



Creating Jobs for Youth!

Experiences of YEP Local Initiatives Programme

POLICY BRIEF

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Context

This Policy Brief provides the insight into the realisation of the Local Initiatives Programme, developed and implemented within Youth Employment Project (YEP) in 2014. YEP is supported by the Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and implemented by the German consultancy GOPA mbH.

The aim of the Youth Employment Project is **to reduce unemployment in BiH, through better integration of young women and men, especially from vulnerable groups, in the labour market.** This aim is to be achieved through three groups of activities targeting: (1) improved performance of public employment services (PES), (2) increased access of disadvantaged youth to the PES services, and (3) increased presence of employment in the public space in BiH.

YEP Local Initiatives Programme (YEP LIP) was devised to test models of youth employment and inclusion in the life of local communities through increased involvement of civil society organisations (CSO). Furthermore, the intent was to develop models of cooperation of public employment services (PES), CSO and employers and to test their efficiency.

YEP LIP is based on three key assumptions, derived from BiH specificities and guidelines of the European Union:

- Key of the improved participation of youth in the labour market is close cooperation of PES, employers, NGOs and other social partners,
- CSOs can provide significant contribution in development of innovative models of self-employment and social entrepreneurship at local level, as well as in creating mechanisms for their reproduction country-wide,
- Youth activation programmes, in addition to direct employment-related efforts, have to include motivation activities and inclusion of youth in general social life.

On YEP Local Initiatives Programme

YEP LIP supported total of 13 projects targeting: (a) social entrepreneurship and self-employment, (b) re-training, and (c) voluntarism. Projects managed to involve near to 500 young persons, out of which 118 were employed as a direct project result. Furthermore, 2 social enterprises and 1 cooperative were established increasing the sustainability of the intervention. Finally, model of municipal support to youth start-ups was extended to 10 new municipalities with prospects for further expansion. Most of partner NGOs managed to secure additional support for the implementation which resulted in the increase of overall available budget for 30%.

In the *Social Entrepreneurship and Self-employment Model*, NGOs and/or youth are taking on development of concrete entrepreneurial initiatives. These initiatives are then to be integrated into PES active employment measures as to expand service provision supply and create synergy with other measures.

In the *Model of Competences Development through Retraining*, NGOs initiate and coordinate trainings aimed at providing youth with skills demanded by the labour market. Employers contribute through provision of training premises and the use of the equipment. Public employment services are the key for the efficacy of the model – they identify and motivate youth fitting the requested profile for the participation in the training.

The *Model of Voluntary Work* aims to encourage youth to actively participate in the life of the local community, build social networks and gain first working experiences. In implementation of these activities, NGOs are especially successful as traditionally recognized providers of opportunities for voluntary engagement. In implementation of YEP LIP this was confirmed, as implementation of local initiatives resulted in a satisfactory level of interest of young people. Furthermore, NGO promotion of the concept of volunteerism is not based solely on time-limited projects, so this model has significant sustainability potential.

What can Civil Society Really Do?

Civil society organisations **can** provide *concrete* jobs for *concrete* young persons. Experiences of the YEP Local Initiatives Programme confirm this statement for all piloted models: re-training, self-employment and social entrepreneurship and voluntarism.

Indicator	Planned	Realised	Compliance
Number of youth involved in activities	569	499	87,70 %
Number of youth employed	123	118	95,23 %

Effectiveness of the intervention: the number of youth involved in the activities and number of placements confirm high effectiveness of the intervention, with the achievement rate amounting over 95%. This rate can be described as exceptionally high having in mind it is achieved in the context of catastrophic floods (May 2014) which affected over 30% of project sites. The potential for further improvement of effectiveness is evident, having in mind opportunity to integrate learned lessons into future programmes.

Efficiency of the intervention: the average price of individual placement of 2.288 (1.170 Eur) is relatively favourable. The same is true for employment ratio (out of 499 involved youth, 188 or 22.44% was employed). This aspect of project result was heavily influenced with the programme designed to encompass as much youth as possible. With more precise targeting (i.e. fewer beneficiaries, more employments) it is possible to further reduce employment cost and increase direct efficiency.

The impact of the intervention: experiences from the YEP LIP implementation are enabling formulation of guidelines for achieving impact on youth employment:

- Public employment services are one of key stakeholders in promotion and implementation of local initiatives. Through partnership with NGOs, PES can mobilize support of local government institutions and other actors for youth employment programmes and thereby diversify the supply of services for youth at the local level. Characteristic examples are demonstrated in local initiatives in Srbac, Modrica, Novi Grad, Cajnice and Travnik.
- Future programmes should foster coordination of related activities and networking of stakeholders: active employment measures (PES), incentives for youth start-ups (municipalities), incentives for agriculture (ministries), grant programmes for NGOs (international and local donors), etc. Characteristic examples are demonstrated in local initiatives implemented by NGOs Kult and Perpetuum Mobile.

Results per Areas of Intervention

Self-employment and Social Entrepreneurship

Self-employment and social entrepreneurship projects are admittedly different in number of important aspects. However, in analysing YEP LIP results, these projects are considered as one model, based on their key characteristic: entrepreneurial nature of the intervention. In self-employment projects, NGOs are supporting youth in initiating small/start-up businesses or agricultural farms. In this model, the burden of formulating entrepreneurial ideas lays upon youth while NGOs have only supporting role. In social entrepreneurship model, entrepreneurs are NGOs and they are responsible for development of innovative entrepreneurial ideas.

Key role in formulating, financing, monitoring and evaluation of these programmes should be with the public employment services. This conclusion is based on characteristics of the EU *Youth Guarantee* programme which promotes PES as key institutional stakeholder, but with partnership-based approach. Integration of NGO

self-employment and social entrepreneurship projects into the PES active employment measures two effects are being achieved: (1) the supply of service providers for youth (as per Guarantee) is being enhanced and (2) existing PES services aimed at personalized support in integration at the labour market are being improved.

International development projects targeting youth employment should bear in mind importance of the PES role and, through their NGO-related activities promote active cooperation with PES. This cooperation is of key importance for building the capacity of PES in realisation of complementary active measures. Additionally, through cooperation with PES, international projects can significantly improve their performance measurement systems.

Public employment services and/or international projects in designing their activities should recognise role and capacities of other stakeholders with expertise and experience in cooperation with NGOs. It is of special importance to synergise with municipal programs of support for youth entrepreneurship, social protection support system for associations of persons with disabilities, etc.

Skills and Competencies Development (Re-training)

According to this model, NGOs establish cooperation with employers within the selected industry (field) and examine their work-force needs and specific scarce occupations/skills. In the next step, NGO defines the training programme, complementary to the skills required by the labour market and animate youth for participation in the training. In identification and motivation of youth, partnership is established with the PES.

Training includes both theoretical and practical part, with practical training, whenever possible, organized directly in the production facilities of employers. Upon the completion of the training, successful candidates are awarded certificates and NGOs and PES assist youth in employment.

The key of the model is in the partnership of NGOs, PES and employers with clearly defined tasks and responsibilities for each partner:

- NGOs have the role of initiators, coordinators and providers of human and material resources: NGOs are focal point, responsible for overall results,
- Employers are providing contribution through use of production facilities and equipment. Professional staff of employers often actively engages in training in order to identify the most committed candidates for employment,
- PES (Jobclubs) identify and motivate youth meeting requested preconditions for participation in the training. The quality of the group (expressed through

motivation, commitment and pre-knowledge) directly impacts the number of employments upon the completion of the training. Additionally, skills provided to the youth by the Jobclubs have positive impact on employment in critical point of the project: when, upon the completion of the training, youth negotiate the employment with the employers.

Voluntarism

NGOs are traditional providers of voluntary activities in BiH. Experiences suggest that the level of interest of youth increases with time – once organization becomes established in this field, it no longer experiences problems in motivating youth for participation in voluntary work.

Most NGOs in their work promote the voluntarism by combining the approach of voluntary work **of youth** (for the wellbeing of the community) and voluntary work (of professionals of other age groups) **for youth**. Activities of voluntarism promotion thereby require lesser funds to perform, expertise is usually present in the community and benefits are multifaceted.

Experiences of the YEP LIP suggest that integration of voluntary activities into employment projects contributes to the more effective integration of youth at the labour market. Through these activities, young persons change their mindset, build professionalism and social networks and gain necessary experiences. Voluntary activities are insufficient to produce new employments by themselves, but combined with focused employment-related activities they augment overall results.

Recommendations

Youth employment reform practices in BiH should be harmonized with EU concept of *Youth Guarantee*. The complexity of application of this concept in BiH environment, calls for preparatory phase which implies:

- Continuation of development of procedures for organization, realization and evaluation of new services for PES clients, including web site/portal for information exchange on opportunities for youth in education, training, employment, voluntary work, apprenticeship and similar.
- Identification, capacity building and networking of all service providers for youth capable of participating in the realization of the Youth Guarantee program at the local level, including municipalities, ministries, NGOs and others.
- Developing partnership of PES with non-governmental organisations in realisation of concrete employment activities through active employment measures. The aim

of this partnership is to ensure continued and coordinated support for development of **sustainable employment programmes** (social enterprises, cooperatives) and thereby strengthens supply of service providers and integrate it into the PES active employment measures:

- **Model of (agricultural) cooperatives** possesses significant potential for addressing the needs of youth with low education level in rural areas – target population with least possibility to use other active employment measures due to geographical distribution and communication restrictions. The focus in development of this model should be on elimination of key obstacles: (1) identification of cultures required on the market and mastering new skills for growing these crops, (2) professional empowerment of cooperatives in the marketing of products, (3) creating a more stimulating legislative framework, and (4) fundraising for initial investments.
- **Social entrepreneurship model** enables use of local potentials for sustainable development of local communities. Focus in development of this model should be on: (1) improvement of legislative framework, animation and (2) capacity building of stakeholders (primarily NGOs) in practical deployment of the model – registration of social enterprises.
- Sustainable employment programmes should be complemented with:
 - Activation strategies and activities: group counselling (Jobclubs/PES), voluntary programs (NGOs), informing youth on opportunities for education, training and employment (info-packages), etc.
 - Re-training programs adjusted to the needs of employers. Sustainability of these programs can be enhanced through PES and resources of employers, education system and local communities.
- Described models do not have to be implemented separately. The optimal concept of their realisation is based on combining approaches described above into unique local intervention.

Realisation of these recommendations requires the **joint platform for coordination of activities, exchange of experiences and peer education on modalities of self-employment and entrepreneurship**. This platform should be used as organisational backbone for improvement of local, regional and policies at the BH level aimed at creating enabling environment: access to financial resources, building up business infrastructure (co-working spaces, social incubators, etc.), education opportunities (especially in the field of business competencies), legal framework for WISE enterprises, etc. Having in mind European context (Youth Guarantee), establishing links between this platform and corresponding European networks is of crucial importance.