

'LET'S DO IT TOGETHER IN MARIBOR'



LOCAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF COOPERATION IN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN MARIBOR

MARIBOR, November 2014

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INTRODUCTION

The Local Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as: LAP) entitled 'Let's Do It Together' has been prepared with the purpose to further promote and strengthen cooperation between key stakeholders in the field of youth employment in Maribor. The following key stakeholders, acting as partners, agreed to closely cooperate with the Municipality of Maribor in the development and implementation of the actions included in this LAP for the period between 2015 and 2020:

The main partners in the LAP are the Employment Service of Slovenia, the City Youth Council Maribor, the Maribor Development Agency and the Career Center of the University of Maribor and the Business Incubator of the University of Maribor. Several non-governmental organizations are also partners in the LAP: the Institute PIP – Legal and Information Center of Maribor, the Center for Alternative Production and Development (CAAP), the Institute for the Development of Social Responsibility (IRDO) and the Student Organization of the University of Maribor.

By signing a Letter of Intent the above mentioned partners agreed to cooperate in the drawing up of this LAP, contribute to an effective and efficient implementation of the LAP measures and monitor its implementation in the period between 2015 and 2020.

Scope of the LAP

The LAP focuses on the youth employment in the Municipality of Maribor. The LAP is based upon:

- SWOT analysis in the field of employment and employability prepared by young people (see: Annex 1);
- Local Program for Youth 2010–2012;
- Draft Local Program for Youth 2013–2018, which includes the following four main areas: mobility of young people, education and training, housing issues and employment and employability;
- Regional Development Program;
- Measures to improve employment of young people at national and local level;
- Initiatives of the Municipal Parliament Program.

Partnership for the enhancement of employability and employment of the youth

Local partnerships are the main and most effective instrument for the pooling of local partners, while reaching for agreements and consensus for local solutions for the challenges identified at local level. This is the reason why the Municipality of Maribor gathered all relevant partners that can contribute to the

improvement of the situation. We strongly believe that actions proposed by partners included in this LAP reflect the needs of young people in our city and will therefore significantly contribute to youth employment in the forthcoming period.

Moreover, with the purpose to build upon the knowledge, expertise and experiences of the main local partners and to optimize the available financial and human resources it was agreed that the Local Support Group (hereinafter referred to as: LSG) established under the My Generation at Work project will continue to play an important role in this process.

The roles of the LSG main members are briefly described below:

- The City Youth Council Maribor contributed to the LAP with its views and opinions on the topic of youth (un)employment, and furthermore with extensive information on how and where young people search for solutions to this serious issue.
- The Employment Service of Slovenia, Branch Office Maribor (hereinafter referred to as: ESS), provided valuable statistic data on youth unemployment at the local and national level and shared their rich experience gained through providing services and active labor market measures for the young unemployed. Furthermore, their cooperation and support are crucial in order to reach young unemployed persons and ensure their participation in the LAP activities.
- The Career Center of the University of Maribor provided information on students, whereas graduates could benefit from career planning offered within the center.
- The Business Incubator of the University of Maribor provided an input on how an innovating ecosystem can promote and support entrepreneurial engagement of students and researchers. Furthermore, the Business Incubator is expected to play an import role in transferring these experiences gained through the development of new start-ups also in the period up to 2020.
- The Maribor Development Agency was responsible for the elaboration and implementation of the Regional Development Program (hereinafter referred to as: RDP) for the Podravje Region. The RDP for 2014–2020, which is currently under discussion, is expected to address the issue of youth unemployment and provide some measures aimed at enhancing employment and employability of young persons.

The LSG members have already proposed to invite other stakeholders to participate within the LSG, in particular the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska and the Chamber of Craft of Štajerska, as well as non-governmental organizations or other organizations that can contribute to the implementation of the LAP.

LOCAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE YOUTH 2015–2020

This LAP represents an important step towards improving cooperation between key stakeholders/partners in Maribor which, in our opinion, will produce adequate answers and solutions to the challenges of youth employment. Young people are important for our city and the current situation with regards to youth employment raises immense concern. The unemployed rate among young people in Maribor aged between 15 and 24 is well above the state average (40 % compared to 28 %), while the unemployed rate of young people within the age group 25–29 also exceeds the Slovenian average (24 % compared to 18 %).

The LAP objectives

- Ensure a structured cooperation between the key local stakeholders in the field of youth employment, thus their networking synergy potential can result in new measures that will have an impact on youth employment.
- Enhance employability and increase employment of young persons aged between 15 and 29.

Target audiences of the LAP

The target audiences of the LAP are young people aged between 15 and 29 and local stakeholders (professionals, decision-makers, managers) in the field of employment and employability.

LAP measures and activities

The measures and activities included in the LAP were proposed, discussed and agreed with the members of the LSG during two sessions held in October and November 2014. Therefore, the LAP presents conclusive proof that the stakeholders became aware of the fact that by merging all available resources real improvement of the situation with regards to youth employment can be achieved.

Measures	Purpose	Responsibility	Timescale	Source of funding
FORMALIZATION OF THE LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP	In order to ensure structured cooperation between the key local stakeholders in the field of youth employment, the LSG will be responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the LAP.	Municipality of Maribor	2014	Municipality of Maribor
JOB CAFÉ - INFO CENTER	Provides a space for young people to socialize, meet and obtain advice and information on available services in the field of career guidance, job searching, education and training, (self)employment etc.	Municipality of Maribor; LSG	2015	Municipality of Maribor Also: Public works in cooperation with ESS
WEB PORTAL	Upgrade of the web portal http://www.mladimaribor.si , with the purpose to provide comprehensive information about events for the youth in Maribor.	Municipality of Maribor; LSG	2015	Municipality of Maribor Also: Public works in cooperation with ESS
RESEARCH or STUDY ON MOTIVATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE	Identifying how to motivate young people to take greater responsibility for their own success on the ever-changing labor market and increase their social engagement.	University of Maribor; Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor; LSG	2015–2016	University of Maribor
PROJECTS and ACTIVE LABOR MARKET MEASURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	Ensuring mentoring programs and internships for the youth.	Municipality of Maribor; LSG	2015–2020	Municipality of Maribor and other funding sources (national/EU)
	Supporting social entrepreneurship among the youth.	Municipality of Maribor; LSG	2015–2020	Municipality of Maribor and other funding sources (national/EU)
	Continue the initiatives of the My Generation at Work project: - Connecting Youngsters and the Municipality - Volunteering = Having a Job: Involving young trained and skilled individuals as providers within some of the measures (such as: Young-to-Young; Promoters). - Start-Up Floor - Active Youth - Promotion of Internships and Apprenticeships	Municipality of Maribor; LSG	2015–2017	Municipality of Maribor and other funding sources
	Preparation, implementation and (co)funding of new active labor market measures that are not yet available, funded by the Municipality of Maribor and ESS.	Municipality of Maribor; LSG	2015–2020	Municipality of Maribor and other funding sources (national/EU)
CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR THE YOUTH	Examine the needs and possibilities for the establishment of a career center for pupils in secondary school programs.	Municipality of Maribor; LSG	2015–2017	Municipality of Maribor and other funding sources (national/EU)

Resources for the LAP

The funds necessary for the implementation of the measures envisaged in this LAP will be planned and allocated within the budget of the Municipality of Maribor, while some measures will be only co-funded by the municipality, as in the case of public works (community programs) where the majority will be funded from the state budget (Ministry of Labor, ESS). Furthermore, partners will also need to invest effort into obtaining other resources and in order to ensure their own funding contribution. In addition, the possibilities of co-funding within different EU programs will be thoroughly explored (Erasmus+, Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices, Regional Development Programs – Cohesion Policy Measures, European Social Fund). Private (co)funding will be considered as an equally important resource for funding the LAP implementation.

Launching or bringing the LAP at the fore

The Municipality of Maribor is drawing up a new Local Program for Youth 2015–2020, in which an important part is dedicated to the question of employability of young people. All measures presented in this LAP are integrated in the aforementioned Local Program for Youth. The draft of the Local Program for Youth 2015–2020 is currently undergoing the processes of public consultation and hearing. After collection of feedback in the form of comments and recommendations, the Local Program will be updated and submitted to the Municipal Council for approval, presumably in December 2014.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT – SWOT Analysis

Employment allows young people to pursue their life and career goals as well as social and financial security, thus ultimately achieving autonomy. Youth employment proved to be one of the future key challenges of the European Union.

Especially the transition from educational institutions to employment is difficult for young people, what is reflected in the high unemployment rate and precarious forms of employment. According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia the unemployment rate in Maribor as of April 2014 was 45.9 % among young people aged 24 and younger and 25.5 % among those aged between 25 and 29. As of June 2014, the total number of unemployed young people in Maribor aged between 15 and 29 was 1,755. The unemployment rate in Slovenia as of April 2014 was 32.7 % among young people aged 24 and younger, whereas 20.0 % among those aged between 25 and 29.

The labor market is confronted with a mismatch between supply and demand, which is strongly connected with the process of entering educational programs. In order to overcome the obstacles of transition from education institutions to employment, the issue of low employment among young people has to be addressed through direct policy planning in the local community, whereas the development of competences of young people has to be promoted in accordance with the needs of the local labor market, the networking between economic and education institutions strengthened in the form of mentoring and internships. Furthermore, entrepreneurship has to be encouraged, a friendly business environment for young people created, whereas incentives for employment in (non-)economic activities provided in order to employ the full potential of young people in the local environment.

SWOT analysis of employment

In December 2012, the Municipality of Maribor and the City Youth Council Maribor prepared an analysis of employment among young people. A SWOT analysis in the four priority areas of youth policies was drawn up. The participants were divided into three groups and asked to prepare a SWOT analysis of employment policies, education, housing issues and mobility from three perspectives: the young peoples', NGO's and decision-makers' perspective.

The SWOT analysis of youth employment policies highlights (see Table 1 below) the problems educated young persons with high level of flexibility and inventiveness are facing, especially the consequences of the economic crisis, the poor economic situation, the uncertainty on the labor market on one hand and the lack of practical skills among young people on the other hand, all hindering their employability.

Table 1: SWOT analysis of youth employment policies

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • level of education • informal experience • time, energy, will • flexibility and optimism • inventiveness • a large number of NGOs (unused potential), many young people involved, volunteering • high level of innovation and creativity • the possibility of non-formal education, networking • a lot of expertise, intergenerational cooperation • Office of Culture and Youth • Youth-Friendly City certificate • European Youth Capital • facilities (Youth Cultural Center and City Youth Council Maribor hostel) • programs for young people • integration, networking • non-formal education, skills • co-funding by the Municipality of Maribor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no practical experience, not enough interconnection • no confidence, no self-initiative • apathy (Facebook), lack of networking • not trained for deficit professions • too long education • financial and human resources, malnutrition • low level of entrepreneurship • underdeveloped cooperation with businesses • lack of leadership skills, lack of experience in participating in calls for tenders • lack of calls for tenders by the Municipality of Maribor for employment • ill-informed young people • dispersed organizations • passivity and inactivity of young people • low mutual respect
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calls for tender and project work, subsidies, public works, "The First Challenge (Employment Service of Slovenia) • student work, self-employment, social entrepreneurship, work abroad • interest by foreign investors • youth organizations, empty places in voluntary work • active employment policy, R & D program (joint projects supported by EU funds) • systematic development of social entrepreneurship, EU funds • Center for Development of NGOs (hub center) • change in the crisis of values • European Youth Capital • establishment of a coordination center • entrepreneurial mentoring • intergenerational interaction • volunteering, NGOs, calls for tenders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low governance leadership, money, abolition of subventions for self-employment • inflexibility of employers • different mindset of parents (directing children into education) • student work (stealing someone's job) • lack of systematic actions of local governments and the state (relevant legislation, financial and tax mechanisms) • lack of concessions (local, national) • deepening of the crisis, lack of understanding by decision-makers about the challenges and possibilities • the problem of co-funding (of calls), multi-annual calls for tenders • actions represent a major financial challenge for NGOs • passivity of young people • poor economic situation, high taxation • deficit of staff in certain professions • inability of the market to adapt to the needs of young people, no perspective • brain drain

Annex 2: EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS DEVELOPED AND CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE MY GENERATION AT WORK PROJECT IN MARIBOR

Introduction

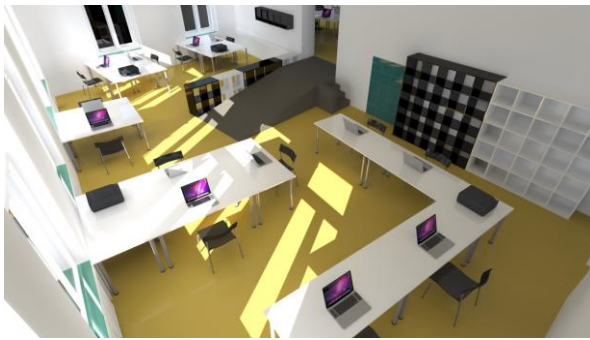
The main focus of the My Generation @ Work Enterprise Maribor is to connect and set up a network of stakeholders who already are active in the field of youth employment. As stakeholders, the URBACT Local Support Group (hereinafter referred to as: ULSG), ESS, the City Youth Council Maribor, the Maribor Development Agency and the Career Center of the University of Maribor and the Business Incubator of the University of Maribor took initiative for such networking with the goal to create a platform for cooperation building, presentation of individual projects and interconnection of these between ULSG members. The My Generation @ Work project is recognized as a powerful tool for initiating the process of networking in Maribor and the ever-growing connection with other stakeholders in the city. Although Maribor is a small city, stakeholders are not connected or do not cooperate, therefore are unaware of each other's actions.

Go For It (hereinafter referred to as: GFI) 1: Connecting Youngsters and the Municipality

The first GFI 'Connecting Youngsters and the Municipality' set in 2012 aimed at making empty municipality-owned office spaces available for renting to young people for a symbolic rent. This GFI has been realized in August 2014, but with a broader perspective. Upon request from youngsters and non-governmental organizations in Maribor, the Municipality of Maribor created a community center in the city center. From August 2014 onwards a 2,000 m² former pharmaceutical factory house is available to all potential entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations and youngsters. The community center 'Tkalski prehod 4' encourages and facilitates different work processes, supports networking and cooperation between each other and fosters the development of one's own work. The community center currently houses around 13 organizations from various fields. Besides the common places available to everyone, a call for tenders was published for desk sharing in the aforementioned building (<http://maribor-pohorje.si/namera-o-oddaji-stvarnega-premozenja-v-brezplacno-uporabo.aspx>).

Through the process of establishing the desk-sharing space we have learned that vast interest for such a solution exists among entrepreneurs. Currently 10 entrepreneurs are using the space, but the number increases from week to week. We estimate that within a year of its establishment approximately 70 entrepreneurs will occupy this space. Moreover, young people have expressed a need for additional activities. Therefore, we have developed various forms of support services in cooperation with them:

- Education and training,
- Networking of organizations and individuals,
- Establishment of cooperation with the industry and public administration,
- Administrative assistance,
- Provision of infrastructure (space, equipment, information and communication technology),
- Support and technical assistance for new organizations and social enterprises.



GFI 2: Volunteering = Having a Job

The GFI 'Volunteering = Having a Job' was successfully launched and completed in 2013. As stated in the preliminary GFI description, 7 volunteers were given the possibility to present their ideas. They implemented several ideas with our help and gained valuable work experience that will undoubtedly prove to their advantage in the labor market. The following actions were carried out:

- October, 2013: Workshops entitled *"Time Management"* and *"How to Organize Yourself"* – facilitated by the volunteer Monika Rajšp at the EYC Maribor 2013 Cultural Information Center (hereinafter referred to as: CIC).
- November, December 2013: *Christmas Card Workshops* - The Municipality of Maribor has provided volunteers with a place and materials for the production of Christmas cards. The Christmas cards were sent to all EYC Maribor 2013 and the My Generation @ Work participating organizations, but also different institutions in Slovenia.
- December 2013: *Christmas Fair* – Volunteers could sell their hand-made products at two festive stands.

During the 'Volunteering = Having a Job' project we learned that young people seek mentorship among established entrepreneurs, artists, athletes, academics, politicians and other public persons.



GFI 3: Start-Up Floor

This third GFI entitled 'Start-Up Floor' aims to further strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit among students and increase the formation of start-up companies among the students of the University of Maribor. The initiative for the GFI 'Start-Up Floor' came from two young entrepreneurs, who already have built a successful start-up business.

Through the implementation of this GFI corporate awareness, entrepreneurial skills and activity of students will increase. All students participating in the GFI will live in student dorm, what will create an environment that supports their entrepreneurial mind-set. Mentors will provide professional help and support in business start-up.

This GFI was presented in September of 2013 in Braga, when it was still an idea. Since then, the content and the role of each stakeholder were defined, and an action plan for the implementation of the GFI drafted. On October 14, 2013, an open discussion with the title 'How to Encourage Start-Up Businesses in the University City of Maribor through Cooperation' was organized. An ambassador/mentor has already been chosen and the group of students participating in this project is starting to take shape and should consist of around 20 students.

Through the preparation and implementation of this GFI we have learned that it is essential to include and engage ambassadors/mentors in student dorms for an effective promotion and introduction of the project.

We were thrilled by the response of the participants as well as the results of the visibility of the project due to the 'student-to-student' approach.



GFI 4: M-Generation

The 'M-Generation GFI' has been designed as a space for direct, more efficient and easier way to find work and human resources on the basis of 'I have a skill' – 'I need someone with specific knowledge'. This app is intended to be a link between young people and employers. It will encourage:

- greater adaptability to the individual's employment needs and wishes,
- the use of innovative knowledge,
- greater flexibility in the labor market,
- the integration of social networks.

The initial idea is to form a closer connection with young people. The majority of young individuals have created FB and Google+ profiles, therefore both formal and informal knowledge can be spread on these platforms. Moreover, employers can form a better and more realistic profile of the job seeker. Using a mobile app, young job seekers will be able to apply for a job in a less bureaucratic environment, thus communicating directly with the employer. The final result of this GFI was intended to be an updated version of the +Delo mobile app, which can be accessed through the following link: <https://plus.google.com/u/0/s/%2B%20delo.je%20>. Unfortunately, this GFI is an unsuccessful project as during the preparatory phase we discovered that the number of young people using Google+ is very low and the costs of developing a new mobile app are too high.

GFI 5: Active Youth

Within this GFI, various workshops, lectures and other activities for young people were organized to encourage them to become more active in the search for solutions related to their future employment

situation. The main goal of this GFI was to provide them with new skills in professions that are in shortage in the Maribor area (e.g. handicraft businesses: painters, electricians, masons), consequently helping them to find a job or starting their own business.

The participants were young people, who wanted to acquire new skills for the above mentioned unpopular jobs. The initiative for this GIF came from different young individuals as well as from youth organizations in Maribor following the presentation and discussion of the idea from the partner city of Valencia, Spain.

On November 28, 2013, the first workshop 'Promotion of Occupations in Shortage' has taken place in the premises of the City Youth Council Maribor. The 6 participants were young people who wanted to acquire new skills in the field of handicraft businesses, as a matter of fact pupils from the Secondary School for Civil Engineering Maribor, accompanied by their adult mentors. The workshop resulted in the renovated premises of the City Youth Council Maribor. Due to the successful work, different places owned by the Municipality of Maribor are to be renovated within similar workshops in 2015 and 2016.

Within the framework of this GFI we have learned how to actively participate in decision-making processes. Furthermore, we understood how to encourage young people for active participation in volunteer activities. As active citizens, young people can cooperate in order to contribute to their local communities as well as empower themselves by gathering experiences and knowledge for the improvement of their employment situation.



GFI 6: Promotion of Internships

Currently, the transition from education to work is perceived as an immense problem for young people. Therefore, opportunities for young people, where they could gain valuable work experiences, are necessary in order to enable them to cope with the labor market challenges more successfully.

With this GFI we tried to encourage companies to provide more internship places for young people and thus enhance the skills and employability of young people and facilitate their transition from education and training to a favorable first job. Internships can also be useful for businesses as they can find a potentially excellent future employee with fresh ideas who can contribute significantly to the continued productivity and competitiveness of their company.

On May 28, 2014, the event 'Internship – Take it Serious' was organized in the premises of the City Youth Council Maribor. The idea of the workshop was to present the meaning of internship through the eyes of an employer and a youngster. Within the cooperation between two ULSG members, the City Youth Council Maribor and the Career Center of the University of Maribor, several other events were organized reaching about 20 young individuals.

Within the framework of the 'Promotion of Internships' project we observed that young people need information regarding the employers' expectations. Furthermore, we have learned that suitable preparation before initiating an internship results in positive effects for young people, however these are not fully recognized by them as important.



Conclusion

The GFIs presented above provided a fresh vision and new perspective on how to tackle the issue of employability among young people. The successfully implemented GFIs raised the awareness among young people about the changing labor market and the need for improving their entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in order to cope with the labor market challenges successfully.

Experiences gained within the framework of the My Generation @ Work project in the field of youth employment proved to be useful and were considered while drawing up the new Local Program for Youth.

Good practices from the project's partner cities have been considered and will be implemented in Maribor through this new Local Program for Youth.