in several European countries. By the document "Pathways 2.0"⁹, the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth sets the priorities of "the Strasbourg process" towards better recognition of non-formal education and youth work in Europe. A year later, the recommendation of the European Council on the validation of non-formal and informal learning¹⁰ was adopted, which emphasizes the importance of this issue on the European agenda, but also on the activities that should be undertaken at the national level. In their recommendation, the Ministers responsible for Education invite the EU Member States to establish mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2018¹¹. Specifically in Serbia, the recognition of non-formal education is foreseen by the Education Strategy in Serbia until 2020.

In line with these European trends, and the needs identified in Serbia, the research (together with complementary Mapping study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for the employability of young people¹²) aims to make a step towards better recognition of youth work as significant area for competence development of young people, as well as to point out the value of acquired competencies and improve the chances of young people in the labor market. The research itself helped in establishing the "missing link" set the basis for the development of a future mechanism for recognition of competences acquired through participation in non-formal educational youth work programs.

Youth work and non-formal education / learning in Serbia

Youth work is a professional and educational work with young people, which is performed outside the formal education system and exists as an independent practice in many European countries. Thanks to the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR), which consists of more than 90 member organizations, significant steps have been made towards consolidation, promotion and professionalization of youth

⁹ *Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe* (2011). Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth.

¹⁰ Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01)

¹¹ For the full overview of the development of European policy in the field of recognizing of non-formal education in Europe, please see annex: Evrard Markovi, G. (2014): Mapping study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for the employability of young people, NAPOR

¹² Ibid.

work in our country. The persons engaged in youth work can be trained volunteers or professionals, and three levels of professional qualifications of the youth worker will be in the future National Qualifications Framework. In the preamble to the Law on Youth¹³, drafted with active participation by the representatives of NAPOR, we find the following definition:

"Youth work shall mean such activities organized by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people's free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions for personal and social development of young people in accordance with their needs and abilities, in which young people voluntary participate"

When we are talking about non-formal education in the context of this study, we are talking about one of the key pedagogical practices and one of the key principles of youth work. The Youth Law of the Republic of Serbia (which defines young people as aged 15 to 30) we find the following definition:

"Non-formal education of young people shall mean any organized activity, adjusted to young people, outside the formal educational system, based on young people's needs and interests, principles of voluntary and active participation of young people in the learning process and the promotion of democratic values, through which young people acquire competencies necessary for developing their personal potentials, active participation in the society and better employability."

Non-formal education and youth work are related but not identical concepts, which partially overlap like Venn diagram. Therefore, we can also talk about non-formal education outside the youth work.

Although locally the term more frequently used is "non-formal education", sometimes it is more accurate to use the term "non-formal learning", where the emphasis is on *individual learning process* of a person, and focus is on *learning outcomes* (e.g. acquired competences). At the European level, we see a variety of practices in use of these terms, but given that the current legal and policy framework in Serbia recognize the concept of non-formal education, this study will use the term "non-formal education".

Research Methodology

The overall goal of the study was to show the impact of non-formal education in youth work to acquire relevant competences for better employability of young people. Specific objectives of the study included the following aspects:

- To identify the competences acquired through non-formal education programmes in youth work, and contributing to greater employability of young people
- To investigate the factors that affect the greater transferability of competences acquired in youth work in the workplace

¹³ Law on Youth of the Republic of Serbia, 2011

- To identify aspects of youth non-formal education activities that ensure competence development
- To investigate the relationship between length and frequency of participation in the programmes of youth work to the level of development of competences for employability
- To explore the attitudes of young people, organizations and employers to develop a mechanism for identifying and validating competences acquired through non-formal education in youth work

In addition, the research informed the development of the future mechanism for recognition of competences acquired through participation in non-formal education in youth work. The study developed recommendations for improvement of youth work in the direction of greater impact on the employability of young people.

The study was conducted between November 2013 and February of 2014 in the territory of the Republic of Serbia. An appropriate sample of **356 respondents** was included, with the use of quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques.

The **content analysis** of the documents covered the relevant legislation and documents of public policy issues, as well as previous studies in this field carried out in Serbia, or at the European level. In addition, **content analysis** was conducted **of 100 job advertisements** posted by various companies operating in Serbia, taken from the internet portal Infostud.

Through **two online surveys** data was collected from a total of **316 persons**. Of these, 141 respondents filled out the *Questionnaire for the organizers of non-formal education programmes in youth work*, while 175 respondents filled out the *Questionnaire for participants of non-formal education programmes in youth work*. Polls were posted on the website Survey Monkey, and the call for participation was distributed through social networks, mailing lists and web sites.

Forty people of the following profiles took part in **37 in-depth** interviews:

- representatives of organizations and institutions that implement programmes of non-formal education in youth work,
- employees who have prior experience of non-formal education in youth work,
- representatives of employers - those responsible for the selection and development of employees,
- representatives of other relevant institutions and organizations.

The researchers were aware of the fact that it is in the very nature of youth work (which does not belong only to the arena of lifelong learning, but also to the broader context of civil society) to make an impact on the *overall* development of the competences required for the active participation of young people in society, more fulfilling personal development, and to facilitate the transition into the world of work. While not denying the importance of the first two components and without intent to instrumentalize youth work or narrow its purpose, the primary focus in this study has been placed on the competencies that may be of importance for better employability of young people.

Summary

The overall goal of this study was to show the impact of non-formal education in youth work to acquiring relevant competences for better employability of young people. In addition, the study should inform the development of the future mechanism for recognition of competences acquired through participation in non-formal education in youth work. The research also aims to develop recommendations for improvement of youth work in the direction of greater impact on the employability of young people. In line with these objectives, the research team has formulated the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** There is significant match between competences acquired in youth work programs and competences required by employers in the labour market
- **H2:** In the recruitment process, employers positively evaluate the competences acquired in non-formal education
- **H3:** Competences acquired in non-formal educational activities conducted through youth work programmes are transferable into a business environment
- **H4:** It is possible to identify key aspects and features of non-formal educational activities that contribute to the development of competences of young people
- **H5:** The length and frequency of experience in non-formal educational activities conducted through programmes of youth work positively correlates with the degree and extent of acquired competences
- **H6:** Civil society organizations and young people express a positive attitude towards the development of a mechanism for recognition of competences acquired in youth work
- **H7:** Employers would more positively evaluate the mechanism for recognition of competences that include external assessment of competences

Based on the results, we can say that the hypothesis H1 is confirmed, and we can state with a great degree of assurance that non-formal education in youth work contributes significantly to the development of personal, interpersonal and work related competences of young people who participate in these programmes. At the same time these skills largely coincide with the competences that employers look for when hiring, expressed in advertisements or applied in the selection procedures.

Therefore, we can ***conclude that the competences acquired in non-formal education in youth work are very important for the employability of young people, since these competences (personal, interpersonal and work related) are those that employers look for when hiring.*** Ten competences from the tested competence framework are important for all jobs, while the other six competences are seen as significant depending on the position one applies for. Of particular importance for employment, regardless of the position one applies for, are ***communication, and learning and development, and then self-management, personal organization, willingness to take responsibility, teamwork, conflict management, entrepreneurship and problem solving.***

We have found also that the list of competences in our framework proved to be very relevant to employability, because it includes as many as *11 of the 15 most sought after competencies in job ads*. Therefore we can take it as a good basis for further work on the creation of a mechanism for recognition of competences for employability of young people.

According to the information communicated by the young people who have been able in and present their experience of non-formal education in youth work in the process of applying for a job, ***only 3.3% of employers felt that the experience is "not relevant"***.

Out of the group, 82% of these young people reported a positive attitude of employers towards the experience of non-formal education in youth work (16.4% of employers felt that this experience was "very relevant", while 44.3% of them were "interested to learn more about it").

From interviews with employers, we found that in the process of recruiting "*the experience of non-formal education is very much appreciated, because it speaks about a person's wider scope of interests.*" Employers particularly valued volunteer work, participation in student organizations, participation in conferences, seminars, and sports activities, and membership in a scout group, because this kind of engagement indicates "*how proactive a person is.*" In addition, the representatives of the sector of human resources of companies interviewed believe that ***young people often inadequately present their competences and indicate that young people often do not mention their youth work experience thinking that it will be irrelevant for the position to which they apply.*** At the same time, the employed young people with previous experience of youth work point to the challenges of recognizing the value of so acquired competences after the selection process, or during integration into the work environment. Based on the above, we can conclude that ***young people and employers agree in their assessment that in the selection of employees, the experience of non-formal education in youth work is positively evaluated in many cases. For employers, this experience is an indicator of pro-activity of young people. At the same time, the employers indicate that there is a need for greater visibility and better presentation of competences acquired in non-formal education in youth work by young people when applying for a job.***

" the experience of non-formal education is very much appreciated, because it speaks about a person's wider scope of interests."

Quotation from interview with employer

Competences acquired in non-formal education in youth work are very important for the employability of young people, since these competences (personal, interpersonal and work related) are those that employers look for when hiring.

The results confirm the hypothesis H3 as well, indicating a *significant transferability of competences acquired through non-formal education in youth work into a business environment. Over 90% of young people and the organizers of the programs included in online survey consider*

the competences acquired through non-formal education entirely or largely transferrable in the business environment (e.g. working in a company). In terms of transferability, the organizers of the programmes are somewhat more positive than participants, where as many as 41.8% believed that the competences acquired in this way can be fully transferred to work in a business context. It has been shown, also, that the young employees, no matter what sector they work in, confirm that ***all the competences in the tested framework are applicable and important for success in their business context***. In particular, they cite the importance of: ***communication, personal organization, willingness to learn and develop, taking personal responsibility (accountability) and problem-solving ability***. At the same time, the transferability is not without conditions and a mechanism for recognition ("translating") of competences from one sector to another would certainly be of great help. In this process it is important to work on a larger inter-sectorial understanding and creation of a common conceptual framework (so called conceptual transferability). Also, one of the important **preconditions for the transfer** of competences is primarily identified in personal awareness of acquired competences, individual openness and adaptability to the new environment. ***The findings of the study, therefore, confirm the transferability of competences acquired through non-formal education in youth work into a business environment. At the same time, the results indicate that, in addition to gaining awareness of acquired competences, it is important to support young people in developing openness and adaptability to the new environment. In terms of "conceptual transferability" it is necessary to create a "common language" of competences in cross-sectorial communication.***

The study results show that the hypothesis H4 is confirmed too, i.e. that it is ***possible to identify key qualitative aspects and characteristics of non-formal educational activities that contribute to the development of competencies of youth. The insight that the combination of qualitative aspects depends on the type of non-formal educational activities that are carried out, is also interesting***. The survey has highlighted the key aspects of the three most common types of activities: training courses, workshops, and long-term youth work with the group. The results showed that in all three types of activities have "active participation in the learning process" by the participants as the key aspect, and that there are significant differences in terms of educational approach that contributes to the development of competences within training courses, workshops and long-term youth work.

In the study we also identified the **ways in which young people are becoming aware of their newly acquired skills**. According to the results, "the practical application of newly acquired competences" stands out as the most important aspect that contributes to young people becoming aware of their competences. "Reflecting about the experience after the activity" is in the second place and "self-reflection on learning during the activity" was highly rated as well. These aspects point to the importance of mentoring in the learning process, both during the activity and after its formal conclusion. A significant difference was observed in the attitudes of young people and organizers to the importance of "feedback from other participants" for individual learning, where young people showed more positive attitude than the organizers of the programme. Apparently this is a significant resource for the recognition of acquired competences that should be used more often in youth work.

When it comes to hypothesis H5, based on the study results, we found ***a statistically significant positive correlation between length of participation and frequency of participation in non-formal education in youth work on one hand, and the extent and scope of the competences acquired by young people, on the other hand. The results show that the length of participation of young people in non-formal education programs in youth work is significantly associated with the acquisition of 10 of the 16 competences from our framework*** This statistically significant association was found for the following competences: self-management, accountability, integrity, leadership, communication, conflict management, entrepreneurship, organizational skills, problem solving and digital competence. ***A statistically significant correlation between the frequency of participation in non-formal education programs in the WO and the level of acquiring nine competencies from our working framework, namely: accountability, leadership, conflict management, intercultural sensitivity, communication in a foreign language, entrepreneurship, organizational skills, problem solving and client focus. Data from the online survey and information obtained through interviews indicate interdependence between the quantity (length and frequency) and the quality of programmes and their impact on the acquisition of competencies for employability of young people.*** With the exception of other contextual aspects that may play a role in the personal development of a person, we believe that the length and frequency of participation of young people in youth work activities, along with qualitative factors can significantly affect the development of competences for youth employability. ***Trajectories of young people within the world of youth work are very diverse and usually cover a range of different activities. In this sense, it is hard to tell what types of activities provide a more suitable context for the development of competences, but we can certainly say that the longer-term, more intensive and higher quality programmes of non-formal education in youth work have a better chance to enable young people to develop a higher level and scope of competences than the short-term and part-time programs.***

The collected data support the hypothesis H6 that there is a need to develop an instrument for recognizing competences acquired through the non-formal education in youth work. ***As much as 95.7% of the organizers of the programmes and 91.5% of young people expressed a positive attitude towards the development of a national mechanism for recognition of competences for employability of young people, gained through non-formal education in youth work. In the survey, the organizers of the programmes expressed a more positive attitude than the youth.*** At the same time we learn that 62.5% of young people in online poll have not used any instrument, as is the case with 59.9% covered organizers of youth work programmes. Volunteer passports are used by 14.1% of organizations and 13.1% of young people, about 13% of young people and organizations have used Youthpass in the "Youth in Action" programme, a small number of them used scouts' instrument "Empower Yourself" and "European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers" of the Council of Europe. Out of the organizations participating in the online survey, ***only 5.7% of organizations have developed comprehensive systems for monitoring the development of individual competences of young people,*** while 33.6% have the systems partially developed. At the same time, over 50% of organizations do not apply a structured approach to monitoring competences of young people, which suggests that the resources invested in non-formal education in youth work are not being fully utilized because the competencies that are developed most often remain unrecognized. These practices in CSOs that work on

developing competences of young people suggest the need to develop a uniform system that would lead to easier identification and recognition of competences acquired.

Study findings support the hypothesis H7 *that employers would more positively evaluate the mechanism for recognition of competences that includes external assessment*. Moreover, this leads to the inevitable conclusion that this is one of the key prerequisites for acceptance of the mechanism. Employers recognize the importance of self-assessment, but consider that it is necessary to provide and "external, standardized assessment system." This view is also held by *82.9% of young people and 86.3% of organizers who believe that this process should be a combination of self-assessment and external assessment*. The issues of the methodological approach and the profile of those who would be undertaking this assessment remain open, and the answers to them must be found during the consultation process for the development of the mechanism.

Reflections and recommendations for creating a future mechanism

The reflection on the creation of the future mechanism is also presented within the study, and a set of recommendations for the process of development and implementation of the mechanism, for its structure and content, as well as the promotion of youth work towards a greater contribution to the acquisition of competences for employability of young people.

The highlighted **purpose of the mechanism** is its possibility to "*additionally support young people who are already working on self-improvement and use their free time usefully in extracurricular activities*", to encourage personal development, to support the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and increase the motivation of young people for greater participation in the programmes of non-formal education and youth work. Employers would find this mechanism very important because it would provide "*a better and proven insight into competences of young people*." A benefit to civil society is the opportunity to have clear recognition of the contribution of the CSOs to the increase of the employability of young people, which would contribute to "*their positioning as a sector that provides relevant and quality education*."

The tool should be **empowering for the youth**, the respondents felt that young people should be "*familiarized with the tool at even the younger age to start as soon as possible with the development of competences*." In order for the mechanism to be empowering for the youth from vulnerable groups, the development and implementation process should include those who work with vulnerable group and applying inclusive educational approaches, but also representatives of marginalized youth themselves. In addition, the mechanism should monitor and assess the competences acquired through a variety of processes and settings (e.g. to include correctional facilities to ensure the process of acquiring competences during the stay of beneficiaries in them).

Study findings suggest that it should be a **comprehensive document that shows the cumulative competences acquired through various programmes**. This position is especially strongly held by the representatives of the companies, pointing out that in this way it would be more useful and purposeful in the process of employment of young people, as opposed to collecting piles of certificates from each activity.

Data collected from employers lead us to conclude that the document should show **basic wider competences** that would further be specifically presented **through indicators and examples of coping with specific situations**. The employers find it more essential to have insight into the practical reflection of a competence than just to get a list of competences. In addition to the learning outcomes and specific competences which the young person has, the respondents believe that this document should offer basic information about the activities through which the competences have been gained. For example, "*if it is claimed that the person has the competence to manage projects, it would be important to specify what project has the person implemented, how much it cost, how many people were involved, and so on.*"

A significant number of respondents in the interviews suggest that this mechanism should be **in the form of online database** in which the data would be collectively presented, and through which the young person would be able to generate a document to be submitted to the potential employer. This approach would allow the entry of various data, including recommendations, self-reflection, feedback, description of the process of learning, and so on. Some respondents recommend the "*establishment of a social network, like LinkedIn, where young people would open their profile.*" However, there is recognition of challenges in the maintenance of this portal, primarily because it would rely on the responsibility of the organizers of the programme to enter information about a young person who is involved in a particular activity.

The mechanism should be assessing and **displaying competences that are sought for by the employers**, and it needs to be matched to their needs. In this regard, the companies that already use competence based management have internally developed procedures and systems for the development of competences of their employees.

The highlighted key **prerequisite for the success and validity** of the tool is the credibility of the body that will develop and implement it. The very recognition of competences will motivate more young people to participate in non-formal education, but recognition must be accompanied by certain criteria to ensure that validation of competences obtained only by those who did actually acquire them. Respondents still believe that the process of development and application of tools would be more successful if they rely on past experience from other countries that have a similar mechanism.

Another aspect that for employers would be a guarantee of validity and objectivity of this mechanism is **the institution that will be the leader in the process**. Respondents' attitudes however differ when it comes to specific institutions and organizations. Common to most of the respondents is the view that there should actually be more carriers, including government institutions, CSOs and businesses. As far as the public authorities, as the potential carriers, they see the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, or any of the institutes under the Ministry (Institute for the Advancement of Education, the Institute for Quality of Education), the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economy. In addition to the ministries, the perceived potential carrier is the National Employment Service as well. As for civil society organizations and their associations, respondents most frequently cited NAPOR and National Youth Council of Serbia

(KOMS). When it comes to the business sector, the credibility of the Union of Employers of Serbia is highlighted, as well as Serbian Chamber of Commerce, AmCham, and so on.

In addition to the aforementioned potential holders of the mechanism, the respondents believe that **the consultation process of its development should necessarily include more stakeholders**. Among them- the young people, then the organizers of the youth work programmes, the Belgrade Open School, the Centre for Educational Policy, Youth Council, an advisory bodies within the National Assembly, institutions that follow education policy, universities and several colleges, high schools and school administration, Infostud, companies of different sizes and from different industries, the Foreign Investors Council, regional chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, business incubator centres, media, and so on. The importance is emphasized of participation of people from different levels in large systems (*"from the National employment Service - include persons from the headquarters who write procedures, but also people from the branches"*). When it comes to the economy, the respondents point out that it is important *"to include not only the department of human resources, but also people from the business world who may not know how to explain competence, but work in management, manufacturing, finance ... because they have their own systems of assessment and different language and terminology that define competence."*

Most organizations, institutions and businesses surveyed have expressed a **willingness to engage in a consultative process of mechanism development**. In addition to participation in working groups, respondents were willing to participate in data collection, promotion of the future tool, and reaching out to marginalized youth with the particularly important role of CSOs from smaller communities.

Overall, apart from the specific dilemmas and different views on the mechanism that need to be harmonized throughout the consultation process, the respondents identified some **challenges** related to the context in which it will develop. They first point out that young people have not developed sufficient awareness to what extent non-formal education can contribute to personal development. They state civil society is unfamiliar and uninformed about the needs and trends of the company and the business sector as well as the business sector about the processes of non-formal education, and that *"the current lack of understanding of the concept of non-formal education is larger problem than its formal legal validity."* Therefore, the respondents point out the importance of the participation of the media and ensuring visibility of the development process mechanisms, and intensive promotion of non-formal education and youth work, and the benefits that young people have thanks to them.

Speaking of possible responses to the challenges and dilemmas that this initiative bears, the respondents identified the **need to establish links between this and other reform process and implementation of practical public policies**. In the context of standards and licensing of those who implement programs to acquire competences that will be validated, the respondents recognize **NAPOR's system of accreditation** of organizations and processes to acquire competences for different levels of youth worker jobs. In the context of programme quality and licensing of those who carry them out, it is important to establish close ties with the implementation of the **Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia by 2020** with the accompanying action plan and the **Adult Education Law**. It is also believed that it is important to ensure the **quality**

compliance of various trainings on the same topic (e.g. those implemented by CSOs and those offered by NES). Furthermore, given that volunteering ensures acquiring important competences, it is necessary to have the process connected with the **Law on Volunteering** (especially in light of initiatives to amend this law). Another option for institutional networking of the future mechanism stated is the **cooperation with universities and presentation of competences acquired through a "diploma supplement"**. The use of the tools is seen in the field of labour law, in relation to the recognition of competences acquired at a particular workplace (from soft to specific, technical skills), which could be important in the transmission of previous years of service and for severance payment.

2.2.3. Development of the mechanism/tool

Upon the completion of the two researches, advocacy/consultancy meetings with relevant stakeholders [business sector (12 representatives), government institutions (12 representatives), CSOs and young people (20 representatives)] took place. In total 3 cycles of consultation meetings were implemented. Data from two above mentioned researches created basis for the development of the **tool for recognition of competences for youth employment**.

In order to effectively develop tool that respond on the needs of the employers and to the issue of reducing gap of work force skills and market needs, it was crucial to facilitate dialogue among relevant stakeholders (business sector, HR agencies, government institutions and CSOs). In this way, resources and capacities of each of the stakeholders were acknowledged, market needs and possible solutions of responding to the needs are recognized and stakeholders are stimulated to invest in this development process. This practice created a fertile environment for youth development and active labor market measures.



2nd Joint consultancy meeting – On tool development ...

Tatiana Glisic Milutinovic, visor - Coordinator, Institute for the Advancement of education

This process is very relevant and useful for us in government sector. This is what we are missing, recognition of skills, values and knowledge and linkage with practical applicability”.

It is important to harmonize this process with on-going processes at national level.

The key actors for youth employment that were involved in the process: employers, HR agencies, business associations, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, National Employment Service and CSOs. They all recognized the importance of creating efficient system for recognition and acquiring labor market skills that foster youth employability. Consultation meetings provided opportunity for effective dialogue among relevant stakeholders regarding the issue of youth employability and reducing existing skills gap and mismatch. Discussions were focused around the role of non-formal education in youth employability and tool for recognition of young people competencies gained through youth work and NFE and how this can be used for employability. The key actors have had opportunity to actively participate in tailoring the tool according to their own needs.

When we talk about the mechanism, we are really talking about a system that enables the assessment of competencies for employability of young people, which are acquired through non-formal education and youth work programs.

The system consists of several key aspects:

- ü An instrument for the assessment and recognition of competences
- ü Who assesses the competence?
- ü Who is the holder / holders of the mechanism and their duties and tasks?
- ü Compliance with applicable laws and strategies

Within the project, the instrument for the assessment and recognition of competences framework that includes defined competencies and questions that are directed to young people as users of the tool are defined.

Tool for the assessment and recognition of competences

Through the researches and consultation process, primary purpose of an instrument was identified: to assess and recognize competencies acquired through non-formal education in youth work in order to increase the youth employment. Accordingly, the tool also has the purpose to:

- ü Ease the process of hiring competent workforce for employers, where they will get better insight into the transferable competencies that young people possess.
- ü Provide support to young people in identifying, planning and systematic competence development, as well as to help them to adequately present their competencies to employers. Young people are participating in the various youth work and non-formal learning processes and often are not aware of their competences. Through this process, they are able to become aware of their current competences, their current stage of development, as well as to create further personal development plan in accordance with the principles of lifelong learning. During the recruitment process, young people often do not represent their transferable competencies, because they do not recognize them as important or they don't represent them adequately.
- ü Increase recognition, efficiency and practical applicability of youth work.

ü Contribute to the harmonization with the EU system of qualifications

For who is the tool anticipated

It is aimed at all participants in the youth work programs. It is primarily intended for young people, but can be used by those who were once participants in the youth work programs, but currently does not fall under the category of young people (15-30 years). The tool is also seen as future potential for wide variety of non-formal education programs, but due to its complexity, the focus is given only to the competences acquired through the youth work programs.

Appearance and complexity

The tool is going to be developed in the form of online databases which will generate the data, e.g. which confers a cumulative summary of skills that young people gained by participating in various types of youth work programs. This means that the tool is not designed to be filled out after each attended training / seminar / workshop. Tool is not a substitute for a certificate of participation or certificate of attendance of particular training / seminar / workshop.

The tool has user-friendly design. It empowers young people for competence development, raises awareness of present development stage of individuals and develops models for adequate presentation of personal skills to employers. The tool is sufficiently informative and practical for employers. Because of this, it is planned that the tool has the ability to print longer and shorter versions of the competence passport / certificates.

COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK
Personal competencies
1. Self-management
2. Personal organization
3. Learning and Development
4. Integrity
Interpersonal competencies
5. Teamwork
6. Leadership
7. Communication
8. Intercultural Communication
9. Conflict Management
Working competencies
10. Entrepreneurship skills
11. Organizational skills
12. Problem solving
13. Client focus

The shorter version is designed for employers with an overview of acquired competencies and levels of achievement (basic, intermediate, advanced); including a brief explanation / example / reference to how a person acquired a certain competence.

A longer version is intended for young people, which in addition to the above items include an overview of indicators that are related to competences. This review of competencies should enable young people to develop an individual plan for acquiring additional skills.

Bearing in mind the diverse jobs require different competencies, the tool should have the "custom made" option e.g. showing and hiding relevant competencies depending on the relevance of a particular position / employer.

Competence framework

The relevance of the competence framework with appropriate indicators is tested through the research and all target groups included in the study. The suggested competence framework was discussed during consultation meetings with representatives of the public, civil society and the business sector and recommendation is to divide 2 out of 14 competences in future tool development process. These are entrepreneurship (ability to develop business ideas and resourcefulness) and intercultural communication (divide ability to speak in different languages and intercultural communication).

The competence development scale

Through a consultative process with the relevant stakeholders (employers, youth, representatives of public institutions and civil society), the "tool" competence development scale was developed.

The main purpose of the scale is to enable the person continuous and planned development of competencies. It's also raising personal awareness about existing skills as well as possibility for systematic and planned acquisition of lacking competence. It is suggested to develop three levels of achievement (Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3) in order to enable the understanding of tool users. The tool will contain a legend that defines each level (level 1 - the basic theoretical knowledge and limited experience, Level 2 - practical applicability, level 3 - independence in their work, practical and theoretical applicability). It's also suggested to make clear note at the very beginning of the tool that it is not necessary to assess all the listed competencies and have maximum achievement for each of them, since some transferable skills are associated with personality traits.

<p>LEVEL I - (basic theoretical knowledge and limited experience)</p>
<p>The young person has acquired theoretical knowledge and experience in the experimental environment (classroom, workshops, and training). In performing the task, the person is in need of help and support.</p>
<p>LEVEL II - (practical application)</p>
<p>A young person has the theoretical knowledge and some practical experience, is able to finish the job, but need support from time to time.</p>
<p>LEVEL III - (practical and theoretical applicability)</p>
<p>A young person has the theoretical knowledge, relevant practical experience and successfully applied competence in practice without the support of others. Also, a young person's high level of competence is recognized and he/she provides assistance to others.</p>

How does the instrument instrument (tool) works?

The tool represents a complex document in which, based on identified competence framework, young people show their current knowledge, skills and experience, in order to better present themselves to future employers. The tool consists of a detailed competence framework. In the following pages we will try to show the logic of the tool and how it is used.

STEP 1 – It represents detailed descriptions of each competency, which includes an understanding of individual sub-competencies. Necessary knowledge, experience and attitudes are defined.

I Personal competencies

Self-management

UPRAVLJANJE SOPSTVENIM PONAŠANJEM	Osoba uspešno upravlja sopstvenim ponašanjem kada efikasno radi, postiže rezultate i spremno preuzima odgovornost za svoje ponašanje u poslovnom okruženju. Ova se osoba nosi sa stresom i kontroliše svoje emocije kada je to potrebno tako da one rade za nju, a ne protiv nje. Pod pritiskom, ova osoba ne dozvoljava da rokovi, stres, nedostaci u komunikaciji, napeta atmosfera i ostali ometaju i faktori utiču na njenu efikasnost, rezultat i motivaciju. Takva osoba je svesna da su (negativne) emocije prirodna pojava, ali da ne mogu imati primat na radnom mestu, odnosno da ih je potrebno staviti u drugi plan kako bi se efikasno i uspešno realizovali radni zadaci. Takva osoba je svesna svojih "okidača" - situacija koje izazivaju intenzivne negativne emocije i nepromišljene reakcije i nalazi na in da umanju njihov uticaj na sopstveno ponašanje. Ova osoba razume da su stres i rad pod pritiskom sastavni deo posla, pa ih uspešno neutrališe u datoj situaciji, dok kasnije traži na in da u trenutku kada to ne e ugroziti izvršenje radnih zadataka iskomunicira emocije na na in koji e omogu iti da do iste/sli ne situacije ne do e ponovo, da se pritisak izbegne i smanji i da se razviju strategije i primene mere da do sli nih situacija ne do e.
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	<p>Znanja: Posедује teoretska znanja iz metoda/tehnika za:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- rad pod pritiskom- rad sa kratkim rokovima- rad u napetoj atmosferi- savladavanje stresa- kontrolu (negativnih) emocija- prepoznavanje i kontrolu „okidača“- prepoznavanje uloge različitih aktera u poslovnoj situaciji u stvaranju i prevazilaženju problema vezanih za rad pod pritiskom, neadekvatno ispoljavanje emocija i podnošenje stresa- razvoj strategija i mera za smanjenje pritiska i stresa u poslovnom okruženju <p>Veštine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ume da neutrališe pritisak- ume da kontroliše sopstvene (negativne) emocije- efikasno izvršava zadatke samostalno- efikasno izvršava zadatke u timu- efikasno izvršava zadatke i u otežavajućim okolnostima (kratki rokovi, napeta atmosfera, nedostaci u komunikaciji, itd)- ume da komunicira asertivno i u situacijama kada je otežana komunikacija- ume da se fokusira na radni zadatak bez obzira na ometajuće faktore- ume da prepozna kada svojim ponašanjem izaziva negativne/neprimerene emocije, stres i pritisak (kolegama, nadređenim, korisnicima, itd) <p>Stavovi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preuzima odgovornost za svoje ponašanje
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preuzima odgovornost za izvršenje zadataka i rezultata - Posедуje svest o uticaju svojih (negativnih) emotivnih reakcija i ponašanja na izvršenju radnih obaveza, svojih i ostalih - Pokazuje inicijativu da iskomicira (negativne) emocije na primeren na in, vode i ra una o vremenu i mestu kako bi spre io/la kulminaciju i ponavljanje problemati nih situacija. - Svesno preuzima potrebne mere kako bi umanjio/la nivo stresa/pritisak kod sebe i drugih koji odre ena stvar/situacija izaziva.
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STEP 2 - On the basis of individual competence descriptors, three levels were developed; level I which represents the basic theoretical knowledge and limited experience, level II as practical applicability and level III whose characterise autonomy in work, theoretical and practical applicability. All three levels describe the identified knowledge, skills, attitudes and necessary experience.

POKA-ZATELJI	Osnovno teorijsko znanje i limitirano iskustvo	Prakti na primenjivost	Samostalnost u radu, prakti na i teorijska primenjivost
ZNANJE	<p>Posедуje teoretska znanja iz metoda/tehnika za:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. organizovanje vremena 2. postavljanja prioriteta 3. razvoj individualnog plana za realizaciju zadataka 	<p>Posедуje teoretska znanja iz metoda/tehnika za:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. organizovanje vremena 2. postavljanja prioriteta 3. identifikovanje potrebnih resursa za uspešnu realizaciju zadataka 4. razvoj individualnog plana za realizaciju zadataka 	<p>Posедуje teoretska znanja iz metoda/tehnika za:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. organizovanje vremena 2. postavljanja prioriteta 3. procenu rizika i analizu spoljnih faktora 4. identifikovanje potrebnih resursa za uspešnu realizaciju zadataka 5. razvoj individualnog plana za realizaciju zadataka 6. pra enje procene li ne efikasnosti i identifikovanje mogu nosti za dalji razvoj
VEŠTINE	<p>Uz podršku supervizora:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. vrši procenu potrebnog vremena 2. pravi plan za sprovo enje manjeg broja zadataka koji ne zahtevaju analizu rizika i prioritiziranje. 	<p>Samostalno:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ume da vrši procenu potrebnog vremena za sprovo enje zadataka 2. ume da organizuje vremenski plan za izvršenje aktivnosti 3. izvršava zadatke u skladu sa definisanim rokovima 4. ume da napravi prioritete za izvršenje zadataka/zaduženja <p>Uz podršku supervizora</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. pravi procenu rizika i plan prevazilaženja rizika za izvršenje zadatka uklju uju i i faktore nad kojima nema kontrolu 2. identifikuje potrebne resurse i ume da ih traži i efikasno koristi 3. pravi efikasan individualan plan za realizaciju zadataka koji se po potrebi revidira 	<p>Samostalno:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ume da vrši procenu potrebnog vremena za sprovo enje niza zadataka 2. ume da organizuje vremenski plan za izvršenje niza aktivnosti 3. izvršava zadatke u skladu sa definisanim rokovima 4. ume da napravi prioritete za izvršenje razli itih zadataka/zaduženja 5. ume da napravi procenu rizika i plan prevazilaženja rizika za izvršenje zadatka uklju uju i i faktore nad kojima nema kontrolu 6. ume da identifikuje potrebne resurse i da ih traži i efikasno koristi 7. ume da napravi efikasan individualan plan za realizaciju zadataka koji se po potrebi revidira
STAVOVI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Posедуje svesnost o potrebi prioritizacije. 2. Posедуje svesnost o potrebi preuzimanja odgovornosti za 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritizuje sopstvene zadatke. 2. Preuzima odgovornost za izvršenje zadataka i 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Svesno procenjuje potrebu i prilago ava sopstveni plan u skladu sa novonastalim promenama i njihovim uticajem.

	izvršenje zadataka.	ostvarenih rezultata.	2. Samostalno procenjuje važnost i prvenstvo u realizaciji zadataka u skladu sa principima efikasnosti i prioritetima organizacije / poslodavca.
ISKUST-VO	Postoji ste eno znanje o ovoj temi na treninzima (mogu e proveriti u referencama)	Postoji li no iskustvo iz ove oblasti do 6 meseci (mogu e proveriti u referencama)	Postoji li no iskustvo iz ove oblasti i preporuka (mogu e proveriti u referencama)

STEP 3 – Represents questions that are part of young person’s self-assessment process. The questions, or situational questions are directly related to the appointed indicators. Multiple answers can be selected which are automatically linked to categories e.g. Highly developed competence a) and d); middle level of development b) and e); space for improvement in c) and f). If the answer is something else, mentors provide support based on provided indicators and categories.

Part of the self-assessment consists of identifying practical examples, as well as evaluating themselves in terms of the possession of certain skills. It is necessary to describe the situation and give examples that will help the young person and potential employers to assess the current level of development of these competencies. The examples are to be shared with certain employers, by applying for a particular job. After the identified questions, young people assess themselves in relation to the identified competencies. In this way, their awareness of possessing certain competences is tested. The final result of the questionnaire is software-generated ASSESSMENT - Highly developed, moderately developed, there is space for further development / Poor physical competence (in relation to an identified scale).

STEP 4 – Conclusion from the consultancy meetings is apart from self-assessment process, external assessment of young people is replaced with supervisory / mentoring support by their youth workers which are following long-term growth and development of young people. Through this approach, young people will have the ability to create a personal development plan and competencies development, employers will have an additional verification, and the system will be financially sustainable.

STEP 5 - The final figure represents the average of the pre-generated estimate of the self-assessment and evaluation. Also at this point practical examples are given that confirm the level of the specific competencies, but also the assessment of the support person / mentor on the awareness of young people about the possession of the identified competencies.

STEP 6 - The final part shows concrete evidence of the level of specific competence, as well as the contact person that can verify the existence of these competencies.

Consortium and further process

In order to obtain a guarantee of quality, validity and objectivity in following project stages, it is necessary to define who will be the leaders / holders of the entire mechanism. Several recommendations were given through research and consultation process.

The recommendation is to have more than one actor / stakeholder responsible for the functioning of the mechanism. The potential consortium should consist of several stakeholders from state institutions, civil society and business entities. Defining of the specific members of the consortium will be done in future process. Ministry of Youth and Sports is interested to participate in the role of potential future consortium leaders, as well as the "host" of forthcoming meetings. Employment is set as a priority of the Serbian Government and the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the coming period. The 10 years plan of the National Youth Strategy is in the preparation phase, where measures relating to the recognition of acquired competences in youth work programs will be introduced. This represents sustainability of the tool development and its practical applicability. Although wider applicability of the tool is seen as important, it is decided that the first phase of the tool development will be kept within youth work field.

Compliance with the existing legal framework and sustainability mechanism

It is recommended that the entire mechanism is in line with the National Qualifications Framework in order to ensure understanding and recognition of non-formal education and youth work, both by civil society, as well as public and business sector. Compliance with EU recommendations is listed in detail in the EU mapping study.

The next steps:

Having in mind that the process of the tool development is not finished, within this project further stages of development were identified.

- ü First it's necessary to define the learning outcomes and work tools relating to self-assessment. This will be based on comments from business, public and civil sector representatives who were participating in consultation process.
- ü The second phase of defining the tool is related to mentors / supervisory support to young people in self-assessment process. This also includes training of potential mentors. Both phases involve testing.
- ü The third phase would include forming a consortium, its role, purpose and membership, as well as the functionality of the entire mechanism.
- ü In all phases of the process is necessary to include all three sectors.
- ü To be able to continue with this developmental practice, it's necessary to have joint fundraising for the continuation of the process, as well as to continue with sharing reflections and maintain contacts of all relevant stakeholders.

2.2.4.Challenges

When it comes to challenges the biggest challenge was to lead the process where all relevant stakeholders will be involved through which ownership of the product will be achieved. In practice this meant that drafts of the tool were going back and front until all relevant stakeholders were satisfied with one developed phase of the tool. Often, relevant stakeholders due to their everyday jobs (especially employers) could not attend joint consultancy meetings, thus their participation needed to be compensated with individual meetings. Yet, even though it was time consuming, this was highly necessary.

Therefore, through consultation process with stakeholders it has been concluded that entire process of tool development is extremely complex, thus it need to be divided into three (3) stages.

1st Phase -Include defining tool and self-assessment mechanisms for young people (logic of the tool, competencies, learning outcomes, indicators, questions for self-assessment).

2nd Phase -The second phase is related to the definition of external evaluation tool. Both phases involve testing in order to accurately define all necessary statements.

3rd Phase -The third phase would involve forming of a consortium, its role, purpose and membership, as well as the functionality of the entire mechanism. In all phases of the process is necessary to include all three sectors.

With this project, the 1st Phase of the tool development is finished.

2.3. RESULT 3

Competence recognition tool for NFE recognized by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, employers, CSOs and Youth offices and they are expressing commitment for future usage

2.3.1. Competence recognition tool recognized by relevant stakeholders

One of the most important aspects is to assure that developed tool for recognition of the competencies is recognized by the relevant stakeholders. When it comes to recognition, there are two aspects to have in mind; a) to ensure sustainability of the tool – meaning that tool need to become part of the government system (part of the strategies and action plans); b) that tool should be recognized by the relevant ministries, NFE/Youth work providers, young people and by the employers – to assure its practical applicability.

In order to achieve this, entire process of the tool development, has been implemented in close partnership with mentioned above stakeholders through consultation processes. With this approach NAPOR assured that the tool is developed primarily in line with the needs of young people and employers. While all relevant stakeholders created ownership over the tool. All stakeholders expressed their interest for further participation in tool development

Parallel process that has been implemented was negotiations and strategic partnership dialogue with the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Meetings and on-going communication with the Ministry of youth and sport were taking place on regular bases. In total 12 meetings were held in order to discuss strategic directions of the tool development and its sustainability.

Success story
One of the biggest outcomes of the process is that tool is going to become part of National Strategy for young people and National Youth Action plan

When it comes to sustainability of the process, one of the biggest outcomes of the process is that tool is going to become part of National Strategy for young people and National Youth Action plan.

By this Ministry of Youth and sport showed great commitment to the process of development and commitment to implementation of the tool. Commitment of the Ministry was also shown through funding project of the NAPOR that will be implemented in upcoming period. The project covers next phases of the tool development.

2.3.2. Implementation of the final conference

Conference:” *Youth workers in youth clubs – from idea to realization – young people are OK*” represented final event of the project.

The conference took place in Belgrade on 25th of September. The conference has been organized in partnership with Ministry of Youth and Sport, USAID-SLDP and UNICEF. By this, wider public has been introduced with the results of the projects, importance of quality work with young people and its link to local economic development as well as with the examples of good practices. The event gathered 70 representatives from 20 municipalities, including representatives of local self government, youth office coordinators and CSO representatives, along with some of the relevant strategic partners.

The key speakers at the conference were Minister of Youth and Sport – Vanja Udovi i , Željko Ožegovi , state secretary of Ministry of state government and local self-government, USAID Mission Director for Serbia - Azza El Abd, Director of UNICEF in Serbia - Michel Saint-Lot and President of NAPOR - Vanja Kalaba, Jelena Zajeganovi – UNICEF, or e Radoi i – Local Youth office – Raška, Marko Mladenovi – Local Youth Office, Vladicin Han.

At the conference participants of multimodular training and validation of previously attained competencies, received their certificates and took an oath on Ethical conduct of youth workers. In total 31 participants received certificate for Coordinator of youth work programs (25) and assistant coordinator of youth work programs (6), while 6 of them received certificate on participation on multi-modular training. By this, competencies of Youth office coordinators and CSO representatives are built and standardized in order to increase quality of service delivery for youth employment.

“Despite all efforts of the reform of formal education, the fact is that the labor market needs are changing very quickly and that formal education is too slow and unable to adequately respond to the market needs. This is where youth work and non-formal education perfectly fit. Due to their flexibility they can quickly respond to the market needs.

Through the conducted research, it was found that out of 15 most wanted competencies by employers, 11 of them young people gain through youth work! “

Vanja Kalaba,

President of National association of Youth Workers

Final conference:”Youth workers in youth clubs – from idea to realization – young people are OK”; Palace of Serbia, Belgrade, 25th September 2014.

The key speakers at the conference; Minister of Youth and Sport – Vanja Udovi i , Željko Ožegovi , state secretary of Ministry of state government and local self-government, USAID Mission

Director for Serbia - Azza El Abd, Director of UNICEF in Serbia - Michel Saint-Lot and President of NAPOR - Vanja Kalaba, Jelena Zajeganovi – UNICEF, or e Radoi i – Local Youth office – Raška, Marko Mladenovi – Local Youth Office, Vladicin Han.



2.3.3. Ensuring social recognition, informing relevant target groups on the project's progress through social media and the media

Because the tool and the process both have a great importance for Serbian society, we have strongly considered that it was very important to ensure wide social recognition.

It's a very well known fact that civil sector in Serbia is not valued as it should. On the other side, we have lot of young people involved with it. It's very often that even their friends underestimate civil sector and skills that young people can gain through participation in it. So, one of the most important target groups was youth.

Because more than 80% of young people in Serbia use social networks as the main source of information we have used Facebook and Twitter to inform youth about project's progress.

For the project's purpose we created Twitter account NAPOR_Serbia. At the beginning, communication on this network was very poor and rare; it was more like one way communication. Later on, Youth Office coordinators and CSO representatives opened their Twitter accounts and started using it for dissemination of information about small local projects. We have established hashtag #NAPOR, and together with #mladi (Youth), #posao (Job) and #omladinskirad (Youth Work) we had using it during the whole project. Today, NAPOR_Serbia twitter account has 533 followers.



Facebook was the other social network used for ensuring wide recognitions. With lot of posts, pictures, interesting facts, information about open job positions in Serbia etc. we had draw attention of people who have never been interested in civil sector. Then, through a simple and short communication we informed them about project, its goals, results of the research about the impact of nonformal education on youth employability etc. The number of people who saw any of NAPOR Page posts during the whole project was impressive and counts 1 057 290.



Bearing in mind that the overall project's objective is to reduce gap between young peoples' existing skills gained through NFE and the labor market needs, we isolated our second target group: local authorities.

Society usually helps only things and projects that truly understands. To ensure understanding and support of local officials and environment we specifically paid attention on press releases that were sent to medias.

In order to call potential participants of small local projects, inform local public about their progress and about results at the end, we sent press release in each municipality where the small project was conducted. We thought that it was very important to inform local public about what young people and civil sector in their local environment can and will do for youth employability. As results of this, we had more than 50 media appearances during the project.

„УЗ ДОБАР АЛАТ, ВЕШТИНА ЈЕ ЗАНАТ“

НОВИМ ВЕШТИНАМА ДО ПОСЛА

У Сремским Карлоцима је 25. новембра почела реализација пројекта „Уз добар алат, вештина је занат“, који би у наредних 11 месеци требало да окупи бизнис сектор, надлежне државне институције и организације цивилног друштва ради решавања проблема незапослености младих. Пројекат који Национална асоцијација практичара омладинског рада (НАПОР) спроводи уз подршку Министарства омладине и спорта и УСАИД-а, омогућава да 39 представника канцеларија за младе и организација цивилног друштва из 32 општине у Србији, стекну вештине неопходне за добијање посла.

Подаци Националне службе за запошљавање показују да више од 200 хиљада младих у Србији, старости до 30 година, нема посао, што је чак трећина од укупног броја незапослених у нашој земљи. Званично, млади на посао чекају око две године, али стручњаци процењују да је потребно двоструко више времена за добијање радне књижице.

Као одговор на наведене проблеме Национална асоцијација практичара омладинског рада покренула је пројекат како би се, пре свега, утврдило које то вештине у складу са потребама привреде, а затим ће бити развијен систем препознавања, што ће послодавцима олакшати селекцију.

— Прва фаза пројекта је само почетак борбе за системско решавање овог горућег друштвеног проблема, који ће, без одлучнијег ангажовања свих актера, читаве генерације младих оставити без наде у боље сутра - истиче координаторка националне НАПОР-а, Маја Радак.

У наредним месецима биће организоване нове обуке које ће, како је истакнуто, оспособити учеснике да помогну младима у развијању лидерских вештина, решавању конфликтних ситуација, као и у управљању пројектима, што ће им помоћи да постану конкурентни на савременом тржишту рада.



In this early phase of long term process - developing and establishing the tool, we had two more target groups with similar communication goal: government institutions and business sector. At the beginning, we tried to present them a great impact of non-formal education on youth employability. Also, through an nonformal conversation we have tried to make their interest for wide use of this tool in the following years. Finally, advocacy/consultation meetings and final conference held in September was more official channel of communication and also the foundation for future cooperation.

Obviously, target groups were diverse and were demanding different approaches. Because we were in the 1st phase of the process, communication accent was on youth and social network channels. Nevertheless, in the following period, when the tool development and implementation process come to the 2nd phase, PR are going to be more aggressive and based on mass medias.

3. LEASSONS LEARNED

3.1. Non-formal education in youth work in service of youth employability

Through this project, youth work programs have been for the first time tested with specific focus on impact and effectiveness on increasing youth employability. Due to its flexibility, youth work is divided on several types according to program area that covers such as:

- Political awareness and active citizenship
- Healthy life styles
- Prevention of social inclusion
- Raising awareness on ecological issues
- Counselling and informing young people
- Social education (building social skills)
- Etc

Yet, what is important to mention is that no matter which program area youth work covers, young people gain soft/transferable skills. This is due to specific methodology that youth work implement in the programmes.

Therefore the focus on increasing the employability of young people **should not involve changing the nature of youth work**. Youth workers should continue with the programmes that they are already working on, but with an improved awareness of the competences that young people develop, which may have added value to their employability. The programmes should primarily **develop applicable competences with the mandatory practical experience**, including, for example, communication, teamwork, innovation, entrepreneurship, analytical skills, personal organization, conflict management, flexibility and leadership skills. The tool for recognition of young people competencies will have crucial role, not just in recognition of competencies by employers but also in the process of empowering young people to strategically and systematically approach to their career development.

Another aspect is that youth work can be additionally empowered for the role of youth employability by developing new type of youth work with specific area of employability. This type of youth work program, besides gaining transferable skills, could aim toward young people career guidance and even supporting young people in gaining technical skills. This could involve connecting young people and employers, introducing young people with different professions, gaining work experience, job shadowing, empowering for entrepreneurship, etc.

Yet, during implementation, the **organizers of the program should respect the principles of non-formal education and youth work**, particularly those for which the youth emphasize that they contribute to the process of acquiring competences: active participation in the learning process, learning from other participants, supported by competent and trained educators, learning from experience, encouraging openness, readiness and motivation for learning, and so on. Through structured reflection, supporting the learning process and providing feedback – **make sure that after participating in youth work activities the young people become aware of the competences acquired**, and by additional mentoring support and connecting with

experts for career guidance and counselling - **it is necessary to work on the adaptability of youth for implementation of competences acquired in youth work in other contexts and situations (e.g. in a business context).**

It is necessary to work on further developing and promoting the wider use of **Standards for ensuring the quality of youth work**, regardless of who conducts it. Ensure that aspects of the standards implementation be incorporated into strategic documents for the upcoming period, as well as ensure that the **trainings for acquiring the qualification of youth workers** includes this aspects.

4.2. Development of the tool for recognition of young people competencies for youth employability

The main lesson learned when it comes to development of the tool for recognition of young people competencies at national level is to make sure that ownership of the process and of its outcome is achieved by all relevant stakeholders.

This is also mentioned within recommendations of EU Mapping Study and it has been confirmed within this project as well. This approach may be more time consuming contrasting to the approach that is based on development of the tool by the core expert group without participatory consultation processes.

No matter the formal recognition of the tool, no matter the financial resources invested and no matter its final format, the tool will neither be used to a great extent nor be as useful as expected if there is no sense of ownership.

4.3. Professionalization of representatives of local self-government (youth office coordinators)

Beside this project NAPOR in 2012, with the support of USAID-SLDP implemented project “Quality Youth service – step toward sustainable local development” where 24 youth office representatives from 17 municipalities were included, from which 21 were certified. Due to local elections many of Youth office coordinators (9 out of 21 coordinator) have been replaced. This is seen as an urgent issue to be solved. There is no argue that youth office coordinators should be professionalized in order to assure quality implementation of youth action plans at local level. This includes also supporting NFE programs aimed at youth employability through cross sector cooperation that leads to community development.

The question is how to prevent replacement of professionalized youth office coordinators? This is a complex issue that demands systematic solutions and one of them is that workplace of Youth office coordinator should be systematized within local self-government. By this, needed competencies for this position should be defined. Meaning that this position should become professional not political.