

PERIODIC EVALUATION of the local youth employment initiative programmes

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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND
POVERTY REDUCTION
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Editor:

Dragana Jovanović Arijas

Authors:

Aleksandra Lakićević Dobrić

Design and prepress:

Dalibor Jovanović



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1. Introduction

The project “Support for the Implementation of the Employment and Social Policy Reform Programme in the Republic of Serbia with a Focus on Employment Policy and Youth Employment Promotion” (Youth Employment Initiative) is part of a broader programme financially supported by the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) entitled “Education to Employability (E2E): Youth Skills Public Private Partnership Development in Serbia”. The overall goal of this programme is an inclusive and sustainable increase of youth employment in Serbia.

The initiative is being implemented through innovative and comprehensive approaches in various sectors working on youth unemployment issues, leading to the achievement of goals envisaged by the relevant strategic documents, particularly the Employment and Social Reform Programme. The project is being implemented by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) in partnership with key line ministries responsible for youth employment and employability policies in the Republic of Serbia - Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The initial/pilot phase of the programme “Youth Employment Initiative” lasted from October 2015 to October 2016. The main activity under the project was the “Local Youth Employment Initiatives Programme” (hereinafter: Programme), implemented through a public call “Support for Innovative Approaches for Increasing Youth Employment and Employability” during the period February-July 2016. Ten innovative approaches and solutions have been provided with support during the pilot phase of the Programme through three different support models, depending on maturity of innovation.

Based on the findings of the pilot phase evaluation¹ and a consultative process with civil society organizations (CSO) – bearers of innovative models for increasing youth employment and employability, the SIPRU team, in partnership with the line ministries, approved the continuation of support to the development of social innovation for six innovative models for increasing youth employment and employability during the main Programme phase from February 2017 to February 2018. Based on the experiences from the pilot phase, in the spring of 2017, a second public call was issued under the title “Support for Innovative Approaches for Increasing Youth Employment and Employability”, approving nine projects - models for increasing youth employment and employability.

¹ http://sociojalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Evaluacija_Javnog_konkursa_Podrska_inovativnim_prístupima_za_povećanje_zaposlijanja_i_zaposlijivosti_mladih.pdf

The purpose of the periodic evaluation is to use the analysis of results, experiences and lessons learned during the pilot and main phase of the Programme, especially from the standpoint of youth who participated as end beneficiaries, to contribute to the process of defining recommendations for public policy development with the aim of increasing youth employment and employability.

2. Local Youth Employment Initiatives Programme - Main Phase

During the main phase of the Local Youth Employment Initiatives Programme (February 2017 – February 2018) a continuation was approved through direct support for the development of innovation under the six innovative local projects/models for increasing youth employment and employability from the pilot call “Support for Innovative Approaches for Increasing Youth Employment and Employability” (February - July 2016).

The overall goal of the Programme is support to innovative approaches that contribute to resolving the issue of youth (15 to 30 years of age) employment or employability through local partnerships of civil society organizations and the private sector. The innovative approaches should contribute to the achievement of one or several **specific objectives**:

- ✓ **Support job creation** (e.g. through support to youth entrepreneurship, improved access to information, education, business advisory services and mentorship);
- ✓ **Increase youth employability, mobility and flexibility** (e.g. working/professional apprenticeships in small or medium-sized enterprises, youth organizations and civil society organizations, and opportunities for the development of generic, and/or transferable skills);
- ✓ **Contribute to entrepreneurial learning** for youth through formal and non-formal education;
- ✓ **Increase the employability of young women and men facing additional barriers when entering the labour market** (e.g. youth without qualifications, young Roma, youth with disabilities, youth leaving the institutional care system and other vulnerable groups of the population covered by various strategic documents).

The call supported projects/innovative models through three different models of support to the development of social innovation:

Support model 1: Support to the early development of innovative approaches to youth employment so that an idea that fits a problem in the community could be developed up to the phase where it can be piloted/tested.

Support model 2: Support to the improvement of innovative approaches to youth employment so that an innovative solution that has already been developed can be applied, or if already being implemented, to be further improved (by developing those segments proven to be necessary based on the lessons learned during implementation).

Support model 3: Support to the growth and expansion, and/or scaling-up of those innovative approaches to youth employment that have proven to be successful in practice.

The following table lists projects that have received continued support for the development of social innovation for increasing youth employment and employability during the main phase of the Programme in 2017.

Table 1. Innovative models for increasing youth employment and employability under the main phase of the Programme (February 2017 - February 2018):

Ref. no.	Project name	Lead applicant (CSO)	Location	Project budget (CHF)
MODEL 1				
1.	ENCOUNTER	Roma Women of Vojvodina	Municipality of Novi Bečej (settlements: Novi Bečej, Novo Miloševo, Bočar and Kumane)	2,999
MODEL 2				
2.	Practical Academy	Association for Development Kamenica	Nišava County: City of Niš, municipalities of Ražanj, Aleksinac, Merošina, Doljevac, Gadžin Han and Svrlijig	25,000
3.	BE DIFFERENT 2! – Confirming the scalability of the <i>Activator</i> model through developing implementation capacities in accordance with the needs of an increasing number of beneficiaries from the Jablanički County	European Movement in Serbia Leskovac	Leskovac, Vlasotince, Lebane, Medveđa, Bojnik, Crna Trava	25,000
4.	DAFF Agribusiness Start-Up for Youth 2	Association Fenomena	Raški, Moravički, Zlatiborski and Podunavski counties	25,000
MODEL 3				
5.	Local Partnerships for Youth Employment - Education Fit for the Economy	Development Business Centre Kragujevac	Kragujevac	24,880
6.	Research Youth Business 2	Regional Educational Centre Banat	Three local self-governments within the territory of Banat (Kikinda), Bačka (Novi Sad) and Srem (Stara Pazova)	26,000

The programme *Encounter* by the association Roma Women of Vojvodina is a continuation of the model “*Do You Know? You Can!*” developed during the pilot phase of the Programme. The intent was to support the continued development of this model through a combined approach - Support model 1, with the goal of improving the project, and then, through Support model 2, to apply it and test it in practice. The improved model of the *Encounter* programme for increasing employment and employability among young Roma, according to the assessment of the SIPRU team, was not sufficiently based on a model developed in earlier phase, and thus it was not sufficiently elaborated to be supported through Support model 2 during the continuation of the main phase of the Programme. Therefore this model is not considered further in the report, but Appendix 1 provides an overview of the *Encounter* programme under Support model 1.

3. Main Findings

The Programme has successfully identified and supported the development and improvement of local innovative approaches to increasing youth employment and employability through local intersectoral partnerships, thereby achieving the specific objectives of the Programme: job creation through entrepreneurship, improved access to information, education and training, business advisory services and mentorship, financial support; contribution to increased youth employability, mobility and flexibility, including youth faced with additional obstacles on the labour market, through professional apprenticeships in the business, public and civil sector, improvement of transferable and generic skills, and entrepreneurial learning for youth through non-formal and formal education.

The number of Programme participants this year has been nearly doubled compared to the pilot phase of the Programme. The Programme covered 200 young participants in 2017, 61% of them female. Young people are coming from various towns across Serbia - in addition to towns where programme activities have been implemented (Kraljevo, Leskovac, Novi Sad, Kikinda, Stara Pazova and Niš), youth are also coming from neighbouring towns and settlements (such as Čačak, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Varvarin, etc.). **The pilot phase of the Programme (2016) covered 106 young participants in 2017, 53.8% of them female.**

During 2017 a total of 200 young people have completed entrepreneurship training and/or professional apprenticeships, while just over two thirds had access to business advisory services and mentorship: 54 young people (M-23 and F-31) have completed training, apprenticeships, or gained mentor support under the programme *Practical Academy*; 42 of them (M-16 and F-26) are beneficiaries of the innovative services

of the multi-sectoral cluster for entrepreneurial employment of youth “Activator”, comprised of entrepreneurial training, professional apprenticeship and mentor support; a total of 13 youth (M-3 and F-10) have completed the educational programme *DAFF Agribusiness Start-Up for Youth* for promoting youth entrepreneurship in agriculture; 91 young persons (M-36 and F-55) have completed entrepreneurial training under the programme *Research Your Business*, with 32 persons (M-14 and F-18) completing advanced entrepreneurial training in addition to the basic training.

According to the results achieved to date in implementing this year’s Programme, **18.5% (37) participants of the 2017 Programme have started their own business, 24 of them female. A total of 15 young people (40%) have started their business with financial support through the programme.** The highest number of newly founded businesses are in the services sector, followed by manufacturing and agricultural production.

After just over a year, 58.5% of all participants of the pilot phase of the Programme from 2016 have found a job or became self-employed, approximately 2.5 times more than at the end of the previous year.

Youth faced with additional barriers on the labour market comprise 59% of all Programme participants in 2017; they are mainly long-term unemployed youth or youth from rural areas, and also include young people from financially vulnerable families, youth under informal employment, non-qualified youth, youth with disabilities, youth from the social protection system, Roma, etc. **Young people facing additional barriers in the labour market comprise 68.9% of all the participants of the pilot phase of the Programme.** However, during the two years the Programme has had very little success in including young men and women who are not employed, in education or training – the NEET category.

The highest number of young people in the group of young Programme participants in 2017 are those with tertiary levels of education, i.e. higher education (37%), followed by participants having completed secondary education (33.5%), then students (28%) and a negligible share of persons with primary education only. This data corresponds with data on high unemployment rates of youth with tertiary education in Serbia, but also indicates that these young people have a need for support when entering the labour market. **A large number of these young people were educated for occupations shown by surveys to be surplus on the labour market. During the pilot phase of the Programme the largest group were youth with secondary education (51.9%),** followed by tertiary education, i.e. higher education (41.5%), students (5.7%) and one person with primary education.

The quality of employment of youth from the pilot phase of the Programme is low. However, this quality does not stand out from the quality of employment in Serbia, shown by

recent studies to be inadequate, i.e. low. Youth are a particularly vulnerable group on this type of a labour market; therefore this group of young people has also shown certain indicators that are less favourable compared to the overall population - a higher share of flexible work contracts, a high share of employees working in jobs requiring lower qualifications, lack of opportunities for professional development and promotion, etc.

The sample of unemployed youth from the 2016 Programme leaves the impression of having good working habits, high working ethics and skills in demand by employers; however, their problem is not finding a job, but the selection of jobs. This conclusion illustrates the quality of youth employment, its main characteristic being the flexibility of contracts with lower levels of security, work in jobs requiring lower qualification levels, etc.

On the other hand, under circumstances of extreme vulnerability of young businesses, with little support during early days of development and a constant struggle to survive, **the findings of the monitoring of the sustainability and job generation of newly founded businesses through the Programme are positive.** This assessment is primarily indicated by job satisfaction and the dedication of youth to continue working and expanding their business. In addition to this positive trend, there were businesses that failed to survive on the market during the past period, despite financial incentives and non-financial support.

The main challenges faced by youth from the Programme in the labour market are said to be: a) lack of harmonization between the educational system and the needs of the economy and lack of harmonization of youth occupations with the labour market, lack of adequate jobs and offer, b) low quality of employment, c) deviations in the labour market - unfair market competition, unfair and non-transparent hiring, d) refusal of businesses to provide an opportunity for youth to acquire work experience and professional apprenticeships - no understanding among the business and private sector for the needs of youth, nor are they sufficiently involved in youth education/training for the needs of the labour market, e) insufficient funds for stimulating youth employment and a non-stimulative business environment, and f) (de)motivation of part of the young population due to all the above challenges, particularly noting the passivity of youth in rural areas where opportunities are very limited - i.e. there are none.

Young people need support in job-seeking and improving their employment prospects. In addition to financial support for stimulating new businesses they also recognize the need for non-financial, advisory support. They also have the need for acquiring adequate and recognized apprenticeships and work experience, and the need to be heard by businesses and the private sector. Furthermore, they need opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, access to relevant information, making contacts and

expanding their business network, applying professional know-how in the context of the economy, confirmation of business ideas, acquisition of self-confidence and more self-confidence in their approach when meeting employers or on the labour market.

Young people believe that support for youth employment should be available at the system level - through local institutions, non-government organizations and businesses, and through greater accessibility and more such programmes for youth. However, the **local self-government, local institutions and representatives of the business sector are working very little/insufficiently on issues faced by youth when entering the labour market and promoting youth employment.** Young people particularly note a **lack of interest and understanding by businesses and the private sector for the needs of youth, inaccessibility of the private sector for acquiring practical education, and being closed off against acquiring first work experiences.**

Participation in the Programme contributed to a change in the attitude of youth regarding higher flexibility and mobility in the labour market. Young unemployed persons from the 2016 Programme believe their employment prospects remain good even a year after the completion of the Programme, and that they have received an impetus to continue work on improving their competences. Increased youth elasticity in adapting to the circumstances on the labour market is a very important effect and lasting value of the Programme in a world of rapid change, and thus changes in the labour market.

According to two-thirds of the young participants from 2017, the Programme fully responded to their needs in the labour market, but also to the elimination of barriers faced when entering the labour market. This represents extraordinary success for individual programmes, managing to correctly recognize the needs of youth and attract the target group, but also to meet the expectations of young people through content. **Every participant of the 2017 Programme and of each individual programme would recommend it to their friends, colleagues, relatives, etc.**

Based on the responses of young participants from 2017, the Programme VERY SIGNIFICANTLY contributes to the development of interpersonal competences and SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTES to the development of working and personal competences. Compared to the sample of youth from 2017, the young participants of the pilot phase of the Programme have evaluated the contribution of the programme to each of the three competence groups with a lower grade, but they nevertheless assessed that the Programme is SIGNIFICANTLY contributing to the development of these competences. **Despite slight differences in the evaluation of the contribution of the Programme to the development of competences relevant for the labour market, evaluations at the**

level of **SIGNIFICANT** and **VERY SIGNIFICANT** contributions represent an extraordinary effect of the Programme as a whole as well as individual programmes for developing lasting capacities and contributing to the improvement of youth employability.

For youth from 2017 the most important element for the process of learning and development of competences was shown to be the practical training (professional and entrepreneurial), mentor support and the professional knowledge of the educators. Experience-based learning, professional apprenticeships, learning from others and support in taking on responsibilities are also aspects highly assessed by Programme participants. **There is accordance under the first three aspects of the Programme with young participants of the pilot phase of the Programme - the only difference is in the sequence, since they assessed the professional knowledge of the educators as more useful than mentor support.** Flexibility stands out among the important aspects of the programme for the group of youth from 2016, not the case for the new generation of young Programme participants.

As the most important benefits of participation in the programme youth from the pilot and main phase of the Programme note the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, acquisition of contacts and greater self-confidence regarding their competences in the labour market. As expected, young people from the pilot phase of the Programme have had greater benefits from achieving (self) employment, increasing their income and acquiring work experience compared to this year's programme participants, since the programmes are still under way. This year, the youth from the pilot phase of the Programme have also assessed at an approximately lower, but similar level the benefits of the programme for increasing attractiveness on the labour market and making use of opportunities for employment and professional development.

In addition to the above, discussions with youth indicate that perhaps the greatest benefit of Programme participation is that these young people feel empowered for further endeavours on the path of achieving their professional goals. The Programme has contributed to the readiness of these young people to accept challenges and create solutions. Participation in the Programme was also an impetus for the creation of new business ideas, for identifying potential partners, necessary resources and sources of support; perhaps the most important was raising awareness of the potential and power of these young people - even if Programme participation does not immediately result in employment, it strongly improves employment prospects.

Youth are a particularly vulnerable category, even when they are part of the group of more educated and motivated young people, whose employment prospects are far greater. The findings of this evaluation indicate that they also face additional barriers and need support for entering the labour market. In a context of high youth unemployment, underdeveloped entrepreneurial tradition and culture, non-stimulative regulatory framework for stimulating youth entrepreneurship, insufficient financial and non-financial support, insufficient support programmes for youth employment and passive or insufficiently prepared private sector to be socially responsible in the field of youth education, it is no wonder that the modest supply of youth support programmes is reached only by the most dedicated. Just as the previous evaluation has shown, a careful balance must be struck between effectiveness and fairness of support. **The programme has shown that it provides an impetus for youth to be proactive, but it remains a large challenge how to reach, motivate and include those youth who are most distant from the labour market.**

The decision to directly provide continued support for these innovative models was shown to be justified, because it was precisely the continuity of support that has contributed to multiple benefits and “rounding off” the work started in 2016. CSO capacities have been improved, their status in the local communities has been strengthened, where youth have been recognized as relevant stakeholders and leaders in resolving the issue of employment and employability, all the innovative models have confirmed their potential for expansion and sustainability, a systematic initiative has been started in the educational sector for resolving the causes of issues in employment and employability, and the effects on improving the status of youth in the labour market have been strengthened overall.

Four innovative models for increasing youth employment and employability have confirmed their scaling potential through the results achieved. The timeframe, scope and form that this potential can be realized through should be a topic for collecting evidence during the coming period - through an analysis of the net effects of implemented measures, cost-benefit analyses, evaluation and monitoring of participants during the forthcoming period, etc.

- ❖ *Practical Academy* – model of innovative professional apprenticeship of students in SMEE and the public sector with the aim of increasing youth employability through the development of their locally applicable practical know-how and provision of developmental support to the economy of underdeveloped municipalities.
- ❖ *Be different* – innovative model of a multi-sector cluster for entrepreneurial employment of youth “Activator”, increasing youth employability and contributing to the creation of new jobs through a set of innovative services for the development of entrepreneurial learning.

- ❖ *DAFF agribusiness start-up for youth* – innovative model for promoting youth entrepreneurship in agriculture and a contribution to entrepreneurial learning for youth, particularly those encountering additional barriers in employment.
- ❖ *Develop your business* – innovative model of improving youth knowledge and skills on entrepreneurship with the aim of creating new jobs and raising the awareness of local communities on the importance of non-formal education, life-long learning and mentor programmes for the empowerment and development of an entrepreneurial ambience among youth.

One model has started a systemic change in the sector of education:

- ❖ *Local partnerships for youth employment – education fit for business* represents a systemic change through the improvement of the secondary vocational education programme and specific improvements to educational curricula for two profiles: mechanical engineering technician for computer design (MTKK) and technician for computer control (TKU) so that they correspond to the requirements of employers in the metals processing sector. Curriculum changes are based on the successful results of the innovative model of the *Development Partnerships for Youth Employment*.

The call procedure and documentation of the second public call “Support for Innovative Approaches to Increasing Youth Employment and Employability” has been improved by integrating the lessons learned, experiences and recommendations of the CfP from the pilot phase of the Programme. Likewise, call procedures are to a large extent harmonized with the application procedures for grants under the IPA II programme. Furthermore, **since the goals of the Programme include strengthening the capacities of stakeholders in the public, private and civil sector in the creation of innovative and sustainable solutions for increasing youth employment and employability, contributing to the use of IPA II funds in the field of youth employment and employability in the forthcoming cycle, this is a very useful improvement of the selection process.** All of the above improvements have set the stage for improving the quality and growth of innovative approaches to support for youth in transition towards the labour market.

4. Recommendations

This segment of the report lists recommendations stemming from the main findings of the periodic evaluation, encompassing the monitoring of the implementation of innovative solutions for increasing youth employment and employability, focus groups and interviews with young participants of the pilot Programme and 2017 Programme, and an overview of the improvement of the second CfP “Support for Innovative Approaches for Increasing Youth Employment and Employability”.

The recommendations relate to ideas for directions and considerations for further development and improvement of innovative models for increasing youth employment and employability and the Programme as a whole, and proposals for public policies for support to youth employment and employability based on the lessons learned and experiences of developing innovative models for resolving the issue of youth employment.

a. Recommendations for the supported projects/models under the Programme and the Programme as a whole

Improve the monitoring and reporting system for the programme and programme participants – although progress can be noted here based on guidance by the SIPRU team, the system of monitoring and evaluation of the success of the projects should be systematically implemented and comprehensive. The precondition for this are databases of project participants containing their main socio-demographic characteristics (gender, qualifications, age, status in the labour market) providing for an analysis of the coverage of the most vulnerable groups of youth in the labour market. Monitoring youth regarding their status on the labour market (employed/self-employed) also needs to be provided after a certain period of time (after the implementation of activities, six months, one year or more, if possible). A request for participation in monitoring even after the project is complete should be one of the obligations of the participants stated in the contracts with the beneficiaries. This data is the basis for evaluating whether participation in the programme helped young people find a long-term solution for the problem of unemployment and improve their status in the labour market. An analysis over more complete databases can indicate with certainty further directions for action to improve the model, but also provide data on the effects of the programme, comprising the basic argumentation for scaling and directions for scaling of the model. A significantly expanded database of programme beneficiaries and implementation experience of a minimum of two cycles of support to youth, the analysis of the effects of the implemented measures and cost-benefit analyses represent minimum requirements.

Intensify the promotion of success stories for young participants of previous cycles of the programme – successful attendants of previous cycles of the programme are role models to new participants of the programme - they can positively motivate youth to enter the programme.

Success stories of programme participants from previous phases should be integrated in the content of trainings (case studies) and additional support services - counselling, mentorship (some projects have successfully done this: EPuS Leskovac, Association Fenomena, but REC Banat did not). The success stories of young participants should be featured more prominently on websites, social networks, and important events, since they represent precisely the real and desired effects of the programme.

Support in the form of business counselling and mentor support should be provided for all interested newly founded businesses and not limited only to the winners of prizes and/or investments - support for the development of business operations of newly founded businesses can considerably improve the sustainability and success of newly founded businesses, and thus the effects of the programme. Organizations can become hubs for new companies, business networking, exchange, support and counselling, creating a new resources and enriching the supply of services for supporting youth entrepreneurship, and thus stimulating local economic development.

Information and campaigns for submitting applications for programme participation should be aimed at those youth farthest from the labour market – providing information through classical channels, the branch office of the National Employment Service and the internet, is most frequently not the communication channel for young people facing additional barriers to access to the labour market or members of youth NEET populations. During campaigns it is necessary to approach these categories of youth, who need participation in such programmes the most. The communication strategy should contain multiple direct channels of communication with youth - through CSOs working in the field with direct beneficiaries, through faculties/schools, through participation in events where youth gather (festivals, concerts, etc.).

Improve public recognition of acquired competences and certificates through non-formal training programmes, representing one of the ways to improve the system of monitoring and evaluating the development of youth competences - in addition to certificates and recommendations for young programme participants, the programme implementers should improve the system for recognizing acquired competences that could include self-evaluation instruments, and external evaluation of programme coordinators or partners from the private sector. Awareness and recognition of the competences acquired by youth is a more successful method of presentation on the labour market, with potential employers and/or investors. In order to recognize the quality of non-formal education programmes, organizations can make use of the options offered by the Law on Adult Education and acquire the status of a publicly recognized organizer of adult education, thereby being recognized in the education system, and thus gaining recognition for the issued public documents (certificates, etc.).

Strengthen cooperation with representatives of local self-governments with the goal of advocacy, but also strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders for integrating the

needs of youth into local strategic policies. Despite the fact that support for youth was recognized as one of the priorities of the national socio-economic development policy and local policies, local self-governments do not allocate enough funds for support programmes for youth employment and youth entrepreneurship, and they have limited administrative and human capacities for resolving the issue of youth unemployment. Including representatives of local self-governments in all phases of the programme, providing support to local policy programming, improved coordination and monitoring of youth employment measures for a more efficient utilization of resources will contribute to the sustainability of support measures for youth, and thus to local economic development.

Target activities towards rural and underdeveloped areas – although the individual programmes and the Programme as a whole managed to cover youth from underdeveloped and rural areas (and support programmes to youth in these communities are rare), all subsequent cycles, due to the lack or very limited nature of the supply of youth programmes, should give preference precisely to underdeveloped and rural areas and youth coming from them.

More intensely promote the concepts of dignified work and corporate social responsibility through criteria for the selection of partners from the private sector and integration into the curricula of trainings and support through the programmes. One of the goals of these programmes is to raise the standard of doing business, business culture and practice, thus the replication of bad market and business practices must be prevented in any way possible.

b. [Recommendations for public policies for support to youth employment and employability](#)

The main findings of this analysis lead to several recommendations for systemic measures, with the inclusion of all social stakeholders that need to contribute to resolving the issue of low youth employment and employability.

In accordance with the developed national and local strategic framework recognizing the issue of youth employment and employability, **secure funds through allocations from the national and local budgets and through programming development donor funds for various long-term and short-term programmes and measures for increasing youth employment and employability.** Thus provide for the dissemination and mainstreaming of those programmes that have shown good results and high success rates, and enable the early development and testing of new models.

Prioritize and support the reform of the education system, including non-formal education - in accordance with the findings of the analysis, provide particular support to the continued modernization of educational profiles based on competencies and learning outcomes in accordance with the needs of businesses and the adoption of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), introduction of entrepreneurial education at all levels of education and into

the curricula of the maximum possible number of educational profiles, harmonization of enrolment policy in schools and faculties with the demand for educational profiles in the labour market, improvement of professional practical education at all levels of education and improvement of the system of recognizing prior learning.

Development and improvement of the mechanisms of intersectoral coordination of planning and monitoring the implementation of programmes and measures for youth employment at the national and local level, particularly for gender-sensitive policies and measures. Within employment policy, prioritize investments and job creation stimulating social and economic development and utilizing available quality human resources. Improve the capacities for planning, implementing and monitoring policies and measures for increasing youth employment and employability.

Create a stimulating business environment for private sector and SME development through improvements to the regulatory framework, tax policies and measures against unfair competition. Provide more specific support for entrepreneurship and starting one's own business for youth through improvements of the regulatory framework and tax policies, and the availability of financial incentives, as well as adequate support to newly founded businesses, including the availability of business information, education, counselling and mentor support.

Improve youth and CSO knowledge about using European programmes for the development of innovation and entrepreneurship - COSMO programme (programme for SMEs), HORIZON (research and innovation programme) and EaSI (employment and social innovation programme). In the field of agriculture, provide for the accessibility of knowledge on the use of IPARD funds for young agricultural entrepreneurs.