



# 2015

## Final Report

### Literature review

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pistes solidaires



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# 1. Introduction

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Young adults and teenagers are engaged in work on a much smaller scale than older workers. Young people are engaged less in work because they are still in school, or they are involved in leisure activities. Some, on the other hand, would like to work, but find it difficult obtaining employment. The transition from school to employment is a process that involves searching and changing jobs before deciding on a more or less permanent employment. Today, more than ever, youths have a lower rate of employment, hence there has been much concern about the youth labor market.

According to many experts, youth is a period when one best benefits from training. This adaptability makes it easy to grasp new ideas and learn techniques quickly. Youth is also according to an English poet, John Gay, "a season made for joy." Unfortunately, for majority of young people throughout the world this is not so. Youths today are faced with many pressures, cultural as well as social. One such pressure is unemployment.

Unemployment along with other problems that plague our young people has aroused so much public

attention and discussion throughout the world that it is interesting to note that the United Nations designated 1985 as "International Youth Year." This chapter is a summer of review of the literature on youth unemployment for the countries, Greece, Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and France.

For the purpose of this chapter "youth" is defined as the age group 14-24, inclusive.

## 2. Literature review for countries

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## 2.1. Literature review of Spain

Spain is traversing a period that the youth employment crisis, significantly aggravated by the global and financial crisis, it imposes a great challenge for the governments, the employers and the workers to work even harder on the promotion, development and maintenance of a decent and productive employment. This part is focused on what young people should take into consideration when they are searching for a job placement for Spain.

First of all, the youth unemployment is specified in 3 different groups depending on their education and skills: 1. The achievers' group, that have a high level of education, speak at least one foreign language and are motivated and ambitious. 2. The average group, young people with incomplete education, who do not speak any foreign language fluently and their skills are limited. 3. The unskilled group, that they abandon school and do not possess job skills. Thus, each of these groups needs different ways to succeed as future workers. Specifically, the average group would

benefit enormously of an experience in a foreign country, where they could learn a new language and gain independence, and the unskilled group needs orientation at least to finish the high school and their education so that to develop the basic job skills (Citi Foundation & IESE Business School, 2013).

According to a study of Ana María Pérez Rubio, the difficulty of finding a job is sorted in two different axes: victimization and culpability. The process of culpability consists to not having personal characters such as attitude, initiative, creativity etc. And the process of victimization is identified as cute/ugly discrimination, body language, work experience, too much unemployment etc. The companies search for people with a set of virtues, characteristics and personal skills that will construct a flexible employee. Nowadays, the most valuable characteristics of an employee in the business environment are the capacity of adaptation and to learn, have abilities of working in a team, communicative and organizational skills, creativity, autonomy, computer literacy and knowing different languages.

Young people who search for a work should take into consideration another important fact concerning

to their skills and capacities; the Non-formal Education that promote the youth organizations. According to the Youth European Forum, It is shown that the participation in non-formal education in a foreign country furthers the development of the linguistic skills, the cultural awareness and leadership. Furthermore, the voluntary activities or the activities organized by the youth organizations play a key role in providing to young people the “soft skills”. The 75% of the young people who participated in Youth Voluntary Service (EVS), for example, say that this experience improved their perspectives in work. Generally, the employers take into account the participation in youth organizations as a positive experience and provide them information about the applicant’s motivation level and his future capacity to fit into the company.

### 2.1.1. The list that affects the term of process of being and employee:

**a) Ability to analyze:** A graduate is able to reflect and evaluate significant impact on the good work location to know what is the situation in which we

live and what is the most effective way to achieve the objectives both in the medium and long term.

**b) Organizational competence and planning:**

It is important to choose that way of organizing or planned that best fits the graduate individually since each person has a different system of learning and this influences the way of organizing information. It starts from the need to obtain this information and then choose the procedure for planning organization that best suits everyone.

**c) Learning competence:**

Implies the possibility to learn, accept and direct their own learning throughout life, to be integrated in different cultures and situations, and to mobilize the diverse cultural, linguistic, social, scientific and technological knowledge to understand reality.

**d) Adaptability:**

Graduates are able to adapt to new situations and can respond naturally to what the job market expects of them, helps achieve goals. Having a good ability to adapt helps to

overcome obstacles in all facets of life in general and the labor market in particular.

**e) Ability to apply knowledge to practice:** Knowledge is not complete or used if it is not applied in practice. Such knowledge is linked to mankind from the beginning. The more knowledge you have of reality, of more value available to the graduate.

**f) Ability to make decisions:** People in general and graduates in particular to every problem they have to solve, have to make decisions and whether they, commit the individual as important or crucial way. Consequently, a useful tool for decision theory, involves linking theory with practice.

**g) Concern about the quality:** Marks a pattern in the behavior of them that helps them improve and grow professionally.

**h) Ability to solve problems:** In humans in general and graduates in particular, social interactions are an indispensable part of life, which is why it is not impossible to see the man completely

isolated from the social sphere, since from birth is immersed in a first social unit is the family and this is where they begin their first social interactions over time are spreading to different social groups, which is why some authors state that the way we act and we face different situations we face in these groups will be determined by what we call social skills.

**i) Ability to work in team:** Due to constant changes borne by society, graduates need to transform the individualism culture of teamwork in organizations.

**j) Ability to communicate:** Communicative competence influences many factors. The art of good communication can use the graduate to achieve their goals. It is impossible not to communicate hence it is best to communicate what we want and not vice versa.

**k) Ability to know yourself:** Self-knowledge is the root of all knowledge. Introspection understood as self-analysis, self-examination, self-observa-

tion and contemplation of feelings, thoughts and actions is useful as a psychological technique supported by Socratic philosophical principles.

**l) Competence to stay positive:** The attitude that graduates seeking to maintain or improve employment influences the orientation process itself, and this more difficult and expensive to negative and positive fluid and grateful for positions attitudes.

**m) Ability to take initiative:** The initiative makes people become active agents of improving their working situations in a changing world like today.

**n) Ability to have empathy:** Emotional response that comes from understanding the status or another person and is similar to what the other person is feelings. Empathy well understood play a central role in prosocial available to people.

**o) Being proactive:** A proactive graduate has the positive quality to anticipate the action without need for order, but using their freedom of choice.

**In conclusion, to the young people who search for a job :**

- Focus in the foreign languages. An important competence that every young person should have is the domain of at least one foreign language.
- Focus on social skills (soft skills). They should increase their employability, developing skills such as teamwork, adaptability, analytical skills and basic computer skills.
- International mindedness. Young people, when planning their career, should consider international experiences so that to enrich their perspective in life and add a plus in their CV.
- Be proactive.

These skills are highly sought by the companies in the young people who apply for a job.

## 2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW OF GREECE

During the last almost 10 years, Greece is undergoing a severe financial crisis. One of the most notable consequences of this crisis in Greece is the increase of youth unemployment to rates never before experienced in the country, something that has apart from financial, social and political consequences.

Youth Unemployment Rate in Greece (for young people 15-24 years old) averaged 33.46% from 1998 until 2015, reaching an all-time high of 60.50% in February of 2013, according to Eurostat. Today, this rate reaches 49.70% in Greece, whereas in certain areas, like our region, Messinia, it surpasses 60%. The unemployment rate of young people between 25 and 29 years old also reaches 40%.

In parallel, when it comes to the labor market, we can notice a shift from the focus on the qualifications acquired through formal education (university degrees, language diplomas, etc.) to the more practical the so-called 21st century/tangible skills (communi-

cation, collaboration, critical thinking, team building, problem solving, social and interpersonal/intrapersonal skills and many more) that one can acquire through non-formal and informal education.

What is more troubling is that according to Eurobarometre's report on European Youth, published in April 2015, 25% of young people in Greece are not at all confident and 42% are not very confident that they are going to find a job after finishing their studies, in contrast to the European average of 6 and 18% accordingly. In our opinion, this can be attributed to 3 main facts:

- The economic crisis that has led to the decrease in job openings
- The lack of real connection between the knowledge acquired in universities and the practical skills that are needed by the labor market
- The lack of practical/field experience on their sector.

This report is focusing on the skills, competences

and knowledge that young people need to develop in order to improve their position in the labor market.

### 2.2.1. Skills needed in the Greek labor market:

The department of applied researches of ALBA Graduate Business School at The American College of Greece conducted a research on youth employability in Greece of the Economic crisis.

There seems to be a difference in opinion as to which skills are important in today's labor market between young people and employers. The biggest difference is viewed in skills like leadership, taking initiatives, entrepreneurial ethics and emotional intelligence which are rated higher by the employers than by the young people. Young people in Greece rate higher competences such as willingness to work and make extra effort (97,5%), setting goals and being result oriented (94%), persuasion and selling skills (91%), professionalism (91%) and communication (89,5%).

Employers, on the other hand, rate higher competences such as an orientation in learning (97%), pro-

fessional ethics and integrity (96%), taking of initiatives (93%), adaptability (92%), managing changes (92%), leadership (89%), communication (88%) and self-motivation (85%). Despite the difficult circumstances, the grand majority of the young people remain positive, hopeful, resilient and are self-confident.

In addition, according to a research titled "Employers' perception of graduate employability" conducted by Eurobarometre, published in 2010, but that still remains relevant today, Greek employers seem to be satisfied by skills such as knowledge of foreign languages, IT skills, as well as skills related to knowledge acquired through relevant formal education. On the other hand, they seem to not be completely satisfied by the competences that young people have in terms of decision making, communication, team work, organization and planning, analytical thinking and problem solving, as well as adaptability and ability to act in new circumstances.

The conclusion that can be made by the above is that the "weaknesses" of the Greek youth do not concern knowledge that is acquired through formal education. On the contrary, they concern competences

that are acquired mainly through non-formal education, personal experiences and work experiences (soft skills).

### 2.2.2. The role of non-formal education:

Non formal education is INCLUSIVE and LIFE-LONG. People from different educational, social, financial, etc. backgrounds and of any age can participate in non-formal learning activities and develop through them transversal skills and competences that contribute to their personal, social and professional development. In addition, in contrast with formal education that has a specific structure and is teacher-oriented, non-formal learning is mostly learner-oriented and can take into account different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.). It also gives the learner the possibility to reflect and assess their own learning and explore their own learning styles.

The recognition of skills and competences gained through non-formal learning is one of the priorities of the European Union and should be a main priority in every country, if we want to combat the phenomenon

of youth unemployment and foster the connection between gained skills and competences and the labor market. In every country, as well as in Europe, steps are taken and efforts are made towards a system that will facilitate the recognition of non-formal learning and the skills gained through it. Especially when it comes to young people with fewer opportunities (school drop-outs, people that did not have the chance to follow a higher education programme, people with learning difficulties, etc), the recognition of skills gained through non-formal learning is vital as it can give them the chance to improve their position in the labor market, as well as in society in general.

In Conclusion, What we see in today's labor market is a bigger focus on skills that are developed, not through formal education, but through experiences, contact with different people, attitudes and culture as well as by allowing ourselves to take risks and adapt to different circumstances.

The European Voluntary Service, EVS, can offer all of these and provide its participants with knowledge, competences and experiences that can really facilitate the personal and professional development of a

young person. The skills, competences and knowledge acquired through this experience are invaluable and can support a person in not only improving their place in the labour market, but also support them in discovering their real “talents” and career path that they wish to follow. This is why finding ways to make the competences gained through this experience more “recognizable” not only by the volunteers themselves, but also by the labour market is important.

## 2.3. LITERATURE REVIEW OF ROMANIA

Youth organizations actively involved in working with EVS volunteers have specified various problems regarding the sustainability and the recognition of the volunteering experience in its whole dimension. In general, lack of sustainability of the outcomes gained through EVS as international experience and also lack of recognition for the competences developed through are often stated by them. It has been clarified that the necessity for a validation tool, certifying the involvement of the volunteers and the international dimension of their experience, seems urgent. The project OVPELO strives to foster the recognition of competences gained through non-formal education and their better applicability with formal education and job market pathways. One of the phases of this project, is represented by the literature review, in order to know what is the situation of volunteering under the European Union frame and also in our countries.

In Romania, the volunteering field is not that devel-

oped and not that known among small cities. Regardless to this fact, we have legislation, official documents that help in recognizing the volunteers competences, a guide that helps with this procedures. The system of recognition of volunteering competences came as a need for all three parties: the volunteers, the NGOs and the potential employers. For the volunteers is very important in their personal development through formal and non-formal education, for increasing employability through skills development suitable for labor market and for the improvement of the quality work as a volunteer or as preliminary step for development of more complex volunteering activities. For NGOs, this system it is very important for the motivation of the volunteers and attract new ones, it makes the way of working with the volunteers more professional, and implicitly it contributes to the impact of the organization in the society. For the potential employers, this system represents a complementary alternative, motivating and effective for vocational trainings; it increases the motivation of the employees for a company that promotes corporate volunteering. With the help of this system, the employers can have a more clear idea

regarding the type of competences a former volunteer has developed.

### 2.3.1. The main competences of a volunteer, utilized at European level are:

- Communication in mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Mathematical competences, and basic competences in science and technology ;
- Digital competences;
- Learn to learn;
- Social and civic competences;
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

The present literature review report is ment to sum up all the main information regarding the situation of volunteering field in Romania. Even though it is not very well known in the small cities and not known at all in villages, volunteering starts to gain the interests of youngsters more and more. Volunteering is considered a plus when it comes to applying to Universities

abroad, but is still very little known among local employers. Awareness of volunteering opportunities in Romania is based on a combination of tools managed by different stakeholders. We can identify three main tools used to raise awareness about volunteering: web portals, national campaigns, and special events.

## 2.4. LITERATURE REVIEW OF ITALY

This study is part of the research phase of the project OVPELO aiming at the creation of a specific online platform for validation of the competences, which the volunteers have developed during their EVS period abroad. This research has been produced by YOUNET – the Italian coordination organization of this project during January 2015.

### 2.4.1. Learning Outcomes – What are they and what are they not?

A study of a document “An introduction to learning outcomes - A consideration of the nature, function and position of learning outcomes in the creation of the European Higher Education Area”, produced by Stephen Adam, has been done, in order to be better able to define the concept of learning outcome. Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, or attitudes.” Therefore, the learning outcomes are often

related to competences when it comes to demonstrate the abilities and knowledge gained during a learning period. But what is a competence, and is it the same as a learning outcome?

As far as this review shows, the competences are the capabilities to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform working functions or tasks in a defined work setting. In other words, they serve as the basis for skill standards that specify the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in the workplace, as well as potential measurement criteria for assessing competence attainment. Learning objectives describe what the learner should be able to achieve at the end of a learning period, which is often seen as the final outcome out of the learning process. The competences define the applied skills and knowledge that enable people to successfully perform their work while learning objectives are specific to a course of instruction out of which outcomes are expected.

In his paper, Adams has declared that the learners benefit from a comprehensive set of statements of exactly what they will be able to achieve after a suc-

successful study. He explains that the learning outcomes provide learners with clear information that can help them with their choice of module/unit/programme/qualification to study and can lead them to more effective learning. According to his work, the learning outcomes also benefit employers, higher education institutions and civil society in general by clearly articulating the achievements and attributes associated with particular qualifications. Employers are often familiar with learning outcomes and value the spotlight, which they bring to skills and competences that are important in the workplace. A specific attention should be paid here if Adam considers a difference between learning outcomes and learning objectives. This is important when there are now an increasing number of initiatives to promote lifelong learning. The author suggests that learning outcomes could assist the creation of multiple progression routes through and between the educational systems and different sectors. Adam suggests that the expression of learning in terms of learning outcomes is perhaps the only way to accomplish such integrated systems for lifelong learning, capable of including the recognition of non-formal

and informal learning and that The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong learning (EQF) is also based on the concept of learning outcomes for this reason.

Something very interesting comes out of the Adam's study, in terms of empowerment of students, even though it concerns students of HEI. He declares that "The employability agenda is strengthened by the adoption of learning outcomes that highlight the generic skills and competencies valued by employers. Similarly, students have much to gain from more explicit course descriptions. The empowerment of students has to include their active participation in educational life and their development as active learners in more student-centred learning systems. Effective student participation can be enhanced when modules and courses are clearly expressed in terms of learning outcomes, which allow the learner to see the skills and abilities they should acquire. This also helps them make more informed choices within and between different programmes of learning." This claim shall be considered of a major importance regarding the creation of volunteer centered quality criteria for valida-

tion of learning outcomes, which the project OVPELO would like to create, as well as of significant value when the on-line recognition platform will be established.

#### 2.4.2. What is employability and which type of competences does it imply?

The current literature review tries as well to find some answers on how learning outcomes could support employability and which could be the transversal skills most sought by employers, in order to set up the volunteering centered criteria for validation according to the data found. Hereby this research proposes to define the concept of employability according to a review on employability produced by the European Commission, with a special focus on the transversal skills needed for ensuring employability of the young people. The term of initiative employability has been described by Professor Mantz Yorke as “a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make gain employment and be successful in the chosen occupation, which benefits the

workers, the workforce, the community and the economy.” He highlights the fact that employability implies the capacity to function in a job and be able to move between jobs, thus remaining employable throughout the whole life, which requires the need for the individuals to develop transferable skills, so that they had the flexibility to move between job roles and employers, and so remain employable on a long term.

#### 2.4.3. Competences needed for employability:

In regards to the competences, necessary for ensuring employability of young people, the review of the gathered documentation shows that the US Department of Labor Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) had the following vision: to “identify a set of basic skills generalizable across all jobs and occupations” (Bates and Phelan, 2002: 123). The skills identified included the Three—Part Foundation Skills:

- **Basic skills:** reading, writing, performing of arith-

metic and mathematical operations, listening and speaking.

- **Thinking skills:** creative thinking, decision-making, problem solving, visualizing.
- **Personal qualities:** display of responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity

#### 2.4.4. The Five Competencies:

- **Resources:** identification, organization, planning and allocation of resources.
- **Interpersonal:** working with others.
- **Information:** acquisition and use of information.
- **Systems:** understanding of complex relationships.
- **Technology:** ability to work with a variety of technology.

The SCANS study suggests that whereas the three-part foundation skills relate specifically to individuals, the five competencies are somewhat broader, as they relate to the position and functioning of an individual in

a wider working context.

Furthermore, the same report highlights that the basic skills are defined as skills that are required for individuals in order to function in the adult world and include skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics (CEDEFOP, 2009). Technological changes in recent decades, together with changes in labor markets and economies, have meant that other skills are also required to participate in contemporary society. These 'new basic skills' include ICT skills; knowledge of foreign languages; social, organizational and communication skills; appreciation of technological culture; and entrepreneurship. In economies with strong knowledge based sectors, basic skills are seen as a given and thus as necessary, but not sufficient, for finding and sustaining employment.

As evoked above, in addition to the basic skills, the modern labor market requires various behavioral capacities and attitudes, necessary and relevant to a person's ability to gain and sustain employment. Those skills are often defined as soft skills and can be gathered in the following categories according to the report delivered by the EC on the topic:

- Personal effectiveness skills (self-esteem, creativity, flexibility, lifelong learning);
- Relationship and service skills (customer service, interpersonal communication);
- Impact and influence skills (leadership, organisational awareness, development of others, communication);
- Achievement skills (achievement orientation, efficiency, proactive approach, initiative, Planning and organisation);
- Cognitive skills (analytical and conceptual thinking skills).

Furthermore, defining the skills required for employability is also important, in order to provide education, vocational training and support, which will help individuals to develop the necessary competences to gain and secure their employment. Efforts have been made to develop a picture of the skills required for modern employment and frameworks have been proposed in different studies (Brown et al., 2010; Bynner

and Parsons, 2002; Krahn et al., 2002; Scarpetta et al., 2012; Simmons, 2009; Worth, 2005), according to the explored documentation provided by the EC. Drawing on these studies, the following list summarizes some of the skills, values and characteristics that are most often associated with a person's employability:

- Core knowledge;
- People and social skills;
- Specific job - preparation skills;
- Citizenship values;
- Academic skills (communicating, thinking, life - long learning);
- Personal management (positive attitudes and behaviour, responsibility, adaptability);
- Teamwork skills;
- Literacy, defined as the ability to understand and use printed information in a range of daily activities, and numeracy;

- Computer skills;
- Analytic and problem-solving skills and creativity;
- Self - management verbal self--guidance;
- Motivation and confidence, developing their 'personal effectiveness';
- Identity capital;
- Trainability.

The list of the abilities includes also adaptability and mobility as important factors to remain employable and to integrate various working situations. This is due to the labour market changes, which have led to increased mobility opportunities and thus, to move away from ideas of traditional careers and a 'job for life', towards the concept of the "boundaryless career", defined as being mobility across organizational boundaries. The term of adaptability relates to career adaptability, which implied the capacity to move across occupations and career sectors. The researchers have proposed four propositions about career adaptability:

1. challenging work provides opportunities to develop "adapt - abilities";
2. updating substantive learning is necessary for career adaptability;
3. individuals learn to adapt through interactions at work;
4. self-directedness and self-reflexiveness (in harnessing learning and development opportunities) are necessary for career adaptability."

As in the recent decades the working life has become increasingly flexible, characterized by higher levels of job mobility and occupational changes, so it is then essential for individuals to navigate their careers, move between jobs in order to engage in sustainable employment and ensure their employability.

#### 2.4.5. The 4 global categories:

For providing a complete overview of what are the core employability skills, this literature research involves the study of a recent official documentation of-

ferred by ILO. The document reviewed here suggests that the core employability skills enable individuals to constantly acquire and apply new knowledge and capacities, as they are additional to the basic and technical skills and build upon them. The employability skills seem also often related to lifelong learning. The current report presents 4 diverse categories of core skills. Similar categories have already been found out in the previously studied documentation and many of the mentioned findings could be sum up through the 4 categories seen below. Thus, they include:

### ***Learning to learn competence***

Learning to learn refers to the acquired knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes that enable individuals to set, plan and reach their own learning goals and become independent and autonomous learners. It allows young people to meet the demands of lifelong learning. According to the author, it implies not only that individuals gain certain skills, but also that they become self-directed learners and rely on their own learning capacities. Therefore, learning to learn strat-

egies are about learning what you know, learning what you do not know, and learning what to do about it.

These skills will enable individuals to take better responsibility for their own learning, spend time effectively, select the best approaches to deal with specific tasks, provide the knowledge and skills needed to begin, follow through, and complete tasks, access to a variety of content and reference materials and give the confidence to know when and who to ask for help.

### ***Communication skills***

According to the ILO study, oral, written and IT communication skills are the media for sharing knowledge, interests, attitudes, opinions, feelings, and ideas in order to influence and ultimately lead others. Therefore, communication skills include the ability to listen and observe to gain understanding, the capacity to clearly and effectively relate ideas, the use strategies and skills to work effectively with others, the ability analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of formal and informal communications.

### ***Teamwork skills***

Teamwork is related to the ability to operate smoothly and efficiently within a group. Doing this draws on a number of other skills such as the ability to encourage and inspire other team members to perform better, the ability to compromise and ignore one's own ego, also communication and other interpersonal skills such as negotiation, influence, advising and interpreting.

The study also shows that teamwork skills include the ability to make decisions, specifying goals, risks consideration, generating and evaluating alternatives. It requires cooperation and leadership by organizing groups to accomplish a purpose, helping others to do things their way, the ability to choose appropriate leadership style, the understanding of personal strengths, teaching and training others for gaining new skills. Equally it is about following orders, respecting leadership and knowing how to communicate concerns and position.

### **Problem - solving skills**

The studied documentation suggests that in order

to succeed in the workplace (and in life generally) individuals need to be able to evaluate information or situations, to break them down into their key components and consider various ways of approaching and resolving them, also be able to decide which is the most appropriate. These problem-solving skills include recognizing long-term consequences of solutions to problems and probing, devising, implementing, and evaluating a plan of action for problem resolution.

Employers nowadays look for workers who will take the personal responsibility to make sure targets are met, who can see that there might be a better way of doing something and who are prepared to research and implement change, people who don't panic or give up when things go wrong but who will seek a way around the problem.

### 2.4.6. Youth and volunteering:

In order to complete the subject according to the project aim, this review will also focus on the study of a report on what young people gain from volunteering. For this, the report of National Youth Agency

regarding a research project on the same topic done in 2006 will be studied. In fact NYA (UK) has undertaken a research for identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes that young people gain out of volunteering which could be potentially accredited and provide evidence for better employability. The studied report shows clearly similar outcomes to which have been found so far and this tends to show that it is still very relevant. Therefore, the findings show:

- “Young people identify for themselves a wide range of personal and social skills developed through volunteering, but opportunities to reflect on and articulate this learning are often underdeveloped.
- The fieldwork findings clearly support the evidence of the literature review that young people can and do increase their self - confidence and self-esteem, develop a range of communication skills and improve their ability to work with other people through volunteering.
- Volunteering can act as a catalyst for young people to engage more effectively with other learning, or in some cases re - engage with formal learning or

training, putting them in a position where they can develop skills and potentially gain qualifications.

- Many young people also develop practical skills related to their specific experiences of volunteering.
- Three themes emerged strongly from the project: the potential contribution of volunteering to young people’s learning and skills development; the specific skills that young people identified and articulated; and the need for mechanisms to promote this learning and development.”

#### 2.4.7. How to assess learning outcomes?

The same document proposes a very detailed table of skills related to employability to be referred to the volunteers. The example of this table might be useful regarding further steps of the research phase of the OVPELO project, as well as for establishing of the on-line platform. “Volunteering and Skills project” provide suggestions to evaluate the skills, according to a scale from level “very low” to “very high”. In view of the needs of OVPELO project the below-proposed scheme might

be a good starting point regarding the establishment of quality criteria and the platform launch. The report suggests the evaluation of the initial level of competences of the volunteer and the level meanwhile/after the volunteering period. In this way the volunteers may have a clear picture for identifying the outcomes, which they have obtained after completing of their volunteering period.

## Table – Personal and Social Development Skills Framework

**S** – refers to the competences of the volunteer at his/her start

**N** – refers to the competences at the moment of evaluation = now

Skills	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Comments
<b>INTERPERSONAL/ PERSONAL SKILLS</b>						
<b>Planning</b>						
• Looking long term			S	N		Skill level gone up
<b>Taking responsibility</b>						
• Using own initiative						Skill level stayed the same
• Commitment			SN			
• Acting responsibly						
• Completing tasks						
<b>Improving own learning and performance</b>						
• Identifying and setting targets						Skill level gone down
• Review progress and achievement	N		S			
<b>Communication skills</b>						
• Taking part in a group discussion						
• Making phone calls						
• Writing different kinds of documents (reports, minutes, press releases etc)						
• Making presentations						

Skills	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Comments
<b>Problem solving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the problem</li> <li>• Finding out relevant info</li> <li>• Exploring different ways of tackling problems</li> <li>• Analytical skills</li> </ul>						
<b>Self-awareness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying feelings</li> <li>• Knowing own strengths and weaknesses</li> </ul>						
<b>Self-management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Managing risk behavior</li> <li>• Self-discipline</li> <li>• Stress management</li> <li>• Resourcefulness</li> <li>• Anger management</li> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Patience</li> </ul>						
<b>Self-confidence/self-esteem</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief in abilities</li> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Feeling good about self</li> <li>• Enthusiasm</li> <li>• Motivation</li> </ul>						

Skills	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Comments
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**Making decisions**

- Being fair
- Acting on decisions

**INTERPERSONAL / SOCIAL SKILLS**

**Active listening skills**

- listening to other viewpoints
- reflecting back to others

**Working with others/teamwork**

- identifying what you want to achieve together
- Planning tasks with others
- Setting ground rules and sticking to them
- Identifying individual roles within group
- Reviewing how you all worked together
- Supporting peers

**Leadership**

- Organizing projects
- Planning and running activities
- Feeling comfortable about leading
- Knowing when to delegate/share
- Motivating others

Skills	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Comments
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**Managing relationships**

- Working with different kinds of people
- Relationships with teachers
- Dealing with people in authority
- Empathy
- Networking

**Negotiation**

- Handling conflict
- Willing to compromise to reach solutions
- Giving/receiving constructive criticism
- Dealing with peer pressure

**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES (INC WORLD OF WORK)**

**Budgeting/financial management**

- Drawing up budgets
- Sticking to budgets
- Doing accounts
- Fundraising

**Understanding diversity**

- Understanding of different cultures
- Awareness of discrimination
- Understanding power relationships

### **Understanding society**

- Values and beliefs
- Relationship with wider community
- Community action
- Global issues
- Understanding local services/ decision-making structures
- Altruism

### **Rights and responsibilities**

- Legal, moral, social, employment etc
- 'Respect' agenda

### **Preparation for work**

- CV building
- Interview skills
- Understanding workplace demands

### **ACTIVITY SPECIFIC SKILLS**

Creative skills (e.g. face-painting, reading music, taking photos)

Working with children

Hygiene

First aid

Environmental

ICT

Researching local needs

When it comes to the consideration of assessment methods, it is particularly useful to define the qualities or abilities that are sought to be engendered in the learners. The current literature review continues by a study of Oxford Brookes University briefing paper. It provides 8 different categories, which might be useful when it comes to the learning outcomes assessment. The paper suggests the following categories, as well with ideas of how the learning outcomes in the different areas could be evaluated.

In this case the proposal is connected more with Higher educational studies rather than non formal learning, but it could be also good inspiration for re-inforcing the validation and recognition process. The ways proposed for assessment revealed by the document refer to: oral/written presentations, essay, group work, applied tasks, case analysis, role plays, reporting, observation of a real or simulation of professional practice. However, the same University suggests that the following transferable skills might be identified through each one of the stated above categories.

**A. Self Management This refers to a student's**

**general ability to manage her own learning development. Abilities required to do this successfully include:**

- an ability to clarify personal values
- an ability to set personal objectives
- an ability to manage time and tasks
- an ability to evaluate one's own performance

**B. Learning Skills This refers to a student's general ability to learn effectively and be aware of her own learning strategies. Abilities required to do this successfully include:**

- an ability to learn both independently and co-operatively
- an ability to use library skills, to find and organise information

**C. Communication This refers to a student's general ability to express ideas and opinions, with confidence and clarity, to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes.**

***Abilities required to do this successfully include:***

- an ability to use appropriate language and form when writing and speaking
- an ability to present ideas to different audiences using appropriate media
- an ability to listen actively
- an ability to persuade rationally

**D. Teamwork This refers to a student's general ability to work productively in different kinds of team (formal, informal, project - based, committee based, etc.) Abilities requires to do this successfully include:**

- an ability to take responsibility and carry out agreed tasks an ability to take initiative and lead others
- an ability to operate in a range of supportive roles within teams
- an ability to negotiate, asserting one's own values

and respecting others

- an ability to evaluate team performance

**E. Problem solving This refers to a student's general ability to identify the main features of a given problem and to develop strategies for its resolution. Abilities required to do this successfully include:**

- an ability to analyze
- an ability to think laterally about a problem
- an ability to identify strategic options

**F. Information Technology This refers to a student's general ability to use IT appropriately for their learning and employability. Abilities required to do this successfully include:**

- an ability to use IT as a communication and learning tool
- an ability to use IT to access and manage information
- an ability to use IT to present ideas

- an ability to use specialist software where relevant to the discipline

The current literature review has studied various documents related to the transversal skills which tend to ensure better employability for the young people, in view of searching for provide a work towards the validation of outcomes gained during the voluntary service. The results of the current study provide a clear answer regarding the categories of skills, which could be taken into consideration during the research phase of the project, in view of establishing the set of volunteer centered criteria for validation and the on- line platform launch. The overall outcomes of the study show that the criteria may include the learning to learn abilities of the volunteers, their communication, teamwork and problem solving skills. In addition, the validation criteria may include some practical skills in terms of ITC use etc. Generally, this review has shown the existence of diverse suggestions. However, the most important ones seem to be the ones related to the 4 categories stated above, as well as the use of technology and self - management.

In conclusion, in the field research phase through questionnaire, it could be considered to define if the inquired stakeholders refer to the same categories of competences as identified in this report and how they relate to them. In this case it will be useful to work in parallel on what is already defined as categories and see if any similarities could be proposed so that the volunteer-centered quality criteria for approving learning outcomes could fit in the studied framework. In case if the field research shows different results, then a work towards the definition of new categories of skills enhancing employability of young people might be considered.

## 2.5. LITERATURE REVIEW OF POLAND

### 2.5.1. Analysis of key skills and competencies for increasing the chances of the labor market graduates

Qualifications and effects of education which increase the chances of graduates to find employment after graduation

In order to define the qualifications and effects of education increasing chances of graduates to find employment, it was necessary to refer to the key issue, i.e. competences. An assumption was made that during professional career a person should be prepared to return repeatedly to the education system to deepen or prove their competences. From this perspective, the key issue was to research what all persons need and if these are competences that are necessary for professional development, for being an active citizen, social integration and employment and self-realisation

needs, lifelong education. In the research, this meant obtaining certain effects of education typical for specific education and their proof such as diploma, which leads to holding specific qualifications.

Most respondents were aware of the situation and believed that competences which will favour labour market participants in the near future will be the competences that are useful in the situation of fast pace of changes and higher risk. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that professional competences are no longer employer's sufficient criterion to evaluate employees in today's market. A typical mechanism identified in the research is as follows:

- employers are seeking employees with specific competences and professional qualifications meeting their needs, business and legal requirements, etc. – only at this stage competences and professional qualifications are deciding (general “hard” competences also fall within this minimum, and these are: languages, website creation skills, specialist software literacy);
- However, it is “soft” competences that ultimately

decide about employment demonstrated in the report, i.e.

- Cognitive competences (analytical skills, heuristic skills, ingenuity, critical thinking),
- Interpersonal competences (incl. communication and media, and those related to team creation, team work, most of all interdisciplinary),
- Self-organisation competences (the project method, timely delivery of tasks, independent decision-making, ability to work under pressure, self-organisation of work, flexible response to change).
- Both employers and university representatives agree that university education insufficiently reflects the practical aspects of fields of study. Many graduates cannot see any continuity between their studies and professional career. For employers this means longer time for graduate's on-the-job-training, i.e. smaller effectiveness of employing a graduate compared to an experienced employee.
- Entrepreneurship is an area which helps shape

and integrate various competences that are useful in the labour market. This means a need to support undergraduate entrepreneurship and a need to introduce classes developing entrepreneurship (such as implementation of undergraduate business, team and individual projects; various simulation games during classes etc.) in the curricula.

Study of skills and competencies of graduates of vocational education expected by employers:

The importance of competence holding by persons, of the company's perspective, should be considered in terms of market conditions, in which a company operates. Usually it is assumed that the highly specific competence for certain specific tasks may have a greater value in the field of a specific company, than the general competencies. However, in a particular company and the local market, it could be that the general competencies, because of their rarity, are more important for the entrepreneur.

Due to increasing operational flexibility organization might higher valued and rewarded demonstrating competences which are possible to use in many tasks

entrusted to the employee - named 'transferable competencies'.

'Transferable competencies' (or 'skills;') can be defined differently. These competencies are often equated with the concept of 'Generic competencies' – universal and understood as the competence appropriate to the various professional groups in all organizations. This indicates that the 'transferable skills' are developed in one context, which can be used in other contexts, developed independently of the type of work and occupation. Sometimes universal competencies are defined as competencies that can be used at work in various positions, both from the point of view of the function of the organization (department) and the level of hierarchy. The opposite of 'transferable competencies' are the competencies specific for the organization's needs, suitable for a particular technology or business process, but which do not provide "added value" on the external labor market.

Labor market's experts emphasize that the work is obtained in 70% thanks to the expertise and 30% through social competence, and lost 70% because of lack of social skills and 30% lack of substantive competences.

The authors are also not agree in which competencies are transferable, giving them different classifications and lists. Key competencies include the following types of skills:

- ability of gaining new knowledge and problems solving;
- ability of critical thinking - the causal and functional links and the complexity of phenomena;
- ability of searching, sorting and using information from different sources;
- self-improving - flexibly respond for changing and searching for new solutions;
- communication skills – using the new technology,
  - ability of communication in different languages;
- ability of argumentation and presenting own opinion;
- ability of team working and group cooperation;
- acting – organize own work, taking responsibility for results;

In another classification, the most important are:  
communication skills;

- problems solving and logical thinking;
- leadership;
- creativity;
- motivation;
- ability of gaining new;
- ability of team working and group cooperation.

### 2.5.2. Study Entrepreneurs Offering Practical Vocational Training:

1. Employers' needs analysis in a field of competence and qualifications of persons employed in various positions and different occupations confirmed the most important is their experience, as well as skills and knowledge, lower are: age, gender, or educational background. If candidates do not have any work experience should have at least internship.
2. Employers do not always recognize that employed

trainees meet their expectations and are good candidates for permanent employees.

3. In the case of personal service workers positions and retailers (eg. seller, cook, barber, waiter) when it comes to professional qualifications, the professional education is not a prerequisite here. Here are welcome young people as employees. However, it is important to have any work experience.
4. In the case of technical positions and associate professionals (eg. computer specialist, pharmacist, economist, accounting, tourism) more important is education - employers prefer to recruit technicians/ engineers, people slightly older (25-35) years and having work experience or with experience of professional practice. When hiring people for such positions employer shall also take into account the skills (eg. computer literacy programs), as well as theoretical knowledge.
5. Persons employed as office workers (eg. office worker, clerk, administration, receptionist) do not necessarily have a directional education or work experience. When hiring such workers no matter the age or sex. While important are their skills such

as: computer skills, ability of using office equipment, as well as dealing with customers.

6. In the case of industrial workers and craftsmen (eg. mechanic, confectioner, baker, tinsmith, locksmith, bricklayer) employers prefer to hire vocational school graduates, men and people experienced. There is no formal code importance of education, age, and their skills and knowledge.

### 2.5.3 Competence as a key to the Poland development

#### A. Competency shortages and mismatches

Three-quarters of employers seeking employees drew attention to the difficulty in finding the suitable people for the job. The main cause of these problems was the fact that the candidates did not meet their requirements - especially in terms of competencies and the lack of relevant work experience.

Candidates for work missed mainly three types of competence:

- **Professional** - related to work in the specific profession;

- **Interpersonal** – communication the other people, and cooperation in the group;

- **Self-organizing** - autonomy, decision-making, entrepreneurship and self initiative, resistance to stress and the work motivation.

#### B. Competence of Poles and the needs of the Polish economy

- Industry skills assessment - the expectations of employers and higher education effects of Krakow example

- On a general level the most important for employers are soft skills competencies (social competences). An exception are the passive construction and energy industry where the highest role is played by the specific knowledge and specialized skills.

- In particular industries the list of core competencies are quite varied. The competence, which was among the 10 core competencies in all the analyzed sectors is honesty. Others which have been

assessed as particularly important in more than half of the industries are: concern for quality, learning ability and knowledge of English.

- Four skills were among 10 future core competencies in more than two branches: innovation, initiative, learning ability and integrity.

#### 2.5.4. Employers about labor market

The most needed were three kinds of competences:

1. **Self-organizing** – organizing work itself, affecting on efficiency and effectiveness of action taken in the context of work (self-reliance, time management, decisions taking, initiative, resistance to stress and general desire to work).
2. **Interpersonal** – based on contact with people, being communicative, cooperation in a group and solve conflicts.
3. **Professional** - skills and knowledge of particular occupation.

The need for professional qualifications and com-

petence on the labor market

**COGNITIVE COMPETENCE:** reading comprehension, analytical and synthetic thinking, searching information, anticipating the consequences of alternative actions, problem solving, divisibility attention, concentration, learning ability, creativity;

**INDIVIDUAL COMPENECES:** independence, time management, decision making, initiative-taking, entrepreneurship, resistance to stress, career ambitions (aiming for promotion), striving to raise the skills, commitment, honesty, hard working, self-discipline, honesty, lack of addictions, manners, optimistic, cheerful disposition, smile, ability to work/ planning skills/good organization of work, focus on results attitude for success/effectiveness in action, responsibility, energy/dynamism in action/active operation, dutifulness/ conscientiousness/flawless/professionalism, perseverance, courage, discretion, accuracy/ meticulousness/care.

**CULTURE COMPENECES:** verbal ability, track current events, knowledge of customs, knowledge about art, creative skills, physical competence, health, phys-

ical fitness, coordination abilities, spatial orientation, knowledge of the topography of the city, region, sight and hearing, reflexes.

**INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCES:** cooperation, interact with people, customers, solving conflict resolution, communication, self-presentation skills, negotiation skills, assertiveness, ability to easily in contact making.

**EXECUTIVE COMPETENCE:** leadership, management, tasks division, disciplining employees.

**AVAILABILITY COMPETENCES:** availability of time - working time flexibility, availability of space - willingness to change jobs, flexibility, adaptability skills.

**OFFICE COMPETENCE:** the ability to create formal documents, knowledge of business language/ conversations, knowledge of the collection, circulation and archiving of documents and correspondence, knowledge of the organizational structure of the company and the formal procedure of doing things, the ability to operate the equipment and office equipment.

**TECHNICAL COMPETENCES:** using technical imagination, using of technical devices, technical skills and technical knowledge.

**COMPUTER COMPETENCES:** basic computer skills, advanced computer skills, using the Internet and e-mail, creating computer applications - including web sites, insights into the current state of computer technology, professional / specialized computer programs knowledge - accounting, etc.

**MATH COMPETENCES:** making simple arithmetic accounts, solving complex computational problems, using patterns and of symbolism, read tables, interpreting graphs;

**PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY:** professional competence, reading technical drawings, knowledge of the local market/industry knowledge, ability to prepare and conduct a presentation, knowledge the law of Public Finance/Accounting Acts/ insurance system.

## 2.6 Literature review of France

This literature review aims at studying carefully various documentation related to transversal skills, which the young people need in order to boost their employability. Two questions will be highlighted here: which are the main transversal skills that ensure employability nowadays? What is the added value of the volunteering experience for the employers?

The current research proposes to help the process of establishment of specific volunteer-centered criteria for recognition of learning outcomes after completion of the European Voluntary Service. It is part of the research phase from France for OVPELO European project.

As a consequence, first we may wonder if in France the tools for recognition of non-formal education exist and how it is working. In a second part, we will focus on transversal skills and what kind of competences employers need in current French labor market. Does it a match exist between the skills required by employers and those acquired during an EVS experience in

youth organisations?

### 2.6.1. Recognition tools at national level:

#### **A. Legal framework for process of validation and certification:**

It is necessary to justify an experience of at least three years in the exercise of an activity directly related with the title and the desired degree. This degree is awarded after evaluation by a jury on the basis of knowledge, skills and competences developed during the experience.

In practice, the applicant must contact the Point Relais Conseil of his/her county.

In France, there is also a Passeport Bénévole des compétences that is to say a Skills Passport for competences developed during a volunteering experience. This certificate takes the form of a personal booklet recognition of volunteer experience. This tool, developed by France Bénévolat in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Employment Centre, can be used as a supporting document to complete a record of validation of experience. Volunteer Passport

allows any individual who wishes to create a bridge between the associative experience and professional background, upgrading skills acquired in combination

### **B) Other ways of social recognition for process of valorisation and assessing:**

A portfolio to enhance the volunteers skills was established within a European project called Assessing a Voluntary experience-Vaeb (2003-2006), awarded in Helsinki in 2006 for excellent practice in addressing the priorities of the Copenhagen process and promoting an enhanced European co-operation in vocational education and training. This project is about a tool to assess knowledge, experiences and skills acquired through voluntary activities. The AVE project helped identify, assess and enhance learning non-formal and informal and skills acquired through associative commitment. It has led to the recognition of informal qualification and to outline their “hidden” skills for some categories of volunteers. It offers a portfolio with several headings:

- Voluntary biography
- List of trainings and seminars attended

- Collecting voluntary activities
- Identifying skills (e.g. Mind Map) developed through volunteer experience
- Action plan to enhance this involvement in the labor market.

To summarise, we have just noticed that organisations, volunteers and even the government wanted to create a tool to better identify and promote among peers the acquisition of transferable skills that volunteers could develop during their volunteering experience as an EVS. As a consequence, this kind of recognition tool which tend to add value to learning outcomes after such experiences can reinforce quality and legibility of non-formal education and learning.

### **C) Transversal competences and employability: which soft skills employers are looking for?**

#### ***Definitions: soft skills and hard skills:***

To start the second part of this literature review, it seems important to focus on the difference made be-

tween soft skills and hard skills by a handbook published in 2011 by the SALTO Training and Cooperation and the SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre:

Today in Europe, many professions are defined by a list of competences that are needed in order to perform a specific job. In general, the list of competences for a job are clustered into two; generic competences and specific competences. Generic competences are mainly composed of soft skills whereas specific competences are generally about hard skills.

Hard skills are the technical skills, which are used to define the occupational requirements of a job and/or other activity. These are what make up the hard facts in a CV; which degree(s) you have and on which topic(s), what type of working field you have been involved in, what is your training and learning background, and so on.

Soft skills are social and communicative skills, such as personality characteristics, language abilities, personal habits, friendliness and skills in relationships with other people. In general they shape how you interact with your work. Soft skills complement hard skills and have a big effect on how you perform with

your technical abilities in a given context.

So, as we can understand soft skills means cross-disciplinary, interpersonal skills or merely as David Hopkins writes in his essay “knowing how to be”.

***Youngsters point of view: which competences acquired through voluntary activities are needed to enhance your employability?***

If we refer again to the SALTO handbook mentioned before, during the ‘Let’s Train: Recognition of Non-Formal Learning and Youth Work’ Training Course, which took place in November 2010 in Milocer, Montenegro, they asked the above question to a group of youth workers/leaders coming from different regions; namely Western Europe, Mediterranean, South East Europe, and Eastern Europe and Caucasus regions. Here are some of the answers:

- Self-confidence
- Trainer’s skills
- Project management
- Leadership

- Team work
- Communication skills
- Intercultural skills
- Language skills
- Understanding the others
- An open mind
- Curiosity
- Acknowledging different culture
- Accounting skills
- Networking
- Conflict management skills
- Dynamics of change
- Presentation skills
- Human resources management

Nevertheless, it seems necessary to know more about “the employability concept”. According to an-

other SALTO’s publication about “learning to learn”, Youthpass and Recognition, while there is no singular definition of employability, a review of the literature suggests that employability is about work and the ability to be employed (Hillage, 1998). This ability depends on “the combination of factors (personal attributes and competences, marketability and economic context) which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during career” (CEDEFOP, 2008). It goes without saying that employability prospects rely not only on the job seekers but also on the needs of the organisations providing employment.

Youthpass is a useful tool within the HRD model. Youthpass can easily fit into HRD processes and practices leading to recognition from the business sector as a validation tool for learning in personal and professional development. A successful integration of Youthpass into the HRD field will build a bridge to connect the spheres of public youth policy and employment.

## 2.6.2. Stakeholders point of view in France about transversal skills and employability: what the employers are looking for from young people?

If we have a look at websites of matching and on-line recruitment, people from Human Resources agree with the fact that today soft skills are competencies, which are really making the difference when hiring two candidates with the same curriculum or diploma: it enhances youngsters' employability. They are looking for people with values corresponding to the company's ones, characteristics and personal skills that will build a "flexible" employee.

If a recruitment office is hiring someone with experience, obviously he will be more focused on his/her professional career. A recruitment officer who is looking for a youngster for their first job or training will pay more attention on his/her character and the values he could have for the job. As evidence, more than 60% of requested criteria for a job opportunity are related to soft skills according to Success&Carreer website.

Last but not least, as you can see according to an annual study of Regionsjob website in 2013, soft skills will be representing the second most important criteria (savoir-être/personnalité- 23%) in a selection process after work experience.

According to Success&Carreer website, nowadays there are 5 key soft skills that employers are looking for:

- Sense of efficiency
- Communication
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Team spirit

Creativity and sense of initiative

After an overview of all tools existing in France to recognise and add value to competences developed through volunteering, we focused our study on transversal competences and employability. We have to highlight that there is a match between some soft skills developed and mentioned by youngsters as well as required by employers:

- Communication
- Team work
- Flexibility and dynamics of change

To conclude, in France, online platforms and websites of recommendations system based on soft skills already exist but it is only possible for peers to post comments and opinions. Maybe, there is something similar we can improve with the OVPELO project by making recommendations and comments possible also for and by youth organisations. Undoubtedly, this first research phase will help us to improve OVPELO platform content we plan to create through this project, and taking into account existing tools in each country.

## 2.7. LITERATURE REVIEW OF BULGARIA

Countries across the world are seeking strategies to improve both the employment prospects of young men and women and the productivity of enterprises. A foundation of core skills is one of the key constituent factors of employability, along with access to education, availability of training opportunities, and the motivation, ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning. These skills are critical for both workers and the enterprises that employ them, enabling workers to attain decent work and manage change, and enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and enter new markets. This policy brief aims to assist key stakeholders to better understand what the core skills for employability are, why they are important, and how they can be delivered, attained and recognized. It illustrates various ways of integrating employability skills into core academic content and vocational training. Innovative use of information and communications technologies (ICT),

improvements to informal apprenticeship systems and targeted interventions directed at the specific hurdles facing disadvantaged young women and men provide greater opportunities to incorporate core work skills into technical training.

The relationship between the labor market and the education system is chaotic. Over the years, in accordance with the European dimension of education and the requirements of the labor market, the majority of Bulgarian universities have established Career Centers. The Career Center monitors the trend of the labor market and informs academic leaders about trends in supply and demand. This provides an opportunity for the business to work with the leadership of the university to prepare educational programs that provide adequate professional training for students in accordance with the real needs of the economy. The awareness on the labor market leads to right choices and rational decisions of students. The ability of young people to make their own decisions is essential for effective professional development and career planning. In Bulgaria are developed and implemented a number of projects and programs aimed at creating

new jobs and creating encouraging and supportive environment for quality professional development of young people.

### 2.7.1. What are core skills for employability?

Core employability skills build upon and strengthen the skills developed through basic education; the technical skills needed for specific occupations or to perform specific tasks or duties (such as nursing, accounting, using technology or driving a forklift); and professional/personal attributes such as honesty, reliability, punctuality and loyalty. (For a summary of the different types of skills needed for the world of work, see table 1.) Core work skills enable individuals to constantly acquire and apply new knowledge and skills; they are also critical to lifelong learning. Various agencies and organizations have given different labels to these skills, ranging from “key competencies” to “soft skills”, “transferable skills” or “essential skills”.

Enterprise surveys are used to determine which skills employers require. Certain work skills are identified in most such surveys, and these are listed in table 2, grouped into four broad skill categories: learning

to learn; communication; teamwork; and problem-solving. Clearly the relevance of any particular skill or group of skills will depend to some extent on the type of employment (self-employment, formal or informal), the economic sector in which the enterprise operates, and the size and nature of the enterprise.

- Learning to learn covers the knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes which enable individuals to set, plan and reach their own learning goals and become independent autonomous learners. These skills equip young people for lifelong learning.
- Communication covers the abilities to gain understanding from others – by listening, reading and observation, using both formal and informal, oral and written means – and to put across ideas clearly and effectively.
- Teamwork covers the abilities necessary to operate smoothly and efficiently within a group, including those related to both cooperation and leadership.

- Problem-solving covers the analytical skills required to evaluate information or situations and decide on the most appropriate ways of addressing problems.

These skills include awareness of long-term consequences of actions taken and the capacity to assess and adapt plans of action.

### 2.7.2. Why are core skills for employability important?

Skills have become increasingly important in the globalized economy. Vocational and technical skills are essential, but employers are seeking applicants with more than these, and to date this need is a long way from fully met. A report by the Institute for Progressive Education Bulgaria, drawing on survey data, found that less than half of employers (43 per cent) were able to find the skills they needed in entry-level workers. What employers are looking for are the core skills for employability identified in the preceding section. These skills benefit those newly embarking on

the labor market, existing employees and employers. For the individual, they improve the ability to get and keep a job, to move around in the labor market and to engage in lifelong learning. Learning skills enable one to manage one's own time and get the most out of it, whether in work or studying. Teamwork and communication skills show one how to get the best out of working with others. Problem-solving helps individuals to develop a systematic approach to tackling the inevitable challenges they will encounter in their studies, work and everyday life. For the employer, these core skills mean employees better able to respond more readily to changes in the workplace, reducing the time taken for a product to be conceptualized, manufactured, distributed and sold. Workers equipped with these skills will be able to learn more quickly and perform more effectively, allowing enterprises to develop more innovative and flexible workplaces, where employees can offer novel ideas, and to adjust more quickly to technological change and organizational restructuring.

### 2.7.3. What do employers want?

“Employers want assurances that young people applying for jobs have at least strong foundation skills and can deploy their knowledge to solve problems, take the initiative and communicate with team members, rather than just follow prescribed routines. These skills are not taught from a textbook, but can be acquired through good quality education. Yet employers often indicate that these skills are lacking in new recruits to the labor market.”

### 2.7.4. Policy challenges

The major policy challenges in this area revolve around four broad issues:

- Securing the first job and then being able to move on in the labor market, both of which require core work skills as well as the technical skills to perform specific tasks.
- The need to improve access to innovative, good-quality secondary education and training, a prime site for the transmission of core work skills, and to

ensure that more young people take part in and complete their courses.

- Opening up opportunities to acquire core employability skills to disadvantaged young people, including those who have dropped out of school or never attended, and those who are working in the informal economy under poor conditions. These young women and men often lack not only access to training, but also the professional or personal role models who could nurture essential employability skills.
- Obtaining recognition of the core employability skills acquired outside the workplace, through regular activities in the home, the community, the classroom or recreationally. These skills are not typically certified, so how are they to become recognized?

### 2.7.5. Getting a job and remaining active in the labor market

#### 1. Responsibilities for skills development:

- The government has primary responsibility for
  - education;
  - pre-employment training, core skills;
  - training the unemployed and people with special needs.
2. The social partners play a significant role in
    - further training;
    - providing work experience.
  3. Individuals need to make use of opportunities for education, training and lifelong learning.

**Key messages:**

1. The best way to acquire core skills for employability is on the job. But many employers are no longer prepared to take on new recruits without demonstrated ability in these skills. Therefore, both individuals and education and training systems must do more to attain and deliver these transferable skills.
2. Secondary school is an important channel

through which young people acquire skills that improve their chances of getting good jobs. High-quality secondary education and vocational training that cater for the widest possible range of abilities, interests and backgrounds are vital to set young people on the path to the world of work, as well as to give countries the educated workforce they need to compete in today's technologically driven world. Innovative ways need to be found to integrate the teaching of these skills into the transmission of core academic content.

Innovative, good-quality secondary education and training for all

**Key messages:**

- a) Curricula at lower secondary school level should offer both basic education and good-quality training in relevant skills. Upper secondary curricula should provide a balance between vocational and technical skills, including ICT, and core work skills.

b) To improve access to good jobs for disadvantaged young people in particular, secondary education has to be made more equitable and more inclusive, offering the widest possible range of opportunities to accommodate young people of differing abilities, interests and backgrounds.

c) Ways need to be found to overcome the main obstacles to attendance, namely: cost; distance from home to school; lack of language skills and learning materials; and lack of understanding of the relevance of formal education.

#### 2.7.6. Good practice:

Access to, participation in and completion of secondary education and training are all enhanced by a system that:

- provides detailed information on occupational requirements to students and their families and friends;
- coordinates strong community-based and personalized support;

- assigns an academic adviser to each student who is responsible for supporting and monitoring that individual's progress;
- expands geographical outreach, using such means as distance learning;
- makes it affordable;
- improves the quality of primary-level education;
- reforms policies that deter girls' participation;
- makes it more relevant to the world of work;
- tailors skills to the needs of the local market;
- offers technical and vocational training;
- offers an effective and flexible curriculum;
- uses hands-on learning techniques and modular course design;
- brings the classroom to the workplace;
- brings the workplace to the classroom.

For those who dropped out of school or never at-

tended, second-chance opportunities at formal education can be successful if they:

- focus on the holistic development of the individual;
- provide a learning environment which is safe and structured but also challenging;
- offer a flexible and dynamic programme of integrated general education, vocational training and work experience;
- are participant-centered and participant-led, offering genuine opportunity for open and honest feedback between trainer and participants;
- emphasize achievement rather than failure;
- use appropriate assessment and certification;
- are flexible in respect of curriculum timing;
- offer courses of variable duration on the basis of student needs;
- operate in close proximity to students' homes;
- assign little or no homework;

- keep financial costs to a minimum, both for students and for their parents or guardians;
- involve families and communities in the learning process.

### 2.7.7. Improving employability by volunteering

In Bulgarian society lifelong education is becoming more important and therefore volunteering as a form of non-formal education, more desirable. The empowerment of human capacities through volunteering brought more concurrency on the labour market and increase the employability in general. Validation of experience knowledge and skills gained through volunteer involvement is closely related with a concept of lifelong learning, so it is often viewed in that context.

What does volunteer involvement offer:

- Improving skills and getting opportunity for better employment possibilities.
- Gaining new professional experience and references.

- Improving skills and getting opportunity for better employment possibilities.
- Presentation of working skills and benefits that one organization could have by employing a person with previous volunteer experience.
- Improvement of CV with new experiences.
- Informal learning process.
- Development of personal potentials.
- Gaining competencies for personal and professional development.

Equal opportunities – inclusive volunteering as a way to integration and improved employability

- Through volunteering, representatives of groups in risk of social exclusion got an opportunity to gain or strengthen work experience and social skills as well as to expand their social network.
- Hosting organizations have increased their capacities for implementation of inclusive volunteer programmes and based on that strengthen their role

and values in the community.

Specific capacities of non-profit organizations were developed, with the respect to the provision of diverse measures that could facilitate easier labor market entry for unemployed and inactive youth.

### 3. Conclusion

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The employment rate of the 15-64 age group represents employed persons aged 15-64 as a percentage of the population of the same age group. In 2002, this employment rate was an exception in the northern part of Europe. There were 24 NUTS 2 regions with an employment rate below %50 – two in Spain, five in France (including all four overseas regions), six in Italy, one in Hungary and five each in Poland and Bulgaria. Of the six in Italian regions below %50, there (Campania, Calabria and Sardegna) had the lowest rates (41.9%) off all European NUTS 2 regions studied. In all Polish regions except two (Lubelskie, Mazowieckie), the employment rate of the 15-64 age group was less than 55%

NUTS 2 regions in which the employment rate exceeded 75% in 2002 (altogether there were 21 of them) can be found in the Netherlands (4) Finland (2), Sweden (3) and the UK (11), Denmark (comprising one NUTS 2 region) also had an employment rate above this level. Among the new Member States, only six NUTS 2 regions exceeded %65: four in the Czech Republic (the capital region Praha, Stredni, Cechy, Jihozapad, Severovychod), one in Slovakia (the capi-

tal region Bratislavsky kraj) and Cyprus (which, like Denmark, comprises a single NUTS 2 region).

In most countries, there was a positive trend in employment between 2001 and 2002. Only two of the former EU-15 Member States recorded a decrease in total employment (Germany 0.7% and Denmark 0.5%); the highest increase was observed in Spain (2%, representing an increase of 312,000 employed persons), Italy (1.9% or 315,000 employed persons) and Ireland (1.9% OR 33,000 employed persons). The intensity of the decline in the new Member States, and especially Romania, was substantially greater: 9.5% in Romania (decrease of 1.01 million employed persons), 3% in Poland (decrease of 424,000 employed persons) and 5.5% in Lithuania (decrease of 81,000 employed persons). The biggest upturn was recorded in Latvia (2.5%, representing an increase of 24,000 employed persons) and Bulgaria (1.5%, or 41,000 employed persons).

In 2002, an improvement of more than 0.5 percentage points in comparison with 2001 was observed in 57 NUTS 2 regions, whereas an equivalent worsening was noted in 107 regions. The greatest decline in the

unemployment rate ( over 2 percentage points) was recorded in Bulgaria (Severen tsentralen, Severoiztochen, Yugoiztochen, where the latter two had an unemployment rate above 20%), France (two overseas regions, Guyane and Reunion, both with high unemployment rates), Greece (Sterea Ellada) and the new Member States Estonia and Lithuania.

Regions with the largest increase in the unemployment rate (more than two percentage points) in 2002 were as follows: six Polish regions, two Spanish regions (La Rioja and Extremadura), two in Greece (Voreio Aigaio and Notio Aigaio), two in Romania (Sud-Est and Sud) and one French region (Franche-Comte).

In 2002 female unemployment in the former EU-15 Member States was 8.7% (countries with a rate higher than 10% were Spain (16.4%), Greece (15.0%) and Italy (12.9%), Latvia (11.0%), Slovakia (18.7%) and Poland (20.9%)); in Bulgaria and Romania it was 17.3% and 7.7% respectively. At regional (NUTS 2) level, a female unemployment rate below 5% was recorded in eight regions in Austria, two each in Belgium, Portugal and Italy, 30 in the UK, six in Sweden,

10 in the Netherlands, nine in Germany, three in Hungary, one in Finland, Ireland and the Czech Republic. In Denmark, Luxembourg and Cyprus the female unemployment rate was also below 5%.

In 2002, regions with a female unemployment rate over 20% could be found in Poland (ten of the 16 regions), France (all four overseas regions, with Reunion exceeding 30%), three regions in Bulgaria and two each in Germany, Slovakia, Spain and Greece. The situation in Italy was marked by a big difference across the country- of the six regions in this category, Campania and Calabria were over 30%. In Germany the female unemployment rate was noticeably higher in the regions of the former GDR.

The youth unemployment rate represents unemployed persons aged 15-24 as a percentage of the economically active population of the same age group. However, there is a greater divergence between the former EU-15 Member States (14.9%), and the new Member States (32.4%), Bulgaria (37.2%) and Romania (23.2%). In the former EU-15 Member States, a youth unemployment rate of over 25% was observed in Italy (27.2%) and Greece (26.5%), whereas it was

below 10% in Denmark (7.4%), Germany (9.7%), Ireland (7.8%), Luxembourg (7.0%), Austria (6.2%) and the Netherlands (5.0%).

The long-term unemployment rate represents persons unemployed for one year or longer, as a percentage of the sum of those unemployed for less than one year and those unemployed for one year or longer. In 2002, relatively low long-term unemployment rates (below 20%) were recorded in five Swedish regions, 17 British regions, three Austrian regions (Salzburg, Tirol, Vorarlberg), one Spanish region (Illes Balears), one Italian region (Valle d'Aosta) and in Denmark. In spite of the high youth and female unemployment in the Spanish region of Andalucia, the long-term unemployment rate was relatively low here. The opposite situation was observed in Slovenia. A long-term unemployment rate of more 65% was observed in four Bulgarian regions (Severozapaden, Yugozapaden, Yuzhen tsentralen, Yugoiztochen), all four French overseas regions, in four Italian regions (Lazio, Campania, Puglia, Sicily), two Greek regions (Western Greece/ Dytiki Ellada and Inland Greece/ Sterea Ellada), two Slovak regions (Zapadne Slovensko and

Vychodne Slovensko) and in the Polish region of Podkarpacie.

## 4. Recommendations

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In order to implement key objectives of the strategy “Europe 2020” and the priority inclusion of young people on the labor market, in the development of projects, programs to support professional planning and realization of students, it is appropriate to take into account the theoretical productions in career development, best practices, exchanges and models from other educational systems.



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