

MEDNET 2 – Innovation, exchange, networking for a new leading  
class in the Mediterranean

## **First COUNTRY REPORT: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)**

Update Thematic Dossier #1: The Youth Labor Market  
in the Mediterranean Area

**Topic to be explored:**

# Career Guidance and Job Search in the MED Area

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## INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a country located on Balkan Peninsula, South-Eastern Europe. It is bordered by Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Adriatic Sea. BiH has a population of 3,871,643 according to the results of census in 2014. Sarajevo is the capital, while other bigger cities are Banja Luka, Tuzla, Mostar, Zenica and Bijeljina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina went through difficult civil war during the 1992-1995 as a part of breakup of Yugoslavia resulting in estimated 100,000 deaths and 2.2 million people displaced from their homes. Today, the country maintains high literacy, life expectancy and education levels and is one of the most frequently visited countries in the region, projected to have the third highest tourism growth rate in the world between 1995 and 2020. <sup>1</sup>

## THE SYSTEM OF CAREER GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO JOB SEARCH TO JOB SEARCH IN BIH

Bosnia and Herzegovina has several levels of political structuring, according to the Dayton peace agreement (1995). BiH is divided into two entities: Republic of Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Beside entities, Brcko district was created in 2000 out of land from both entities. Division into cantons is unique for Federation of BiH, and it has ten of them. Every entity, district, canton and country as a whole has its own political structure and representatives. All these divisions make political and other systems very hard and expensive to function.

The question of Career Guidance and Job search is directly related to the concept of employment, unemployment and economical (in) activity of youth that are connected to their level of employability. Unfortunately, because of many heterogeneous reasons young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are currently in very unfavorable situation concerning their capacity for employment.

Unemployment Rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina averaged 43.13 percent from 2007 until 2015, reaching an all time high of 46.10 percent in February of 2013 and a record low of 39.03 percent in May of 2008. Unemployment Rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is reported by the Federal Office of Statistics, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.globalgoodnews.com/business-news-a.html?art=118515766614678270>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/bosnia-and-herzegovina/unemployment-rate>

*Table 1 – Level of economic activity of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

	Level of activity			Level of employment			Level of unemployment		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
<b>Republic of Srpska</b>	30,6	30,2	30,8	14,0	12,3	13,4	54,3	59,2	56,5
<b>Federation of BiH</b>	29,1	27,7	28,8	9,6	11,4	10,0	67,1	58,9	65,3
<b>BiH</b>	29,4	28,3	29,3	10,8	11,6	10,9	63,1	59,1	62,7

The group of young unemployed people in BiH, beside their abundance (1/3 of all unemployed) is characterized by the fact that most young people are registered as unemployed for more than 1 year. Young people that have proper career guidance and gain certain work experience shortly after graduation have smaller risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

An overall system of Career guidance and support to Job search does not exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is due to many external and internal factors that influence condition in the country. Complicated political structure and situation is one of the main reasons for lack of support to job search of youth on national level. However, there are many different programs and methods that are implemented by lower levels of government: entities, cantons and local authorities.

After the WWII, Career guidance in BiH had a tradition of institutionalized existence in the companies, employment bureaus, institutions of education and institutions for adult education. Since 1990s, those institutions no longer exist, and career guidance is legislatively and systematically not sufficiently regulated area. Unfavorable situation on the market of work is emphasizing the question on how much education prepares youth for market. On the other hand, it is very important to raise the level of development and adequacy of educational programs for whole-life learning and skills-development necessary for complex and changeable demands of work market.

**Strategic documents** that had previously been adopted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and constitute an important basis and provide a framework for development of career guidance in Bosnia and Herzegovina are:

1. Strategy of development of vocational education and training in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2007 - 2013
2. Strategic Directions of Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an Implementation Plan, from 2008 to 2015

3. Strategy of entrepreneurial learning in education systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2012 - 2015 with the Action Plan and implementation

4. Employment Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2010 – 2014

**The legislative framework** in Bosnia and Herzegovina for development of career guidance consists of the following documents:

1. Convention on human resources development, the International Labour Organization in 1975. (no. 142). Bosnia and Herzegovina (ratification: 1993)

2. The Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 2003

3. Framework Law on Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 2008

4. The Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 2007

5. The principles and standards in the field of adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 2014.

## **TOOLS, APPROACHES AND METHODS TO GET ACCESS TO CAREER GUIDANCE AND SEARCH FOR EMPLOYMENT**

Institutions of High education in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the most active **actors** in the field of promoting their programs to potential students or high school students, but are less active when it comes to helping students complete their studies and find employment. Although the career development of students and assistance in their employment in the past have not been priority topics in higher education, universities implement a variety of measures designed to connect students with industry. One of these measures is the creation of graduate, master's and doctoral theses for the needs of companies and other employers in the private and public sectors. Connectivity is sometimes performed through different projects. This connection has the benefit for students, universities and employers. Students have the opportunity to meet the needs of organizations which helps them find employment more easily. The benefit for company is that in this way new knowledge is transferred into the practical use, and the faculties thus develop permanent cooperation with employers, allowing them to include new knowledge required in the labor market into the study programs. It should be noted that there are significant differences among universities in terms of development of career guidance services and connections with the economy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Strateski\_pravci\_razvoja\_karijerne\_orijentacije\_u\_FBiH.pdf

The public employment services are dealing with career guidance as well. Target groups are unemployed, who, through counseling, workshops on active job search and co-financing, are trying to enable their easier integration into the labor market. Also, the target groups are pupils and students who are about to choose their education and careers. Through visits to the educational institutions, they are provided with information about the importance of choice of education and occupation, as well as the current situation in the labor market. Information is given through **internet portals** and **facebook profiles** of public employment services. However, due to massive overload of public employment services caused by accumulated obligations of a social character, a career orientation is neglected and not given the necessary attention. As in the case of higher education institutions, there are significant differences between public employment services in terms of development of these services. Classic diversification of services/tools does not exist with regard to the typology of searched jobs.

Beside public employment services, there are several private employment services specialized for finding and employing permanent and part time personal in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those firms provide employment mediation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and offer many specially designed services from human resources. They are also actively working with candidates through courses and advice giving providing to make them more competent in job market. In this approach they help companies to find best candidates, but also help candidates find better jobs.

Young people in BiH are more and more using internet portals and social networks in order to find adequate jobs. There are several portals where they can see the job offer at any time ([www.posao.ba](http://www.posao.ba), [www.job.ba](http://www.job.ba), [www.market.ba](http://www.market.ba), [www.malioglas.com](http://www.malioglas.com), [www.posao.banjaluka.com](http://www.posao.banjaluka.com), etc). Beside search for active ads, young people can register on those portals and upload their resumes. Classic pages for employment are not the only way for young people to find the job through the internet. Social networks that are used everyday can be very useful in search for job opportunities. Special attention is given to LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. The main advantage of using online platforms for the purpose of job search is that they are free, easy to access and give simple way to contact the potential employers.

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

The economy and the labor market in Bosnia and Herzegovina are increasingly influenced by the globalization, which is reflected through the introduction and application of new technologies in many sectors of the economy, and strong competitive pressures from abroad. Global competition makes companies to quick adjust, and have continuous development and innovation in work in order to be competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. This situation in the economy is reflected in the labor market in such a way that the investment in

human resources is becoming increasingly important, and in this context, lifelong learning has become imperative for every individual who strives to remain active in the labor market. Model of lifelong employment is being replaced with a model of lifelong employability. This means that the former practice of employment for an indefinite period of time, ie one job for life will soon become completely outdated. Its place will be replaced with the practice of continuous investment in the development of individual careers, which means constantly learning and improving skills and capabilities in order to ensure that the individual even after losing job is able to very quickly find a new job due to the developed skills and abilities. Career orientation is crucial when choosing calling in life, moving from one level of education to the next, from education to the labor market, but also for career guidance and management of its development.<sup>4</sup>

### **GOOD PRACTICE – Youth Employment Project (YEP)**

Youth Employment Project (YEP) is a project that is being implemented in two phases by the German company GOPA mbH, through a representative office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first phase of the Youth Employment Project (YEP) was implemented in the period October 2008 to October 2011 and was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Austrian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ADC), while the second phase of a three-year continuation project (2011 - 2014), was funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The project, in the period 2008-2011, has significantly contributed to the positive changes in the labor market in BiH, and the final result of the first phase was improvement of active labor market measures, which implementation lead to the employment of 1,521 persons and 2,888 persons received different types of training that should facilitate future employment and integration in the labor market.

Within the first phase of the project, in cooperation with the ministries of education, six secondary schools in Tuzla, Gracanica, Brcko, Rogatica, Vlasenica and Prnjavor were selected, which have implemented the action program of career management, carried out by the working group of school teachers and educators, with assistance of external experts with experience in this field. After more than one hundred educators and teachers were trained, the schools have been equipped with six modern career cabinets, which included the renovation of one of the classrooms, equipping it with the most modern technology and furniture, and branding. In the secondary school center "Milorad Vlačić" in Vlasenica a greenhouse was opened; in which students of the school have a real business, from manufacturing to product placement. In cooperation with the school management teaching materials were prepared oriented toward **career guidance**, all with the aim to facilitate the integration into the labor market of

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<sup>4</sup> [Strateski\\_pravci\\_razvoja\\_karijerne\\_orijentacije\\_u\\_FBiH.pdf](#)

those students who do not wish to continue their education after successfully completing high school.

**Job search clubs** are one way to activate and engage young people in the job search process. Clubs for the job are being implemented in cooperation with the Federal Employment Service, Employment Service of the Republic of Srpska and the cantonal employment services, and in the Project YEP. The club has been an active measure for employment designed to provide unemployed person continuous job search assistance. YEP has established a network of 25 clubs in the local employment offices managed by advisors, staff offices, and there are constant demands for the creation of new clubs and advisory functions for young people in the employment services throughout the country. Model of trainings in Clubs for a job search is unique with its own special curriculum. Job club is preparing unemployed young people to meet the demands of employers in the best possible way. The unemployed youth through the Club adopt the basics of business communication, recognize the importance of teamwork and group support in job search. Through three week training members acquire knowledge and skills relevant to the job search, which will further affect their confidence and motivation.



Table 2 – Ranking of Job search clubs in 2015 <sup>5</sup>

Position	Job search club	Total score	Number of employed	Average efficiency	Opened since
1.	<b>Goražde</b>	175.63	77	40%	05. 2012.
2.	<b>Derвента</b>	155.14	48	44%	09. 2014.
3.	<b>Sarajevo</b>	152.44	119	38%	02. 2014.
4.	<b>Modriča</b>	145.82	145	43%	09. 2012.
5.	<b>Banja Luka</b>	138.89	271	52%	01. 2011.
6.	<b>Srbac</b>	123.44	129	47%	07. 2012.
7.	<b>Doboj (CISO)</b>	122.59	28	26%	01. 2014.
8.	<b>Nevesinje</b>	121.54	65	31%	12. 2012.
9.	<b>Testić</b>	104.71	90	30%	05. 2012.
10.	<b>Gradiška</b>	101.15	96	35%	09. 2011.
11.	<b>Travnik</b>	93.40	102	39%	05. 2012.
12.	<b>Novi Grad</b>	66.29	50	34%	09. 2012.
13.	<b>Novi Travnik</b>	53.80	18	30%	04. 2014.
14.	<b>Fojnica</b>	44.24	16	41%	04. 2014.
15.	<b>Katesija</b>	37.26	46	25%	01. 2013.
16.	<b>Tuzla</b>	34.81	191	42%	01. 2011.
17.	<b>Kakanj</b>	24.70	20	14%	04. 2012.
18.	<b>Busovača</b>	17.67	3	8%	06. 2014.
19.	<b>Bugojno</b>	16.02	14	27%	03. 2014.
20.	<b>Živinice</b>	13.00	43	20%	06. 2012.
21.	<b>Cazin</b>	3.39	47	46%	03. 2012.
22.	<b>Jajce</b>	0.00	5	50%	04. 2014.
23.	<b>Zvornik</b>	0.00	71	33%	01. 2012.

Job search club is an interactive experience for young people and that is how it differs from typical training program. The club is a combination of improving skills, discipline in the job search process and support and this is what distinguishes the methodology of the Job club from other methods. At the same time, the Club is not only training on writing a CV, searching the ads, simulation of an interview with an employer, but also the support group of other unemployed people and counselors in the club who have one common goal - to find a job in the shortest possible time. In order to encourage consultants who work in clubs for job search, YEP has established a system of measuring the effects of the Club which compares the performance of the Club on the basis of the set of indicators such as the number of established groups of unemployed, the number of unemployed who receive training, their level of activity in the job

<sup>5</sup> <http://yep.ba/rang-lista/>



search and, ultimately, the number of employed young people. In the past 4 years more than 2,300 young people have passed through the training and support of Clubs, and out of the total number of participants more than 900 of them have found employment 6 months after or during the program in the Club, which is the average, which is very good and surpasses the vast majority of active measures implemented in BiH. <sup>6</sup>

## CONCLUSION AND FINAL CONSIDERATION

Analyzing the condition related to the level of employability of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it can be concluded that young people in BiH face significantly limited opportunities to, independently or with intermediation of public and private services, find an adequate job and keep the same for certain period.

The causes for this condition are multiple and diverse, and consequences to the individual as well as to the whole society in BiH are serious and very dangerous. As the most significant consequences of limited employability of youth, the following may be stated: incompetency and non-competitiveness of youth on labor market, the large number of youth educated for 'oversupplied' careers and at the same time – the lack of work force in 'deficit' careers, insignificant number of young entrepreneurs and vast economic passivity of youth, and finally high level of youth unemployment and low level of youth employment. These key consequences are becoming causes of numerous negative appearances in society: the lack of economic and financial independence, decreasing level of social activity of youth, later starting of family, immigration to more developed, mostly European countries, and general decreasing of social and economic activities. <sup>7</sup>

Recommendations for improving the employment conditions of young people are:

1. Better compatibility of educational system with the needs of labor market
2. More stimulus business and entrepreneurship surroundings
3. Developed work-culture at younger generations
4. Increased educational, professional and geographical mobility of youth.

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<sup>6</sup> More information is available on the website of the Youth Employment Project (YEP), which is supported by the Embassy of Switzerland and implemented by German company GOPA mbH: <http://yep.ba/opste-informacije/>

<sup>7</sup> Youth policy of Republic of Srpska: Youth Employability