

# Youth about Facing Problems in the Transition to Employment

## Mladi o soočanju s težavami pri prehodu v zaposlitev

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### *Abstract*

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*The article deals with the risk of the social exclusion of young people who have experienced permanent unemployment; it pays special attention to experiencing institutional exclusion and public aid from the position of unemployment. The article includes the findings of a quantitative and qualitative research carried out among unemployed young people in the Ljubljana area (Slovenia). The results show how they experience the risk of institutional exclusion within the framework of the employment, the education and the social sector. The conclusions of the article reveal the need for more the efficient planning of program policies concerning the support of young people in the transition to working and employment.*

**Key words:** *young people, unemployment, social exclusion, institutional exclusion, active employment policy.*

### **Povzetek**

*Prispevek se ukvarja s tveganjem socialne izključenosti mladih z izkušnjami trajne brezposelnosti. Posebno pozornost namenja doživljanju institucionalne izključenosti in izkušnjam z javnimi podporami v položaju brezposelnosti. Prikazani so nekateri izsledki kvantitativne in kvalitativne raziskave, ki je bila izvedena na populaciji brezposelnih mladih na območju Ljubljane. Rezultati opozorijo na doživljanje tveganja institucionalne izključenosti v okviru zaposlovalnega, izobraževalnega in socialnega sektorja. Sklepi prispevka navajajo na potrebo po učinkovitejšem načrtovanju programskih politik pri podpori mladim ob prehodu v delo in zaposlitev.*

**Ključne besede:** *mladina, brezposelnost, socialna izključenost, institucionalna izključenost, aktivna politika zaposlovanja.*

## **Introduction**

In modern society employment represents a basic part of everyday life and a key source of financial independence, status, identity and social participation. Unemployment represents a risk of marginalization and social exclusion, especially of the young, who are only entering the world of employment (Rapuš Pavel, 2005). Higher levels of unemployment of young people compared to the levels of unemployment in every other age group are to be expected; however, the European Commission is discovering that the unemployment level of young people in Europe is still higher than the unemployment level of the general population, which represents a serious problem and the possibility of the marginalization and exclusion of young people (Hammer, 2003). Different countries face the unemployment of young people in different ways, according to the specifics of the labour market and their social policy models.

The issue of social in/exclusion and in particular the significance of this issue can be defined not only in terms of such objective states as low income, poverty, unemployment, dependency on social welfare etc.; from the point of view of the people facing social exclusion, this position is also linked with experiencing a lack of social recognition and personal dignity, as well as powerlessness to change one's own situation (cf. Renner, 2003, p. 159).

Young people who try to organize their lives separately from the source family and create their own families, are nowadays often (over)burdened by financial difficulties. Organizing their own lives, what with the insecurity of the labour market and low incomes, is closely connected to their financial situation. Young people normally do not have their own savings, and are for this reason even more exposed to the risk of poverty. Long-term unemployment leads young people to poverty, dependence on welfare and other forms of state-provided aid. The different models of welfare in European countries can to some extent alleviate the material marginalization of young people. They range from the highly-evolved model of social security in Nordic countries (Finland, Denmark and Norway), a model of social security with a more moderate arrangement, divided between institutions and families, as well as combined forms of aid (Scotland), to the models of social security that are based on the family as the primary source of social care (Spain, Italy) (cf. Hammer and Julkunen, 2003, p. 135). By accepting the Programme to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2000, Slovenia is also following the strategic goals set out by the EU (Lisbon 2000), the fulfilment of which should lead to the modernization of the European social model, investment in human capital and the reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

The altered circumstances of the labour market also change the structural context and the patterns of poverty, and experts are discovering that poverty is moving towards younger households. The trend of increasing poverty among young people is prominent in all European countries. Today more than ever, poverty is manifesting itself in various forms. In more advanced societies, even the people that border on satisfying their cultural and information needs are considered to be poor; they cannot satisfy their need for identity, normal inclusion into society and in planning wider social activity. This points to a logical interconnectedness and interdependence between certain forms of poverty and specific lifestyles (Dekleva, Razpotnik, 1999).

## **Some aspects of social exclusion of the young unemployed in the area of Ljubljana**

The research entitled "Social Inclusion and the Psychosocial Health of Young People with Experiences of Unemployment in the Ljubljana Area"<sup>1</sup> looked at both the material and the social deprivation of young people. In the analysis of the social conditions of young people's lives, the concept of deprivation is differentiated from poverty: deprivation is seen as a degree of relative deprivation in view of the local community or the wider society of which the individual is part. Taken into account are both the deprivation of basic necessities (food, clothes, housing conditions) and the deprivation of social activities and conditions that are 'common' in a certain community. Many young people may feel deprived in terms of material or cultural circumstances, but we only speak of poverty when at the same time, access to sources with which they could attain more suitable social conditions is restricted. Deprivation depends on experiencing certain social conditions, while poverty depends on the possibility of accessing various sources (Hammer and Julkunen, 2003, p. 136).

In the above research, material deprivation of unemployed young people was established by the following question: which of the listed activities did each of the 655 poll participants have to give up in the last 12 months because of they could not afford them?

We can see that the smallest percentage had to give up warm meals, while the highest went without frequenting bars and restaurants, going on holiday, buying newspapers and magazines. The medium degree includes maintaining social relationships, pursuing hobbies, attending cultural events and spending their free time. As much as one fifth was subject to the shortage of the most basic essentials such as food, and more than two thirds had to forego cultural goods.

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<sup>1</sup> The article presents the results from the research project entitled Social in/exclusion and psychosocial health of young people with experiences of unemployment conducted in 2003-2004, Dekleva and Rapuš Pavel (2004). The project was financially backed by the City Council of Ljubljana.

*Table 1: The percentages of poll participants that had to give up a certain commodity because of a shortage of money.*

Goods or activities that had to be given up:	%
Warm meals	19
Paying the rent and other bills on time	31
Essential clothes for yourself and your family	38
Inviting friends to your home	44
Visiting relatives or friends in other towns	50
Hobbies and recreation	53
Buying gifts for friends and family members	54
Spending holidays outside the town of residence	67
Buying magazines, newspapers	68
Buying cinema, theatre, concert tickets	69
Frequenting cafés, bars, restaurants	71

The aforementioned research also examined how young people of different ages with the experience of prolonged unemployment, with completed or uncompleted education, define the vulnerability of their position in life, what they experience as their key obstacles and limitations, as well as sources of support in their transition to the work sphere. The characteristics of different forms of public aid that the 655 poll participants have received were established by the following question: did you seek assistance and support from the following experts / institutions during the time of your unemployment?

*Table 2: The percentages of young people, unemployed for a longer period, seeking assistance or advice from various experts / institutions.*

Where they sought assistance:	%
Seeking advice, assistance from a Social Work Centre while unemployed	50
Seeking advice, assistance from doctors, psychologists while unemployed	12
Seeking advice, assistance from the Youth Information Centre while unemployed	5
Seeking advice, assistance from various non-profit organizations and societies while unemployed	15
Seeking advice, assistance from various counselling centres while unemployed	29
Seeking advice and assistance from counsellors at the Employment Service while unemployed	76

The table shows that the majority sought advice and assistance with the Employment Service and Social Work Centres. From a different point of view, the information also reveals that only two thirds of the young people registered at the Employment Service, view working with experts in this institution as actual assistance and counselling, while a third views this relationship as purely instrumental. The Mladina 2000 research (Rener, 2002, p. 95) also showed that young people do not trust professional advisors, as only a very small number of people turned to them (in the case of problems or when they needed advice). The frequency in which assistance was sought in various counselling centres in the period of unemployment is, in our opinion, quite high, as 29 % of the young people visited them. At a similar percentage of frequency (12-15 %), they sought assistance from doctors, psychologists and other non-government organizations.

Further analysis of the data shows a kind of 'classic' trend in economically and socially threatened groups that turn towards government institutions for aid in the period of unemployment, namely social transfers that help them deal with their existential hardships. The vulnerable groups that more often seek advice and different forms of assistance are young people of lower social status, young people with lower levels of education, and women.

The quantitative part of the research complements the qualitative part, where with the help of the Ljubljana Local Office of the Employment Service, we formed focus groups of young people and conducted interviews with them concerning the status of unemployment and how they perceived the support of various institutions. The groups were formed as follows:

**Group 1:** young people without completed vocational or high school education, up to 23 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as "younger dropouts" in the rest of the text);

**Group 2:** young people with completed vocational or high school education, up to 23 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as "younger successful students"<sup>2</sup>);

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<sup>2</sup> The somewhat unusual use of the term "younger successful students" simply means that the people in this group have successfully completed their studies at

**Group 3:** young people without completed vocational or high school education, between 24 and 26 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as “older dropouts”);

**Group 4:** young people with completed vocational or high school education, between 24 and 26 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as “older successful students”);

We initially also wanted to include a group with completed college-level education in the research. However, after studying the information register, it turned out that there is only a small number of such candidates seeking employment, which is why we decided to abandon the idea of including a fifth group.

**Education sector:** A selection from the statements<sup>3</sup> given by young people in various sub-groups about their experiences with education:

A1: You would expect that you would get to know your country at a school of tourism. In the three years of education, we did not go on one excursion or trip. At Gimnazija Ledina [a general upper secondary school] they had something organized every week, while we at tourism had nothing. We knew nothing about tourism. During our practical training, we ended up cleaning hotel rooms rather than working in reception or dealing with guests.

A3: When I started my extra-mural studies, I realized that the school wasn't giving me anything I needed to practice the profession or what my employer required. And I had to work so I could pay my tuition. But you didn't get anything out of it, or at least I didn't, and then, for example, if you actually worked in the mornings and got to school at three o'clock, you were tired, right, and it worked for a couple of months, but then you're just not able to do it any more. Now I don't care if it's this school or another one, it doesn't matter nowadays, as long as I finish it and get my piece of paper, that's what matters today.

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a vocational or other type of high school. In many cases this is only a two-year vocational program that the people themselves do not view as a sign of any particular scholarly achievement or success.

<sup>3</sup> A1 – A5 denotes statements given by participants in the group of “younger dropouts”, B1 – B5 by “younger successful students”, C1 – C5 by “older dropouts” and D1 – D 5 by “older successful students”.

A2: Computers, that's what you've got to be good at these days. Wherever you go, at least some basic skills are required. I know I'm supposed to know this, and I'll focus on it more in the future, and on languages. I think it's good if you know more languages, at least one, two, three, at least passively, you have to know English actively, you have to know it, and then if you understand at least something, you have more of a chance to get a job. And you have to be good at interacting with people, this is the main thing when it comes to jobs, it's often more important than a diploma.

B1: It's a difficult situation if you find yourself high and dry when it comes to education. If you're extra-mural and only take exams, then you have to put more effort into it yourself. You take exams, you don't have classmates, you're basically on your own; if you have money, you can maybe afford a tutor.

B2: Maybe I should add something about the choice of these schools, because there's very little choice when it comes to these lower types of jobs. For example, there's nothing that would interest me and suit me better, where they would help to finance my education.

C4: I don't know, retraining often leaves you on the same level, in the same position. It's a level where we all already have professions. But they're the kind of professions where it's hard to get an actual job. Anyway, they demand a higher level of education for jobs, finished college, so I don't see how retraining would make my situation any better.

D2: I plan on continuing my studies, but it's difficult to be accepted to college, but I want to go to a specific school that interests me. You need to try several times to get in, because I want to go to the Academy of Fine Arts and Design. But that's what I want.

We have found that education means widening the field of opportunities for entering and acquiring a better position in the world of employment to all sub-groups. "Younger dropouts" are focusing on finishing the vocational schooling they had previously discontinued and stress the importance of earning a certificate of concluded education. They are critical of the level of actual usefulness of the knowledge they acquire during their schooling and professional training. They point out that in their current position – finishing their schooling in the framework of adult education – they are left to rely on themselves and their own decisions concerning the organization



of the learning process, which can sometimes be fairly difficult for them. They also point out that their position is more difficult than that of their peers, who are full-time students: they are lonelier and they miss the support of classmates etc. The majority feels that in the future, they will not be working in the vocation for which they are currently concluding their education. Concerning their future employment, they point out the relevance of social competence, resourcefulness and flexibility; they feel that these skills – particularly in view of the lower level of education they have reached – can increase their chances of employment in the future. Compared to the other groups, these young people keep up with current developments in the labour market and keep themselves informed about possible market niches. “Younger successful students” stress the problem of the shortage of opportunities to take part in different educational fields subsidised by the state. The majority expresses distress that their desire for education is dependent on and subordinated to their limited financial capabilities. They point out their unfavourable experiences of employment in the private sector, and for this reason show more interest in education which would enable them to find employment in the public sector (for example, in medicine as an orderly or nurse etc.). What they recognize in these professions is a higher level of social security for the future. Young people in the group of “older dropouts” report about their past experiences of taking part in various forms of additional education, courses and retraining as part of an active employment policy. They are critical of being advised to partake in additional education and retraining, where they can only attain a lower level of education, because they feel that even with the additional knowledge and courses, they were not any more successful in finding employment. This group’s vision of the future entails getting a higher, possibly college-level education and ‘collecting’ education certificates in various fields. This is where they see better employment opportunities and the chance for a better situation in life in the future. “Older dropouts” are registered at the Employment Service mainly because they are looking for additional options for subsidised education and acquiring additional education that would later enable them to take part in and achieve higher levels of education. Compared to the other groups, they have more to report about actual experiences in the labour market: they feel that additional education they have acquired to increase their chances

of employment are actually obstacles when it comes to finding permanent employment. Employers often see them as competition instead of knowing how to utilize their knowledge and their skills. In this group of young people, some face the problem of having their level of education ratified due to the disarray in the verification of educational programs of public and private educational institutions (schools in the field of art). Compared to the other groups, they express a higher level of persistence to be educated in the fields of their own interest, although they are aware that in certain cases with the current labour market, their professions are not highly sought after or alternatively full to the brim. The majority have a vision of self-employment for the future.

**Employment sector:** Some of the statements given by young people in various sub-groups about their experiences of working with the Employment Service:

A3: I came to the Employment Service basically because it was very hard to get a job anywhere, because if you don't have student status, you can no longer get work through the Student Employment Service, you can't do anything. I am also here because the Social Work Centre sent me because I don't have any means of subsistence.

B2: This whole employment plan is just about administration. It's just pieces of paper; they don't know what will really help you, I mean you have to help yourself, it's just so they keep an eye on you.

B1: You have to know how to deal with these people at the Employment Service so they leave you alone to go on with your schooling and that they don't force a job on you if you don't want it. But a lot of people don't know how to do that, so then they threaten to take them out of their records and they lose everything, their status and their insurance, and everything. I know a lot of people like this.

C4: I expect to get certain information from the Employment Service, as much information as possible, anything I want, if I'm interested in something new, that I can come here, turn to the office for certain information. I don't expect the Employment Service to find me a job, just to give me as much information as possible about things I'm interested in.

C3: Co-funding is only for certain schools, for the ones that have only finished elementary school the Employment Service will pay for everything, as long as you show up. Unfortunately, they pay and

help you only where they can, are supposed to, but they can't help you at all where you want them to. That's not ok.

D5: Yeah, the system might be good, just not for us, it doesn't offer me practically anything, I get nothing out of this system, even if I go see my counsellor. I come to see her, and she asks if I've filled out any job applications and that to her is success; that I write one measly job application, that's maximum cooperation.

D3: No, I don't get any other type of aid here other than money. I think that the Employment Service, as far as working with employers is concerned, is not well organized. Just as the employers take us on, they reject us, because the Service pays them for it. They should change the law, so that we'd be more protected.

D6: I personally don't write job applications because I know the way employers, hairdressers, work. They get an application, they don't even open it, they just throw it in the bin; who should I write them for if I know they go directly in the trash? So I prefer to go there personally. But they want me to write a certain number of job applications.

“Younger dropouts” say that they registered at the Employment Service predominately because they had difficulties making ends meet (paying for tuition, rent), so they could claim welfare at the Social Work Centre. The majority is concluding previously discontinued schooling and for this reason does not take part in other active employment policy programmes available. They report favourably about their experiences with the organization of study aid provided by the Education Service. In the group of “younger successful students”, registering at the Service is connected with their intention to actively seek employment, difficulties in obtaining temporary employment, and also with the need to arrange social and health insurance. They express satisfaction with the attitude and the effort put in by the experts at the Employment Service when it comes to education. They feel a shortage when it comes to the variety of courses available and to subsidising in those fields of education they are interested in. They view the construction of an employment plan as foremost bureaucratic and a form of control. When it comes to solving the problem of unemployment, they say that they rely essentially on themselves, as their work with the Social Work Centre until this point has not resulted in successfully

gaining employment. They strive to fulfil the required conditions set by the Employment Service in order to keep their status as “active employment seekers” and the benefits that this status entails. The young people point out that counsellors take their interests and priorities into account if they bring them up (for example, focusing on education rather than actively seeking employment); however, the chances of finding employment more quickly, and the type of work actually available within the framework of the support the institution offers, are very limited. “Older school dropouts” report limited information and unsuitable job offers provided by the Employment Service. They reject the unsuitable job offers if they feel that they do not correspond to their qualifications and abilities. They are familiar with how cooperating with the Employment Service works and are aware of the fact that they have to respect and fulfil the required conditions if they wish to remain in the register of employment seekers. They favourably assess the motivation provided by the experts from the Service and the way they keep track of their progress in the process of education. This group also points out the bureaucratic nature of the employment plan. Some see it as something the expert “prescribes” to them. The expectations they have of the Employment Service are connected mainly with receiving quality information about education and employment suitable to their qualifications. They sometimes see employment courses that their counsellors direct them to more as a control mechanism of the institution, a way of verifying if they are actually actively looking for work. They point out the problem of the different types of approaches used by experts, the inconstancy, the switching of the employment counsellors they work with. “Older successful students” experience the problem of competitiveness on the labour market the most acutely. They registered at the Employment Service mostly because of the need to arrange their social status and health insurance, and to attain additional financial aid so they could continue their education according to their own interests. They feel that the Employment Service does not offer them sufficient information or suitable employment opportunities in view of their qualifications. They express resistance to and disagreement with the conditions they have to fulfil in order to remain in the Employment Service register (for example, writing a certain number of job applications, reporting to their counsellor, having to be available

at a certain time etc.). They are critical of the current manner of cooperative partnership between the Service and the employers, because they feel that this method is essentially damaging to them, and stack up a long list of unpleasant employment experiences; the employers benefit more than the employees. They have second thoughts about the retraining available at the Service for tackling the problem of unemployment. They wish the Employment Service offered more information about aid provided for education based on their own interests. They are critical of the sometimes biased attitude of the counsellors, who for the benefit of the institution sometimes hold back relevant information, do not familiarize them with the rights afforded them by their status, which instils in the young people a sense of distrust in the aid and support offered by the institution. It is more often that they get information about the financial aid they are eligible for and other rights from other young people in similar situations, and more seldom from an employment counsellor. They view an employment plan as beneficial because it records their achievements, consequently increasing their chances of employment.

**Social security sector:** Some of the statements given by young people in various sub-groups about their experiences of working with a Social Work Centre:

A1: Twice now I'd been getting welfare for three months and a half, and then at the end they said, "well, you'll have to sell your shares, or pick up a broom". And I just looked at them, what, is this any kind of way to treat a person. Later I heard from other people that this happened to them as well, that they were treated like that at a Social Work Centre.

B5: It also depends a lot on the Social Work Centre, how much you get. It can be the same Centre, the same situation, and someone will be given welfare and someone else won't. I mean, it's like this, I even know some cases where she finds some loophole and doesn't give you as much as you're eligible for.

C2: These people that work at the Centre maybe don't even know that it's not like it used to be back when parents took care of their kids, and now maybe the parents can't even take care of themselves and even the kids have to fend for themselves, and then what are you going to do? They just don't get that.

D3: I went to the Social Work Centre yesterday because she wanted to reduce my welfare. She started asking me what the financial situation at home was like, how are the wages, how much pension my father gets, and I don't know what else. I'm the one getting the welfare, not my parents. My parents help me as much as they can, but that's none of her business. So I said, I don't know, I don't go through his wallet to see how much he gets. Yeah, I am registered as an independent single woman and I am like my own family, so why does she keep bothering me about how much money my parents have? By law, my parents aren't responsible for me anymore; the parents are responsible while you're still in school full-time, I'm in school extramurally, which means they're not. It really depends on how much they even want to help me, but then she keeps bringing up my parents all the time.

In the majority of the cases, the Social Work Centre workers put the "younger dropouts" in touch with the Employment Service. The participants of all the groups brought up unpleasant experiences of working with the staff at the Social Work Centre when claiming their welfare rights. They feel there is a lack of clarity when it comes to the criteria the experts use when allocating social aid; they report experiencing injustice, inequality, the bureaucratic mindset, wilfulness and inappropriate attitude of the experts.

## **Conclusion**

In Slovenia, more and more young people take part in educational programs for adults; they are commonly described as the population without a profession or work experience and are for this reason socially categorized as the least employable. Our findings, derived from the experiences of young unemployed people in the system of adult education point to the following: young people are critical of the usefulness education has for practicing certain professions, they endeavour to acquire an educational certificate (a school credential, a diploma, a professional title) that will enable them to enter into the employment system and compete for positions; to the majority of the young people, the position outside of the mainstream educational system means experiencing social isolation and a heavy financial burden, which in spite of financial aid and state subsidising, is in view

of the current living expenses still too great, particularly for those who want to be educated in the area of their desired professional interests. Rather than retraining at the same educational level, the young are more attracted to attaining a higher level of education, because they feel this will give them a competitive edge and afford them greater advantages in life. They are aware of the fact that more education means a better starting point for (better) positions in the working world. In the research, particularly young people who have already finished vocational school express more disagreement and resistance to retraining and being redirected in their education; they also have more complaints about their relationships with experts and employment counsellors.

In Slovenia, an active employment policy is carried out by various institutions. The central institution concerned with employment and insurance policies in the case of unemployment is the Employment Service. Beside the Employment Service and its regional and local offices, various other institutions and non-government organizations – mainly functioning within a local environment, although some operate on a state level – deal with the problems of the unemployed. These are the following: educational organizations, Social Work Centres, volunteer societies and organizations, other organizations for helping male and female individuals (Red Cross, Caritas etc.), professional organizations on a national level (the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education). In all of these organizations and institutions, active employment policies are carried out with the help of a number of programmes such as: programmes offering assistance with planning a career path and finding employment, programmes offering assistance to employers, programmes for preventing unemployment, educational, training and employment programmes for the unemployed. The results of the research show that the various forms of public aid and the role of the measures taken by the institutions is perceived by young people above all as financial aid, obtaining insurance and certain other benefits provided for the unemployed. They report experiences that point to a lack of confidence in the aid provided and the direction certain public institutions take when tackling the problems of education and employment; in the research, this is most prominent with the older group of young people who have been unemployed for a long time. The participants also pointed out the bureaucratic nature of working

with experts; some experience the provided assistance and keeping track of their search for work predominantly as a form of control, while only a minority find this type of approach helpful, providing them with direction, which they evaluate favourably. When it comes to asserting their rights for public forms of aid, they report experiencing social inequality, stigmatization and attempts to curtail the rights that their unemployment status affords them.

For transition policies to be successful in supporting young people as they embark on the path of employment, there is an urgent need for reaching agreements through the cooperation of the individuals, institutions and services involved with the needs of the most vulnerable groups, which implies a need for an approach that would consider multiple perspectives and was based on the teamwork of different experts and officials already on the local level. We feel that the psychosocial stabilization and development of an individual should have precedence over the integration into employment training, retraining and education; this is particularly important for young people who, as well as being unemployed, also find themselves in dire social and financial situations. It is necessary to encourage the development of programmes outside of government institutions that would reach out to those young people who decline contact with employment institutions. The contents of these programmes should include room for encouraging creativity, with the purpose of discovering one's own interests, and for introducing, for example, new forms of studying, shorter forms of obtaining qualifications, offering practical work experience and work that might not require special qualifications. A useful improvement would come from experts developing a realistic plan for the professional careers of young people who have been unemployed for a long time in cooperation with the individual himself, taking into account his current situation in life. Our findings show that the current manner of handling the issue of young people facing unemployment focuses too greatly and predominantly on keeping records of their educational achievements, while insufficient attention is given to a thorough, individual and flexible treatment of the problems facing young unemployed people, and not enough attention is given to considering the wishes and interests of the young. Additionally, it would be prudent to consider strategies, mechanisms and measures for orientating and directing young people on the labour market, with



which social inequality, stigmatization and segmentation would be reduced, and in which young people were able to participate more, to win recognition and validation for the knowledge they possess.

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