

YOUTH JOB CENTRES ARE ONE-STOP-SHOPS PROVIDING COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO CHOOSE A SUITABLE CAREER, FIND WORK OR RETURN TO EDUCATION.

## Youth Job Centres

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### LITHUANIA

The Lithuanian Youth Job Centres provide counselling and support to young people under the age of 29 to choose a career that is right for them, enter the labour market or return to education. This is done through numerous activities, such as individual tailored support, group counselling, career and education events, cooperation with education providers and employers, job search and business start-up support, and workshops to help young people become more motivated and self-reliant.

Young people do not need to register with the Lithuanian PES to access this support. The Youth Job Centres work in cooperation with a range of municipal, non-governmental and private stakeholders to ensure that young people can receive a range of support for different needs. The Youth Job Centres also operate in a more relaxed and informal environment in order to be more attractive to young people.

Name of the PES

Lithuanian PES (Lithuanian Employment Service)

Scope of measure

National

When was the practice implemented?

Since 1999 - ongoing

What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?

The Youth Job Centres were introduced for a number of reasons. Firstly, to create a contact point for youth peers, job counsellors, employers, education providers and other relevant labour market actors, to work together in providing better support for young people both in the labour market and from a broader social integration perspective. The Youth Job Centres were also introduced to increase the coverage and reach of the Lithuanian PES services across the country for young people, including to more remote areas.

The first 11 Youth Job Centres were established in 1999-2009. The initial idea was to have centres situated in larger cities where there is a bigger concentration of young people. This could help to determine if young people really needed the Centres. Since then, the network has expanded and, at the time of writing, there are 45 Youth Job Centres in Lithuania covering almost all municipalities. The peak period for increasing the number of Youth Job Centres was 2010-15 following the economic and financial crisis when youth unemployment rates increased dramatically. This provided a rationale for the Lithuanian PES to provide services closer to young people and adapt them to their needs.

The Youth Job Centres also contribute to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee by helping young people move successfully from education to work and to adapt to changes in the labour market. They offer an alternative service exclusively for young Lithuanian PES clients. Despite being part of the Lithuanian PES, the Youth Job Centres have their own brand and visual identity. They generally have a more informal environment, where there is no obligatory registration and services are free of charge

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

- ▶ The national PES monitors the Youth Job Centres. There is a uniform method for the provision of counselling for young people, therefore all centres follow the same framework developed by the national PES;
- ▶ The Youth Job Centres have strong partnerships with employers, entrepreneurship organisations, local municipalities, labour inspectorates and other service providers such as psychologists. Especially for young people with complex problems, one institution is usually not sufficient to provide them with all the help they need. Such partnerships are therefore important for providing a range of services and support.

Which groups were targeted by the practice?	Young people under the age of 29 (including higher grade school students and university graduates) who are looking for jobs or are planning their professional career are directly targeted. Other target groups are employers seeking to recruit young people, as well as organisations providing volunteering opportunities for young people.
What were the practice's main objectives?	<p>The aim of the Youth Job Centres is to help young people under the age of 29 choose a suitable career, successfully move from education to work and adapt to changes in the labour market. The Centres also aim to help early school leavers and low-skilled young people return to the education system. Moreover, they help to develop young people's skills that are required to compete in the labour market and ensure positive provisions for lifelong learning.</p> <p>The Youth Job Centres ensure the provision of labour market services for young people and employers seeking to employ them, by applying creative, innovative and effective strategies, methods and tools for targeting young people. The ultimate objective is to increase youth employment and social integration.</p>
What activities were carried out?	<p>The activities carried out include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The Centres carry out individual/group consultations with young people on employment opportunities in the local areas. Available professions in the local area are mapped out and analysed, and information on the situation and trends in the labour market is collected. Consultations are also carried out with young people on the possibilities of acquiring a vocational education and undergoing retraining.</li> <li>▶ The Youth Job Centres actively cooperate with local employers and advertise lists of new graduates which employers can consult when looking to hire.</li> <li>▶ Young people also have the opportunity to visit potential employers and participate in employer events. Young people under 18 contact the Youth Job Centres in search of temporary employment during their summer holidays.</li> <li>▶ Services are tailored to individual needs. If a young person needs further support, the Centres can arrange for the relevant partners to provide it.</li> <li>▶ Career counselling and planning activities take place at the Youth Job Centres, including tests for professional suitability and determining personality type. In 2018, psychological counselling also became available inhouse on a permanent basis for young people when needed.</li> <li>▶ The Centres provide information to young people who wish to return to education, including information on courses, education establishments and the requirements for joining. Young people can visit the education providers to see how they work and attend some lessons to get a better idea of whether or not a particular course is suited to them.</li> <li>▶ Information events also take place on a cyclical basis on career planning, for instance in schools to advise students of the professions which are currently in demand in the labour market. The largest event is the International Exhibition of Knowledge and Education Studies<sup>1</sup> a three-day long career fair in Vilnius, Lithuania. Some of the largest employers attend - especially from sectors which are lacking a workforce such as IT engineering - and provide information on working in these sectors. Representatives from all Youth Job Centres in Lithuania attend the fair, providing them with a good opportunity to exchange best practices. The Youth Job Centres have attended the fair four years in a row, and have built on their experiences each year.</li> <li>▶ Job search and business start-up support is provided in cooperation with partners. This is done for instance through the Youth Guarantee and European Social Fund projects for young people, preparation of employment documents, and preparation for job interviews.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► A cycle of motivational workshops is organised on a regular basis throughout the year, and are offered to participants according to their individual needs. They are usually hosted at the Youth Job Centres, and in some cases in companies or universities. They cover three themes: (1) self-knowledge and evaluation, designed to develop self-cognitive skills, to reveal strengths and qualities of personality to be improved, to promote adequate self-esteem, and to strengthen self-confidence; (2) support participants to understand their current state, enhance motivation and activity, develop their ability to express personal desires and aspirations for further activities; (3) discuss the principle of formulating goals, and preparing an individual action plan to reach these goals. One cycle of workshops consists of four sessions, the duration of which is around two hours. A special three-day workshop is also organised for young people who are undecided about their future, together with the psychologist and career councillor. Moreover, in 2018 a workshop was organised for young women with the aim of helping them find a suitable place in the labour market and integrate into society after maternity leave. These workshops are advertised on the Facebook page for the Youth Job Centres.</li> <li>► The Youth Job Centres have a Facebook profile where participants can learn about upcoming events and read success stories of their peers who have previously received consultation through the Centres.<sup>2</sup> This aspect of peer support and peer opinion is very important. Young people can also ask questions through this Facebook page.</li> </ul>
What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?	Youth Job Centres themselves have small teams of youth support staff. For further support from the Lithuanian PES, young people can register with the PES via a Youth Job Centre, who will direct the young person to the appropriate PES division.
What were the source(s) of funding?	National budget
What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	<p>In 2017 counselling services were provided to 67 358 young clients, of which 32 354 received individual services. Moreover, 3 432 events were organised and 19 125 young job seekers participated in these events.</p> <p>In 2018, 54 866 young people received career planning counselling in Youth Job Centres. Individual counselling about job vacancies, study programmes, vocational training possibilities, etc. was provided to 22 357 young clients. Another 23 325 were contacted by phone or e-mail. Moreover, in 2018 the Youth Job Centres organised 3 100 events with social partners regarding the promotion of entrepreneurship, career planning and motivation. The number of participants in these events was 12 714.</p>
What outcomes have been identified?	In 2018, 11 700 young people (16-29 years old) participated in active labour market policy measures (ALMP), of which the largest number (5 800 or 49.9 %) participated in vocational training programmes. Furthermore, 3 900 (33.6 %) were employed using subsidies, and 8 300 young people (under 29) started activities as self-employed. The figures for 2017 were slightly higher with 17 000 young people (16-29 years old) participating in ALMPs, of which the largest number (9 500 or 55.9 %) were involved in vocational training. A total of 6 100 (35.9 %) were employed using subsidies, while 12 400 started self-employment activities.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The key lessons learnt and factors for success are:

- ▶ Political will was an important factor which enabled the introduction and development of the Youth Job Centres. Strong leadership is also important to drive this process forward.
- ▶ It was important to have developed the Youth Job Centre's identity in a way that is more attractive for young people, with a more informal environment that creates a friendly and more relaxed atmosphere for young people, for instance, in the style of a café.
- ▶ Cooperation and communication is needed with state and municipal institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations and employers. This is necessary to ensure that a range of services can be provided to young people in a holistic manner. This can also help to better address more complex issues associated with young people.

Contact details for further information

Name: Eglė Švabauskienė

Email: [egle.svabauskiene@uzt.lt](mailto:egle.svabauskiene@uzt.lt)

Telephone: +370 5 2745881