

How Job Clubs make a difference

Group counselling services for young unemployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Youth Employment Project (YEP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina changed the way how young people are supported during the entry phase into the labour market. Overall, more than 3000 participants found employment within six months. More than 25 Public Employment Services (PES) adopted the approach developed by YEP. Learn more about this easily adoptable intervention in this article.

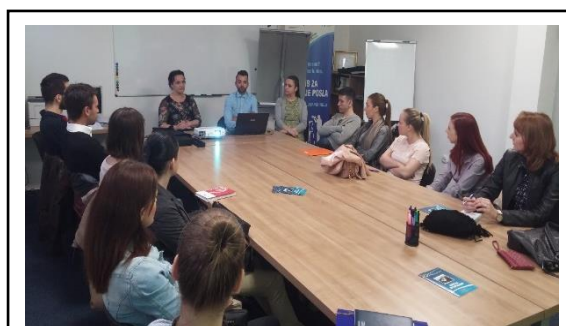
Finding a decent job, and getting actively involved in labour market in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as youngster, seems to be a "mission impossible". In BiH it is especially hard to achieve that, since the unemployment rate is at 40% (at the beginning of the project in 2008 it was close to 60%). The Youth Employment Project (YEP) supported by the Swiss Development Cooperation contributes to the improvement of job intermediation by introducing new procedures and services in Public Employment Services. The project started in 2008 and will be active till 2020.

New services

One of the new services is a **Job Club (JC)**. An **active labour market measure (ALMM)** whose purpose is to provide continuous job search assistance to unemployed persons through peer group support and guidance. Group counsellors (aka Job Club leader) are working with a group of unemployed persons for three weeks, four days a week, following specified programme and activities for each day. The idea is to make **job hunting a job itself**. The original concept was developed in both Great Britain and the United States, but is widely accepted and implemented worldwide. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the programme is introduced by YEP in cooperation with Public Employment Services¹.



The JC's target group are young unemployed persons registered for at least 6 months. Sharing experiences helps to gain more knowledge about labour market and job interviews.

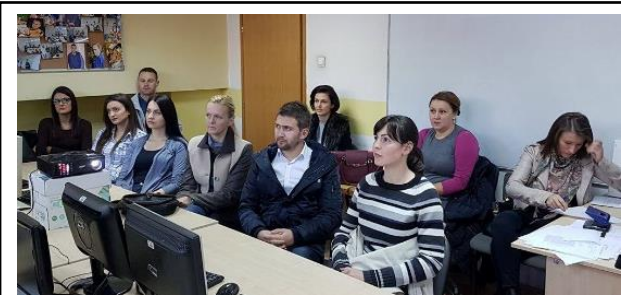


Presentations of employers' business, employment plans and vacancies provide an opportunity to have a group interview, find additional information and get a job.

More than CVs

The JC model developed by YEP prepares the unemployed young person to respond to employers' demands in the best and most effective way. An unemployed person who is member of the specific JC group adopts the basics of business communication, recognizes the importance of teamwork and group support in job search. During a three-week long training programme, members gain knowledge and skills relevant to job search. This further affects their self-confidence and motivation along with chances for labour market reintegration.

¹ Federal Employment Institute, Employment Institute of Republika Srpska, Cantonal Employment Services and Employment Institute of Brcko District BiH



JC is an active measure consisting of group-based counselling, training and individual activities. Role-play interviews and use of own networks are central activities, that JC members value the most.

JC differs from typical training programs because it's an interactive experience and includes full involvement of its members. In concrete terms, JC helps the job seekers with a combination of skills enhancement, a setting which fosters discipline in job search, and general everyday support. It is not just training on CV writing skills, job ads searching, job interview role-plays, but also a full group support for other unemployed persons.

In addition, a JC mobile app and a related website (www.berzarada.ba) provide info on open vacancies and other opportunities such as volunteering, workshops, seminars and (mostly free) training provisions.

YEP also has established **a performance measurement system** that compares single performances based on the set of indicators such as the number of unemployed people who attended the training, their level of job search activity and ultimately, **the number of placements**. (Current JC score list available at <http://yep.ba/rang-lista/>)

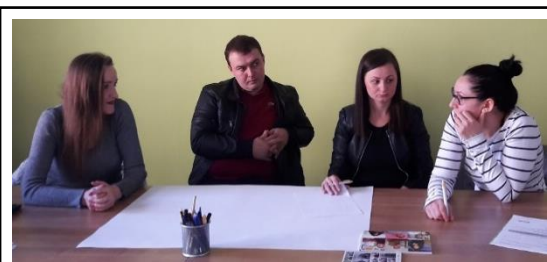
Most important achievements

YEP has trained and equipped Public Employment Services (PES) to implement the measure in 29 locations throughout BiH (map of JCs available at <http://yep.ba/lokacije-klubova/>).

Since the start of YEP, 7.098 adolescents (4.266 women and 2.832 males) were supported, 3.090 of them (1.871 women, 1.219 men) found employment within 6 months after or during the JC programme. This result surpasses the vast majority of active measures being implemented in BiH.

On a more systemic level, YEP's biggest achievement is that although counselling was an unknown term before YEP implementation, JCs nowadays became a recognized starting point for all those who want to find a job in the shortest possible time. Furthermore, YEP has enriched the ALMM range in BiH by developing an approach that can be implemented without additional funding.

Lessons learned



The JC's success also depends on the JC Leader. Strengthening their skills and providing support has been one of the goals. of

Much resources and energy have been invested in designing a successful and feasible group work counselling. Training and mentoring to counsellors have resulted in better service provision. Lobbying with senior management to take the JC programme more seriously and devote more staffing remains a challenge, but still a combination of exhortation and motivation of JC leaders at annual "Best Job Club" ceremonies has given a new light to the traditional ALMM implementation, and a series of "success stories" is a real proof that a job search is a job itself which will give results if carefully planned and guided.

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e-talk

If you are interested to learn more about YEP and their Job Clubs there is an [e-talk](#) on this topic on Thursday, Oct. 4, 2018. Please contact andrea.inglin@eda.admin.ch.