DIAGNOSIS OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF YOUTH and EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYERS

Prepared under the project

"Młodzi na rynku pracy/Young people at the labour market"

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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Project rationale

Young people, in the opinion of employers, are not enough prepared to the labour market. Not every graduate is able to find a job and even if he/she finds it, not everybody is able to meet expectations of the employer. Young people during their studies often do not take the additional activity associated with involvement into student's unions or NGOs. Most of them do not take additional internships and practices in line with their profession. Their skills, competences and expectations often fail to match what is expected from them at the labour market.

The Strategic Partnership we establish aims to diagnose the problem and to reply to it effectively through cooperation, experience and information exchange, development of didactic materials (lesson and workshops scenarios for youth organizations, schools and universities), development of the audiovisual didactic materials.

The Strategic Partnership involves the cooperation of Polish Slovak, Italian and Maltese institutions at the regional level and includes: NGOs, youth organizations, trade unions.

Main activities of the project include:

1. Diagnose of skills and competences which the employers expect from their future employees
2. Best practice sharing and exchange of information and expertise of all stakeholders involved in the project
3. Development of didactic materials - lesson's and workshops scenarios, which will be adapted to the school programmes and NGO programmes (lessons of entrepreneurship, non-formal education workshops, workshops during career days at universities)
4. Development of didactic audiovisual materials - to work with youth in the sphere of development of their social and personal competences and preparing them to the labour market
5. Preparation of Information brochure - which promotes active citizenship, young's people involvement into students' and youth organization
6. Staff trainings - trainings for youth workers and teachers at schools in order to adapt developed didactic materials into school and NGO educational programmes
7. Local 1-day testing seminars for youth - testing of didactic materials developed during the project
8. Final conference in Warsaw promoting and disseminating results of the project.

1.2 Project aims

The main objectives of the project are:

- ➤ Raising the level of social and interpersonal of young people from Poland, Malta, Slovakia and Italy, and preparing them to enter the labor market;
- ➤ Develop a training program and materials for social skills training, which may be used in organizations, in schools, universities, and youth organizations;
- ➤ Increasing the competence of people working with young people, in the field of preparation of young people in Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia and Italy to enter the labor market, equipping them with tools to assist;
- ➤ Promotion of active citizenship, student and professional (internships, practice) as the natural environment to acquire social skills needed in the labor market.

2. Youth competences as a key element on the labour market

2.1 Youth unemployment in EU

Youth unemployment is one of Europe's most pressing problems. In the current economic and financial crisis the lack of job opportunities has affected young people more than any other group in society; this is reflected in high and increasing youth unemployment rates and levels of precariousness.

According to the latest Eurostat report[1] in June 2015, the youth unemployment rate was 20.7 % in the EU-28 and 22.5 % in the euro area, compared with 22.1 % and 23.6 % respectively in June 2014. What means that 4.724 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the EU-28, of whom 3.181 million were in the euro area.

Youth unemployment rates are generally much higher, even double or more than double, than unemployment rates for all ages.

Some reasons for the large number of unemployed people under the age of 25 are country-specific, having in mind the differences in employment policies, educational systems and economic performance among EU Member States, however there are factors contributing to the high youth unemployment rates which are present throughout the whole EU. One obvious reason for the large number of unemployed young people is the recent crisis which caused economic slowdown and tightening of the labour market[2]. However, the reasons of high rates of youth unemployment are more complicated and complex than just an economic conditions.

The biggest obstacles that prevent young people from getting a job is the lack of professional experience, as well as mismatch between knowledge and skills of young people and requirements of employers.

Having less job-related experience than adult workers makes youngsters more vulnerable when there are lay-offs and decreases their chances to be employed for newly opened positions. The low quality of education and the continuous expansion of the skill pool required for a job, leaves young people underqualified and without any work offerings, so it is nearly impossible for them to gain work experience. It is often the case that young people having large theoretical knowledge, do not possess practical skills required by the employers.

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics
[2] According to http://www.bridgingeurope.net/why-is-youth-unemployment-in-the-eu-so-high.html

It is very important to find solutions for these problems and to find a way to help young people to gain competences required by employers and start to gain experiences necessary to improve their position at the labour market.

2.2 Key competences

The National Council for Adult Training approved, by Decision no. 86/24.06.2088, in compliance with the European Union's and the European Union Council's Recommendation on the key competencies lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), The List of key competencies, common to various professions, a list that includes:

- **communication in the mother tongue**, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;
- **communication in foreign languages**, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organize one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behavior that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;

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- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;
- **cultural awareness and expression**, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

2.3 Importance of key competences

The labour market is constantly evolving. Skills, competences, and qualifications that people need change over time. To deal with these changes people need to be equipped with a variety of basic skills.

The Key Competencies are a set of seven generic competencies that people need to participate effectively in the workforce. These competencies cover general skills that apply to most jobs. These seven competencies provide a structure for the development of lifelong, generic and transferable skills. They also provide the framework for the development of more specific industry and enterprise competencies.

Key competencies are very important because world has changed. In the past few decades, there has been enormous change in the nature of societies, change in the nature of work, change in how knowledge is viewed, and change in technologies, changes in expectations of employers, to name just a few. Those changes, and the certainty of ongoing change, have implications for the kind of education our young people require, and the focus of the teaching and learning they experience.

It is no longer sufficient for pupils and students to merely acquire knowledge. Students and pupils need opportunities to develop their capability as users of knowledge and skills in wide-ranging contexts now and in the future. This requires attention not only to their recall of knowledge, or ability to perform particular skills, young people need to be capable at thinking, using language, symbols and texts, managing self, relating to others, and participating and contributing.

They also need to be capable of using those competencies in diverse contexts – at school, in the community, at home, and especially at work.

Essential is to discover what competences are mostly required at the labour market at the given moment and prepare tools allowing for efficient development of these competences among people who are entering labour market.

3. **Methodology description - the concept and organization of research**

3.1 **Objectives of the research**

Objectives of the conducted research and diagnosis of the level of competence of youth and the employers' needs include:

- investigation and determination of the level of personal and social competences young people from secondary schools and university students;
- collecting information about employers' assessment of the level of personal and social competences of young people entering labour market;
- collecting information about skills and competences of young people expected and required by employers;
- study whether the personal and social competencies of students studying either at a University or a College are the same competencies that the employers search for;
- preparation of recommendations, which will be the basis for preparation of set of tools for development of the personal and social competences of young people required by employers.

3.2 **Research tools**

Before starting the research, partners have discussed main issues related with the organization of research and preparation of research tools.

Each project partner has prepared own research tools. This has guaranteed that tools will be adjusted to specific conditions of each project country. However, the main assumption was, that all research tools should be used to gather the same sort of information, so that to make it possible to compare results in each country and prepare unified tools at the later stages of the project.

Partners have decided that given the purpose of the study, which determine the level of personal and social competences of students and pupils, as well as collect opinions and the needs of employers regarding the level of competence in young people entering the labor market; qualitative and quantitative methods were used.

The basic tool used during the gathering of quantitative data, were questionnaire filled in by secondary school students and university students, testing their personal and social competences.

The basic tool used during the gathering of qualitative data were scripts of structured interviews with employers, containing questions about the level of personal and social skills of young people entering the labour market, as well as questions about expectations of employers in this area. Also, questionnaires for pupils and students have also contained open questions in which they were asked about their assessment of possessed skills and competences and their opinion about requirements of employers.

Detailed description of tools used by each partner is contained in their national reports from research, which are attachments to this report.

3.3 Description of the tested group tested

According to the project, partners were conducting research among representatives of 3 groups:
- pupils from secondary schools;
- university students;
- employers.

It was planned that each partner conduct research among:
- 60 representatives of pupils
- 60 representatives of students
- 15 representatives of employers.

However, finally there were some changes.

Slovakian partner received 83 questionnaires from pupils, 63 questionnaires from students, and conducted 16 interviews with employers.

Partner from Malta have received 43 questionnaires from university students and 23 from vocational school pupils, and conducted 22 interviews with employers.

Italian partner received 61 questionnaires from secondary school pupils, 60 questionnaires from university students, and conducted 38 interviews with employers.

In Poland, numbers from the application were kept as planned.

3.4 Organization of the research

Partners have prepared questionnaires for students and pupils in the form of paper questionnaires and online questionnaires (EDS-FNS, NKOS).

Paper questionnaires were filled by pupils and students during meetings with staff from partners organizations (and were supervised by them). These were mostly group meetings – a s this was much easier to conduct. Some meting were organized during classes in schools (after approval of the school authorities and acceptance of the teacher), some meetings were organized in order to conduct research. Each time meetings were organized after receiving permission from authorities (directors of schools), or participants (students organizations). Data from these questionnaires were then introduced into electronic programs (SPSS) and files (Excel) to be analyzed.

 Links to online surveys were sent to pupils and students directly, but also to teachers, academics, staff of different organizations – who may have contacts with students and pupils and could spread links to online questionnaires. Partners were administrating the questionnaires and gathering data.

Employers were interviewed during individual meetings with staff from partners organizations. As a first step, each partner contacted as many individual employers and companies as possible. It was not very difficult process, as all partners have companies and organizations that they cooperate with on regular basis. Each employer has been informed about the project, its goals and planned results and asked for permissions to conduct interview. Then, each partner prepared a schedule of interviews, according to which meetings with employers were held.

4. Analysis of the results

All data gathered during the research were analyzed by each partner organization. Detailed analysis of these data are included into national reports prepared by each partner organization. These national reports are integral parts of this report.

5. Conclusions

After detailed analyses of gained data, each partner prepared conclusions based on the collected information. These conclusions may be shortly summarized– that there is mismatch between competences possessed by young people and these which are expected by employers.

Below, detailed conclusion from each partner country are presented.

5.1 Poland

Analysis of results of questionnaires fulfilled by pupils and students s well as detailed The analysis of secondary school and university students' competence tests as well as details interview with employers made it possible to draw the following conclusions:

- Secondary school students generally have an average and low level of social competences
- A large group of surveyed students (30 %) is not able to assess the level of their competences, the others, in the majority of cases, asses this level as average. Self-assessment of technical and vocational school students is higher than secondary school students.
- Students have very little knowledge of employers' expectations in relation to social competences
- University students show average, low and very low level of social competences
- The assessment of the level of their own competences rates as low and average
- Students' awareness of employers' expectations of young employees is definitely higher than secondary school students'
- The vast majority of secondary school and university students Express their readiness to improve their skills and competences required in the labour market
- Employers emphasise the importance of such competences as: logical and independent thinking, commitment, responsibility, openness to new information and knowledge, efficient communication, teamwork, creativity, cooperation in a team,

formulating and solving problems, ethical conduct, information literacy, management, negotiations, time management and planning one's work

- Employers asses young adults' theoretical knowledge as good, however, they consider its practical application as much worse
- Young adults' professional experience is varied; it is very low or none - of those people who did not have any opportunity to practice in a real work situation and even very high of casual workers, of those who cooperated with various institutions and of volunteers', etc.

5.2 Slovakia

Based on the research it can be seen that there is quite big disproportion between the real needs of employers and the level of skills and competences of pupils and students. Combating youth unemployment is one of the most important and most urgent challenges that states face in every continent of the globe. In order to help to decrease of the level of youth unemployment, there is a big need to find tools which will help to balance gap between needs of employers and skills of pupils and students.

5.3 Malta

The results of survey were very positive:

The majority of interviewed students and pupils believes that they can find a suitable job connected to their educational path. Nearly 50% of University students and over 50% of MCAST students have been working part time or through apprenticeships during their course of studies and have therefore developed familiarity with the labour market. They all have a CV (apart from one person) and most of them are based on the EUROPASS format. Another indicator that confirms the positive attitude of the interviewees towards the labour market is that they nearly all sat for a job interview and most of them were successful at least once.

Although the overall result of the survey is quite positive, this has to be red in the context of the Maltese socio-economic scenario whereby in terms of youths and employment the main issue is not related to those that have achieved a level of education but to those who exit the educational path prematurely.

Results of interviews with employers showed that nowadays not only professional skills of employees matter. Most of employers stressed importance of soft skills and competences, and also noticed that not many young people posses such skills at satisfactory level.

5.4 Italy

Comparing data collected thanks to this research we can make some general conclusions about the soft skills requested by the labour market and not sufficient in young people of our sample.

The following considerations will guide us in the definition of workshops (output 2) in the frame of the project "young people on the labour market".

For our students samples (highs schools and university students) the weakest competence is the stress management and for our employers is one of the competence that employee have to have at the highest level. It means that this competence have to be improved for sure.

The stress management competence is part of the stress and coping skills factor where we could find also the conflict management. It seems that in our sample young people think to have a good level of this skill. It is true? Considering the factor "stress and coping skills" if you are not able to manage stress probably you will not have enough skills to manage conflicts (that are situation with a high level of stress).

The other factors according to the employers answers have to be improved in any case because they expect to have "perfect" employee.

It is interesting that the factor less important for employers and less strong in the young people sample is the "emotional intelligence" composed by empathy, emotional stability and energy and motivation. Only this last item is considered in the profile of a "perfect employee". This is really interesting because probably there isn't the awareness about how much important is the emotional stability in order to be a good worker.

6. Recommendations

After gathering and analyzing data from the conducted research, each partner has formulated recommendations which will be the basis for preparation of materials under the next project outputs.

Each partner has identified skills and competences which are most expected by employers, well as the competences which are at the lowest level (according to employers). This information will be used during preparation of didactic materials helping to shape social and personal competences of young people, as the content of these materials will depend on the identified needs and gaps.

Analyze of results of surveys has shown that nowadays social and personal competences of young people play more important role at the labour market – both for employers and young people.

Main recommendations were that:

- Study programs in schools and universities should be enriched with elements helping young people to shape their personal and social competences;
- These competences must be developed not only in the form of traditional learning but with usage of tools adjusted to needs of young people;
- Young people should be encouraged to develop social and personal skills – not forced to do this. The best way is to use tools attractive for them and show them benefits from possessing high social and personal competences;
- Greater emphasis should be placed on developing soft skills, the ability to apply knowledge, case studies carried out in groups and independent studies;
- Various forms of non-scientific activities of students should be promoted and supported by educational institutions and NGOs;
- Students and pupils should be encouraged to gain and develop their competences and skills not only in formal education, but also by participating in voluntary work, internships, placement, international exchanges. Young people should be informed about benefits from these forms of activities;
- Young people should receive support in searching for and applying to places where they can conduct internships or placements. They need at least information and guidelines about how and where to look for placements, internships or possibilities to be a volunteer;

7. ANNEXES

7.1 National report from Poland

Analysis of young adults' competences and employers' requirements

Study Report

prepared under *Young adults In the labour market* project and Erasmus Programme + KA2 Strategic Partnership

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Lublin, July 2015

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern labour market imposes new requirements on a future employee both in Poland and in other EU countries. What matters is not only theoretical knowledge, education and practical competences but also social competences conceived as a personal potential of an employee. Employers expect candidates to be independent in organising their work, creative in what they do, resourceful, conscientious and consistent. Teamwork and high work motivation are greatly appreciated.

Employers hiring university and secondary school graduates observe that young adults lack social competences. It so happens that a young man is positively verified during a job interview, he/she starts work but finds it difficult to keep it due to interpersonal and self-organisation issues.

To avoid a series of failures in professional career of young adults moving into the labour market, it is necessary to build personal and social competences outside the formal educational system. Personal competences are developed in the process of social training which we observe when a person gets involved in social activities and tasks; our formal educational system, however, does not provide too many of such activities. Thus social training should be introduced in a form of special coaching sessions, interpersonal training and workshops making it possible to perfect specific social skills.

The study conducted under *Young adults In the labour market* project and Erasmus Programme + KA2 Strategic Partnership with the participation of 60 secondary school students, 60 university students and 15 employers shows that the level of social and personal competences of young adults moving into the labour market does not correlate with employers' expectations.

This report is based on findings from surveys and contains a detailed analysis and summary of resulting conclusions. Recommendations drawn on the basis of these conclusions will ultimately be utilized in preparation of a training programme focused on developing personal and social competences in young adults.

1.1 Social competences as determinants of success in the labour market

Transformation to the modern society resulting from changes in social, economic, scientific and technical conditions made it necessary for young adults to depict a wide range of competences. These are competences needed to live an independent and responsible life in the word and in Europe.

Competences are defined as a *cluster of someone's knowledge, abilities or responsibilities,* [3] or else as:

> *the ability and readiness of an individual to do a job at a certain level* (cited in O. H.Tenkins)
>
> *teachable ability to do things well, necessary skills to solve problems* (cited in D. Fontana)
>
> *special quality expressed by demonstrating the ability of an appropriate behaviour at a level set by social standards in the context of the need for and consequences of such a behaviour as well as taking responsibility for this particular behaviour.* [4]

Social competences, in other words social intelligence, social abilities or skills, are among most desirable human competences.

In social psychology, social and interpersonal competences are described, among others, as:

> *ability to attain social and personal goals while keeping good relations with your partner,*
>
> *cognitive and emotional ability contributing to adaptation of an individual to a given social environment- understood as the ability to make a necessary influence on other people in social situations,*
>
> *complex abilities to cope in social situations of a given type, attaining goals in social life, building emotional relations with people - understood as creating, developing and keeping relationships and getting social support* [5].

Social competences are conditioned by personal traits, temperament, general and emotional intelligence. Social competences are developed in the process of social training when an individual gets involved in social activities, situations and tasks. Social training can both be natural and intentional. We witness natural training when we get involved in task-oriented and social situations. Social competences can also be developed or increased in the course of planned social training. This training can take the form of special training sessions, interpersonal trainings or workshops.

Mastering social intercourse skills is an important determinant of life and personal satisfaction. A high level of these competences results in better adaptation to changes in life, higher flexibility in behaviour and attitude in various social situations and lower fear and depression index as well as the feeling of loneliness. Interpersonal skills and abilities have an enormous influence on lower fear and depression index and the feeling of loneliness. Interpersonal skills and abilities have an enormous influence on the quality of work and professional success and, in case of young adults, are an important factor in their job recruitment process.

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[3] 2 Słownik języka polskiego PWN, Warszawa 1994, s. 977
[4] W. Strykowski, J. Strykowska, J. Pielachowski, Competencies of a modern school teacher, Poznań 2003, s. 22-23
[5] http://www.psychologia.net.pl/

1.2. The concept of key competences

The concept of key competences was introduced at the time Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning was issued.

The European Parliament defined competences as *a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context.*[6] In the context of this definition competences are understood as an effective application of knowledge using your skills and abilities. In the recommendations of the European Parliament referring to European qualifications for lifelong learning framework, competences are categorized in terms of autonomy and responsibility. They mean *proved ability to apply knowledge, abilities and personal, social and methodological skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training.*[7]

The European Union has defined eight key competences which are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context needed for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.[8] Thus, they play an essentials role in individual life both in learning processes and in social and professional life.

The key competences are:

communication in the mother tongue
communication in foreign languages mathematical competence and basic competences
in science and technology digital competence
learning to learn
social and civic competences
sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
cultural awareness and expression.

Social and civic competences are defined as those including a full range of all forms of behaviour that equip young adults in skills enabling them to participate in social and professional life in an effective and constructive way, to cope in difficult situations and to resolve conflict where necessary. They also should prepare an individual to participate in civic life fully, equip her/him in knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and teach commitment to active and democratic participation.

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[6] RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC)

[7] Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

[8] RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), Journals of Law (Dz.U.) 394,30.12.2006

The core skills of social competences include the ability to communicate constructively in different environments, to show tolerance, express and understand different viewpoints, to negotiate with the ability to create confidence and to be flexible to changes. Social competences guarantee added value, social coherence, offer flexibility and ability to adapt on the labour market.

Unfortunately, as many examples from numerous European countries, including Poland, show, there is a big discrepancy between the official policy and declarations referring to civic education as well as developing key competences and a practical implementation of them at schools. Developing key competences is becoming more important in modern world than extensive knowledge. Collecting information does not mean the ability of using it. A modern teaching model deviates from sharing knowledge and focuses on forming and developing competences with the application of numerous methods stimulating students to be active and to participate in social life. Mastering key competences enables young adults to function effectively in a fast changing reality.[9]

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[9] Dr B. Kubiczek, Project „The School of Democracy - The School of Self-governance"- Teachers and Students' Social and Civic Competences. Conference materials for participants. Sosnowickie Centrum Edukacyjne „EDUKATOR", Sosnowiec 2012, s. 5

1.3. Young adults' situation in the labour market

Unemployment is one of the key problems in Poland and other EU countries. In March 2015 23.8 million people were unemployed in the European Union, 18 million of which live in the Euro zone countries. Compared to last year a slight improvement was observed – compared to December more than 150 000 people found a new job and the unemployment rate in Euroland dropped to 11.2 percent. Poland ranks 13 with regard to the unemployment rate among all EU countries.
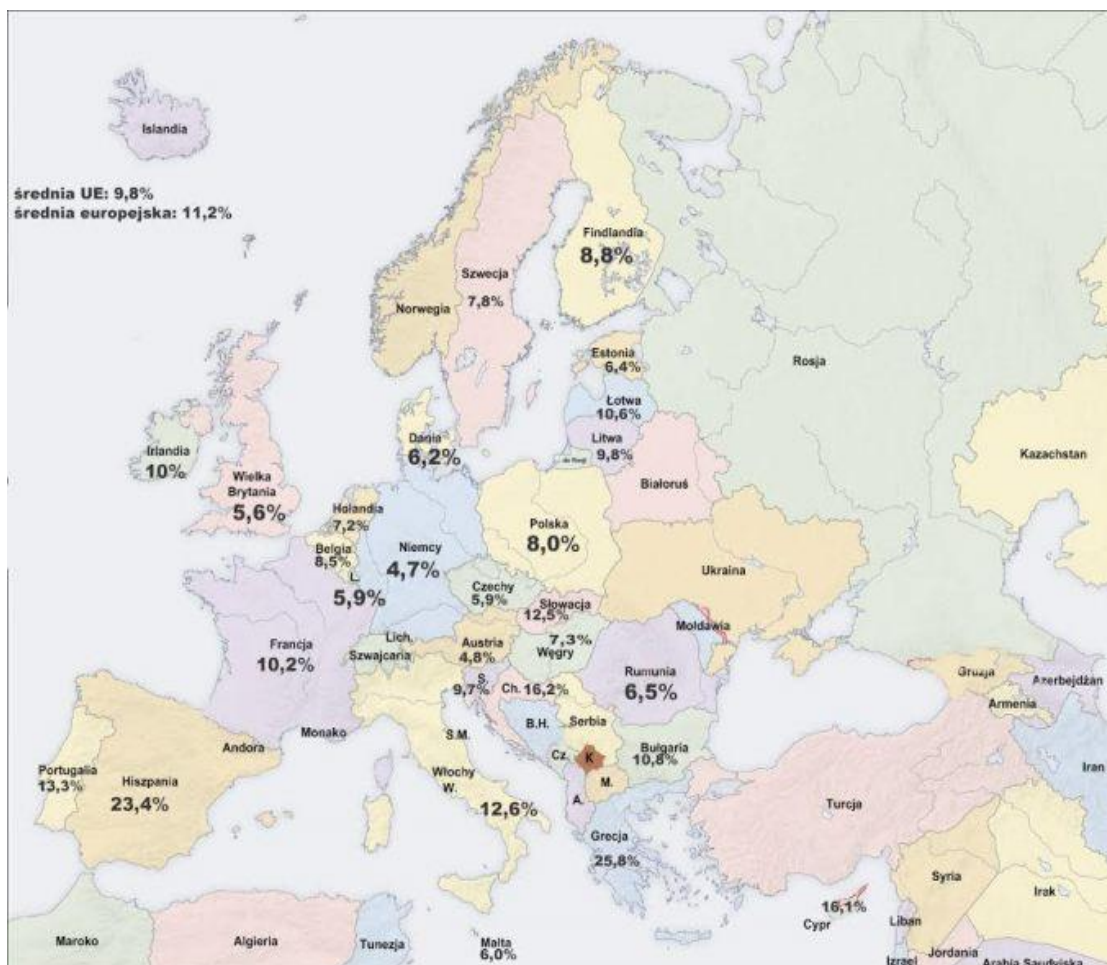
Unemployment rate in Europe defined by Eurostat March 2015 / photo. PB

According to research of the Central Statistical Office (GUS) the unemployment rate according to Labour Force Survey *(EU LFS)* reached 8.6 percent in the first quarter of 2015 compared to 8.1 in a previous quarter. The rate reached 10.6 percent in the first quarter of 2014. The number of the unemployed increased from 1 410 thousand to 1 494 thousand in three previous months.

Finding a job is most difficult for young adults, especially those under 25. According to the Central Statistical Office the unemployment rate among young Poles ages 15 to 24 reached

23.1 % in the 3rd quarter of 2014. It equalled the rate in the 2nd quarter of 2014 and was 3.6 percentage points lower than in the 3rd quarter of 2013.

Poland Youth Unemployment Rate between 2005 and 2013 by education level (15-24 of age, in %)

year	**All levels**	primary	secondary	university
2005	**36.9**	41.2	37.0	29.3
2006	**29.8**	36.3	29.5	23.2
2007	**21.7**	22.8	21.7	20.0
2008	**17.3**	20.6	16.9	16.8
2009	**20.6**	24.5	20.2	19.6
2010	**23.7**	30.3	23.1	20.7
2011	**25.8**	31.8	25.4	22.0
2012	**26.5**	33.2	26.0	22.5
2013	**27.3**	32.3	27.2	23.5

Figure 1: Prepared by Sedlak & Sedlak on the basis of Eurostat (LFS)[10]

According to the European Statistical Office Eurostat the unemployment rate among young adults in the EU countries reached 21.2%. Compared to last year there was an improvement as the rate was 25% in the previous year.

Poland and European Youth Unemployment Rate (28) between 2005 and 2013 by education level (15-24 of age, in %)
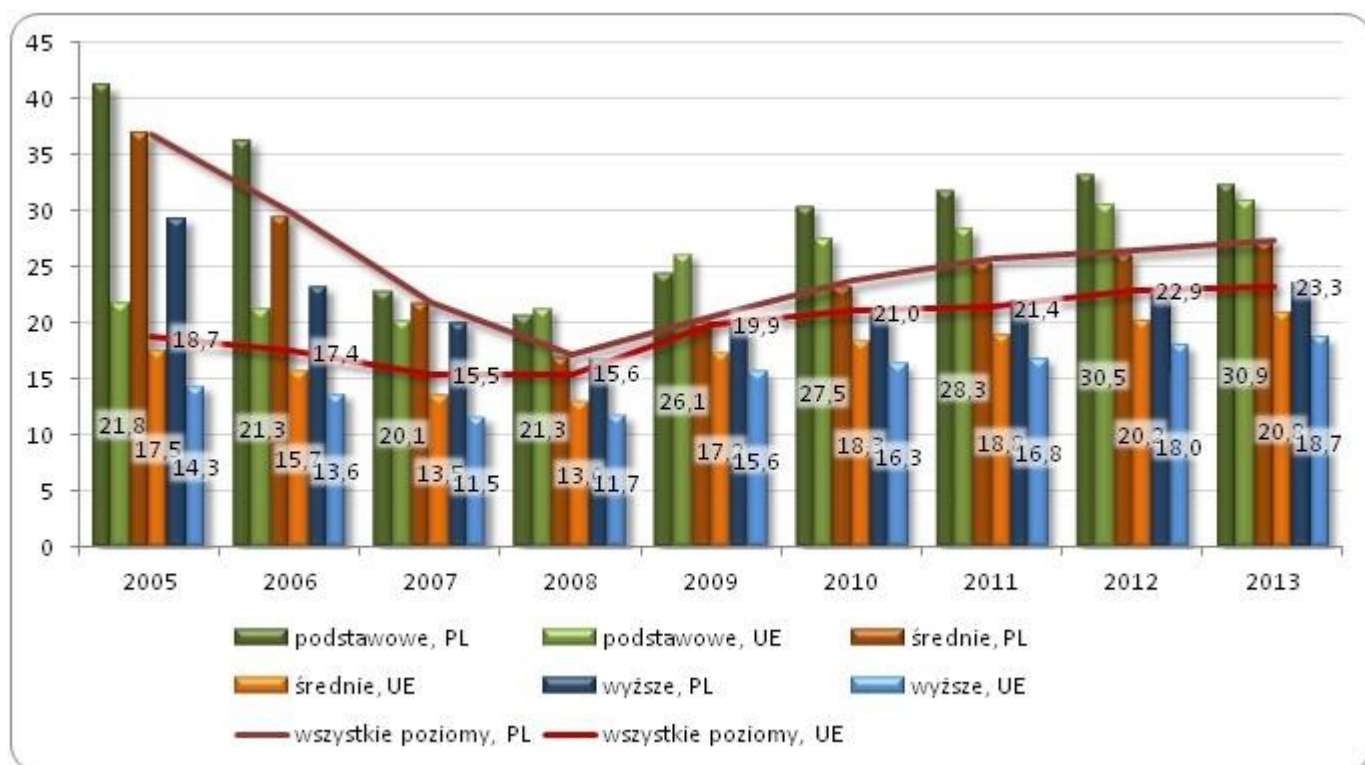
Figure 2: *Prepared by Sedlak & Sedlak on the basis of Eurostat (LFS)*

There are numerous reasons why young adults are placed at a greater risk of unemployment. Market analysts give the following grounds for such a state:

lack of professional experience,
lack of competences matching employers' requirements,
lack of a well-developed social network helping to find an interesting job,
very low salary for people lacking experience, discouraging young people to move into the labour market.

Young people unemployment rate is a great challenge for Europe; it is becoming a major threat to their professional start and a barrier preventing fulfilment of the needs and inspirations of the young. Long-term unemployment and failed attempts to find a job result in total discouragement and failure to seek a new job. A fall in professional activity may result from abandoning professional plans with little chances of getting a job at the place of residence and the lack of funding for further education.

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The level of education, experience gained in the course of taken activities as well as high social and personal competences are the main determinant of a position in the labour market and, as a result, may increase opportunities of getting a job by the unemployed. It is the responsibility of schools, employers and training institutions dealing with job counselling to focus on this particular area in their operations. A young person should realize the importance of these competences in their professional and social lives, which, in turn, will translate into upgrading these competences through training initiatives.

2. Methodology of the study

2.1 The objective of the study

The main objectives behind the analysis of young adults' competences and employers' requirements include:

> investigating and specifying the level of personal and social competences (creativity, openness to change, coping in stressful situations, negotiations, responsibility, ability to work in a team) of secondary school and university youth. Moreover, it assumes setting the most important aspects related to moving into the labour market and related educational needs.
>
> understanding employers' opinions on the level of social competences of young people entering the labour market.

2.2 Study questions and hypotheses

The following study questions facilitated implementation of set objectives:

- What is the level of personal and social competences among secondary and university students moving into the labour market?
- What are the educational needs of secondary and university students?
- What competences do employers require from young adults starting their professional lives?
- How do employers assess the level of personal and social competences of young adults moving into the labour market?

The following hypotheses were formulated on the basis of the abovementioned problem-related questions:

- Secondary school and university youth moving into the labour market show insufficient personal and social competences.
- Secondary school and university students lack adequate assessment of their competences important in the labour market.
- Young adults are ready to improve those skills which are important in the labour market.
- Employers assess the level of personal and social competences of young adults moving into the labour market as insufficient.
- Social and personal competences coaching will improve the level of these competences and will improve the situation on the labour market.

2.3 Variables, sampling

Independent and dependent variables such as: age, sex, profile/course of studies, assessment of employers' requirements related to personal and social competences of young people entering the labour market were used in the survey.

A non-random sampling method was applied in the survey - techniques in which there is no room for random selection but other procedures based on subjective decisions, identified subjective data related to the knowledge of the structure of the examined population are used.

A non-random sampling method was applied in the survey – the most typical example of non-probability sampling. It is a sampling technique in which participants are selected based on subjective choices to enable getting as much and as detailed information as possible.

2.4 Research tools

Taken the objective of the study, which was determining the level of personal and social competences of secondary school and university youth and obtaining information on employers' opinions and requirements in relation to personal and social competences of young moving into the labour market, a quality method *(individual interviews with employers)* and a quantity method *(tests filled in by secondary and university students)* were used.

A quality method concentrates on a „deeper" analysis of a given phenomenon. Focus is shifted towards better and more comprehensive understanding of an analysed phenomenon through special research techniques. As the name denotes, quality methods aim at obtaining information which is of "good quality". Quantity methods, on the other hand, examine phenomena/ features which are well-known and pre-determined. Quality methods provide a new quality of knowledge and information. Quality techniques aim at obtaining information/knowledge and opinions on a given subject, they, however, are not restricted to specific respondents – polled people. In quantity methods the answers are listed and respondents choose one of them. In quality methods answers are collected from respondents, the researcher does not assume what the answers will be. Both of these techniques make it possible to gather non-standard data, to view an analysed concept/problem from different perspectives. [11]

Competence tests of secondary school students and university students were basic survey tools used in a (quantity) survey of secondary school and university students. The test consisted of 20 descriptions of professional situations or life situations. The respondents had to analyse these situations and to choose one out of three, the one that was most similar to what they would personally do. Situations referred to the following areas

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[11] Źródło: http://www.naukowiec.org/wiedza/metodologia/badania-jakosciowe--idea_654.html

Teamwork and teamwork planning
Communication
Resourcefulness
Negotiations
Stress tolerance
Creativity
Openness to change
Responsibility for taken actions
Active professional development
Personal manner.

The test was extended and a survey in which young people individually assessed the level of their preparation to move into the labour market and expressed their educational willingness to perfect competences required by employers was added.

The test was completed in the form of open questions, respondents assessed their skills and list expectations and requirements employers demand secondary school and university young adults possessed.

A high level of anonymity was guaranteed in the survey. Competence tests were filled in by individual students selected to participate in the survey (during one lesson under the supervision of a member of a research team). Students' questionnaires were filled in on-line (through MachForm platform); invitation links were sent earlier. The pollster's role was to identify a pre-selected group or class, to conduct the survey in the selected group, to explain the objectives of a survey, methods of completing tests and questionnaires, to assure participants of full anonymity as well as to explain any ambiguities that could come up when tests and questionnaires were filled in by the students.

In-depth individual interviews which are one of the most commonly used techniques in quality methods were selected. They were used in the survey carried out during this study. The main idea was to collect opinions and requirements of young adults who were about to enter the labour market. The decision to choose this type of a survey was made as it was necessary to collect detailed opinions and information without a risk of negative influence of a group, as it the case when group interviews are carried out. Additionally, when respondents found it difficult to spare some free time it proved convenient as it was not necessary to gather the group at a specific time in a specific place.

In-depth employers' interview scripts included questions on competences a potential employee should have. The competences were listed and an employer was expected to prioritize them, to rank the importance of given competences in his/her company. Later, the respondents from this group were evaluating the level of competences of secondary school and university students' entering the labour market. New questions referring to the following areas were added to the interview script:

Methods of verifying future employees' competences
Determining factors and features in a recruitment process

training methods for inexperienced employees

the importance of additional factors in a recruitment process.

In a quality survey each respondent was able to express his/her feelings, opinions and views freely (which they were not even conscious of before). A standard quantity survey (questionnaire) would definitely not provide such detailed, complex and thorough information and data.

2.5 Description of a research group

A non-random sampling method was applied in the survey - that is sampling techniques based on subjective decisions, familiar subjective data referring to the knowledge of the structure of an audited population rather than randomization.

Target screening was used in the survey – that is the most typical example of a non-random sampling. It is a subjective method of selecting participants of a survey, which, in turn, provides the broadest and the most comprehensive information.

Three respondent groups were selected for the survey:

- secondary school students: secondary school, technical school, vocational school – 60 students
- university youth – 60 students
- employers – 15

Secondary school students

A competence test survey was conducted among 60 secondary school students, including students of secondary school, technical school, and vocational school. A detailed list has been presented below in Table no 1.

School	Educational Profile	Number of students
VI. H. Kołłątaj Secondary School in Lublin	Sports	14
	Arts	4
	Humanities	2
F. Kleeberg Aviation Technical School in Dęblin	Air force mechanic/ technician	20
4. Jan Paweł II Vocational School in Lublin	Cook	20

Table nr 1: List of schools participating in the survey and educational profiles.

A representative sample was an unbiased representation of students' sex, types of school and profile. 17 women and 43 men aged 16 to 20 were selected, with 17-18-year-olders being the largest age group participating in the survey (81.7%).
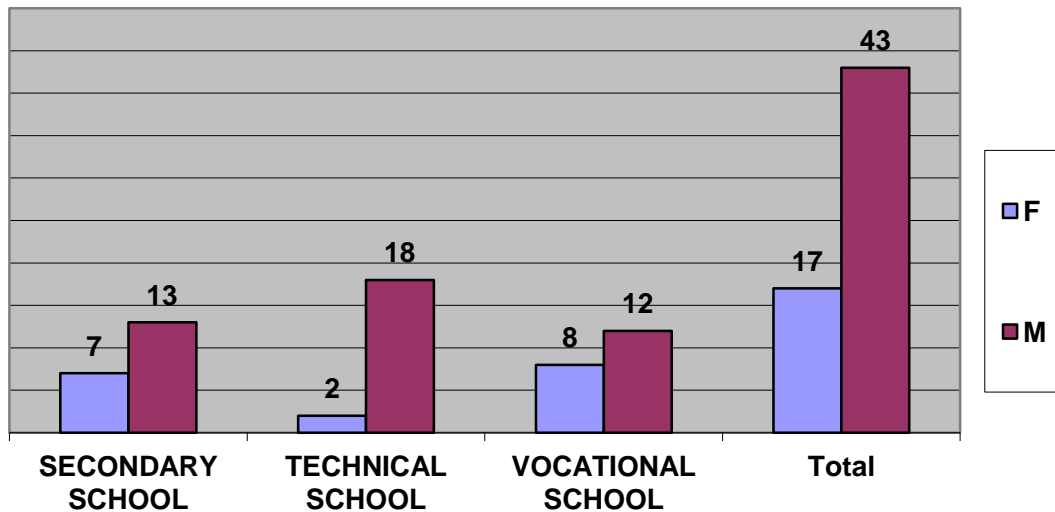

Figure no. 3: Student groups participating in the study by sex
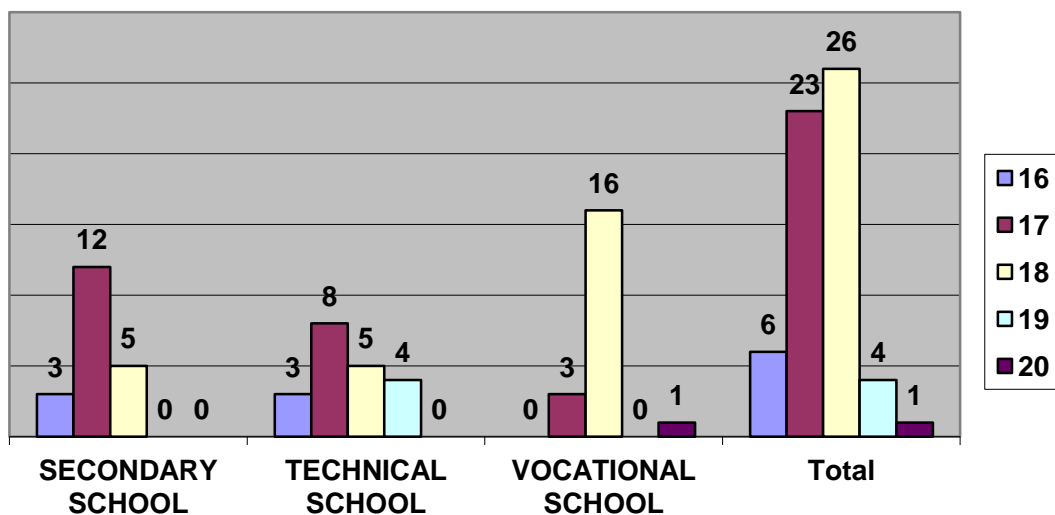
Figure no 4: Secondary school student groups participating in the study by age

University students

University students

39 women and 21 men participated in the survey conducted among university students, representing numerous specialties, mostly form universities in Lublin. The age of the participants: 19 to 30, with 21-26-olders being the largest age group participating in the survey, that is 88.33% of all surveyed.

University	Course of studies	Number of students
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University - UMCS	Administration	2
	Archaeology	1
	Political science	4
	Economy	6
	International Relations	9
	Applied Linguistics	2
	Bulgarian Philology	1
	Law	2
	Cognitive Science	1
	Logopaedics with audiology	1
	English Philology	1
	Pedagogy	1
	Cultural Studies	1
The John Paul II Catholic University Of Lublin	Law	1
	The History of Art	1
	European Studies	1
	Marketing	1
	Romanistics	1
Lublin University of Life Sciences	Environment Management	1
	Logistics	1

Strona 31

	Science of Commodities	1
	Zootechnics	1
	Tourism and Recreation	1
Lublin Technical University	Environmental Engineering	3
Medical University of Lublin	Obstetrics	1
University of Economics and Innovation in Lublin	Psychology	2
	Economy	1
ST. Clemens of Ohryda Sofia University	Polish Philology	1
Warsaw University	Law	1
Rzeszów University	Economy	1
	European Studies	1
A. Mickiewicz University in Poznan	Linguistics	1
Cracow University of Technology	Transportation	1
Rzeszów University of Technology	Mechanical Engineering	1
Silesian University of Technology - Automatic Control Engineering ,Electronics and Computer Science	Computer Science - Programming	1
Łódź University of Technology	Technical Physics	1
Warsaw University of Technology	Automatic Control and Robotics	1
No available data on the university or course of studies		1

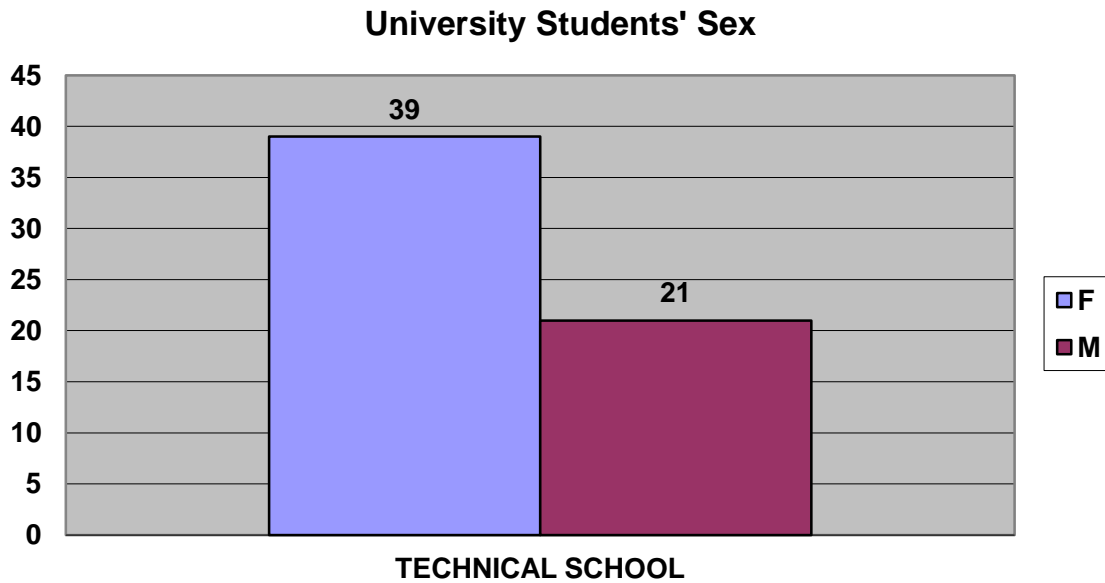**Table no 2:** *List of universities participating in survey and degree courses*

University Students' Sex

Figure no 5: University students participating in the study by sex

University Students' Age
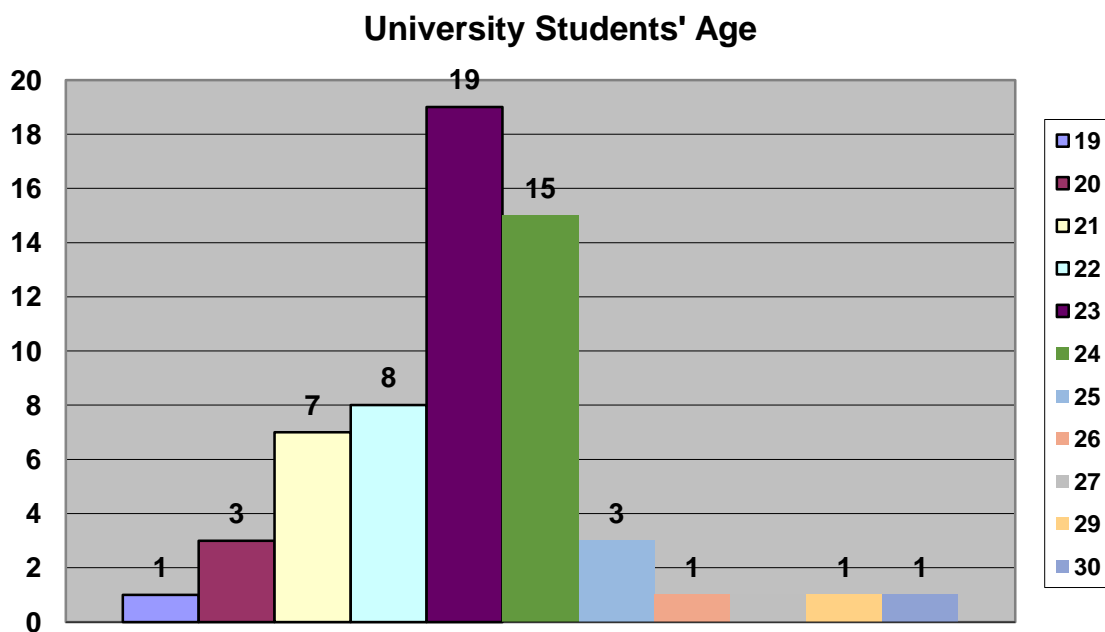
Figure no 6: University students participating in the study by age
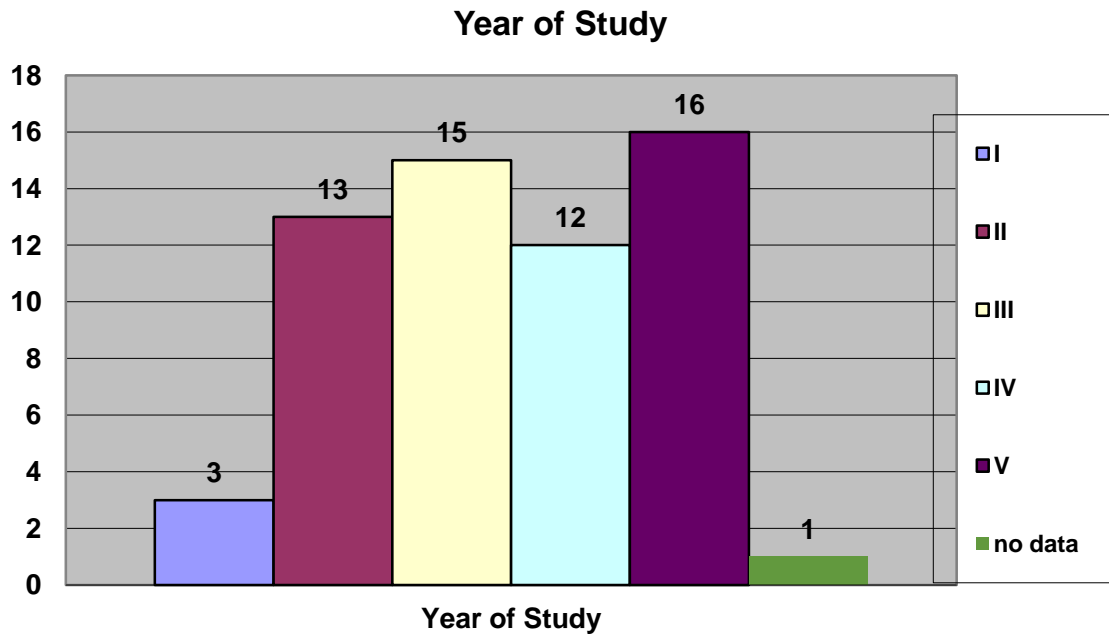
Year of Study

Figure no 7*: University students groups participating in the study by the year of study*

Employers hiring young adults

Employers need professionally competent people who will do specific task at specific working positions and who will depict high level of personal competences. In order to find out what employers demand from young adults entering the labour market, detailed interviews with 15 employers representing different companies as for type, size and range of operations were conducted in the project.

53.33% of surveyed employers declared that they employed secondary school graduates in recent years. Half of them regularly employ vocational school graduates. The level of university graduates employment is similar– 46.7%.

Company Range of Operations
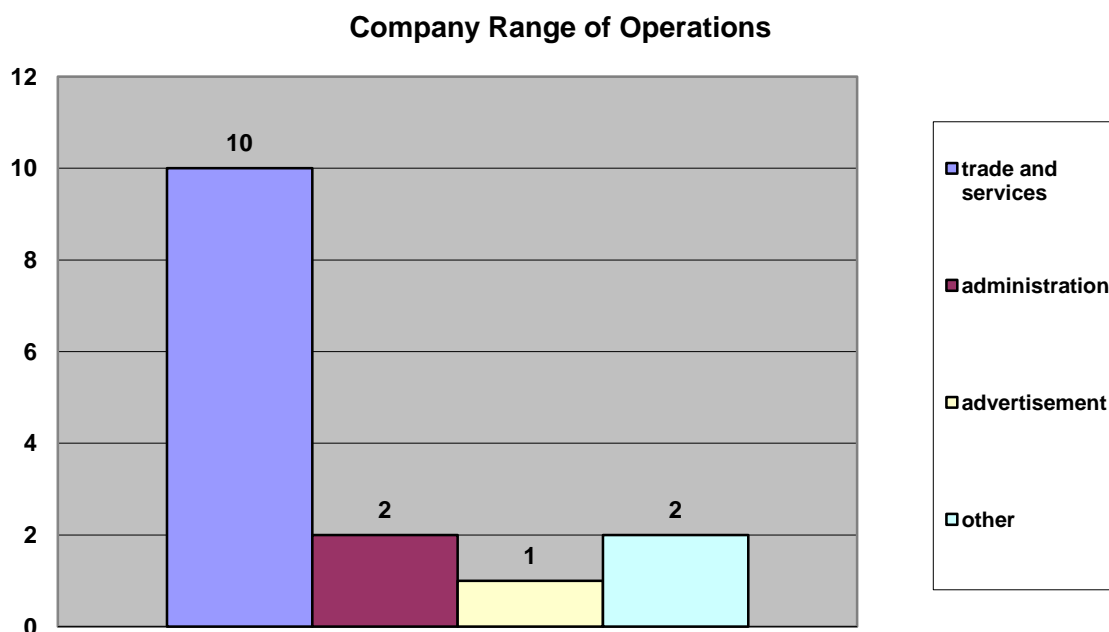
*Figure no 8: **Company Range of Operations***

Detailed description of the companies' range of operations

Company Description	Number
State Administration	3
Shop and/or kiosk	2
Bank, financial services	1
Customer service focused on increasing sales	1
IT services, mainly rep air services and computer services	1
Advertisement and computer design	1
Medical services in a form of residential care hospitalization and outpatient medical care	1
Organization of training and workshops	1
Clothing Company	1
Trade company – 400 shops- head-office in Great Britain	1
Tourist accommodation services and catering services	1
Market analyses, specialist services, insurances and room renting,	1

Table no 3: *List of institutions on the labour market participating in the survey*

Company Size

micro-entity

small enterprise

medium-sized enterprise

big enterprise

Figure no 9: *Company Diversity by Size*

Type of Company

private

public

other
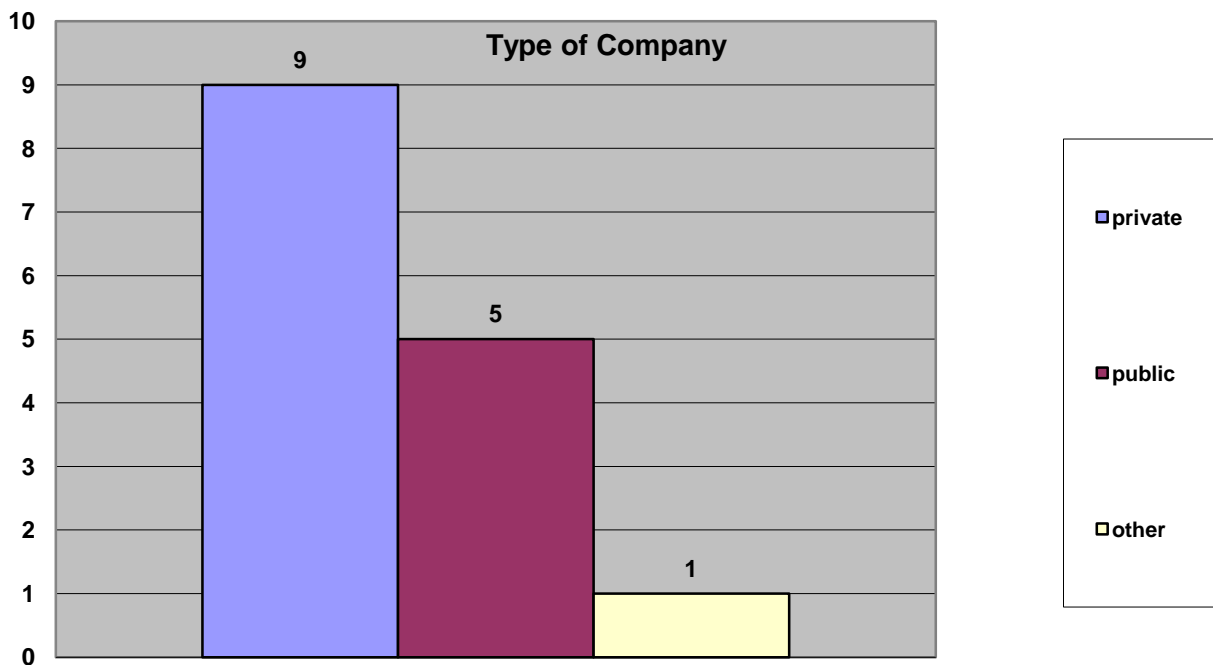
Figure no 10: *Company Diversity by Type*

3. The analysis of the survey

3.1 Analysis of the survey among secondary school students

Students' Level of Competences
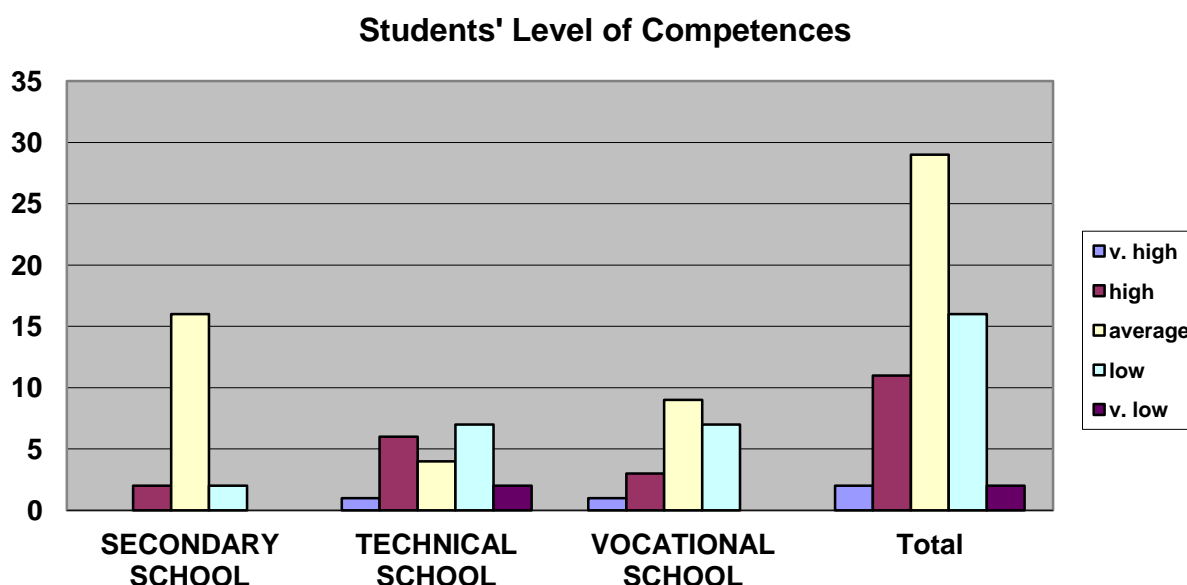
Figure no 11*: Secondary School Students' Level of Competences*
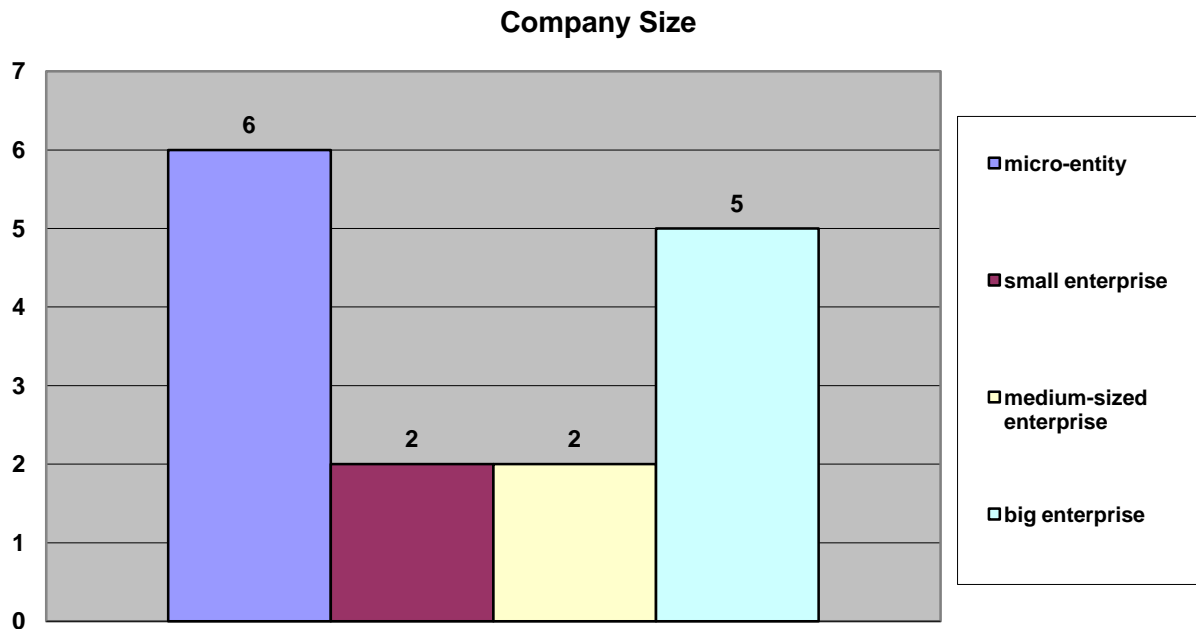
The competence test was aimed at gathering objective assessment of social and personal competences of students through a direct reference to specific life situations. The analysis of test results shows that the majority of students represent an average level of competences- 43.3% of all respondents. The majority of them are secondary school students - 55.2 %, who rated as average. Vocational school students made 30.0%, and technical school students 13.8% of all respondents.

 30% of all surveyed students show a very low level of social and personal competences. The results of technical schools and vocational schools rate almost identically, only 2 secondary school students ranked the same.

18.33% students out of all surveyed show very high level of competences. 6 technical school students (54.5% of all in this group), 3 vocational school students (27.3%) and 2 secondary school students (18.2%) had the best results.

Only 2 students had very high scores (3.3%) - one of whom was a technical school student and another one was a vocational school student.

Self- assessment of preparation to enter the labour market
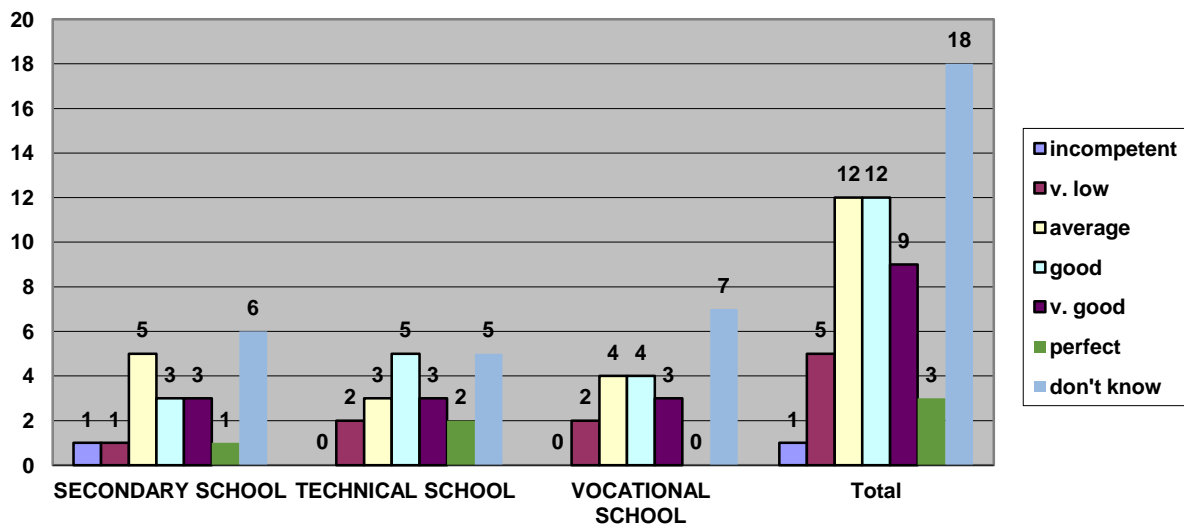
Figure no 12: Self- Assessment of preparation to enter the labour market

The students participating in the survey assessed their preparation to enter the Labour market in the following way:

30.0% does not know

20.0% rates as medium

20.0% rates as good

15.0% rates as very good

8.3 % rates as very bad

5.0 % rates as perfect

1.7 % is not able to rate their preparation

Willingness To Upskill
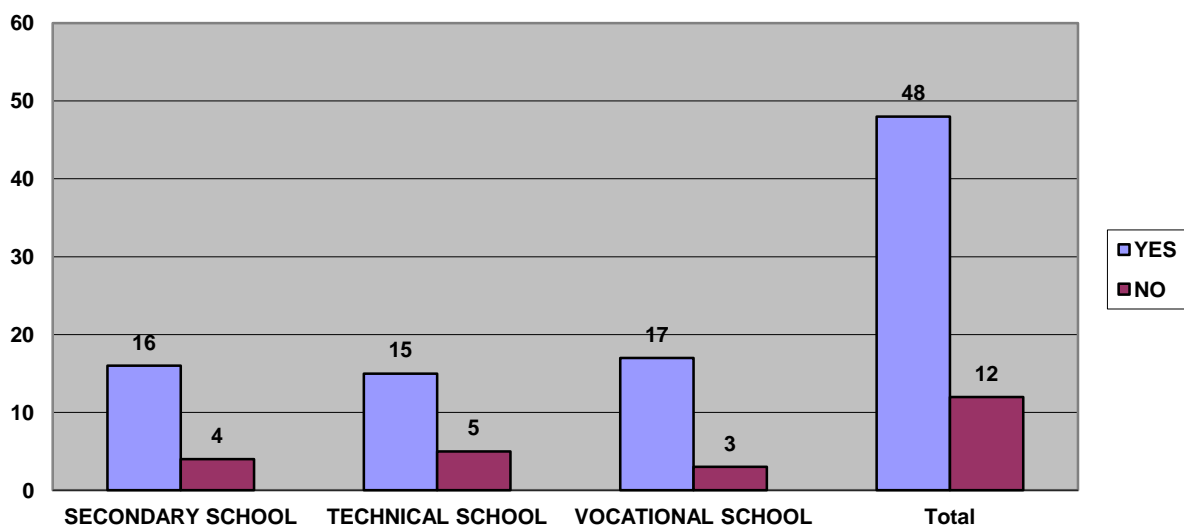
Figure no 13: Students' Willingness to Upskill, the Labour Market Requirements

The majority of secondary school students who were surveyed understand the necessity to upskill, which increases a person's opportunities in the labour market. 81.7 % of subjects express their readiness and willingness to participate in additional training and coaching courses and workshops. Students list the following competences they want to improve:

- Communication skills
- creative thinking
- cooperation with other people
- active listening
- ability to influence others positively
- negotiation skills
- stress tolerance
- marketing skills
- openness to change
- personal manner
- reliability, patience, conscientiousness, sense of responsibility
- very little students additionally list a clean driving licence and foreign languages.

The surveyed student group is very conscious of their skills. 31.7% of all surveyed students are able to assess their competences in terms of usefulness in their future job and labour market. The majority of them were secondary school students – 15, 4 technical school students were able to list such competences while none of the vocational school students answered this open question. In majority of cases the skills that were mentioned by students correlated with ones they wanted to improve or broaden in additional, informal training session outsider school.

One of the questions that the respondents were asked to answer was: *In your opinion, what do employers expect from young adults entering the labour market?*

Three technical school students and 16 secondary school students gave the following answers:

- Creativity, commitment, systematic approach, conscientiousness, punctuality
- internship, experience, commitment, cooperation
- theoretical knowledge and little experience (internship)
- commitment, sense of responsibility, willingness to acquire knowledge, creativity, ability to work in a team, comprehensibility, patience, stress tolerance, punctuality
- sense of responsibility, consistency, reliability, creativity
- conscientiousness, punctuality, ability to work in a team, creativity, making new relations
- experience, total devotion to work, foreign languages, secondary education (minimum),
- personal manner, flexibility, skills, openness, punctuality

- creativity, efficiency, sense of responsibility, punctuality, sincerity, modesty, confidence, ambitiousness, understanding, diligence
- foreign languages, contacts
- punctuality, commitment
- punctuality, respect for work, personal manner
- punctuality, personal manner
- creativity, knowledge, intelligence, resourcefulness,
- being as responsible as the adults
- professional skills
- sense of responsibility, punctuality, doing as the employer says, obedience
- intelligence, knowledge, creativity, devotion, diligence, personal manner, knowledge, skills, Basic knowledge, honesty, sense of responsibility, teamwork, creativity
- foreign languages, professional experience

3.2 Analysis of the survey among university students

University Students' Level of Competence
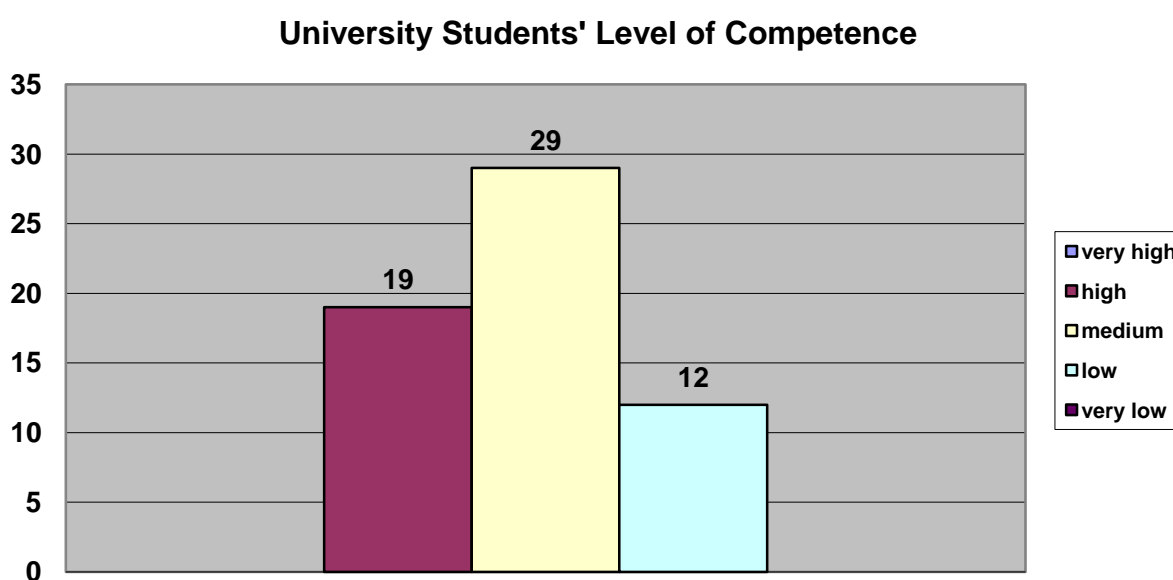
Figure no 14*: University Students' level of competence*

The analysis of data from the survey conducted among university students demonstrated that the majority of young adults (48.33 %) have an average level of personal and social competences.

19 students that is 31. 67 30 % of all surveyed, had a low level of personal and social competences.

12 of all surveyed students 20.00% had a high level of personal and social competences. No cases of very high or very low level of personal and social competences were recorded.

Self- assessment of preparation to enter the labour market
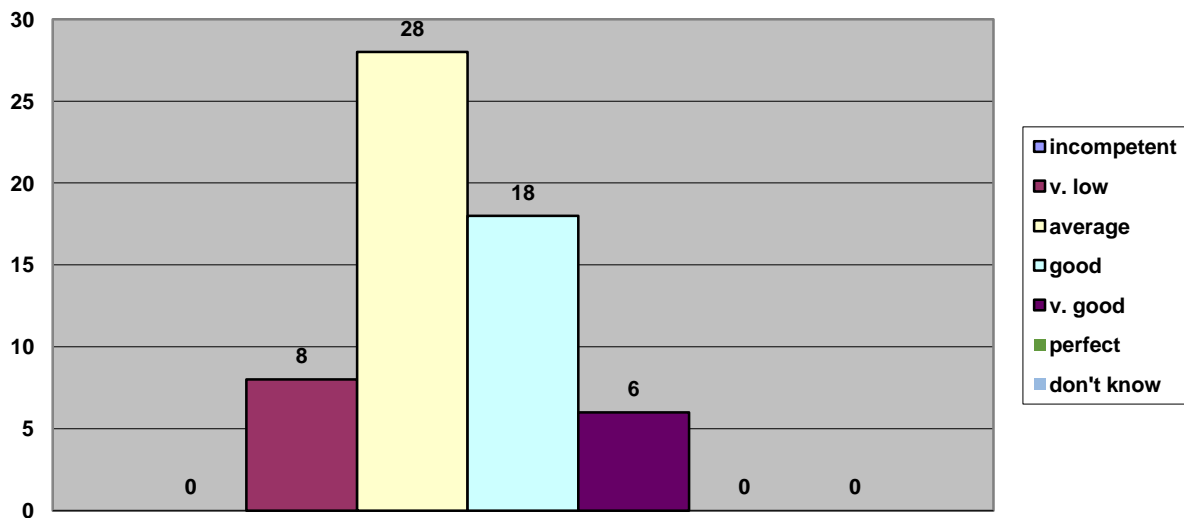
Figure no. 15: *University Students' Self- assessment of preparation to enter the labour market*

University students participating in the survey assessed their preparation to enter the labour market as follows:

> 13.3 % rate it as very low
> 46.67 rate it as average
> 30.0% rate it as good

All surveyed students were ready to upskill and to improve competences which are required in the labour market and which they listed in the survey. They are in opinion that those skills will facilitate their course into the labour market. The following skills were listed in the majority of analysed questionnaires:

- Work motivation
- ability to make quick decisions
- working under time pressure
- change management ability
- openness to people and new challenges
- motivation to acquire new knowledge individually
- ability to advertise one's skills
- teamwork and stress tolerance, communication
- analytic linguistic thinking
- organizational flexibility
- creativity
- ability to work in a team and under pressure
- consistency
- planning

- stress tolerance
- team management, openness to new challenges and people
- courage to take up new tasks and challenges
- confidence in decision-making process
- teamwork
- soft skills
- patience
- social intelligence
- punctuality
- confidence
- being well-organized
- multitasking

Students participating in the survey are aware of employers' expectations and requirements. They list the following ones as the most common: thematic knowledge, foreign languages, interpersonal skills, computer skills – specialist software and professional experience. Below please find sample students' answers:

In employers' opinion young adults looking for a job should have the ability to learn fast, adapt in a new team easily and have good communication skills, be creative and resourceful.

Employers expect discipline, commitment, punctuality, good will, creative ideas and taking responsibility for what you do.

Availability, devotion, commitment, ability to work in a team, creativity are basic skills.

Internship and practice during studies or being a member of student organization. Employers want their employees to have good communicative skills, to be able to work in a team and under time pressure. They want them to learn fast.

They expect discipline, commitment, punctuality, reliability, good will, creative ideas and taking responsibility for what you do.

They want young adults starting work to have professional experience, to be able to learn new things fast, they want them to have good communications skills and to adapt to their colleagues.

Employers would rather employ a graduate with at least 10-year's professional experience.

3.3 Data Analysis of Survey Among Employers

Employers' requirements made to potential employees

Competences	Expected Level (1 – the least important 5 – the most important)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical conduct	-	1	3	1	10
Responsibility	-	-	1	2	12
Commitment	-	-	-	2	13
Loyalty, willingness to bind themselves with the company	-	2	3	3	7
Willingness to learn	-	1	-	4	10
Interpersonal communication skills	-	-	2	2	11
Team skills	-	-	2	2	11
Capacity to cooperate with people from different social groups	-	2	1	4	8
Capacity to cooperate with people in senior positions	-	2	3	3	7
Negotiation skills	-	3	3	3	6
Good logic skills	-	-	-	7	8
Creativity	1	-	1	6	7
Independent thinking	-	-	-	8	7
Problem formulation and solving skills	-	-	3	2	10
Ability to set and justify priorities	1	-	5	3	6
Mathematical skills	-	1	5	4	5
Foreign languages,	1	1	6	4	3
Work organisation skills	-	2	5	4	4
Effective time management	1	1	4	5	4

Project management skills	3	1	5	5	1
Information literacy	-	4	1	7	3
General and professional knowledge	1	4	6	2	2
Professional and subject-area knowled00ge	2	2	3	2	6
Know-how matching current company requirements	1	4	1	5	4
Analytic Competences	3	2	1	5	4
Professional Experience	4	1	6	4	-
Resourcefulness	2	1	6	5	-
TOTAL	**20**	**37**	**79**	**108**	**169**

Table no 4: *The Level of Potential Employers' Competences Per Employers' Requirements*

This table comprehensively lists individual competences useful in the labour market. It also show the level of an individual competence from employers' perspective, where 1 means the least important and 5 the most important.

Rating of the Competence Useful at the Labour Market
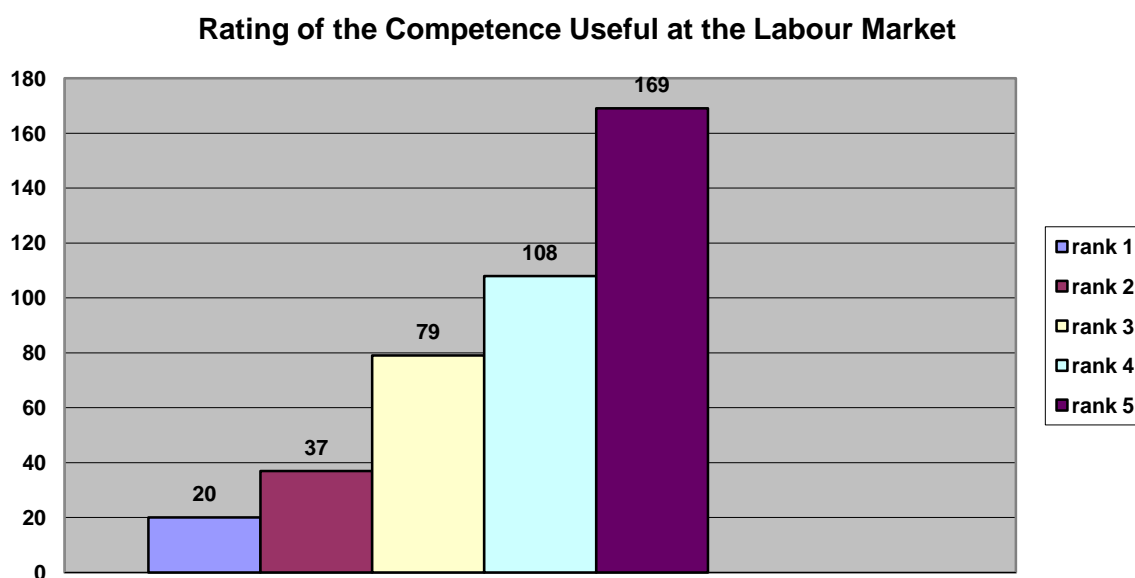
Figure nr 16: *Rating of the Competence Useful in the Labour Market*

Competences Required by the Employers

Legend:
- logical and independent thinking
- commitment
- responsibility
- openess to learning
- effective communication
- teamwork
- creativity
- team cooperation
- formulating and solving problems
- loyalty
- ethical conduct
- information literacy
- time management
- negotiation
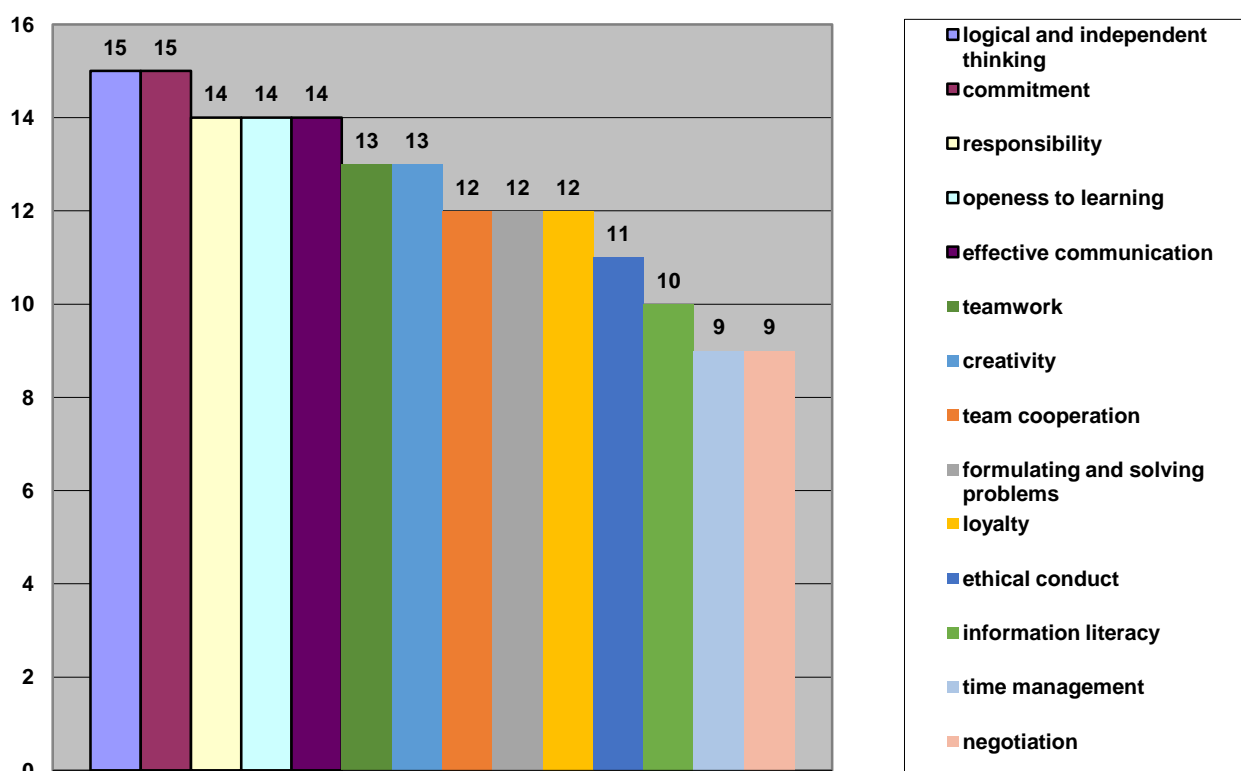
Figure no 17: *Competences Required by Potential Employees*

Employers expect a variety of competences from candidates for a given position. From the survey perspective, the most important competences are those listed by the majority of the surveyed (60%) and more than the majority who rated the importance as 4 and 5 on the scale). Employers' expectations index with reference to potential employees' competences ranks as follows:

- Logical and independent thinking as well as commitment – 100% employers consider them as the most important
- Responsibility and openness to new knowledge as well as effective communication– 93.33%
- Teamwork creativity – 86.67 %
- Team cooperation, formulating and solving problems as well as loyalty-80.00%
- Ethical conduct – 73,33%
- Information literacy – 66.67%
- Management and negotiations – 60%

Evaluation of secondary school students' competences – detailed summary

Competences	Expected level (1 – the least important 5 – the most important)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical conduct	1	2	8	1	3
Responsibility	3	1	7	2	1
Commitment	1	5	4	3	2
Loyalty, willingness to bind themselves with the company	4	3	6	-	2
Willingness to learn	2	1	5	4	3
Interpersonal communication skills	2	6	3	4	-
Team skills	1	2	7	3	2
Capacity to cooperate with people from different social groups	-	9	2	2	2
Capacity to cooperate with people in senior positions	5	5	3	2	-
Negotiation skills	3	6	5	1	-
Good logic skills	1	1	12	1	-
Creativity	2	3	8	2	-
Independent thinking	2	5	6	1	1
Problem formulation and solving skills	3	6	5	1	-
Ability to set and justify priorities	4	6	4	1	-
Mathematical skills	-	4	6	4	1
Foreign Languages,	2	4	6	3	-
Work organisation skills	1	5	7	1	-
Effective time management	-	6	9	-	-
Project management skills	2	6	5	2	-
Information literacy	-	5	2	6	2
General and professional knowledge	-	4	4	7	-

Professional and subject-area knowledge	2	7	3	3	-
Know-how matching current company requirements	4	6	4	1	-
Analytic Competences	3	7	5	-	-
Professional Experience	6	5	3	1	-
Resourcefulness	2	5	5	3	-
TOTAL	**56**	**125**	**144**	**58**	**19**

Table no 5: Evaluation of secondary school students' competences
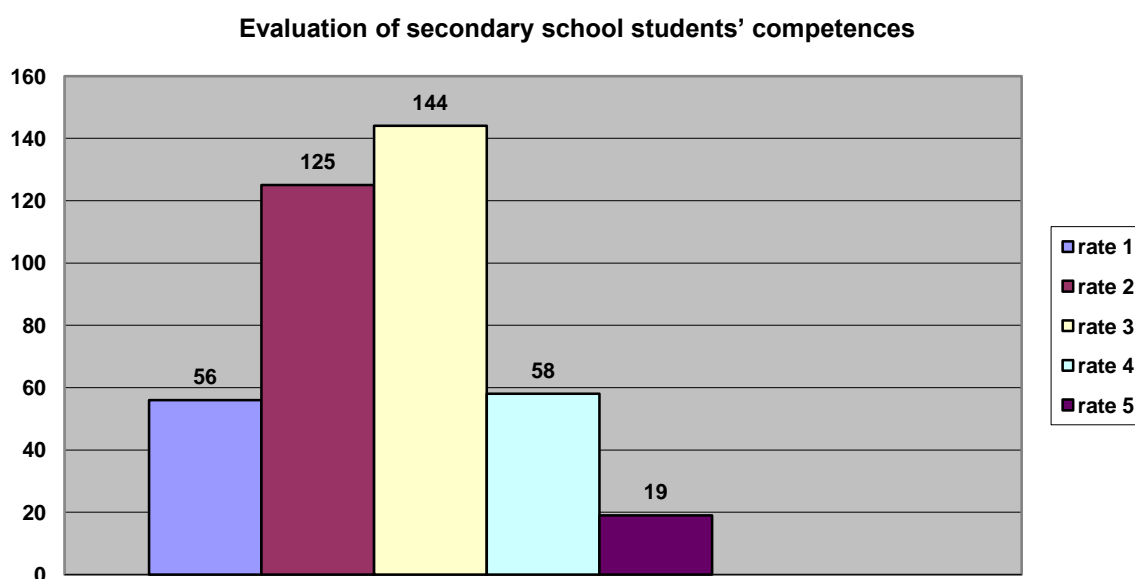

Figure no 17: Evaluation of secondary school students' competences

The level of secondary school graduates' competences required in the labour market falls well in average levels 2-3 (where 1 means the lowest rates and 5 – the highest rates). Very low scores – 1 and good are reported by a similar number of employers. Very few employers evaluated students' competences as low- 5 points.

Evaluation of university students' competences – detailed summary

Competences	Expected level (1 – the least important 5 – the most important)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical conduct	-	4	5	2	4
Responsibility	-	3	5	2	4
Commitment	1	5	3	3	3
Loyalty, willingness to bind themselves with the company	2	4	6	-	3
Willingness to learn	-	4	3	2	6
Interpersonal communication skills	-	2	4	8	2
Team skills	-	3	3	6	3
Capacity to cooperate with people from different social groups	-	2	5	3	5
Capacity to cooperate with people in senior positions	1	2	5	6	1
Negotiation skills	-	5	5	5	-
Good logic skills	1	1	5	6	2
Creativity	1	4	5	4	1
Independent thinking	1	5	4	4	1
Problem formulation and solving skills	1	2	6	5	1
Ability to set and justify priorities	1	4	5	2	3
Mathematical skills	1	3	6	3	2
Foreign Languages,	-	2	5	3	5
Work organisation skills	1	1	6	4	3
Effective time management	3	4	4	4	-
Project management skills	3	2	6	3	1
Information literacy	-	4	4	2	5
General and professional knowledge	2	3	5	4	1

Professional and subject-area knowledge	3	4	4	4	-
Know-how matching current company requirements	3	5	3	3	1
Analytic Competences	2	5	6	3	-
Professional Experience	5	5	4	1	-
Resourcefulness	2	4	6	3	-
TOTAL	**34**	**92**	**128**	**75**	**57**

Table no 6: *Evaluation of university students' competences*

Evaluation of university students' competences

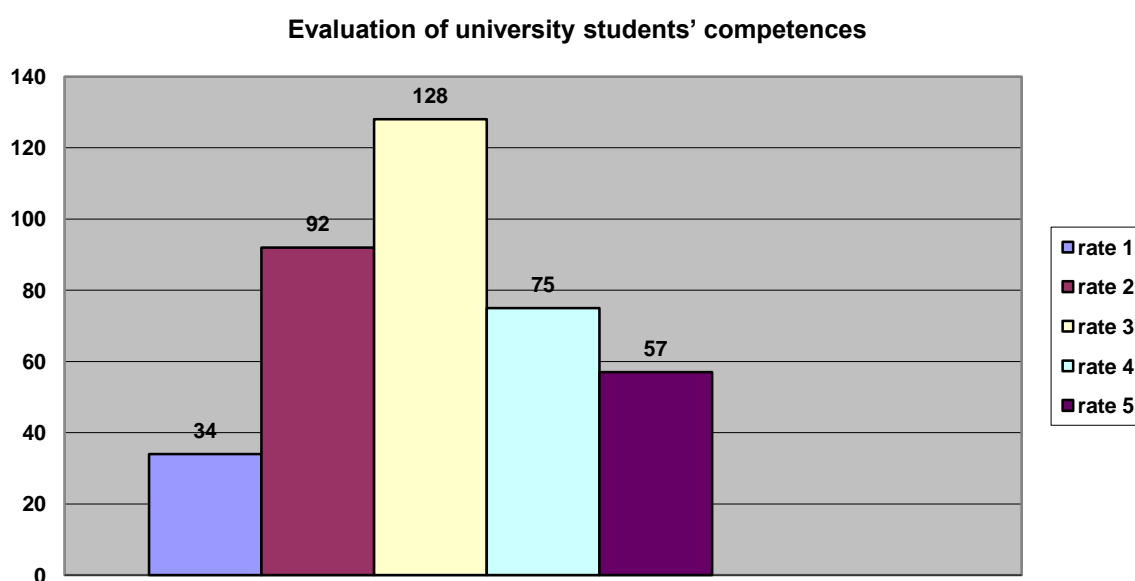**Figure no 18:** *Evaluation of university students' competences*

The level of university graduates' competences required in the labour market falls well in average levels 2-3 (where 1 means the lowest rates and 5 – the highest rates). A large group of the surveyed indicated that university graduates had competences at a good level. Very low scores – 1 and good are reported by very few employers – rate 1.
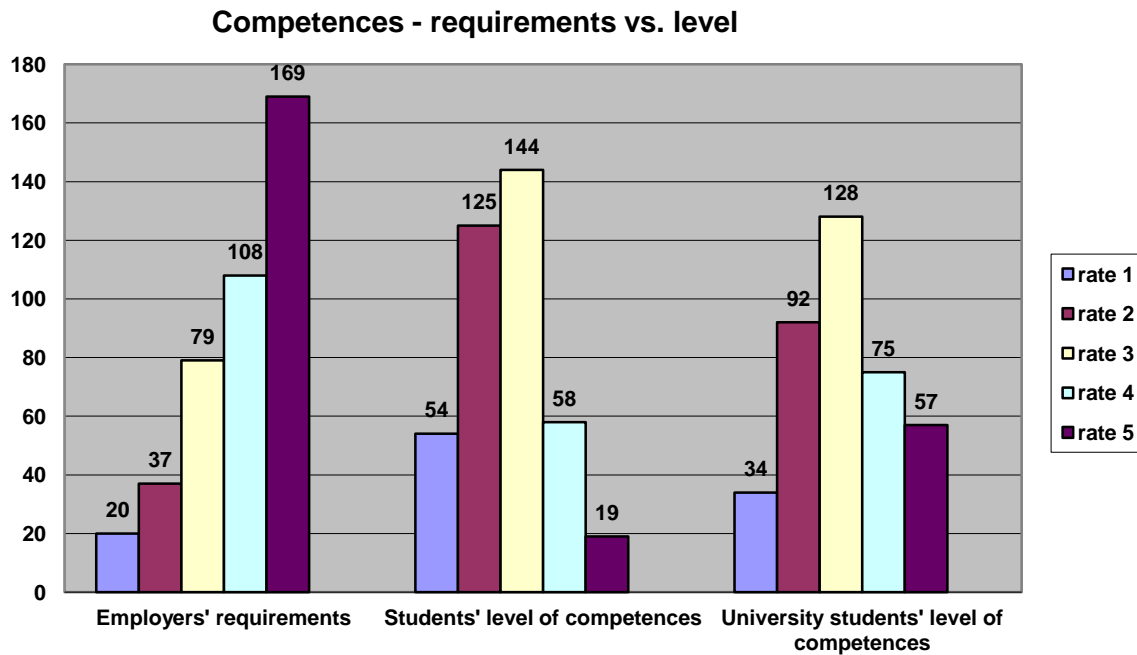
Competences - requirements vs. level

Figure no 19: *Competences - requirements vs. level by employers' responds*

This figure shows the lack of correlation between employers' requirements and young adults' entering the labour market level of competences.

The survey conducted was supplemented with open questions directly related to young adults' recruitment processes. Employers were very open in sparing their views and observations related to employment in their companies.

The majority of surveyed employers – 80% - verifies potential employers' competences and supplied information during job interviews and analysis of documents confirming competences as well as through a set of questions checking a candidate's truthfulness.

Competences of the employed people can be observed in their daily routine, that's why employers require candidates to solve practical assignments during job interviews. The surveyed employers hire people on probation when the employees are examined and competences which candidates listed in their application documents are naturally verified. In one instance an employee was evaluated „from outside" by a *secret shopper/customer.*

In a company, where specific professional knowledge and creative thinking are required the first task which helps to assess candidate's impeccable manner and to determine if you would want to cooperate with her/him as a person is one of the outstanding orders. When the employer observes the way the candidate handles the task, he/she is able to determine the level of professional and technical knowledge of the candidate. A draft of the project or its finished part can check creativity and accuracy of a person who prepared the project.

Some employers contact candidates' previous employers for references.

94.33% employers participating in the survey declare they help newly employed to improve their skills and knowledge. Employers provide internal and external trainings. They assign new employees experienced colleagues who provide necessary support and help. It is a good practice to make teams out of employees so that they could supplement and learn from one another. New employees usually join their elder colleagues. In this way younger employees quickly learn how the company operates and many practical things useful in their everyday routine. Elder employees also benefit from such situations as they get a fresher look at their professional duties.

Open questions the employers were asked referred to the ways of assessing graduates' practical experience and knowledge upon application for a given post in the company. Employers' experience shows that some of them assess this experience as very low and average (6 employers – 40%). In their opinion students and graduates have theoretical knowledge gained during their studies, they, however, lack many skills necessary in a given position. One of the employees said that: *Students most often lack experience in efficient interpersonal communications - with customers and colleagues. Teamwork is also difficult, not all students are able to adapt to principles of teamwork. They also find time management and setting priorities of work difficult to master (e.g. when we have a deadline to finish an order, it sometimes happened that a young employee executed all his/her duties one by one instead of concentrating on closing al outstanding things. Unfortunately you can learn such thing only in practice and they are very important.*

Employers notice that graduates who used to work as casual workers/employees during their studies have much better experience. In fact, many students have practical skills which they gained outsider their universities. Even during a job interview one can notice thy used to work or had a work placement or vocational training in companies. Vocational and technical school graduates show a higher level of competences.

Employers assess the level of general theoretical knowledge as better than professional experience. The majority of the surveyed assess it as good.

However, professional knowledge and personal and civic skills are not as good. Graduates very often find it difficult to use their theoretical knowledge in practice and though they know how e.g.: talk to a customer and what they should do in such a situation – they simply can't do it.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Assumptions of the Strategy of the Development of Education for 2007-2013 increased the importance of key competences. Both institutions of formal and non-formal educations emphasise and focus on developing these competences in young people. By combining knowledge-skills and personal, civic and teamwork-related competences the opportunities of secondary school and university graduates joining the labour market rise. The main objective is to reduce young adults 'unemployment in Poland and Europe.

The study conducted under *Young adults In the labour market* project and Erasmus Programme + KA2 Strategic Partnership and founded with the support from the European Commission with participation of 60 secondary school students, 60 university students and 15 employers **showed there is no correlation between employers' expectations and the level of competences young adults joining the labour market.**

The analysis of secondary school and university students' competence tests as well as details interview with employers made it possible to draw the following conclusions:

- Secondary school students generally have an average and low level of social competences
- A large group of surveyed students (30 %) is not able to assess the level of their competences, the others, in the majority of cases, asses this level as average. Self-assessment of technical and vocational school students is higher than secondary school students.
- Students have very little knowledge of employers' expectations in relation to social competences
- University students show average, low and very low level of social competences
- The assessment of the level of their own competences rates as low and average
- Students' awareness of employers' expectations of young employees is definitely higher than secondary school students'
- The vast majority of secondary school and university students Express their readiness to improve their skills and competences required in the labour market
- Employers emphasise the importance of such competences as: logical and independent thinking, commitment, responsibility, openness to new information and knowledge, efficient communication, teamwork, creativity, cooperation in a team, formulating and solving problems, ethical conduct, information literacy, management, negotiations, time management and planning one's work
- Employers asses young adults' theoretical knowledge as good, however, they consider its practical application as much worse
- Young adults' professional experience is varied; it is very low or none - of those people who did not have any opportunity to practice in a real work situation and even very high of casual workers, of those who cooperated with various institutions and of volunteers', etc.

Taken all the above mentioned issues, it is recommended to implements such solutions which would assist in developing young adults' social and personal competences, especially in relation to developing enterprising spirit, creativity, which is marketable from the employer's expectations and point of view:

- Correlation of formal and informal education institutions activities in relation to developing social competences. Introduction of subjects on developing personal competences and work organisation in small teams to the curriculum still needs to be improved – both in terms of merits and application of educational tools.
- Preparation of a set of programmes and didactic materials on the development of young adults' social competences which will help teachers and students develop key competences required in labour market and which could be used by training institutions
- Preparation and implementation of a uniform system of the evaluation of key competences required in the labour market, e.g. : evaluation sheets of the competences of young adults' joining the labour market
- Developing interesting to young adults educational methods and tools which will enable identification and improvements of social and personal competences of the students
- Increasing awareness, especially secondary school students' awareness of social competences required in the labour market
- Supporting and counselling pupils and students in order to assist them in a conscious career planning

It is estimated that the implementation of the abovementioned recommendations will stimulate creativity, independence, responsibility as well as ability to cooperate with members of a team mainly through applying innovative methods and tools facilitating sharing, improving and consolidating theoretical knowledge and developing and improving key competences. The awareness of strengths and weaknesses in key competences required in the labour market will also rise mainly due to the application methods developed in the project.

Conclusions and recommendations resulting from the surveys play an important role in scheduling work with young adults entering the labour market and selecting methods of developing social competences – recommended by the employers.

5. Summary

The Employment Agency data and public survey results show that while advertising vacancies for a given position employers very often list essentials conditions/requirements which mainly are: interpersonal and social competences in relation to efficient communication, work planning and coping in difficult situations, good manners and ethical conducts as well as ability to cooperate with team members. Moreover, employers need employees who are creative, relentless and determined in pursuing one's goals, reliable, committed and open to new knowledge and skills. The lack of the abovementioned competences makes it difficult for a graduate to find a job in the labour market. That is why it is necessary for school and university curricula contributed to the development of key competences by young adults. Moreover, non-formal education should provide training based on the programme developing social competences which are required by employers. It is easier to develop these competences outside school in the form of training sessions as mandatory curricular subjects cover these subjects marginally..

The need for change in teaching methods is one of the most challenges of the modern Polish educational system. Encyclopaedic knowledge, factual knowledge - „know what rather than know how or know why", disintegration of knowledge, verbalism lack of individualized educational plans, no relation of education to life, insufficient accommodation of social needs: global and future still dominate. The importance of developing competences is still growing in the education system and encyclopaedic knowledge is being discarded. Knowledge alone is no longer important, what counts is the ability to apply this knowledge in practice. Teaching key competences means making it possible to apply acquired knowledge in complex, diversified and unpredictable situations. It is, thus, advisable to develop extensively these competences in educational process with appropriate teaching methods. Skills that are developed at teaching courses for young people offer a good basis for building key competences. They result from long-term activities, they include interrelated elements conditioning their achievement, namely: reflection, knowledge and attitude. Key competences will serve creative perception, identifying and solving problems arising in the modern world; they will allow lifelong acquisition of new knowledge; they enable adaptation to an ever-changing job market in an era of globalization, as well as self-development and self-fulfilment.

One should keep in mind a famous Confucius's saying:

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.

6. List of Figures and Tables

THE FINAL REPORT ON SKILLS AND COMPETENCES OF YOUTH - SLOVAKIA

Ľubica Černá, PhD.

Contents

1. Introduction

Many experts in the fields of sociology, education, philosophy, psychology and economics have tried to define the notion of competence. Their efforts have been shaped by their educational and cultural backgrounds as well as their linguistic origins.

1.1 Definition of key words: Knowledge, Skills and Competencies

Knowledge is sometimes viewed as if it was a concrete manifestation of abstract intelligence, but it is actually the result of an interaction between intelligence (capacity to learn) and situation (opportunity to learn), so is more socially-constructed than intelligence. Knowledge includes theory and concepts and tacit knowledge gained as a result of the experience of performing certain tasks. Understanding refers to more holistic knowledge of processes and contexts and may be distinguished as know-why, as opposed know-that. Each knowledge and learning hierarchy therefore rests on primary mental abilities, with the implicit assumption of a general learning transfer capacity and logic of knowledge acquisition. In all domains there is some logic that acquiring and comprehending new knowledge demands facilitating cognitive prerequisites and specific knowledge and skills. Given this interaction between knowledge and skills, their separation in a typology is not easy.[12]

In everyday language, it has long been the practice to distinguish between information - data arranged in meaningful patterns - and knowledge - which has historically been regarded as something that is believed, that is true (for pragmatic knowledge, that works) and that is reliable. The interchangeable use of information and knowledge can be confusing if it is not made clear that knowledge is being used in a new and unusual sense, and can seem unscrupulous insofar as the intent is to attach the prestige of (true) knowledge to mere information.[13]

Behaviours: behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately during intercultural encounters; flexibility in cultural behaviour; flexibility in communicative behaviour; and having an action orientation, that is, a disposition for action in society in order to enhance the common good, especially through the reduction of prejudice, discrimination and conflict.

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[12] Winterton, J. et all **Typology of knowledge, skills and competences,** European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2006 ISBN 92-896-0427-1 p.25

[13] Deming, S. **What is knowledge**. Available: http://www.stevedenning.com/Knowledge-Management/what-is-knowledge.aspx

Attitudes: respect for other cultures; curiosity about other cultures; willingness to learn about other cultures; openness to people from other cultures; willingness to suspend judgement; willingness to tolerate ambiguity and valuing cultural diversity. [14]

Knowledge means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.[15]

Skills is a combination of ability, knowledge and experience that enables a person to do something well.[16] Usually the term skill is used to refer to a level of performance, in the sense of accuracy and speed in performing particular tasks (skilled performance). Skilled performance has long been a subject of psychological enquiry and is of obvious interest to employers.[17]

Skills mean the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive or practical skills.[18]

Competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.[19]

A group of competencies that have attracted a great deal of attention in recent years are generic skills, also known as subject-independent or transversal competencies. They are not bound to any specific discipline, but can be applied to a whole range of subject areas and settings.[20] Key competences are context-independent, applicable and effective across different institutional settings, occupations and tasks. These typically include basal competences, such as literacy, numeracy, general education; methodological competences, like problem solving, IT skills; communication skills, including writing and presentation skills; and judgment competences, such as critical thinking.[21] Today's societies place challenging

[14] Pantea, M-C. **Mapping of competences needed by youth workers to support young people in international learning mobility project.** Available: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2721/Mapping_of_competencies_Final.pdf

[15] Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance)

[16] Boyatzis, R.E. and Kolb, D.A. **From learning styles to learning skills: the executive skills profile.** Available: http://learningfromexperience.com/media/2010/08/Excecutive-skills-profile.pdf

[17] Winterton, J. et all. **Typology of knowledge, skills and competences,** European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2006 ISBN 92-896-0427-1 p.26

[18] Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance)

[19] Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (Text with EEA relevance)

[20] Key Competencies A developing concept in general compulsory education. Eurydice, 2002, ISBN 2-87116-346-4 Available: http://www.edmide.gr/KEIMENA%20E.U/key%20competences%20Europe.pdf p.15

[21] Winterton, J. et all **Typology of knowledge, skills and competences,** European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2006 ISBN 92-896-0427-1 p.33

demands on individuals, who are confronted with complexity in many parts of their lives. What do these demands imply for key competencies that individuals need to acquire? Defining such competencies can improve assessments of how well prepared young people and adults are for life's challenges, as well as identify overarching goals for education systems and lifelong learning.[22]

LEARNING OUTCOME DEFINITION	Learning outcomes means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence			
BASIC CONCEPTS	E.Q.F. DEFINITION	E.U. PARLAMENT & COMMISSION DEFINITION	COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE	BLOOM TAXONOMY
KNOWLEDGE	In the context of EQF, **KNOWLEDGE** is described as Theoretical and/or factual knowledge.	**KNOWLEDGE** means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study.	**KNOWLEDGE** could be WHAT IS IT In terms of verbs: KNOWS	Select recognize mention identify name place define describe …
SKILLS	In the context of EQF, **SKILLS** is described as Cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical skills (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, material tools and instruments).	**SKILLS** means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems	**SKILLS** could be HOW CAN BE DONE In terms of verbs: UNDERSTANDS	Explain express interpret distinguish classify inter give priority analyse judge relate …
COMPETENCE	In the context of EQF, **COMPETENCE** is described in terms of Responsibility and autonomy	**COMPETENCE** means the proven abilitiy to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work in study situations and in professional and personal development	COMPETENCE it could be the APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS In terms of verbs: APPLIES / DEVELOPS	Use solve, produce create organize …

Tab. 1 Learning outcome definition [23]

In 2000, the then 175 members of the ILO adopted a Resolution concerning human resources training and development, which defined employability skills as: … the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work.[24]

Employability results from several factors – a foundation of core skills, access to education, availability of training opportunities, motivation, ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning, and recognition of acquired skills – and is critical for enabling workers to attain decent work and manage change and for enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and enter new markets.[25]

The employment situation of young people today is characterized specifically by high unemployment and underemployment, lower quality jobs and difficult transitions into decent work, which combined, contribute to the detachment of the current generation from the labour market altogether.[26]

The European Commission has developed several tools to make it easier to match people's skills with those needed on the labour market. As an example, Europass is a direct CV service to help individuals to show their professional experience and skills so that employers can correctly understand and appreciate them. Or the European Qualifications Framework, a Europe-wide reference tool that, once fully put in place at the national level, will help people to make their qualifications more readable and portable across Europe. Partnerships between universities and schools on the one hand and enterprises on the other are crucial when it comes to matching the needs for skills on the labour market with those people can actually offer. The European Commission has set up an EU Forum for University-Business Dialogue for this purpose.[27]

Europe needs not only more skills, but also the right skills. As the nature of work changes, employers are increasingly looking for key competences such as creativity, communication and analytical skills, self management, social aptitudes and the ability to work and communicate in a multicultural environment. These competences are not only an asset for economic wellbeing, but also for personal well-being, citizenship and social

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[24] Resolution on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development. 97th Session the International Labour Conference, 2008.

[25] HRD Recommendation 195, 2004; this was reinforced in the Resolution on Youth Employment 2005.

[26] Brewer, L: Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How? Guide to core work skills. International Labour Organization 2013, ISBN 9789221275343 (web pdf) Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_213452.pdf, p.4

[27] http://www.newskillsnetwork.eu/doc/454?download=false

cohesion. In order to prepare both young people and adults so they can adapt to these changing environments, we need to rethink education and ensure that learners develop these key competences. In its Communication on **"Key competences for a changing world"** the Commission focuses on progress in Member States towards these objectives.

This framework defines eight key competences and describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each of these. It gives an overview of the key competences considered necessary for all in the knowledge-based society. This overview is followed by a more detailed description of the definitions and the corresponding knowledge, skills and attitudes in each of the eight domains.

The National Council for Adult Training approved, by Decision no. 86/24.06.2088, in compliance with the European Union's and the European Union Council's Recommendation on the key competencies lifelong learning (2006/962/EC), The List of key competencies, common to various professions, a list that includes:

- **communication in the mother tongue**, which is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;
- **communication in foreign languages**, which involves, in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- **mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
- **digital competence** involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT);
- **learning to learn** is related to learning, the ability to pursue and organize one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities;
- **social and civic competences**. Social competence refers to personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behavior that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and

structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;

- **sense of initiative and entrepreneurship** is the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance;
- **cultural awareness and expression**, which involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

However, key competencies are the only ones that should be considered for employment. Besides these, there are a series of other competencies and general abilities that an employee should have. These, however, can be more or less important, depending on the employee's profession, the nature of work, the position held.[28]

These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking and constructive management of feelings.[29]

CEDEFOP – the EU's vocational education and training agency – is also preparing a complementary study providing projections of skill supply which help to identity skill mismatches and shortages.

In market economies, product markets influence labour demand, and skill requirements are driven by employer choices in designing jobs (e.g. which tasks are delegated, which can be substituted by technology, which rely on nonroutine tasks). Job candidates and potential employees also come to the labour market with varying knowledge, competencies and abilities that can be broadly defined as "skills", or the outcome of individuals' choices of education, training and of their work experience, combined with innate abilities and preferences.[30]

[28] Ciuhureanu, A.T., Gorski, H., Balteş, N., **Study on the needs of competencies and abilities for the graduates' adaptation to the requirements of the labour market in the context of Europe 2020 Strategy**. Annals of the University of Petroşani, Economics, 11(3), 2011, 35-46 Available: http://www.upet.ro/annals/economics/pdf/2011/part3/Ciuhureanu-Gorski.pdf

[29] Available: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm

[30] **Matching Skills and Labour Market Needs Building Social Partnerships for Better Skills and Better Jobs.** World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Employment. 2014. Available: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC/2014/WEF_GAC_Employment_MatchingSkillsLabourMarket_Report_2014.pdf.p.7

2.   Youth competences as a key element on the labour market

2.1 Youth unemployment in EU

Youth unemployment is one of Europe's most pressing problems. In the current economic and financial crisis the lack of job opportunities has affected young people more than any other group in society; this is reflected in high and increasing youth unemployment rates and levels of precariousness. In Europe, more than 5.68 million young people are unemployed. The average rate of youth unemployment (23.4%) is more than double the overall unemployment rate (10.7%). Even before the crisis the youth unemployment rate was particularly high (17% compared with an average rate of 7% in 2008).[31]

The European Commission identifies 13 key actions at European level that should help to ensure these four key priorities (better-functioning labour markets; a more skilled workforce; better job quality and working conditions; stronger policies to promote job creation and demand for labour). The agenda is complemented by two other EU flagship initiatives under Europe 2020, aiming to address the concerns of specific groups: 'Youth on the move' and 'European platform against poverty and social exclusion'.[32]

The reasons for the youth unemployment are very complex and the main reasons are different in every country. The main factors are the current crisis in the EURO-zone, the education and qualification of the young people and the discrepancy between offer and demand on the job markets. Moreover, young people with a migration background are disadvantaged. Not only poorly educated young people have bad opportunities to find a job in the moment. Even well-educated people have problems to find a job through the economic crisis.[33] Another reason for the high youth unemployment rate is that during the crisis more young people lost their job than older people. This is explainable through the fact, that it is easier to resign people which are shorter employed.

Despite high levels of unemployment, many employers still cannot find the right skills to fill job vacancies. Before the economic downturn, about four million jobs remained unfilled throughout the EU. Europe misses out on major employment opportunities because

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[31]European social partners: **Framework of actions on youth employment**.2013 Available: http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/201306_Framework_of_Actions_Youth_Employment_final.pdf
[32] **New skills and jobs in Europe: Pathways towards full employment.** EU 2012 ISBN 978-92-79-25973-9
[33] Caritas. **Erschreckend viele Jugendliche in Europa sind arbeitslos.** 2013
Available:http://www.caritas.de/neue-caritas/jahrbuch/leseprobe.aspx.

of significant mobility and skill-mismatch problems. And it is not just about an unfilled job – it is also a forfeited economic opportunity.[34]

ESCO is the multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. ESCO is part of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Commission services launched the project in 2010 with an open stakeholder consultation. DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion – supported by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training Cedefop – coordinates the development of ESCO. Stakeholders are closely involved in the development and dissemination of ESCO. The ESCO classification identifies and categorizes skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training. It systematically shows the relationships between the different concepts.

2.2   Situation on the Slovak labour market

The total unemployment rate in Slovakia amounted in March 2015 to 12,06 percent. This means that about 369.455 people available for immediate work are looking for a job – or rather (better to say) are registered at labour offices. The situation around Slovakia differs depending on regions. Some places there are workers lacking, in other places jobs are missing. The willingness to travel to get a job or to relocate has recently been surprisingly on the decline. The prevailing group of the unemployed is young people, especially graduates who cannot apply their knowledge in practice. Young Slovaks with complete elementary or secondary education are the worst off. Youths with higher secondary education have a lower unemployment rate, but it is still higher than the European average. The rate of ability to get employed is influenced by education, experience, language skills and also the very willingness to work.[35]

In 2002, Slovakia enacted the Law on Employment Services, a state-financed framework for internships and apprenticeships. The intention was to guarantee the young unemployed some employment experience and to prevent them from working illegally. The mechanism is currently used by employers mostly for temporary jobs and it is mostly viewed as a tool for preserving the working experience of the unemployed. Employers bear no labour costs for employing young people temporarily and the young unemployed are not bound by any working contract. This allows employers to rotate the young unemployed without creating real jobs. The state-sponsored internship scheme does have some positive effects, as it at least provides some work experience. However, similar to other internship programs, only a very low number of participants find a permanent job through this

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[34] Göran Hultin. **The global 'war' for talent: labour-market policies for Europe 2020.** Available: http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/114263/ichaptersection_singledocument/1c05e3bd-7867-4d54-aeda-a00ec5e2ade7/en/Chap14.pdf
[35] Available: http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20057376/unemployment-in-slovakia-and-the-impact-of-hr.html

mechanism. Slovakia´s experience, while worse than others, is not dramatically different from the situation elsewhere. Young people have been encountering problems finding a job for a long time in the majority of EU member states. Internships, with a weak prospect of turning into a real job, are widespread in many older EU member states.[36]

The current system of career services in Slovakia does not cover the needs of all citizens who would be interested in them. Career consulting focuses on the client's current problems and it does not see his career development in the long term prospects. Counseling services in schools focus mostly on further studies and only minimally develop the students´ career perception that goes beyond school education. Educational advisors do not always have the appropriate competencies. In the field of employment services, counseling is carried out in the context of information and advisory services. Consulting services in offices of labour are focused mostly on the quantity of clients and personnel are understaffed. Long-term registered, low-skilled and young unemployed are those who most need high level of individualized care in the field of continuing education for the purpose of professional, vocational and personal development. Current high mismatch between the skills of graduates and the requirements of the labour market increases even more the risk of protracted registration as jobseekers. Therefore, the strengthening of career guidance and counseling form an essential tool for equipping current and future workforce with needed skills and thus a tool to expand the job success possibilities for our people. Therefore it is necessary to seek constantly new opportunities and solutions, to extend consultancy services to other institutions and to establish partner networks of labour market actors in order to form the workforce capable of responding to the needs of the labour market. For this reason it is necessary to improve the level of professionalism and guidance also by familiarizing and comparing with other foreign experience.[37]

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[36] Martišková, M. **EU's Youth Guarantee is unlikely to dramatically help Slovakia's young unemployed.** Available: https://visegradrevue.eu/eus-youth-guarantee-is-unlikely-to-dramatically-help-slovakias-young-unemployed/

[37] **Career guidance in partner countries. Slovakia** Available: http://www.careercare.eu/en/news/81-career-guidance-in-partner-countries

3.   Methodology description - the concept and organization of research

3.1 Objectives of the research

- creating research tools: test of competences for youth and students, script of the in depth interview for employers.
- translation of the final version of the research tools into 4 languages
- conducting research in 4 countries: 60 x 4 tests of competences in schools; 60 x 4 test of competences among students, 15 x 4 in-depth interviews with employers
- coding of the tests of competences and interviews
- analysing and writing the final report on skills and competences of youth

3.2 Description of the group tested and test methodology

Tests of competences in schools-Questionnaire for students of secondary schools and vocation schools was produced as an online and paper questionnaire. Both forms of the survey were made available during free time of students and the online version of the survey was developed using Google Disc.

Address:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1F92qU7qTjGXa44tCm0_YlDvIc48tBJ6zFmqGN3jGNsU/viewform?usp=send_form

The questionnaire was published on the web side: http://www.nkos.sk/news/dotaznik-pre-studentov-strednych-skol/

The number of participants: planned number of respondent 60, the actual number of respondents n=83

Tables 1, 2 and 3 (Annex A) present background characteristics. Characteristic of respondents:

1. Grammar school, High School (Gymnasium): 4-8 years; provides general secondary education and prepares for further study at universities and other higher education institutions. (n=44, 53%)
   We tested students from:
   Gymnasium st. Cyril and Method in Nitra, http://gcm.sk/
   Business Academy st. Thomas Aquinas in Žilina http://www.oataza.edu.sk/
   Secondary industry school in Kysucké Nové Mesto http://www.spsknm.sk/ssknm/

2. Specialized Secondary School: 4-5 years; provides specialized education and usually prepares students for further study at higher education institutions. (n=0, 0%)
3. Conservatories: 4-5 years; special type of professional school providing specializing in fields such as Music, Singing, Dancing and Dramatic Arts. (n=0, 0%)
4. Vocational School: 2-4 years; prepares students for careers that are based in manual or practical occupations. Secondary vocational schools consist of general education and vocational training and students regularly attend practical classes, training centre and real working places to learn practical skills in the given profession. Vocational education is Slovakia is offered in two, three (n=10, 12%) or four years of study. (n=29, 35%)

We tested students from: Vocational school in Nové Zámky http://www.soujesnz.sk/

Sex
Male: n=23, (27,7%) female: n = 60 (72,3%)

Place of living
The city: n= 37 (44,6%) The village: n=46 (55,4%)

Questionnaire for students of universities was produced as an online and paper questionnaire. Both forms of the survey were made available during free time of students and the online version of the survey was developed using Google Disc.

Address:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/108VrUBvH1ZFBxbmwvmF3bmXCcyEthTJQHjXijUX8Ng8/viewform?usp=send_form

Respondents were from University/College with the following focus: (n=63).

We tested students of Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Education, department of management, www.pf.ku.sk, University of Žilina, The Faculty of Operation and Economics of Transport and Communications, www.uniza.sk, Slovak Agriculture University in Nitra, Faculty of European Studies and Regional Development, www.spu.sk and Comenius University in Bratislava. www.uniba.sk.

Tables 1,2 and 3 (Annex B) present background characteristic of respondents.

Study programme (Tab.1)	N	%
others	0	0
social science	2	3,17
natural science	2	3,17

humanistic and pedagogical science	5	7,94
technical science	10	15,87
economic science and management	44	69,84
	n=63	100,00%

Tab. 2 (Annex B) Sex: Male: n=19, (30%) female: n = 44 (70%)
Tab. 3 (Annex B) Type of study: full time study n=49 (78%), part time n= 14 (22%)
Tab. 4 (Annex B) Level of study: Bachelor level n=50 (79%), master level n= 13 (21%).

Some students (n=33. 53%) have short time work experiences, some ones are employed (n=21, 33%). Only nine students have not any work experience. 22% of students work for an agreement on work performance. 16% of students work on an agreement on work activities. Students are not satisfied with the university and study programs, which they currently studying (n=21, 34%). 15 students would choose the same study programme on other university (25%). See Tab.5 (Annex B).

Questionnaire for employers was produced as an online and paper questionnaire. Both forms of the survey were made available during working time of employers and the online version of the survey was developed using Google Disc.

Address: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1URZN-LUedE6CDzfRi5qjiEpdUsZCZkCQj02O1qyaNdM/viewform?usp=send_form

We tested 3 industry companies, 2 agriculture and food companies, 5 service and trade companies, 5 marketing companies and 1 public office (n=16). You cen see in Tab.1 Annex C. There are 12 small companies, 2 middle and 2 large companies, 15 companies are private and 1 is public. The place of companies is district Žilina, Ružomberok, Poprad and Dolný Kubín. (Tab.2 Annex C)

Date and place of the research: March 2015 – June 2015.

- Secondary and vocation schools: Nové Zámky, Kysucké Nové Mesto, Nitra a Žilina
- Universities: Ružomberok, Žilina, Nitra, Bratislava
- Companies: Žilina, Ružomberok, Poprad and Dolný Kubín

Based on the analysis of literature and Project **"Competencies for Labour Market" Project in the Moravian-Silesian Region of the Czech Republic."**[38] Competence Model was identified which includes the following 14 key competencies:

1. Competency for effective communication
2. Competency for co-operation
3. Competency for entrepreneurship
4. Competency for flexibility
5. Competency for customer orientation
6. Competency for efficiency
7. Competency for independence and decisiveness
8. Competency for solving problems
9. Competency for organizing and planning
10. Competency for life-long learning
11. Competency for proactive approach
12. Competency for stress resiliency
13. Competency for exploring and orientation in information
14. Competency for communication in foreign languages.

This competence model we use in the **Questionnaire for students of secondary schools and vocation schools.**

In the questionnaire for university students and for employers we used our own competency model containing 24 competencies, knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities.

1. Presentation skills
2. Communication skills and negotiation
3. Knowledge of conditions, under which professional knowledge and theory can be applied in practice.
4. Ability to learn and organize learning
5. The level of writing skills
6. Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge
7. General knowledge and outlook
8. The ability to run business and lead a team.
9. Active approach to work
10. The ability of independent decision-making
11. Ability to handle difficult situations and obstacles
12. The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice.
13. Ability to adapt to changing circumstances
14. Legal capacity
15. The ability to engage in teamwork..
16. Entrepreneurship, to have a "nose" for new opportunities.

17. The ability to think and act economically / economic competence.
18. Computer skills
19. Skills to work with information
20. Ability to take responsibility.
21. Ability to identify and solve problems
22. The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting
23. Ability to work in a multicultural / international environment..
24. Foreign language proficiency.
25. Language proficiency in their mother tongue.
26. Mathematical proficiency

Data/information were collected and analysed by Excel. We used bar graphs[39] and pie graphs.[40]

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[39] Bar graphs should be used for categoric, ordered, and discrete variables. If the number of units in a discrete variable is large it may be displayed as a continuous variable.

[40] Pie graphs (sometimes called pie or circle charts) are used to show the parts that make up a whole. They can be useful for comparing the size of relative parts. Because it is difficult to compare different circle graphs, and often hard to compare the angles of different sectors of the pie, it is sometimes better to choose other sorts of graphs.

4. Analysis of the results

4.1 Questionnaire for students of secondary schools and vocation schools

Referring to Figure 1 (or Tab. 4 annex A), we can see that 28% (23) of the respondents haven´t got any work experience. The survey shows that 36% (30) of the students have got extensive work experience.

4. My work experiences

- ■ I haven´t got any work experiences.
- ■ I was a volunteer or I am still volunteer.
- ■ I have only one job experience.
- ■ I´ve got extensive work experience.

28%
36%
12%
24%

Figure1 Work experience of students in vocation schools

Read the following statements and indicate the extent to which statement characterizes you.

Statement	Not at all.	Partly	Almost completely.	Completely.
I can also apply most of my good ideas.	5	43	28	7
I can harmonize my work with team work.	2	28	45	8
I can handle and use what I have learnt.	1	36	34	12
I invest my time and energy for my development…	3	38	27	15
I spend a lot of time browsing the Internet or „in…	9	37	19	18
I can properly judge which information is…	0	27	38	18
I am an active person.	3	35	27	18
I decide independently, based on my own…	2	24	39	18
I do not hesitate to use non-standard methods in…	7	35	22	19
When someone speaks a foreign languge, I…	6	27	30	20
I try to get on well with others.	2	19	40	22
I can speak a foreign language only passively (a…	4	30	21	28
When I come across something new, I can find…	1	19	32	31

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

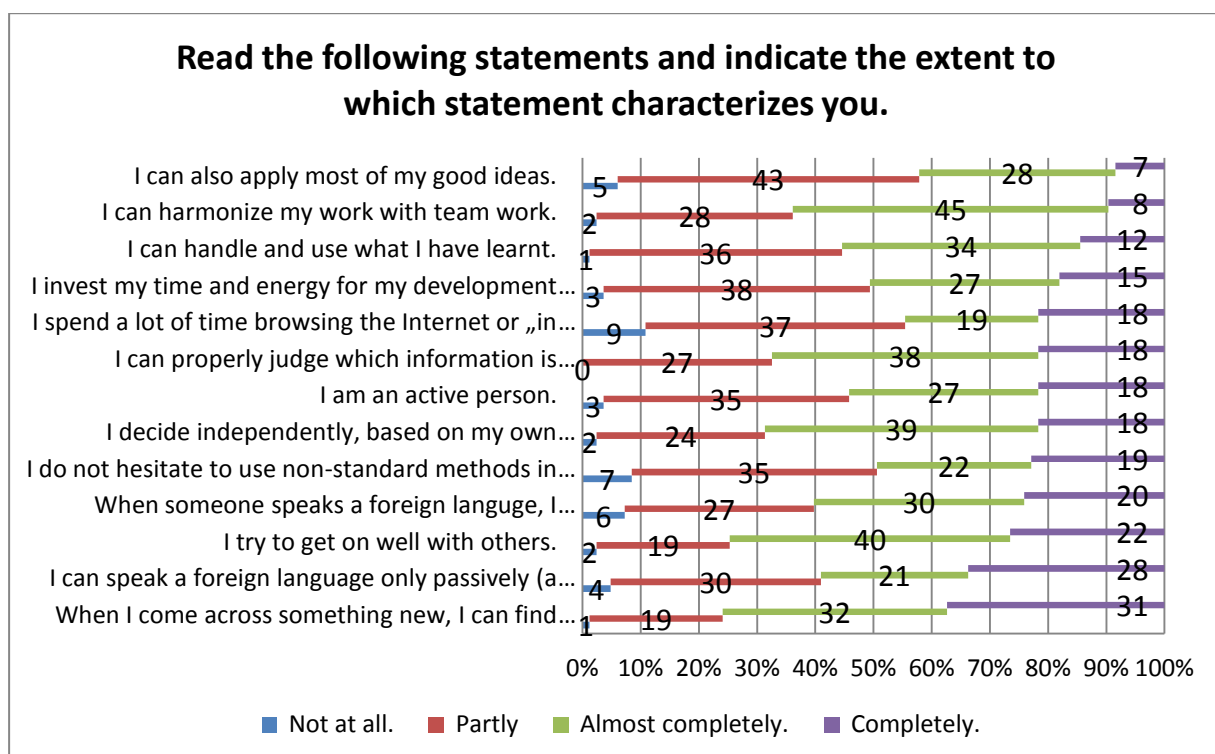■ Not at all. ■ Partly ■ Almost completely. ■ Completely.

Figure 2. Which statement characterizes of respondent.

Pupils characterize ourselves as people with the following competencies: competence to discover and orientation in information (completely n=31, 37,3%), competency for co-operation and team work (completely n=21, 26,5%), competency for flexibility (completely n=19, 22,9%)

On the basis of the questionnaire and the responses of pupils, we found that pupils are absent following competencies: competency for entrepreneurship and competency for proactive approach (Almost completely and completely n= 35, 57,80%). The surprise for us are the ratings of expressing an opinion: *I spend a lot of time browsing the Internet or „in the field", trying to find if there is anything interesting, that might be useful for me.* (Almost completely and completely n=37, 44,6 %) This is in contrast if we compare *When I come across something new, I can find the necessary information.* (Almost completely and completely n=63, 75,90%). We expect that students search for information concerning the work purposefully and necessarily only. (Exactly results are in Tab. 5 Annex A)

Analysis of self-assessment of competencies (Tab. 6. Annex A)

Competence	Opinion	MAX		Opinion	MIN	
Competency for proactive approach	When it suits me and I want it, I am looking for them.	33	39,80%	I prefer best practices. It is necessary to take the effort.	11	13,30%
Competency for effective communication	I have no troubles with presentation in front of large groups and interact with strangers, but I have to prepare for it.	44	53,00%	Basically I avoid strange as I have a big stage fright, neither preparation help me. Safely I feel only among acquaintance and my friend.	7	8,40%
Competency for stress resiliency	I can work under pressure or under unfavourable conditions, but this makes me tired and I do not feel at easy.	30	36,10%	I am the person who manages work under pressure or under unflavoured conditions.	12	14,50%
Competency for exploring and orientation in information	If it is a common thing, I offer my knowledge willingly and openly and participate in the performance of various tasks, but only if it a superior (teacher) ask me to do	35	42,20%	I dislike sharing my knowledge and experience. Quid pro quo	6	7,20%

	so.					
Competency for co-operation	I know listening is just as important as talking, and I respect it.	41	49,40%	Why should I listen anybody, when I know that I understand it better? Let him listens me.	3	3,60%
	If people bother me with their requirements, I always "explode".	41	49,40%	I was angry and upset when people bother me with their requirements.	5	6,00%
	I have got a sense of co-operation.	44	53,00%	If I have to work in a team, I do it but it is difficult for me to adopt myself to others.	8	9,60%
Competency for independence and decisiveness	I can defend my own opinion, but I often make angry those who have a different opinion.	28	33,70%	To accept and adopt the opinion of others is easier and simpler. Especially if it is a minor matter.	5	6,00%
Competency for organizing and planning	I can select the right priorities which lead to achieving my goal.	42	50,60%	What is important I let on the experienced?	10	12,00%
	Venturing into new activities I find exciting and I like doing it.	38	45,80%	I can work in a systematic and planned way.	37	44,60%
	I am cool.	56	67,50%	Occasionally, I feel like going crazy.	27	32,50%
Competency for flexibility	Repeatedly I managed to come up with, to suggest or create something original and interesting.	26	31,30%	Why am I to invent something new while the old works or is run-in.	14	16,90%
	I don´t mind when sometimes I don´t know exactly what to do. Somehow I do it.	30	36,10%	I like to work exactly according to the procedures and systematically, changes do not disturb me.	13	15,70%
	I'm ready for altering changes and situation, but it must not be often.	34	41,00%	Each change makes me nervous and disturbs me.	9	10,80%
Competency for	I am always ready to	54	65,10%	I advocate only my	1	1,20%

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entrepreneurship	support good suggestions that can help solve a problem.			suggestions and initiative. I do not support opinions of others, I prefer to stay silent.		
	My motivation is to earn money for a better life.	59	71,10%	To earn money to pay debts I have got.	7	8,40%
Competency for life-long learning	When I teach or explain something, people understand me.	53	63,90%	Presentation of my ideas to dilettante people is difficult for me	30	36,10%
	I already applied something new in practice.	39	47,00%	I use almost everything.	14	16,90%

Tab. 2 Analysis of self-assessment of competencies

Analysis values of students: (5 values)

- very important values are *health, family, friendship, confidence and love.*
- important values are *work, recognition in a group, money, property, house and justice.*
- partial important values are *social prestige and human recognition, carrier, tradition, power and a car,*
- the least important values are *gold and jewellery, power, tradition, faith and religion, social prestige and human recognition*. (Tab.7, Annex A)

4.2 Questionnaire for students of universities

The Figure 3 shows the relationship between work and study. 86% of students reported that they have work experience, but 33% said that their work is not related to the curriculum and 7% of students reported that the current work do not require a university education. (Tab.8 Annex B)
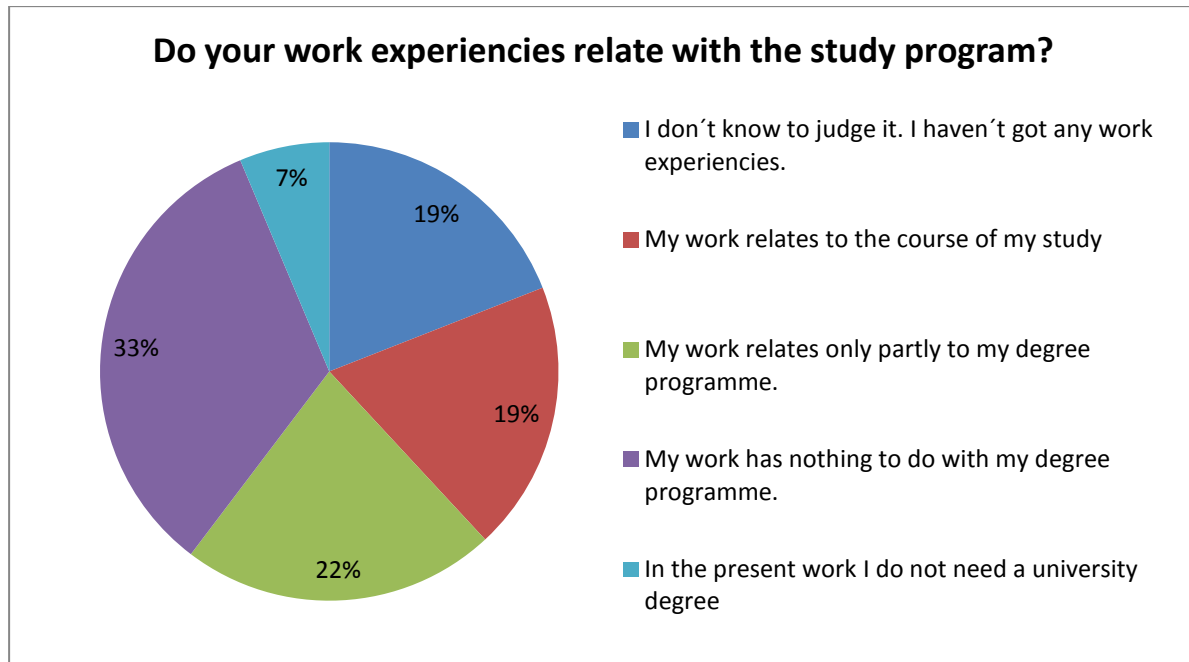
Do your work experiencies relate with the study program?

- 19% — I don´t know to judge it. I haven´t got any work experiencies.
- 19% — My work relates to the course of my study
- 22% — My work relates only partly to my degree programme.
- 33% — My work has nothing to do with my degree programme.
- 7% — In the present work I do not need a university degree

Figure 3 The relationship between work and study

Answers to the question *How does university prepare you in terms of the following competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities)?* confirms the fact that universities do not prepare students to practice. Frequency evaluation 6 points (high level of preparation) was low (max 9 students). (Tab. 9 Annex B)

5 competencies acquired by the university (6 points - high level of preparation): *Computer skills (n=9), The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting skills, The ability to engage in teamwork, Ability to take responsibility. Presentation skills. (n=7)*

5 competencies acquired by the university (5 points): *Presentation skills. (n=19) The level of writing skills. (n=18) The ability of independent decision-making, (n=17) The ability to engage in teamwork. (n=17) Ability to take responsibility.(n=16).*

5 competences which have not received the university (1 point – low level of preparation): *Foreign language proficiency. (n=17), Language proficiency in their mother tongue. (n=13), Ability to work in a multicultural / international environment (n=11), Entrepreneurship, to have a "nose" for new opportunities. (n=10) Mathematical proficiency (n=10).*

Answers to the question *How is the level of your interest to learn these competencies in the university?* confirms students' interest in following competences:

5 competencies with the highest level of interesting (6 point): *The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting (n=23), The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice (n=23), Ability to handle difficult situations and obstacles (n=22), Ability to identify and solve problems (n=20), Ability to take responsibility (n=19).*

5 competencies with the highest level of interesting (6 point): *Mathematical proficiency (n=10), Language proficiency in their mother tongue (n=5), Foreign language proficiency.(n=4), Ability to work in a multicultural/international environment (n=3), The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting (n=2).* (Tab. 10 Annex B)

Answers to the question *Which of the following competencies you need in your work*? reflect the practical use of competencies at work:

5 competencies that are necessary for the performance of work (6 points - I cannot do my work without competence): *The ability to take responsibility (n=25). Be able to communicate and negotiate with people (n=20), The ability to work under stress (n=19), Active approach to work (n=18), The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice. (n=18)*

5 competencies that they never needed: *Presentation skills (n=10) Capacity to lead an organisation and ability to lead a team (n=9), Legal capacity (n=9), Computer skills (n=8), General knowledge and outlook (n=8).* (Tab. 11 Annex B)

The results of self-evaluation of selected competencies were very diverse.

Competency for effective communication and negotiation. (Tab. 12 Annex B)

When talking to someone, my thought fleeing to other topics. (n=13, max. frequency: not like me at all). *I often start a sentence with the words "Yes, but ..."* (n=19, max. frequency: not really like me), *At talk I use the word "I" more often than the words "you".* (n=24, max. frequency: not much like me), *When another speaks, I listen to him with interest, and did not interrupt him.* (n=39 max. max. frequency: a bit like me and that's me).

Presentation skills. (Tab. 13 Annex B)

I do not open a discussion after the presentations, (n=17, max. frequency: not like me at all). *I do not use gesticulation.* (n=16, max. frequency: not really like me), *I do not say content; I want to be surprised listeners.* (n=23, max. frequency: not much like me)*, I keep eye contact with the audience.* (n=26 max. max. frequency: a bit like me), *I fear the audience questions I can always prepare a presentation* (n=18, max. frequency that's me)

Competency for co-operation (Tab. 14 Annex B)

On suggestions and ideas of colleagues I respond positively and support them.(n=15, max. frequency that's me) (n=31 max. max. frequency: a bit like me),

Competency for entrepreneurship and proactive approach (Tab. 15 Annex B)

I have a many ideas (n=16, max. frequency that's me), *I know judge the situation and assess risks.* (n=27 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Competency for flexibility (Tab. 16 Annex B)

Everything needs its schedules, rules and procedures. Time horizons requires outlook and flexible open mind. (n=29 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Managerial competence. Organization and management of team. (Tab. 17 Annex B)

Orders and requirements I can formulate clearly and distinctly. (n=30 max. max. frequency: a bit like me). *The work I perceive rather complex in mutual interconnections.* (n=28 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Competency for life-long learning (Tab. 18 Annex B)

If something does not work, I look for a solution unless I find it. (n=15, max. frequency that's me), *I can work with the study material in electronic form.* (n=24 max. max. frequency: a bit like me).

Competency for stress resiliency (Tab. 19 Annex B)

I have to control on what is happening around me. (n=11, max. frequency that's me),

Competency for solving problems (Tab. 20 Annex B)

Together with others, I'm trying to look at the problem from all angles, so that problem was solved in the best way. (n=19, max. frequency that's me*), I tried to explain to all the logic of my view, purpose and / or advantages of my solutions.* (n=19, max. frequency that's me).

Planning and organizing activities (Tab. 21 Annex B)

Maximum response rates were: *I am planning a trip.* (n=37), *I have a financial reserve, even though small.* (n=36). Minimum response rates were: *I am chaotic.(*n=5) *Financially I do not care about the future. The money is and will be.* (n=6)

Competency for independence and decisiveness. (Tab. 22 Annex B)

Maximum response rates were: *I advise by the view that "Any advice is good."* (n=37), *I watch my bank account, in order I knew what payments I realized* (n=36). Minimum response rates were: *I often live on debt, but I do not mind* (n=3*), I do not watch my bank account, spending money till I have it* (n=3).

Answers of question *What could be interested in your future employer?* have been unequivocal. *Foreign language proficiency. My work experience and practice* (n=53). Only 12 students mean, that The topic of his (her) thesis and his (her) research area could be interested in future employer. (Tab. 23 Annex B)

Strengths of respondents: *work experiences, communication skills, responsibly, knowing my strengths and weaknesses, first impression, flexibility, study results, engagement, skill, enthusiasm, passion for work, PC skills.*

Weaknesses of respondents: *name of alma mater, nationality, little work experience, health, stage fright, stress, age.*

4.3 Questionnaire for employers

Most employers responded that regularly receive high school graduates (8 respondents) and universities (6 respondents). (Tab. 4 Annex C).

Jobseeker in companies should have the following competencies:

5 points, the most important competence: *Presentation skills*. (n=9, 56,25%), *Ability to communicate and negotiate with people* (n=9, 56,25%) *Customer orientation* (n=9, 56,25%).

4 points: *Be able to think and act economically / economic competence.* (n=9, 56,25%), *The ability to identify and solve problems. Computer skills* (n=7, 43,75%)

3 points: *Computer skills. Foreign language proficiency* (n=6, 37,5%)

2 points: *Language proficiency in a mother tongue. Active approach to work.* (n=6, 37,5%)

1 point, the least important competence: *General knowledge and outlook* (n=10, 62,5%), *Ability to learn and organize learning* (n=8, 50%), *Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge* (n=5, 31,25%) (Tab.5 Annex C)

Young jobseekers from vocation or secondary schools have the following competencies*: Active approach to work. Entrepreneurship, have a "nose" for new opportunities. Customer orientation* (n=5, 31,25%). The lowest level of competencies in the opinion of employers: *Presentation skills* (n=10, 62,5%), *Foreign language proficiency.* (n=9, 56,25%), *Mathematical knowledge. The ability to identify and solve problems* (n=8, 50%). (Tab.6 Annex C)

Young jobseekers from university have the following competencies*: Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge* (n=6, 37,5%), *Presentation skills* (n=6, 37,5%), *General knowledge and outlook* (n=5, 31,25%). The lowest level of competencies in the opinion of employers: *The ability to identify and solve problems* (n=8, 50%), *Ability to resolve conflicts. Mathematical knowledge.* (n=5, 31,25%). (Tab.7 Annex C)

Do you consider the following facts important (significant) when adopting graduates for the job

Legend: very relevant, nearly relevant, little relevance, irrelevant
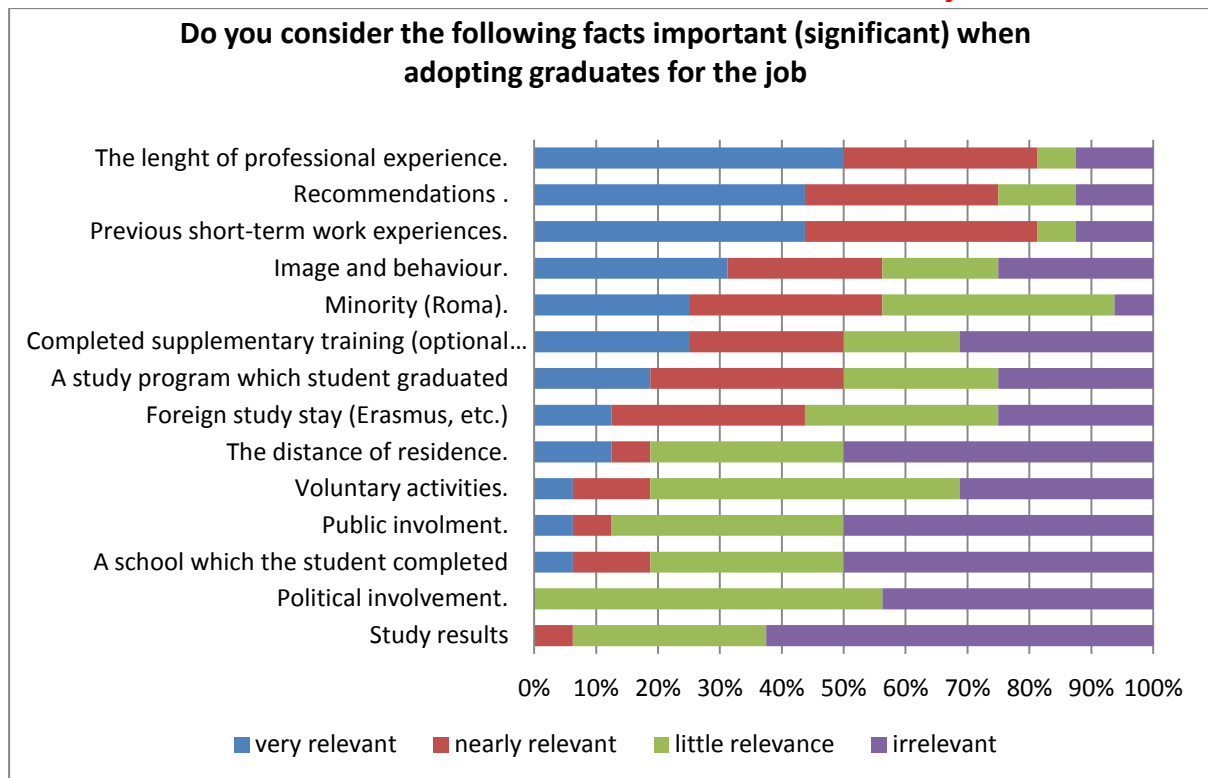
Figure 4 Do you consider the following facts important (significant) when adopting graduates for the job?

The Figure 4 shows what is important for employers. 50% of respondents underline *The length of professional experience* (n=8). Others important facts are: *Recommendations, Previous short-term work experiences* (n=7, 43,75%), *Image and behaviour.* (n=5, 31,25%). Irrelevant facts for employers are: *Study results* (n=10, 62,5%) *A school which the student completed, The distance of residence* (n=8, 50%)

If we have studied the results of questions, what is important for employers (4 points and 5 points), we compile the following order of priority:

Competencies	4 points	5 points (the most important)	n
Customer orientation.	6	9	15
Be able to think and act economically / economic competence.	9	5	14
The ability to identify and solve problems.	7	4	11
Ability to communicate and negotiate with people.	1	9	10
Presentation skills.	1	9	10

Ability to resolve conflicts.	5	5	10
The level of writing skills.	5	5	10
Entrepreneurship, have a "nose" for new opportunities.	5	4	9
Ability to adapt to changing circumstances.	5	4	9
Foreign language proficiency.	6	3	9
Computer skills.	7	2	9
Knowledge of condition, under which professional knowledge and theory can be applied in practice.	3	5	8
The ability to engage in teamwork.	3	5	8
The ability to apply professional knowledge in practice	2	5	7
The skills to work with informations.	2	5	7
The ability of independent decision-making.	2	5	7
Ability to work in a multicultural / international environment.	2	5	7
Ability to organize and plan work.	2	5	7
Active approach to work.	3	4	7
Language proficiency in a mother tongue.	1	5	6
The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting.	2	4	6
Mathematical knowledge.	4	2	6
Legal capacity.	2	3	5
Ability to learn and organize learning.	1	1	2
Professional theoretical and methodological knowledge.	2	0	2
General knowledge and outlook.	0	0	0

Tab. Employer´s priority of competences

5. Conclusions

Employers have the following priorities: *Customer orientation, Be able to think and act economically/economic competence, The ability to identify and solve problems, Ability to communicate and negotiate with people, Presentation skills, Ability to resolve conflicts, The level of writing skills.* Students think that they will receive the following competences at the university: *Presentation skills, Ability to take responsibility, The ability to engage in teamwork, The ability of creative and flexible thinking and acting, The ability of independent decision-making.* Based on the research we see that the disproportion between the real needs of employers and training and education of school students. Combating youth unemployment is one of the most important and most urgent challenges that states face in every continent of the globe. We are all responsible for carrying on the measures that we have adopted and purposefully reinforcing and extending them.

6.   Recommendations

The development of youth unemployment is influenced by inappropriate cross-references between education systems and the labour market. The existence of appropriate skills is the most important requirement for employment growth.

1. The link between the labour market and education should be improved by regular analysis of hard market data, such as salaries of graduates and graduates´ unemployment rates by educational fields and schools.

2. The selection of a suitable area of study has an important role to play even though there is an appropriate awareness of the labour market and increasing issues in the structure of unemployment.

3. It is necessary to connect formal and informal education, to better connect the educational system with practical knowledge and support practically oriented subjects and skills, to raise awareness of parents when it comes to responsible and practically-applicable selection of studies for their children, to realise career advice that would encompass both parents and children, and students.

4. Slovakia´s experience, while worse than others, is not dramatically different from the situation elsewhere. Young people have been encountering problems finding a job for a long time in the majority of EU member states. Internships, with a weak prospect of turning into a real job, are widespread in many older EU member states. The Youth Guarantee is not a bad policy. The question is whether in the individual states the scheme is going to change the approach to labour market policy and improve the connectivity of labour market needs and education of school graduates, or whether it will, perversely, lead dropouts and graduates into a never-ending chain of internships. The example of Slovakia, where the government never provided a complex framework for school-to-work transitions even in the face of staggeringly high youth unemployment, is not encouraging. Policy makers should use the momentum provided by the ongoing discussion on the Youth Guarantee to pressure the weak-performing member states into a range of further labour market reforms.[41]

5. Finally, social dialogue is a key instrument for mobilising social partners to invest in the right skills through education and lifelong learning. The Commission will invite social partners to develop joint initiatives to promote skills forecasting and upgrading, and to accompany short-term restructuring and will also consult with social partners at the sectoral level.[42]

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7.3 National report from Malta

THE FINAL REPORT ON SKILLS AND COMPETENCES OF YOUTH - Malta

Country: Malta

Institution: UHM

Authors: Hermann Micallef, Gian Paul Gauci

Index

1. Introduction

The surveys conducted are presented in this report with the aim of identifying key elements and contribute to the achievement of the project objectives. The first part of the report puts the survey in the context of relevance of youth unemployment and the reasons why it is important to address this issue. Subsequently the report indicates the methodological elements that have been taken into consideration when drafting, conducting and analysing the questionnaires.

Section 4 is the detailed analysis and description of the results obtained from the surveys conducted with MCAST students, University students and Employers. It provides interesting data and feedback, which is used to draw the conclusion of the work as well as to propose a number of recommendations.

2. Youth competences as a key element on the labour market

Competences are a key element on the labour market. The more the youth has developed competencies that are seen as ideal for the employers, the more the youth is susceptible to attaining an employment.(Teijeiro, Rungo, & Freire, 2013) It is apparent that employers search more for transversal competencies (general competencies) than professional ones that are directly related to the job itself. (Deaconu, Osoian, Zaharie, & Achim, 2014)

A number of studies underlined the fact that the educational system is failing in teaching these competencies but rather is more focused on teaching the academic subjects.

In the Bucharest study, the employers searched for accountability in completing tasks as most important and efficiently planning an activity or organization second. (Deaconu, Osoian, Zaharie, & Achim, 2014)

In conclusion, it is very apparent that employers seek general competencies when interviewing prospective employees and this study will try to determine whether these competencies are present on the labour market.

3. Methodology description - the concept and organization of research

3.1. Objectives of the research

The objective of the research was to study whether the competencies of students studying either at a University or a College are the same competencies that the employers search for. For this reason, 3 Research Questionnaires were created.

3.2. Description of the group tested and test methodology

The two questionnaires which tackled the students were done primarily in the quantitative method with only one open ended-question. On the other hand, the employers' questionnaire was done in the qualitative method whereby an interview approach was adopted. The students' questionnaires were divided into University of Malta students and MCAST (Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology.

The University of Malta is the main tertiary educational institution in Malta. It comprises of 14 Faculties, 20 Institutes and 11 Centres. It awards Diplomas (EQF Level 5), Degrees, Masters and Doctorates.

MCAST is the leading VET Institution in Malta. The majority of the courses are done in the dual-education system whereby students work for a number of days with an employer and attend classes on the rest of the days. It comprises of 6 Institutes and awards Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees in EQF levels 1-6.

While the questionnaire did ask which institute and what level of education the students are performing, it did not distinguish in the other questions asked.

The employers' questionnaire was done in an interview format whereby the employers were assured of their anonymity in their answers. A number of questions were performed whereby it ended up into a discussion. The interviewer then wrote down a summary of what was said and the interviewee approved of what was written.

3.3 Date and place of the research

The dates of the research were between March and May 2015. The survey was conducted in different days when UHM staff visited University of Malta and MCAST to conduct interviews with the students.

The employers' questionnaire were performed during the period March - May 2015 and they were performed at the employers' workplace.

Given that the specific characteristics of the target group of this study, it is essential that the interviewer is well trained and prepared to deal with the specific challenges the target group may present whilst conducting the interviews.

In particular the interviewer needs to be provided with the tools to effectively conduct an objective survey.

The experience of the interviewer on the field, i.e. Mr. Gian Paul Gauci has been complemented with briefing with other colleagues at UHM with relevant knowledge and experience in similar activities. The common discussion and consolidation of the questionnaire has led to the definition of a final version of the questionnaire whereby all the main points have been shared and addressed.

Interviews were carried out over a 3 months period, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). All interviews were conducted strictly with the individual concerned.

The interviewer has visited MCAST and University of Malta premises in this period proposing students met over there to take part in this activity.

The interviewer has visited employers at their premises.

4. Analysis of the results

In this phase all the data collected from the face-to-face interviews has been inputted in a database and analysed statistically. Data may be analysed in multiple ways, each of which may yield legitimate answers. The tests to be used was chosen to reflect the number and nature of dependent variables, and the nature of independent variables.

Data are analysed on three different levels:

Level 1 Analysis - After all the data has been entered into the excel and relevant information used

Level 2 Analysis - This form of analysis is used to identify categorical differences between variables

Level 3 Analysis - This form of data analysis is used to analyse the responses to the open-ended questions. This analysis involves bringing meaning to the responses through the identification of themes or patterns (e.g. ideas, concepts, behaviours, interactions, terminology, phrases used) and the organisation of the themes into coherent categories that summarise and bring meaning to the text.

All of these levels of analysis are required to make sense of patterns within the data and to draw valid conclusions on which further decisions and actions may be based.

4.1. Interviews with students and pupils

The total number of students who accepted to be interviewed was 66, out of which 23 MCAST students and 43 University students.

Their age group is as follows:

Age Bracket	Number of interviewees	%
17 yrs -19 yrs	16	23.53
20 yrs -22 yrs	32	47.06
23 yrs - 25 yrs	12	17.65
over 25 yrs	8	11.76
Total	68	

Number of interviewees
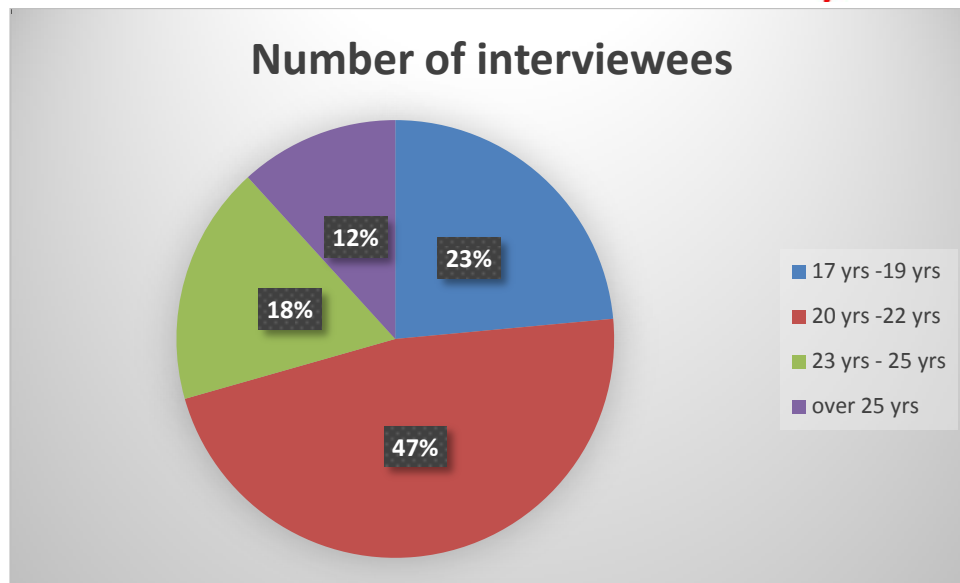
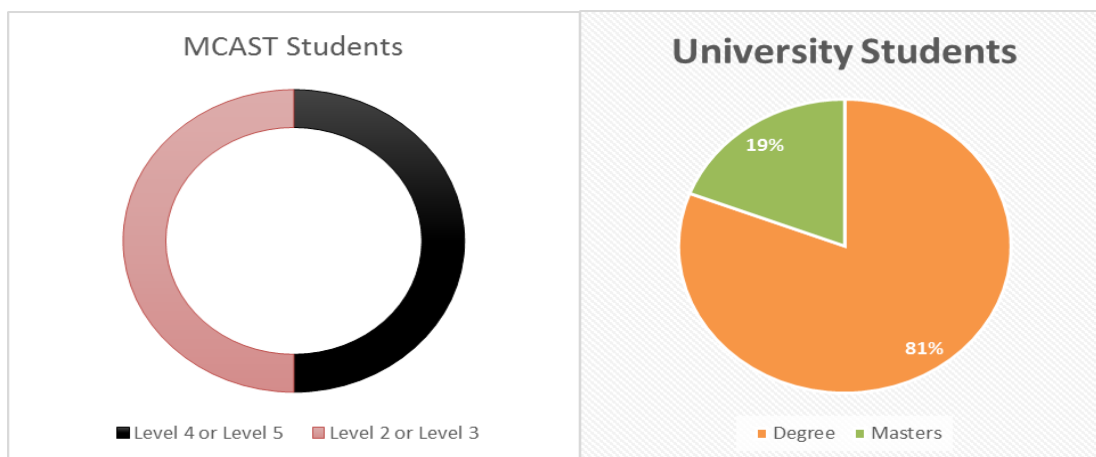In terms of level of Education, amongst the University students interviewed, 76% have a Degree (level 6) and 18% have a Master (Level 7). Amongst the MCAST students instead 50 % have a level 4 or 5 while 50% a level 2 or 3.

University students come from the following faculties

- Built Environment
- Arts
- Science and Health Science
- Medicine
- ICT
- Social Wellbeing
- Media and knowledge science
- FEMA (Economy and Accountancy)
- Tourism Studies
- Engineering

MCAST Students come from the following institutes:

- Agri Business
- Applied Science

- Art and Design
- Building and Construction Engineering
- Business and Commerce
- Community Services
- Electrical and Electronics Engineering
- ICT
- Mechanical Engineering
- Maritime Institute
- Gozo Centre

The 41% of the University students and the 52% of the MCAST students have a part time employment contract. In addition 9% of University students and 17% of MCAST ones are in apprenticeship schemes.

Nearly all interviewees (90%) believe that are employable and a number of them have been promised a contract of employment at the end of their studies (14% University and 17% MCAST)

Most of the interviewees feel part of the society (83%) while the 17% considers themselves as excluded.

They nearly all have a CV (except one person) and 70% of the interviewees have it on EU format.
While in the past, nearly 95% attended a job interview the 90% of them declared that they succeeded.

In terms of basic competences such as numeracy and literacy 95% of the interviewees are able to write a letter, 82% to write a long essay while 95% have basic numeracy skills.
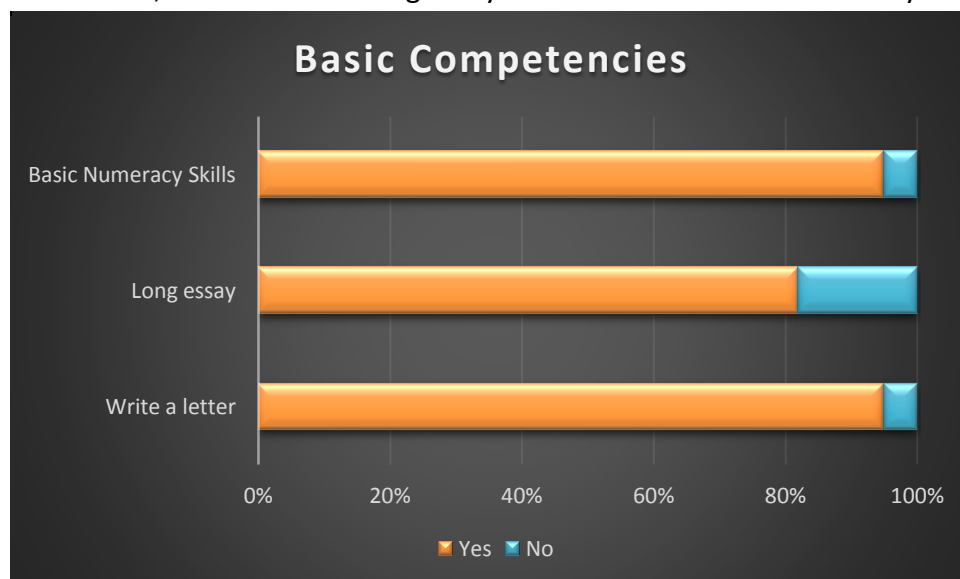
With reference to ICT related competences, 68% considers themselves average computing competent, 25% Tech Savvy and circa 6% are Experts.

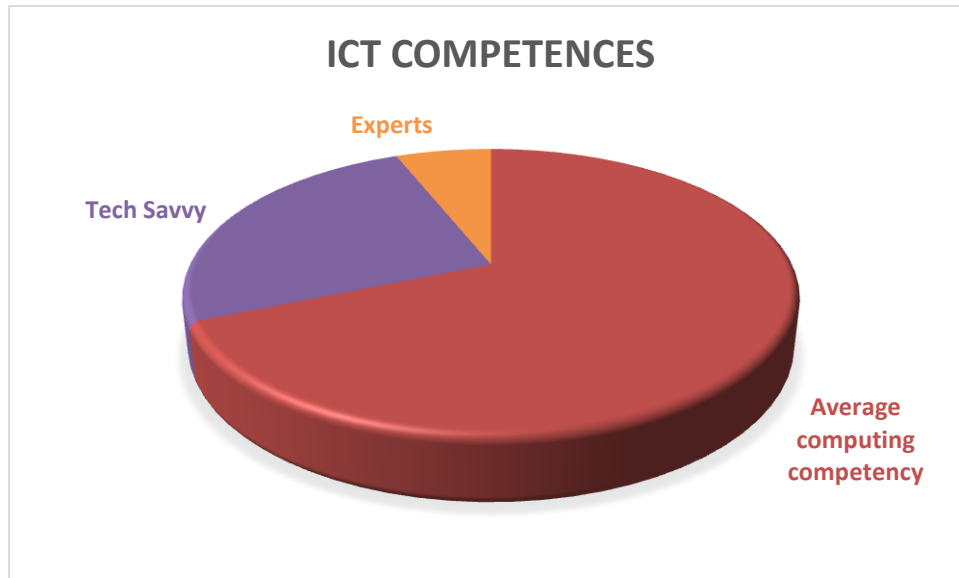Communication skills are quite well developed within the respondents to the survey, as the vast majority is able to write a short and long essay, they possess the basic numeracy skills and they are able to deliver a presentation with confidence. As far as organisational skills are concerned, over the 50% of respondents keep an updated agenda and timetable.

With reference to question number 26, students had to provide an opinion on a number of statements aimed at assessing their main personal skills.

Most of the interviewees are determined to achieve their objectives in spite of the difficulties; nearly all of them are self confident, problem solvers and team-workers.
On the other hand, the majority of respondents do not like doing their exams and do not like to start conversation with strangers.

In terms of expectations from the employers in a candidate the interviewees have provided different replies which can be categorized as follows:

- Professional competences
- Experience and professionalism have been identified as key factors that employers seek in candidates for a job.
- Competences related to the working environment
- Communication skills have been identified by a number of students as a key factor both during the interview and during the actual work.
- Teamwork and the ability to coordinate with other colleagues are also considered crucial aspects that successful candidates must show.

- Finally, students remarked how the commitment to the job and a "hard working" attitude are elements that employers appreciate in a candidate.

With reference to their individual attitude, many interviewees have identified the confidence in carrying out the job can be a key aspect that the employers appreciate.

Another aspect that has been remarked by a number of students was that of being polite and have appropriate manners and behaviour when working.
The candidate is expected to be trusted by the employer and by the colleagues, hence this element has also been considered important for employers when selecting candidates for a job.

4.2 Interview with Employers

During the same period, UHM has conducted interviews with 20 different employers that have led to the following results.

The employers were all classified as SMEs, out of which 10 were micro enterprises as defined by the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC.

The most interesting information emerged is that all the employers, irrespective of their size and area of business, check the information available on the person on social media and this has a weight in the selection process. The "weight" referred to is not formalised, but the way the person is presented in the social media has definitely an impact on the selection process. This means that:

- The selection process is not limited to the interview, but employers tend to investigate more about potential candidates
- Social media can represent a critical point for jobseekers as they might give wrong impressions of the person and compromise the selection process

All the respondents indicated that they have a combination of full-time and part-time employment, in particular the operators of the services sector have a predominance of part-time workers possibly due to the higher volatility of the market.

The majority of the respondents (60%) require a tertiary level education, the 30% secondary level and the 10% lower levels of education.

All the employers require a CV for the selection of candidates, while only 25% require also a presentation letter.

All the employers indicated that the CV/Letter of presentation shall provide clear and concise information on experience and qualifications of the candidate.

While some of the employers indicated that there are no standard questions being posed in all interviews, others remarked that inevitably a first batch of questions related to past experiences and qualifications are asked to all candidates, even though in different forms.

Past experience has been identified by all the employers as the most important aspect that is evaluated in a CV. All the employers stressed that although not a requirement for the selection of candidates, the fact that a person is active in the voluntary sector brings a positive added value. The 10% of the employers interviewed also indicated that the involvement in any non-profit organisation is a key factor that they check in the CV.

Moreover, 65% of the employers remarked that communication skills and IT literacy are very important when selecting a candidate, while the 35% of the employers added that organisational skills and writing skills are strongly taken into account when assessing candidates.

In questions 9 to 11, employers have been asked to provide an opinion on a number of issues

The 25% strongly agreed and the 35% agreed that social awareness makes a difference when selecting employees

All the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the attitude of workers towards the job makes a difference when selecting them and/or promoting them

The 50% of employers would severely punish the use of inappropriate or vulgar language makes a different when selecting or promoting workers, in addition 30% of the employers commented that that would be a reason for immediate termination of the employment.

Finally, 75% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the fact that a candidate is nervous during the interview makes a difference in the selection process.

In question 12, the interviewees were asked to rank statements based on their importance.

The 35% of the employers identified Problem solvers, Knowledgeable, Persistent and Team Workers as key element and were all ranked 1= very important.
The 75% of the employers identified the Trustworthy as very important
The 25% of the employers indicated that it is very important to employ people who seem successful and ambitions.
The 50% of the employers indicated that IT literacy is very important.
Finally 10% of the employers indicated that being a quiet person is very important.
The options chatty person and Yes-no man/woman were not given any mark 1 or 2 meaning that they are not considered important by the employers.

5. Conclusions

The most interesting aspect of the survey conducted with MCAST and University students is the confidence that they expressed towards their employability prospects.

The majority of the interviewees believes that they can find a suitable job connected to their educational path. This aspect is quite unusual in the Regional Mediterranean context where neighbouring countries have higher unemployment rates, particularly in relation to youth.

The confidence is generated by a number of factors:

Economic bonanza. Malta is experiencing a period of strong and steady growth with increasing investments both from the public and the private sector. The different sectors of the economy, particularly Tourism, ICT and Services are demanding more and more skilled workers and offer adequate working conditions and wages.

Students already working. Nearly 50% of University students and over 50% of MCAST students have been working part time or through apprenticeships during their course of studies and have therefore developed familiarity with the labour market. They all have a CV (apart from one person) and most of them are based on the EUROPASS format. Another indicator that confirms the positive attitude of the interviewees towards the labour market is that they nearly all sat for a job interview and most of them were successful at least once.

Use of EU funds. The Government has rolled out a number of initiatives in the last 2 years aimed at bridging education and employment through schemes providing incentives to employers to employ youths in a learning-by-doing framework. Traineeships and Apprenticeships have become quite popular and have often translated into stable contracts of employment at the end of the testing period.

The students have a strong ICT. Nearly 95% of the interviewees are either average computer users or Tech Savvy.

Although the overall result of the survey is quite positive, this has to be red in the context of the Maltese socio-economic scenario whereby in terms of youths and employment the main issue is not related to those that have achieved a level of education but to those who exit the educational path prematurely.

Malta, although performing quite well in the general unemployment rate, has a worrying 12% youth unemployment, that is particularly concentrated amongst those youths who left school and did not achieve any qualifications. Those who are Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEETs) are very often people who left school due to different factors and are now at risk of social exclusion and long term dependency.

6. Recommendations

On the basis of the survey and on the analysis of the results, the following recommendations are proposed to the attention of the project partners as well as to the stakeholders with an interest in the project:

The CVs of jobseekers should be clear and redacted in the EU format. The past experiences and the qualification need to be prominent and shall be directly identifiable. The personal skills with more relevance for the employers, which should be described in a CV are organisational skills and communication skills.

Jobseekers shall use social media carefully as it might have negative repercussions in the whole selection process, considering that the information posted there would be available to the general public including potential employers.

Voluntary work means not only having a social conscience but volunteers develop specific skills and abilities that are relevant for the labour market. It is important to lobby to give a more standardised weight to voluntary work. At the moment this only "looks good" in the eyes of the employers but there is no specific value or mark given in the selection process. On the contrary, voluntary work, apart from having a personal emotional value, contributes to strengthen specific skills that are relevant to other jobs. This information should be clearly incorporated in the CVs as part of the experience of a person with related skills and competences developed.

Employers consider Education and IT skills are being considered minimum requirements to compete for many positions.

In addition, they consider that horizontal skills like team working, persistency and attitude towards problem-solving are crucial for employment.

Finally, in terms of specific competences related to the job, employers expect that candidates would have an appropriate technical basis certified by appropriate qualifications.

7.4 National report from Italy

THE FINAL REPORT ON SKILLS AND COMPETENCES OF YOUTH - Italy

Content

1. INTRODUCTION

This research is part of a Strategic Partnership involving Poland, Slovakia, Malta and Italy. This Strategic partnership aims to diagnose the problem of employability of young people and to reply to it effectively through cooperation, experience and information exchange, development of didactic materials (lesson and workshops scenarios for youth organizations, schools and universities), development of the audiovisual didactic materials.

This research is just the base of the workshops' scenario we will prepare and test with young people.

2. YOUTH COMPETENCES AS A KEY ELEMENT ON THE LABOUR MARKET

In the introduction to its "flagship initiative" the European Commission concisely formulate the main challenges and policy suggestions in the following way:
"Bridging the gap to the target will be no easy task. The crisis has bought the employment rate down to 69% and the unemployment rate up to 10%; [...]. A skilled workforce is an essential asset to develop a competitive, sustainable and innovative economy in line with Europe 2020 goals. In times of budgetary constraints and unprecedented global competitive pressures, EU employment and skills policies that help shape the transition to a green, smart and innovative economy must be a matter of priority". [43]

First of all we have to reflect what are the "skills": a skill is the learned ability to carry out a task with pre-determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both. In other words the abilities that one possesses. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. For example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership, self-motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job. It means that we have different skills how many field we can recognize: Life skills, social skills, hard skills, soft skills but they blur and mix between them and we have to take care about this flexibility of definition.

We decided to concentrate on this last one, the "soft skills" as the key to help the transition and develop a competitive Europe.
Is hard to define what "soft skills" are and «the perception of what is a soft skill differs from context to context. A subject may be considered a soft skill in one particular area, and may be considered a hard skill in another. On top of it the understanding of what should be recognized as a soft skill varies widely. Knowledge in project management for instance is "nice to have" for an electrical engineer, but it is a "must to have" for a civil engineer. Training intercultural awareness might be useful for a chemist, but it is an absolute necessity for public or human resources management in societies of diverse cultures» (Bernd Schulz, 2008[44])
Wikipedia help us with the following definition: «Soft skills is a term often associated with a person's "EIQ" (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, interpersonal skills, managing people, leadership, etc. that characterize relationships with other people. Soft skills contrast to hard

skills, which are generally easily quantifiable and measurable (e.g. software knowledge, basic plumbing skills)» (Wikipedia, 2015)[45].

Softs skills are hard linked with the relational behavior of people and are important because, usually, working life include other people. How to imagine to work alone? The new phenomenon of "impact hub" or co-working tell us how is important to connect with others daily in order to be more productive. But relations at work aren't so easy as it seams and it need to have the right means to multiply their positive effect and limit the risk and the obstacles that should occur.

As we told before, there are different definitions of soft skills and we have to make a choice about which one we would like to take in consideration for our research.

We merged three area of the big five personality traits, the emotional intelligence concept and main skills in it, the stress coping skills, the communication skills and some cognitive skills (quality orientation, planning and organizing and problem solving) because we considered it as the most important softs skills that transversally could be used in different working places.

In details, the ones on we will concentrate are the following:

- *Emotional intelligence*
  EMPATHY: Ability in recognize others' emotions;
  EMOTIONAL STABILITY: Competence in recognize and manage your emotion and control of impulses;
  ENERGIE AND MOTIVATION: The skill of motivate yourself and the others in activities, saving high level of energies.

- *Extroversion*
  ABILITY IN RELATION: This competence allow you to establish strong and positive interpersonal relations.
  FRIENDSHIP: Competence in cooperate and be friendly in a working group/team;

- *Conscientiousness*
  PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY: ability to take responsibility and decision;
  INTEGRITY: attitude in be reliable, loyal and honest;

- *Cognitive skills*
  QUALITY ORIENTATION: is the attitude in details care and working to have a high level products/results;
  PLANNING AND ORGANIZING: ability in organizing in an effective way yours and others work and include an attitude in planning;

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[45] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_skills

PROBLEM SOLVING/LOGICAL-ANALITIC ABILITIES: competence that help you in solving problem in a systematic and rational way;

- *Openness to experiences*
  OPEN MINDING: Competence in been open minded about other cultures;
  CREATIVITY: Competence of creative and innovative way of thinking;
  CHANGE MANAGEMENT: be flexible in external dynamics, to look at changes in a curious and active way;

- *Stress coping skills*
  STRESS MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE: is the competence in manage in an effective way the stressor, cope and tolerate the really strong stress situation;
  CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: the skill to cope problems in relations and solve it; to answer, to explain and be aware of the consequences of your own personal behavior;

- *Communication skills*
  ASSERTIVITY: ability in communicate in an effective way and convince the others;
  COMMUNICATION: transmit and receive information, be understood, comprehension of the messages and answer.

3. METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION

We created an ad hoc questionnaire (Annex I) basing the items on the theoretical part described above. We decided to administrate the same questionnaire to pupils and university students, in order to allow us in comparing the results. We used the same Likert scale about competences also for employers in the ad-hoc questionnaire made for them (Annex II). We used the statistical program SPSS, using frequencies, median, multiple response calculations and transforming it in percentage in order to make them understandable for all.

4. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS RESEARCH

4.1 STATISTICAL EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION

We administrated 61 questionnaires to "A. Lincon" high school's students in Enna.

The example is mainly female (73,77%) and the 22,95 % is male. The 3,28% preferred to don't declare the gender (Fig. 1).

The 54,1 % is coming from Enna. A little minority (8,2%) come from Villarosa and Catenanuova, the others come from the neighboring villages of Enna province (Tab.1). The 96,7% of our example is between 16 and 18 years old, only the 3,3% is between 19 and 21 years old.
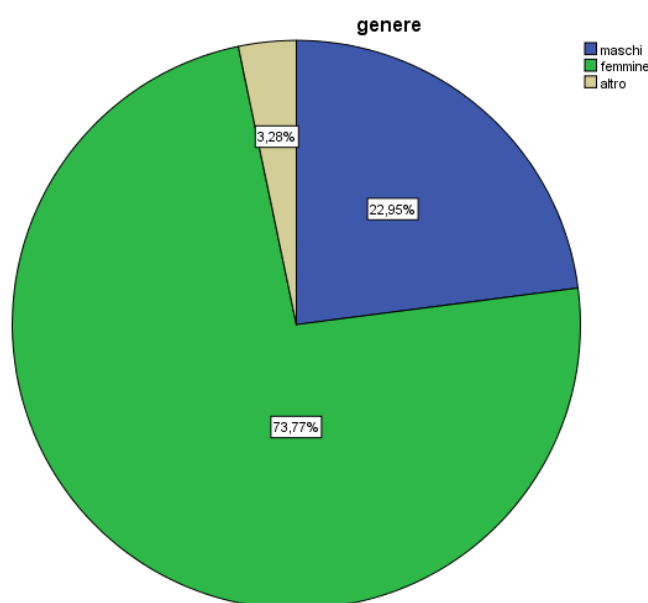
Figura 1

Tab 1

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	16-18years	59	96,7	96,7	96,7
	19-21years	2	3,3	3,3	100,0
	Total	61	100,0	100,0	

Tab 2

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Valid	Alimena	1	1,6	1,6
	Assoro	2	3,3	3,3
	Barrafranca	2	3,3	3,3
	Calascibetta	3	4,9	4,9
	Catenanuova	5	8,2	8,2
	Enna	33	54,1	54,1
	Leonforte	3	4,9	4,9
	Raddusa	2	3,3	3,3
	Valguarnera	4	6,6	6,6
	Villapriolo	1	1,6	1,6
	Villarosa	5	8,2	8,2
	Totale	61	100,0	100,0

The main part of our example was abroad (73,77%) (Fig. 2) and these experiences are predominantly liked to school activites (49,2%) and tourism (36,9%) (Tab.3).

sei mai stato all'estero?
- no
- si

26,23%

73,77%
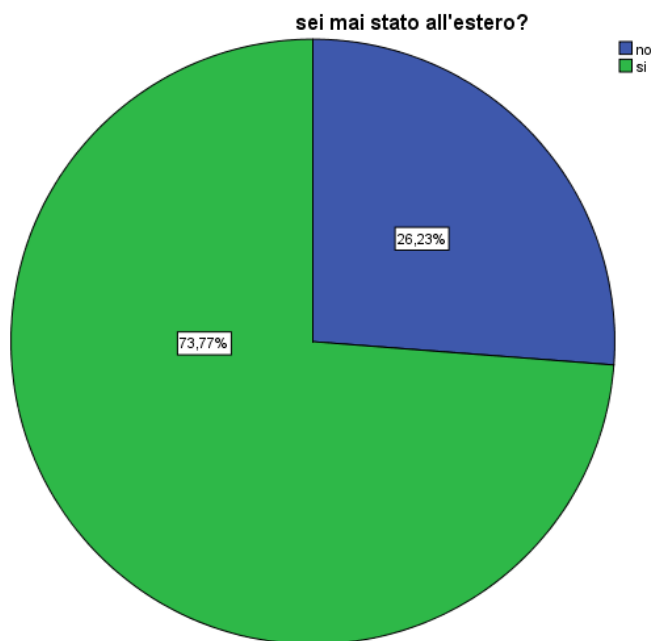
Fig 2

Tab. 3

		Answers		Case percentage
		N	Percentage	
I was abroad because of [a]	turism	24	36,9%	54,5%
	School activites	32	49,2%	72,7%
	European programmes	2	3,1%	4,5%
	other	7	10,8%	15,9%
Total		65	100,0%	147,7%

a. Dichotomy group in tabs at value 1.

Is doubtless that the places where people acquires competences are the formal, non-formal and informal one. Life domains that could foster the personal development and youth competences are various; cause of that, in order to complete the frame we decided to take in account also some working experiences or some hobbies (in particular play an instrument) and the participation in youth/volunteers organizations. The 90,2 % of the example is not belonging to a youth organization or a volunteering association (Fig.3) and they declare to not be involved because they have not time to do it (78,7%) (Fig. 4). A huge part of our example (60,7 %) never have had a working experience (tab.4). The main part of our example don't play an instrument (68, 9%, see tab. 5).
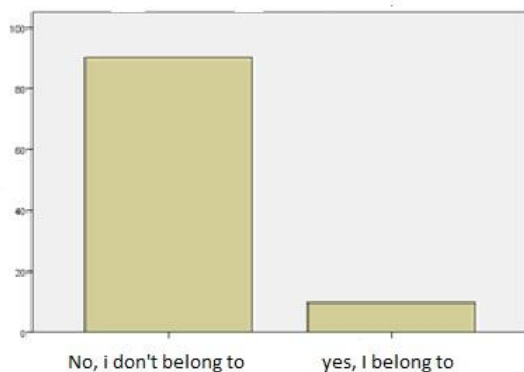
Fig 3
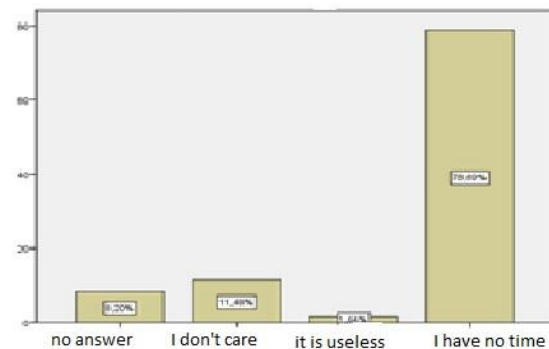
Fig 4

Tab 4

Work		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	no	37	60,7	60,7	60,7
	yes	24	39,3	39,3	100,0
	Total	61	100,0	100,0	

Table 5

Instrument		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	no	42	68,9	68,9	68,9
	yes	19	31,1	31,1	100,0
	Total	61	100,0	100,0	

4.2 SELF-EVALUATION OF SKILLS

After a general descriptive frame of the example, we could go forward straight to the self-evaluation of the skills and competences that pupils think to have.

We asked to pupils to indicate with a cross the degree of competence they assess to have on a list of skills, on a scale from 1 (absent) to 5 (excellent). The example thinks to have a good or excellent level of the competences proposed and a pick of excellence on the *integrity* and *open mind.*

In our example opinion, the lower competence (considered fairly good) is the *stress management* (Tab.6).

Table 6

	Communication	Personal responsibility	Conflict management	Energy and motivation	stress management	Relation management	Change management	integrity	creativity	problem solving	Assertivity	Planning and organizing	Quality orientation	friendship	Emotional stability	open mind.	Empathy
N	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61	61
Deviation std.	,730	,778	,923	1,018	1,176	,843	,940	,694	1,071	,878	,900	1,083	,976	,963	1,105	,915	,874
Median	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	**3,00**	4,00	4,00	5,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	5,00	4,00

Is interesting that the 36% of the answer to the question "where you thing to have acquired the competences you declared?" concerning the school, the main place where pupils think to learn more competences, followed by family (31,5%) and friends (25,2%) (Tab.7).

Tab 7

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
where[a]	school	40	36,0%	65,6%
	Association	6	5,4%	9,8%
	Work	2	1,8%	3,3%
	Family	35	31,5%	57,4%
	Friends	28	25,2%	45,9%
Total		111	100,0%	182,0%

Data are coherent with the percentage of young people who belong to a youth organization and for that these one aren't relevant in the process of competences acquisition.

Finally, the 72 % of our example think could be useful to attend a course in order to develop the competences nominated (Tab. 8- Fig. 5).

Table 8

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	17	27,9	27,9	27,9
	yes	44	72,1	72,1	100,0
	Total	61	100,0	100,0	
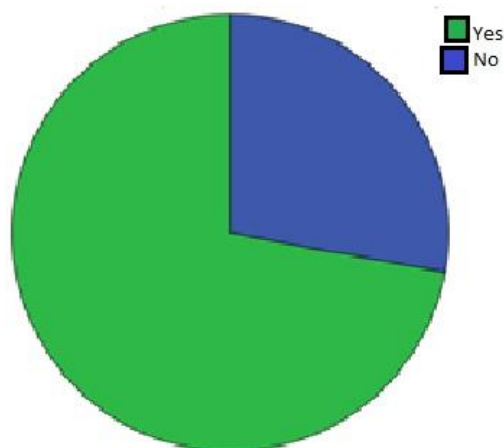
Figura 5

4.3 HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS DATA INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

In view of the described data, is necessary to take in account that the main part of the example is composed by young woman belonging to a particular age range: adolescence. Adolescent often declare to be stressed and they declare to have anxiety. In particular Sicilian woman, suffer from the cultural heritage the idea that the woman have to be really engaged in studies and to be responsible. Above all at the linguistic high school the open mind attitude is a must and they fill to excel in it, comparing to other school.

About learning environment, we thing is significative that young people don't belong to youth or volunteering organization because they have no time to do that. This sentence open to 3 different hypothesis: they believe that to participate means to waste time, they give more priority to school or near school activities, or they have to much activities to do.

Finally we find really important the interest showed to the proposal of a course about the development of these competences..

5. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS STATISTIC EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION

5.1 STATISTICAL EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION

We administrated 60 questionnaires to students of Kore University of Enna; 55 were valid.

The example is mainly female (67,27%) the 32,73% is male (Fig. 1).

The 40% of our example is at the beginning of university career and is between 19 and 21 years old; the 34,55% is in the range of 22-24 years and the 21,8% is between 25 and 27 years. Only the 3,64% is older than 28 years.

The 29% of our example comes from Enna while the 20% is from Catania, the others come from the villages in the province of Enna and from all over Sicily (around 1,8% for each village) (Fig.3).

Fig 6

Legend: 19-21, 22-24, 25-27, 28-31

40,00%
34,55%
21,82%
3,64%
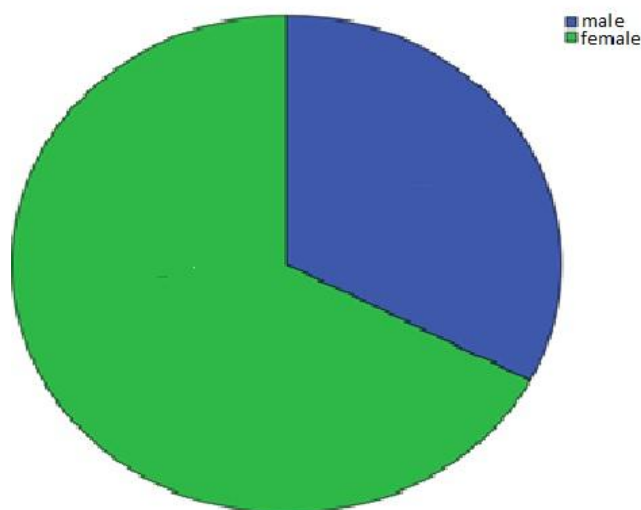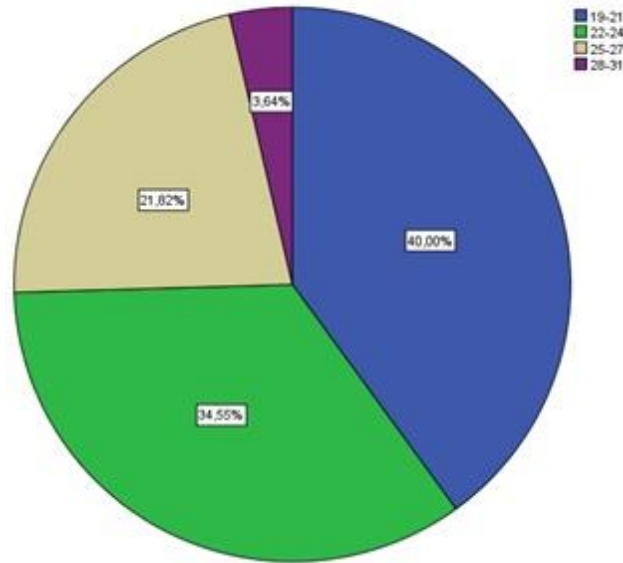
Fig 7
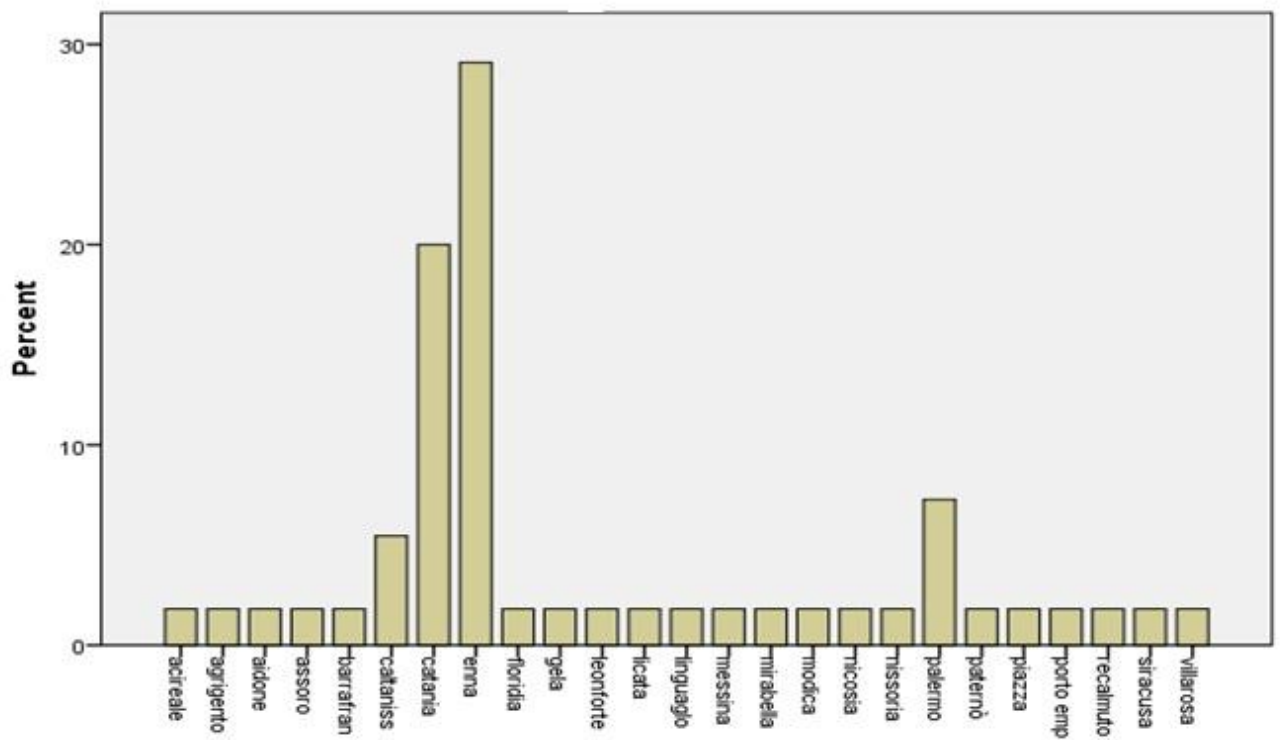
Fig 8

The main part of our example was aboard (85,45%) (Fig. 4) and these experience were touristic (57,4%) while the 32,8% traveled abroad tanks to school activities (Tab.1).

Fig 9

No
Yes

14,55%

85,45%
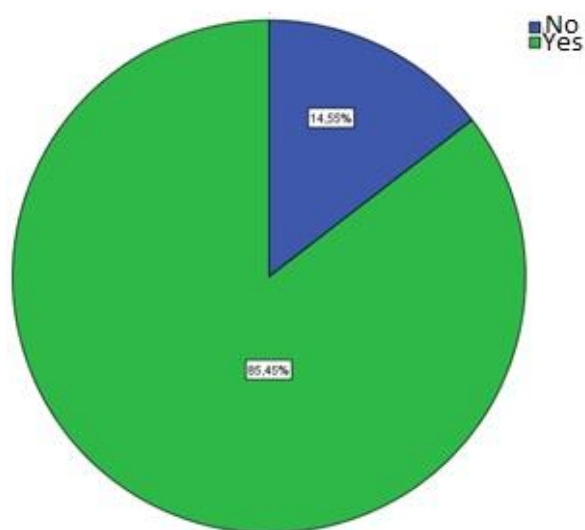
Tab 1

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
I was abroad[a]	Turism	35	57,4%	76,1%
	School activities	20	32,8%	43,5%
	European programmes	5	8,2%	10,9%
	Other	1	1,6%	2,2%
Total		61	100,0%	132,6%

Is evident that the places where people acquires competences are the formal, non-formal and informal one. Life domains that could foster the personal development and youth competences are various; cause of that, in order to complete the frame, we decided to take in account also some working experiences or some hobbies (in particular play an instrument) and the participation in youth/volunteers organizations. The 74,55 % doesn't belong to a youth/volunteers organization (Fig.5) and the reason is because they "have no time" to do it (60%); moreover the 27, 3% didn't answer to the question (Fig. 6). The half of our example

(50,9 %) have done already a work experience (tab.2). The main part of our example doesn't play and instrument. (81,8%, see tab.3).
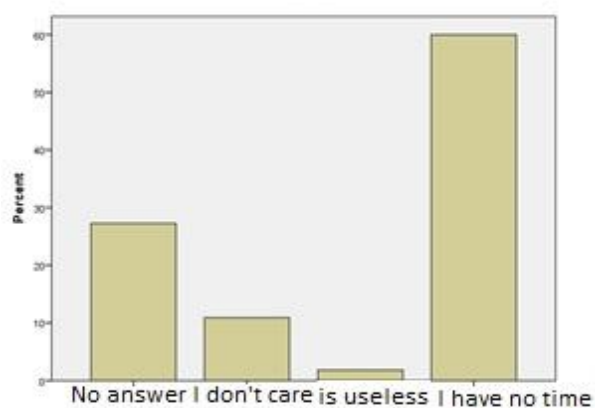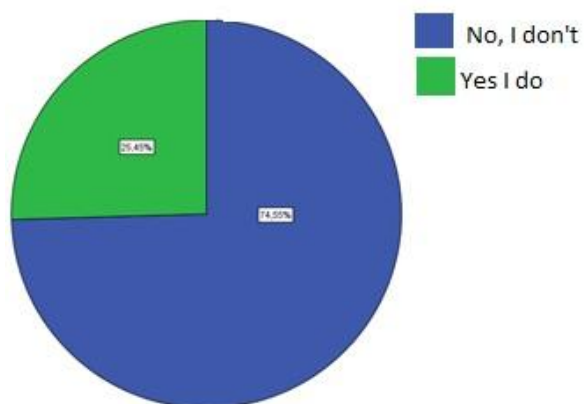
Fig 10   **Fig 11**

Tab 2

Work		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	27	49,1	49,1	49,1
	yes	28	50,9	50,9	100,0
	Total	55	100,0	100,0	

Table 3

Instrument		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	45	81,8	81,8	81,8
	yes	9	16,4	16,4	98,2
	Not right	1	1,8	1,8	100,0
	Total	55	100,0	100,0	

5.2 SELF-EVALUATION OF COMPETENCES

After a general descriptive frame of the example, we could go forward straight to the self-evaluation of the skills and competences that pupils think to have.

We asked to pupils to indicate with a cross the degree of competence they assess to have on a list of skills, on a scale from 1 (absent) to 5 (excellent). The example thinks to have a good or excellent level of the competences proposed and a pick of excellence on the *integrity* and *open mind.*

In our example opinion, the lower competences (considered fairly good) are 3: the *stress management, creativity and emotion stability* (Tab.6).

Tab 4

	Communication	Personal responsibility	Conflict management	Energy and motivation	stress management	Relation management	Change management	integrity	creativity	problem solving	Assertivity	Planning and organizing	Quality orientation	friendship	Emotional stability	open mind.	Empathy
N	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55
Missed	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Mediana	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	3,00	4,00	4,00	5,00	3,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	3,00	5,00	4,00
Deviazione std.	,813	,902	,916	,821	,896	,967	,972	,813	1,229	1,047	1,027	1,029	1,058	,924	7,035	,979	,989

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It is interesting that the places where people think to have acquired their competence is family (30,4 %) while put on the same level friends and university (19,6% both of them) (Tab.5).

Tab 5

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Where did you learned it[a]	School	16	15,7%	30,2%
	University	20	19,6%	37,7%
	Associations	8	7,8%	15,1%
	Work	7	6,9%	13,2%
	Family	31	30,4%	58,5%
	Friends	20	19,6%	37,7%
Total		102	100,0%	192,5%

Data are coherent with the percentage of young people who participate in youth/volunteers organizations and so, this places are not relevant for the acquisition of competences.

Finally, the 63,6% of our example think that could be useful to attend a course in order to develop the competence evaluated above. (Tab. 6).

Tab 6

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	20	36,4	36,4	36,4
	yes	35	63,6	63,6	100,0
	Total	55	100,0	100,0	

5.3 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DATAS INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Comparing data results about University students with the one from schools, we can underline the correspondence between the evaluation of competences. For both of them the stress management is something hard to handle and integrity and open mind are the skills more developed. In University students there are also the emotion stability and creativity that are not so developed. It could happen because they have a little of experience more than pupils in recognize and evaluate these competences.

Is interesting that the half of the example have had already work experiences and the don't influence a lot the competences owned.

About learning environment, is really important that university students as pupils don't belonging to youth organizations because they don't have time. This statement could bring us in considering ita as a defense from the no idea about the real reason behind this choice, also taking in account that a little percentage of the example have not answered to the question.

Finally, is really important that the example welcome the opportunity of a course to foster and develop these soft skills focused trough this research.

6. THE EMPLOYERS RESEARCH

6.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

We administrated 40 interviews to employers on the structure of the questionnaire attached (annex II). The valid interviews were 38. The main part of the sample was composed by employers belonging to small enterprises (82,5%) and between 3 and 5 years of experience (27,5%). (Tab.1 and Fig.1)

Tab 1

Number of workers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Small enterprise	33	82,5	86,8	86,8
	Medium enterprise	4	10,0	10,5	97,4
	Big enterprise	1	2,5	2,6	100,0
	Total	38	95,0	100,0	
Missing	System	2	5,0		
Total		40	100,0		
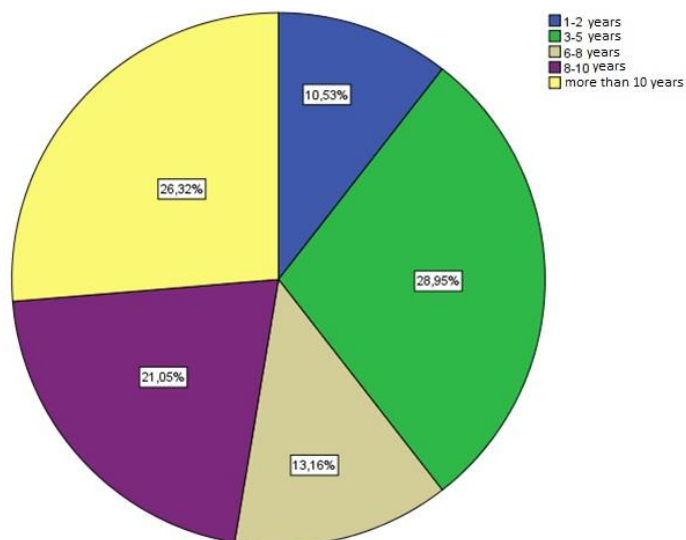
Fig. 1

The sample belonging mostly to sectors not include in the list (55,3%) followed by the services market sector (31,6 %) (Tab2 and Fig.2)

Tab. 2

Market sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	industry	1	2,5	2,6	2,6
	agricolture and food industry	2	5,0	5,3	7,9
	services	12	30,0	31,6	39,5
	ITC	1	2,5	2,6	42,1
	Advertisement and marketing	1	2,5	2,6	44,7
	others	21	52,5	55,3	100,0
	Total	38	95,0	100,0	
Missing	System	2	5,0		
Total		40	100,0		

Figure 12

We added also some questions about how this sample of employers do the evaluation of the candidacy.

Fig. 3

As you can see from the bar chart, the 31,5% consider the cv content really important (it means both working and study career) but they take in account for the 21,05% the preview

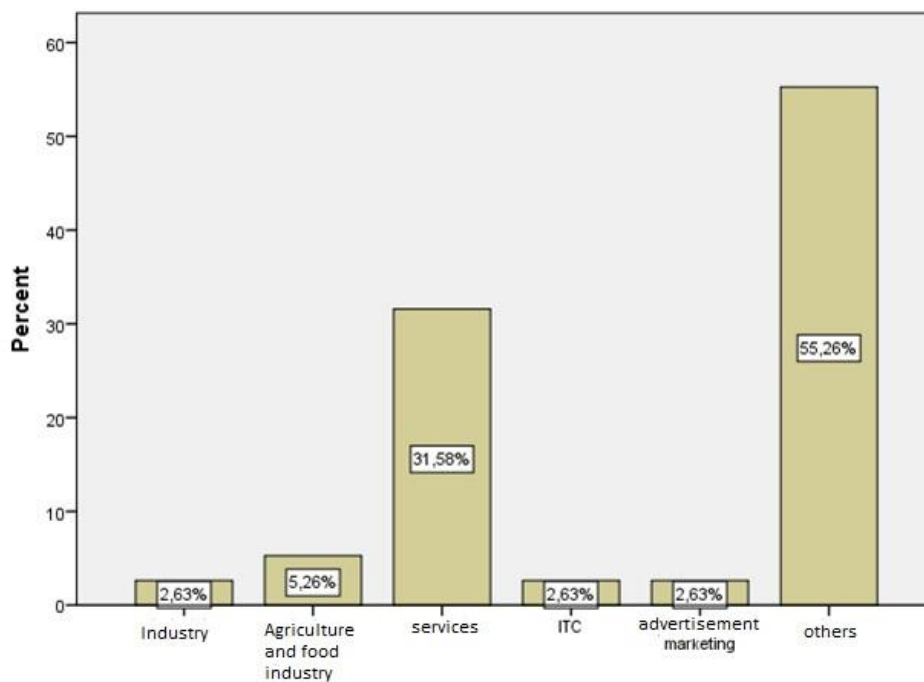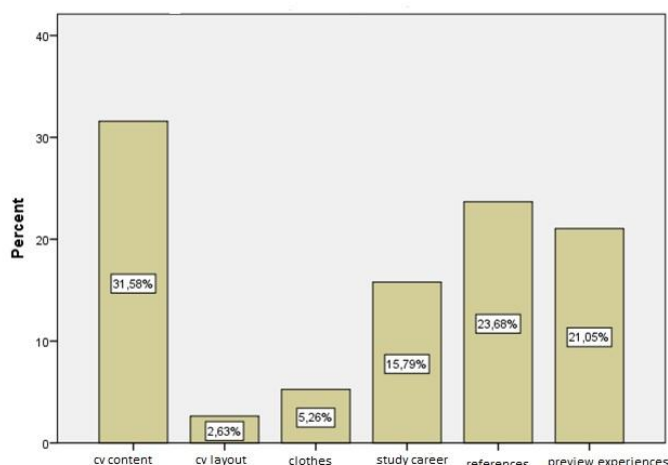working experiences and less study experiences (15,79%). It is really interesting that they give importance also to the references (23,68%) (fig.3)

Finally, our sample is composed by people that mostly promote training activities, in particular trainings with interprofessional founds (34,2%).

Tab.3

How you help your employers in developing employees' competences? Which kind of activities you promote?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I do nothing	14	35,0	36,8	36,8
	I support courses with interprofessional founds for enterprises	13	32,5	34,2	71,1
	I promote tutoring activities	8	20,0	21,1	92,1
	others	3	7,5	7,9	100,0
	Total	38	95,0	100,0	
Missing	System	2	5,0		
Total		40	100,0		

So our sample care about the training experiences balanced with the work experiences and they consider as a value the training on the job to improve competences of their employees (tab.3).

6.2 PEOPLE COMPETENCES EVALUATION

It is really interesting that for our employers sample, their employed have to be nearly "perfect".

All softs skills have to be at the highest level: the median tendency is between 4 and 5, it means between *good* and *excellent*.

So we have to read these data in the opposite way compered the analysis we did for the students and pupils report. Looking to the just "good competences" we see that the change management, creativity, friendship, emotional stability, open mind and empathy are important but less than the others.

It is an important evaluation that will help us in reading the data in their complexity in order to have a clear direction in choosing the most important competences to empower to support young people in their personal path to the labour market.

	Communication	Personal responsibility	Conflict management	Energy and motivation	stress management	Relation management	Change management	Integrity	creativity	problem solving	Assertivity	Planning and organizing	Quality orientation	friendship	Emotional stability	open mind.	Empathy
N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
Deviation std.	,919	,778	,923	1,018	1,176	,843	,940	,694	1,071	,878	,900	1,083	,976	,963	1,105	,915	,874
Median	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	4,00	5,00	4,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	4,00	4,00	4,00	4,00

Tab.4

7. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Compering data collected thanks to this research we can make some general conclusions about the soft skills requested by the labour market and not sufficient in young people of our sample.

The following considerations will guide us in the definition of workshops (output 2) in the frame of the project "young people on the labour market".

For our students samples (highs schools and university students) the weakest competence is the stress management and for our employers is one of the competence that employee have to have at the highest level. It means that this competence have to be improved for sure.

The stress management competence is part of the stress and coping skills factor where we could find also the conflict management. It seems that in our sample young people think to have a good level of this skill. It is true? Considering the factor "stress and coping skills" if you are not able to manage stress probably you will not have enough skills to manage conflicts (that are situation with a high level of stress).

The other factors according to the employers answers have to be improved in any case because they expect to have "perfect" employee.

It is interesting that the factor less important for employers and less strong in the young people sample is the "emotional intelligence" composed by empathy, emotional stability and energy and motivation. Only this last item is considered in the profile of a "perfect employee". This is really interesting because probably there isn't the awareness about how much important is the emotional stability in order to be a good worker.

RESEARCHER PROFILE AND CONTACTS

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ANNEX I

High school's pupils and university students questionnaire

Giosef Enna in the frame of the European project "Young people on the labour market" in partnership with other European organizations, is leading a research about competences needed from young people to rise their employability and to facilitate their entering in the job field. The main goal of the questionnaire we present you is to deep some competences aspects and the characteristic of the learning environment where you learn in general. The data we will collect will be used only for research goals and they will not be revealed to others, respecting the privacy rules.

We kindly ask you to sincerely answer to the questions because everything you declare will not be judged but it will play an important role in the research.

1. **Place   and   Nation   of residence**_____

2. **Age**
   ☐16- 18 years
   ☐19- 21 years
   ☐22-24 years
   ☐25-27 years
   ☐28-31 years

3. **Gender**
   ☐Male
   ☐Female
   ☐ Not declared

4. **What kind of student are you?**
   ☐   High   school   student.   Which   kind   of school?_____
   ☐University   Student.   Which faculty?_____
5. **Are you member o fan association/voluntary organization?**
   ☐Yes. What is working about?_____
   ☐No Why?
         ☐I don't care
         ☐ I think is not useful
         ☐ I have no time

6. Have you ever been abroad? (if no, tickle all reasons you recognize as true)
☐ No
☐ Yes, because....

☐...of tourism
☐....of school activities
☐....of European educational programme
☐other:_____

7. Have you ever had a job experience?
☐ No
☐ Yes, what have you done?_____

8. Do you play an instrument?
☐ No
☐ Yes, which one?_____

9. Now, you will find the description of some competences. About each one, we ask you to evaluate and tickle your degree of competence, based on the scale of values described below. There aren't right or wrong answers.

Not sufficient   sufficient   fairly good   good
excellent

(1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)

COMPETENCE		
COMMUNICATION (transmit and receive information, be understood, comprehension, to mach)	1 2 3 4 5	
PERSONAL RESPONSABILITY (ability to answer, to explain and be aware of the consequences of your personal behaviour)	1 2 3 4 5	
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (the skill to cope problems in relations and solve it)	1 2 3 4 5	
ENERGIE AND MOTIVATION (the skill of motivate yourself and the others in activities, saving high level of energies)	1 2 3 4 5	
STRESS MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE (is the competence in manage in a effective way the stressor and cope and tolerate the really strong stress situation)	1 2 3 4 5	
ABILITY IN RELATION (this competence allow	1 2 3 4 5	

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you to establish strong and positive interpersonal relations)	
CHANGE MANAGEMENT (be flexible in external dynamics, to look at changes in a curious and active way)	1 2 3 4 5
INTEGRITY (attitude in be reliable, loyal and honest)	1 2 3 4 5
CREATIVITY (Competence of creative and innovative way of thinking)	1 2 3 4 5
PROBLEM SOLVING/LOGICAL-ANALITIC ABILITIES (competence that help you in solving problem in a systematic and rational way)	1 2 3 4 5
ASSERTIVITÀ (ability in communicate in an effective way and convince the others)	1 2 3 4 5
PLANNING AND ORGANIZING (ability in organizing in an effective way yours and others work and include an attitude in planning).	1 2 3 4 5
QUALITY ORIENTATION (is the attitude in details care and working to have a high level products/results)	1 2 3 4 5
FRIENDSHIP (competence in cooperate and be friendly in a working group/team)	1 2 3 4 5
EMOTIONAL STABILITY (competence in recognize and manage of your emotion and control of impulses)	1 2 3 4 5
OPEN MINDING (competence in beein open minded about other cultures)	1 2 3 4 5
EMPATHY: Ability in recognize others' emotions.	1 2 3 4 5

10. Where, in your opinion have you gained these competences you declared? (choose maimum 2 answers)

    ☐ At school

    ☐ At University

    ☐ cooperating with associations

☐ working
☐ in my family
☐ with friends

11. Do you think as useful a course to improve/gain these competences?
☐ Yes
☐ No

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION! ☐

ANNEX II

Employers' questionnaire

Instructions

Giosef Enna in the frame of the European project "Young people on the labor market" in partnership with other European organizations, is leading a research about competences needed from young people to rise their employability and to facilitate their entering in the job field. The main goal of the questionnaire we present you is to deep some competences aspects and the characteristic of employee you will like to hire. The data we will collect will be used only for research goals and they will not be revealed to others, respecting the privacy rules.

We kindly ask you to sincerely answer to the questions because everything you declare will not be judged but it will play an important role in the research.

12. Place of your enterprise_____

13. Years of work of your enterprise
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 6-8 years
- ☐ 8-10 years
- ☐ more than 10 years

14. In which sector is your enterprise?
- ☐ Industry
- ☐ Agriculture and alimentary industry
- ☐ Services
- ☐ ITC
- ☐ Advertisement and marketing
- ☐ Public administration
- ☐ other. Which sector?_____

15. Number of employees
- ☐ little enterprise (less than 10 employee)
- ☐ Middle enterprise (between10-100 employee)
- ☐ Big enterprise (more than 100 employee)

16. Now, you will find the description of some competences. About each one, we ask you to evaluate and tickle the degree of competence you will prefer for your employee, based on the scale of values described below. There aren't right or wrong answers.

Not important really important	sufficient	no difference		important enogh
(2)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**

COMMUNICATION (transmit and receive information, be understood, comprehension, to match)	1 2 3 4 5
PERSONAL RESPONSABILITY (ability to answer, to explain and be aware of the consequences of your personal behavior)	1 2 3 4 5
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT (the skill to cope problems in relations and solve it)	1 2 3 4 5
ENERGIE AND MOTIVATION (the skill of motivate yourself and the others in activities, saving high level of energies)	1 2 3 4 5
STRESS MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE (is the competence in manage in an effective way the stressor and cope and tolerate the really strong stress situation)	1 2 3 4 5
ABILITY IN RELATION (this competence allow you to establish strong and positive interpersonal relations)	1 2 3 4 5
CHANGE MANAGEMENT (be flexible in external dynamics, to look at changes in a curious and active way)	1 2 3 4 5
INTEGRITY (attitude in be reliable, loyal and honest)	1 2 3 4 5
CREATIVITY (Competence of creative and innovative way of thinking)	1 2 3 4 5
PROBLEM SOLVING/LOGICAL-ANALITIC ABILITIES (competence that help you in solving problem in a systematic and rational way)	1 2 3 4 5

ASSERTIVITÀ (ability in communicate in an effective way and convince the others)	1 2 3 4 5
PLANNING AND ORGANIZING (ability in organizing in an effective way yours and others work and include an attitude in planning).	1 2 3 4 5
QUALITY ORIENTATION (is the attitude in details care and working to have a high level products/results)	1 2 3 4 5
FRIENDSHIP (competence in cooperate and be friendly in a working group/team)	1 2 3 4 5
EMOTIONAL STABILITY (competence in recognize and manage of your emotion and control of impulses)	1 2 3 4 5
OPEN MINDING (competence in been open minded about other cultures)	1 2 3 4 5
EMPATHY: Ability in recognize others' emotions.	2 2 3 4 5

Which elements are important to evaluate a candidacy?

☐ CV's content

☐ CV layout

☐ how he/she dress

☐ degrees

☐references

☐ previous experiences in the same field

How you help your employers in developing employees' competences?

☐I deliver training courses every years

☐ other_____

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!