



Training Pack for Youth Workers - CASE STUDIES



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WORK OF YOUTH WORKERS

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CASE STUDY 1 – Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy

GENERAL FRAMEWORK/ PROBLEM STATEMENT

The level of unemployment in Poland is falling. However, young people who are looking for their first permanent job face many difficulties. Still many of them are economically inactive, and those who are active can rarely count on a job contract.

Young workers direct their expectations toward an employment contract because of the belief that this form of employment provides important aspects of stability. Having an employment contract guarantees fundamental benefits that affect their sense of security. This is due to the assurance of a minimum wage, protection against immediate dismissal, insurance and rights under the Labor Code. These key factors allow them to plan for the future in the long term, which is becoming an important consideration for young workers.

Many graduates who expect a job contract are experiencing disappointment. According to a ranking on employment prospects for young people in Europe, Poland ranks in the middle. The unemployment rate among this group is 20.8%, despite a recent improvement of 4 percentage points. However, the situation is still not optimistic. In larger cities, job offers for the young are often available, sometimes even on a contract basis. In smaller cities, on the other hand, the situation is much more difficult. Labor market conditions are determined by employers, leaving young workers in a position where they have to adapt to employers' demands or remain unemployed for a long time. As a result, they often work in positions below their qualifications, on short-term contracts or under civil law contracts. Their value in the labor market is diminished and job security becomes lower.

ACTIVITIES

Ochotniczne Hufce Pracy is engaged in the task of promoting the professional development of young people between the ages of 15 and 25. Professional development is a process aimed at helping young people make educational and career choices, as well as gain and maintain

employment. It is a complex process that involves implementing long-term activities focused on gradually shaping young people's attitudes toward work, promoting positive attitudes toward employment, and developing an interest in personal development.

At each location, career development units within the Ochotniczne Hufce Pracy offer both job placement and career counseling services. Young people are provided with comprehensive support, which begins with identifying individual needs and planning the assistance process. This includes scheduling appointments, organizing workshops and determining the scope of topics and content that will support their professional development.

The offering of professional development services by the Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy throughout the country is based on the created document defining the "standard of professional development services for youth in the OHP." This document ensures efficiency, a high level of professionalism and the maintenance of quality support for youth throughout the country. Its purpose is also to reduce differences in access to this support due to factors such as place of residence or environment, so that every young person has equal access to the services provided.

IMPACT

Funds from the European Union have been an important source of funding for activities undertaken by Ochotnicze Hufce Pracy (OHP). This support has contributed to raising the level of professionalism of educational services provided and increasing the number of young people who receive real help in solving life problems. OHPs are responsible for implementing the largest EU projects, both in terms of their scope and the number of people benefiting from these initiatives. The results of these projects demonstrate OHP's experience as a project management organization that supports the goals and responds to the challenges of the operational programs in the areas of employment, social integration and lifelong learning. Projects implemented by OHP with EU support have been very well received in local communities and have received high ratings, not only from the participating youth, but also from independent evaluators.

PHOTO



OCHOTNICZE
HUFCE PRACY

CASE STUDY 2 – Improving Work-Life Balance for Young Parents in Poland

GENERAL FRAMEWORK/ PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Poland, the reconciliation of private and working life for young people, especially those who are parents, is a significant issue. This problem arises due to the lack of flexible working arrangements, especially for parents of children under 8 years of age. Employers often refuse to grant remote work or consent to individual working time, which can lead to a strain on the work-life balance of young parents. Furthermore, the Ministry of Family and Social Policy has initiated and is responsible for a number of measures aimed at helping to provide financial support and institutional care for a small child. Various forms of support for families with children are aimed at preventing family poverty as well as helping parents to combine working life with childcare.

ACTIVITIES

To address this issue, projects concerning the reconciliation of working and private life have been carried out within the framework of competitions announced by the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. In 2017, a practical web-based platform was developed to provide comprehensive information on the mechanisms for reconciling working and private life. This platform was developed under the project "Family and Work – It Pays Off!" co-financed by the European Commission. The platform (<https://rodzinaipraca.gov.pl/>) shows employers step by step how to introduce optimal solutions in this respect in their workplace. In 2017 (Q4), the competition entitled "Implementation of Tools to Support the Fight Against Discrimination in the Workplace and Access to Employment in Small Enterprises" under Measure 2.1 Equal opportunities for men and women in all areas, including access to employment, career development, and the reconciliation of working and private life (Knowledge Education Development Operational Programme) was announced.

The platform was designed to be user-friendly and interactive, allowing employers to navigate through different scenarios and find solutions that suit their specific needs. It also includes a section for employers to share their success stories and challenges, providing a valuable resource for other employers looking to implement flexible working arrangements. The platform also offers a directory of resources and tools that can help employers implement flexible working arrangements, such as templates for flexible work agreements and guides on how to manage remote work effectively.

In addition to the platform, the project also involved training sessions for employers on how to implement flexible working arrangements. These training sessions were designed to be interactive and engaging, with a focus on practical examples and case studies. The training sessions also included a component on how to communicate effectively with employees about changes to working arrangements, to ensure that employees understand the reasons behind these changes and how they can benefit from them.

IMPACT

The impact of these activities is still ongoing. The platform provides employers with step-by-step guidance on how to introduce optimal solutions in their workplace, thereby helping to improve the work-life balance of young parents. This has a positive impact on the well-being of young parents and their families, as well as on the productivity of their workplaces.

The platform has also had a positive impact on the image of employers, with many employers reporting that their employees have expressed a greater level of trust and satisfaction with their employers since the introduction of flexible working arrangements. This has led to increased employee engagement and retention, which in turn has led to cost savings for employers in terms of turnover and recruitment costs.

The training sessions have also had a positive impact on the skills and knowledge of employers, with many employers reporting that they have gained valuable insights and practical tools that they can use to implement flexible working arrangements in their own workplaces. This has led to an increase in the number of employers who are considering or have implemented flexible working arrangements.

PHOTO



CASE STUDY 3 – Settlement Voucher Program for Youth Workers in Poland

GENERAL FRAMEWORK/ PROBLEM STATEMENT

Poland, like many countries, grapples with multifaceted challenges concerning youth unemployment and regional disparities in employment opportunities. A considerable segment of the young population faces obstacles in securing adequate job prospects, particularly in regions marked by higher unemployment rates. Consequently, this has led to a pertinent issue of limited geographical mobility and access to suitable employment options for the youth. To address these challenges, the Polish government introduced the Settlement Voucher program targeted at unemployed individuals under the age of 30, aiming to stimulate job mobility and incentivize relocation for employment purposes.

ACTIVITIES

The initiation of the Settlement Voucher program is designed explicitly for unemployed individuals aged below 30. This pioneering initiative sought to alleviate the barriers young job seekers faced by offering financial support to cover relocation expenses associated with securing employment or engaging in economic activities outside their current place of residence.

Eligibility for the program entails meeting specific criteria: applicants must earn at least the minimum monthly gross wage and be covered by social insurance due to their employment or economic activity. Furthermore, the relocation distance should span at least 80 kilometers from their current residence, or the daily commuting time to the new location and back should exceed a total of three hours. Moreover, participants commit to remaining employed or engaged in economic activities for a minimum of six months following relocation.

The financial support provided through the Settlement Voucher is determined by an agreement and does not exceed 200% of the average wage, ensuring equitable assistance for relocation purposes.


IMPACT


Evaluation of the Settlement Voucher program encompasses both qualitative and quantitative measures. Qualitatively, the program aims to enhance job prospects and economic opportunities for young unemployed individuals. Feedback from program participants highlights increased access to job opportunities and improved socio-economic conditions after relocation.


Quantitatively, the program measures the number of beneficiaries, their relocations, and subsequent employment engagements. It also assesses the retention rate of employment or economic activity post-relocation, aiming to ensure sustainable benefits for the relocated youth workers.

PHOTO



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