



February | 2016

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DESK RESEARCH REPORT

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THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN FUNDED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION UNDER THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME. THIS PUBLICATION [COMMUNICATION] REFLECTS THE VIEWS ONLY OF THE AUTHOR, AND THE COMMISSION CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY USE WHICH MAY BE MADE OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN
2015-1-CY01-KA203-011881



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Introduction

Currently European Union (EU) faces several challenges, as poverty, social exclusion, aging population, environmental changes, unemployment and more specifically youth unemployment. With the emergence of new technologies and innovations, the old jobs disappear, giving way to new functions that are becoming more skilled in all categories. Simultaneously universities graduate a higher number of youngsters that after leaving the education system do not find a place in the labour market, or eventually, the job for what they studied or they desire. In the other hand, many employers refer that graduates are not well prepared to enter into the labour market.

Regarding this, entrepreneurship has been considered as a key element for the growth and competitiveness through employment, skills, innovation and technology. These are key issues to enable the European Union (EU) to meet the targets set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable, and Inclusive Growth (European Commission, 2013). Education, namely Higher Education Institutions, have an important role to help students developing their entrepreneurial competencies, fostering young employability, enhancing self-employment and employability in wage jobs.

Considering these factors, it is necessary to develop projects and programs that analyse the gaps in the development of entrepreneurial skills among young people (through literature and desk research), that can devise strategies and ways to implement the guidelines established, and after its implementation make an assessment of the training provided.

The project **EU Youth: From theory to action – ActYouth EU** arise with the aims to foster the employability and innovative potential of young people/students and graduates by upgrading and developing their competencies for entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial attitudes and other transversal competencies necessary for successful entering the labour market. ActYouth's aim is, thus, to respond to the educational challenges of the higher education in Europe and all members of the EU through the development of a complex system to diagnose, measure and develop such competencies.

The project goals are aligned with the European vision of building a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, especially on the priority themes Youth on the Move, A digital agenda for Europe and An Agenda for new skills and jobs, and also Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan (European Commission, 2013). ActYouth puts forward a work plan to develop tools, materials and training requirements to upgrading and develop competences for that the entry into the working world of these young people is made successfully.

In order to attain the goals the project will developed Research Objectives that guide the study, namely:

Research Objective 1 (R01):

Identify and characterize the entrepreneurship competencies that are most important for employability.

Research Objective 2 (R02):

Identify and characterize the training programs and service needs for improving/developing key entrepreneurship and soft skills competences for students/graduates employability.

The present Literature Review and Desk Research Report aims at understanding what competencies are the most important, both for students/graduates and employees, as well as how to develop such education and training programs. In summary, Act Youth Project searches to find how entrepreneurship skills can be embedded in learning contents and processes, in universities, business schools and corporate academies.

The present document consists of three chapters that offer a description of the data analysed through data collection tools, which includes the Literature Review (DCT1), Training Programs and Support Services (DCT2) and the Competencies according to Job Offers (DCT3). At the end of this document it provided a conclusion that lists the main key points arising from the literature review and desk research report that should be the guidelines for the definition of the competence profile.

Chapter 1. From Theory to Action: Contextualization and Conceptualization

The contemporary development of technologies and innovations, as well as the evolution of societies has been reflected in a rapidly changing economy. Currently, in order to respond to the new dynamics of the economy, the labour market and employers expect and require workers to acquire new and more diversified skills. There is a demand for competency in all areas, both at the technical level and with respect to soft skills, such as ICT competencies, problem-solving, planning, organisation and communication (World Bank Development & Private and Financial Sector Development Departments, 2011; Lapiņa & Ščeuļovs, 2014).

As a mean of developing competencies, education, namely the tertiary education, is one of the key factors to promote a successful competition between job searchers and helps to diminish the rates of unemployment (World Bank Development & Private and Financial Sector Development Departments, 2011; Górnjak, 2013; Lapiņa & Ščeuļovs, 2014)

Teachers show a high degree of concern about the level of employability of their students (Ortiz-Medina et al., 2015), and empowering students with the most valued competencies by employers. Although some employers screen the future employees according to their degree classification, for others the grades are not the most important; they value others competencies instead (Saunders & Zuzel, 2016). Entrepreneurship education appears as an important vehicle to stimulate the development of transversal skills in youngsters, which allow them to create their own jobs and enhance the opportunity to make the difference in the competitive labour market (Premand et al., 2016; Lapiņa & Ščeuļovs, 2014). Several studies confirm that young employability is boosted by entrepreneurship education (Premand et al., 2016; Bustamam et al., 2015)

Despite of education programs for entrepreneurship focus on skills and competencies development, they also aim to stimulate the capacity of students to act and think like an entrepreneur, and making them more effective people, not only at work but also at a personal level (Bagheri & Lope Pihie, 2013). This first part of the report clarifies key concepts on the field of young graduates transition into the labour market and presents a contextualization on the theme.

1.1 Challenges of the contemporary economy

World economy has faced significant changes within the last decades. Globalization has brought new dynamics, businesses made through internet and connections between countries with very different cultures and features. The new global market asks for flexibility and adaptability in such a way it never happened before. Employers expect their employees to be increasingly more prepared for the competitive national and international markets (Lapiņa & Ščeulovs, 2014; Nowacka, 2015). Such requirement is demanded even for young graduates, who just finished University courses, and new competences are needed in all kind of jobs categories (Lapiņa & Ščeulovs, 2014).

Simultaneously, the increasing number of graduates, the job market becomes more aggressive and competitive. Aggravating the situation, regarding the economic and financial crisis, companies from all over the world are still recovering and in need of strong entrepreneurs (OCDE, 2015). Countries are facing serious employability problems (OECD & ILO, 2014), with young and inexperienced graduates having difficulties in their search for a job (Górniak, 2013).

1.2 Young unemployment

Unemployment is one of the greater challenges faced by EU, with young unemployment being of particular concern (European Policy Centre, 2014). Youth unemployment is defined as the unemployment among citizens under 25 years old (between the ages of 15 and 24) compared to the total labour force (employed and unemployed) in that age group (Eurostat, 2015c). It should be considered that a large proportion of people in this age group is outside of the labour market, because many Youngers are full-time students and, thus, are not available for work. In 2012, the youth unemployment rate in EU-28 achieved the worrying number of 23.0% (Eurostat, 2015c), registering only a slight decrease in 2014, to 21.8%, and to 20.1% in 2015 (Eurostat, 2015a).

Although one of the functions of the education system is to prepare students to enter in the labour force, and considering that the number of people in tertiary education continues to increase (with 2012 registering an approximate number of 4.8 million students graduated in the EU-28), the labour market is unable to insert these people (Eurostat, 2015b). It is commonly accepted that competencies are an essential part for individuals' development, for businesses and for society, in general. They assume a great importance, not only to face economic crisis, but also to face a world increasingly dynamic and globalized (World Economic Forum, 2014). Nevertheless, although there is a common concern on Education, many employers consider there is a gap between the competencies required for jobs and the ones that candidates have (World Economic Forum, 2014; OECD & ILO, 2014).

Job candidates go to the labour market with knowledge in several areas, competencies, abilities and other individual characteristics, such as work experience, choices of education, training, innate abilities and preferences (World Economic Forum, 2014), that may constitute factors to a successful transition from school to work. However, not rarely, candidates show an absence of other skills, required to respond to the expectations placed on them (Gillinson & O'Leary, 2006). Demos (2006) refers, for

instance, that since they come from the university used to work in the peer-to-peer environment, it leads them to find difficulties when shift to organisational hierarchies, and have some problems in the relation with their bosses (Gillinson & O'Leary, 2006).

Entrepreneurship is regarded as a potential solution to youth unemployment (OCDE, 2015), since it could re-activate economies and create jobs. At the same time, studies recognize the importance of education and, especially, entrepreneurial competencies to foster employability and reduce the risk of unemployment (World Bank Development & Private and Financial Sector Development Departments, 2011).

1.3 Youth entrepreneurship education

In an attempt to answer to both youth unemployment and the gap between competencies offered by the traditional education system and the missing ones valued by the labour market (Górniak, 2013), policy makers and governments found in the investment on entrepreneurship education and training a measure to reduce the problem (Bustamam et al., 2015). Using different, and usually more practical teaching methodologies, this kind of education leads at developing transversal competencies, which are highly valued in the labour market. The main goals are to help start-ups graduates (graduates entrepreneur), on the one hand, and to produce graduates with entrepreneurial characteristics (entrepreneurial graduates), on the other hand, enhancing both self-employment and employability in wage jobs (Bustamam et al., 2015).

But can entrepreneurship be taught? There is still no consensus among the studies: while some authors state that it must be innate, others believe that it can be studied, learned and developed, through education and training programs in the classroom. For instance, of a total of six schools identified by Cunningham and Lischeron (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991) on entrepreneurship, three assert that entrepreneurial traits are innate, whereas the other three hold that entrepreneurial skills and competencies can be acquired through formal training. Some studies concluded, in fact, that entrepreneurship training plays a vital role to nurture entrepreneurship culture among the students/youngers, leading to improvements in their employability (e.g. Premand, Brodmann, Almeida, Grun, & Barouni, 2016; Bustamam et al., 2015).

Literature review leads to concluding that the most important question to ask would be “how to teach entrepreneurship” or, perhaps, “which entrepreneurial competencies should be taught” instead of if entrepreneurship can, overall, be taught. The key factor is the effectiveness of education and training programs. Entrepreneurship education may, therefore, benefit from a clearer definition of which specific skills or entrepreneurial challenges students/graduates seek to improve, along with a more comprehensive articulation of how changes in skills are expected to lead to employment outcomes (Premand et al., 2016).

Summary

As a result of the dynamic contemporary economy and the current context of crisis and competitiveness, countries face increasingly more challenges to place youth in the labour market. The number of unemployment reach worrying numbers and is regarded as one of the major problems of the world economy and European, in particular.

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education is faced as one of the potential solutions to such concerns, considering its capacity to boost economy and create jobs. The main issue raised would be, then how to do it in an efficient way. ActYouth project aims at helping to respond it, by analysing both the key competencies needed to foster employability. The second and third chapters of the present report are a first attempt to build an answer, since they analyse the competencies desired by employers shown in job offers requirements, and the ones who are already offered through training programs and support services.

Chapter 2. Key competencies for youth employability

Over time various definitions of competences emerged from several authors. Even the correct term to use is sometimes confusing, since “skills”, “expertise”, “acumen” and “competency” are used in the literature as synonyms (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Boyatzis (Boyatzis, 1982) was the first to popularize the term “competency”, defining a competency as “*A capacity that exists in a person that leads to behaviour that meets the job demands within the parameters of organizational environment, and that, in turn brings about desired results*”.

Overall, competencies are defined as an integration or combination of components of knowledge, attitudes, skills, values and behaviours that a person needs to successfully accomplish a task or an activity (Kyndt & Baert, 2015; Morris, Webb, Fu, & Singhal, 2013). Considering that competencies are changeable, they could be acquired, learned, developed and reached by experience, training or coaching and practice (Kyndt & Baert, 2015). Yet, it is important to highlight that competencies could be enhanced with practice, but if they are not practiced, they may be lost (Morris, Webb, Fu, & Singhal, 2013).

Regarding entrepreneurship area, literature establishes a number of competencies that determine the performance and the success of an entrepreneur. There is still some ambiguity in the studies relatively to entrepreneurial skills, and in an entrepreneurial context there is no consensus regarding the relative importance of each competency specifically (Morris et al., 2013).

The list of entrepreneurial skills is endless and there is no general agreement about the classification of those competencies. Nevertheless, many authors refer that entrepreneurial competencies cover personal characteristics, attitudes and skills such as problem solving, leadership, communication, self-awareness and assessment skills like business and managerial competencies (Frank, 2007; Morris et al., 2013)

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of key literature in the field of entrepreneurship competencies that counted with the contribution of all project partners. With the aim of verifying the match between the contributions of literature and the skills required by employers in real context, they were also analysed 40 job offers, for graduates or under graduates, from the project partner countries (Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal). Such collection will help to define competencies needed for successful entering into the labour market.

2.1 Most important competencies to find a job

Regardless the huge number of studies in the field of entrepreneurship competencies, there are less literature concerning the competencies that graduates need to have when they leave university and make the transition to the labour market, even if they create their own job or work for others.

Despite Timmons (1978) consider that “*There is no set of characteristics that every entrepreneur must have*”, for this particular project it was defined a core list of entrepreneurial skills. Table 1 identifies a group of relevant competencies for young students/graduates to successfully entering into the labour market, deriving from a number of studies (Frank, 2007; García-Aracil & Van der Velden, 2008; Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010; World Bank Development & Private and Financial Sector Development Departments, 2011; Morris et al., 2013; Saunders & Zuzel, 2016).

Skills were grouped in two main categories: (i) transversal competencies and (ii) technical competencies, which complement each other.

Table 1. Entrepreneurship Competencies

TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES		TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES
PERSONAL COMPETENCIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Attention to detail • Commitment • Cooperation • Creativity • Decisiveness • Dependability • Enthusiasm • Initiative • Integrity • Self-awareness • Timekeeping • Tolerance to stress • Work ethic • Interpersonal relationships • Leadership • Willingness to learn 	GENERIC COMPETENCIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial awareness • Communication • Ethical issues • Foreign languages • Management skills • Negotiation • Networking • Numeracy • Planning & Organisation • Problem solving • Questioning/Listening • Self-management • Team work • Use of ICT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical knowledge • Knowledge of methods

Entrepreneurial competencies presented in Table 1 represent a summary of the most referred characteristics found in literature, that may also be distinguish by the most important skills to find a job.

2.2 Most desirable competencies by employers

Many students invest in their university education in order to have better knowledge and skills with the intent to obtain better employment prospects and be successful in the labour market. Simultaneously employers expect that young people were endowed with well-developed skills in order to become efficient and effective right from the moment of recruitment to the place of work (Saunders & Zuzel, 2016). However, many employers consider there is a gap between the competencies required for jobs and the ones that candidates have (World Economic Forum, 2014; OECD & ILO, 2014).

Sometimes the level of skills acquired at school and those required in the labour context do not match (García-Aracil & Van der Velden, 2008). Saunders and Zuzel (2016) analyses the employability skills in the vision of employers and the students perceptions, and obtained a good agreement between them. However, the priority assigned to each of the competencies was different according to the group (students *versus* employers). More than technical and subject-specific skills, even in highly technical scientific jobs, employers value a range of personal characteristics and generic skills (Saunders & Zuzel, 2016).

Employers who complain of difficulties in recruiting usually find lack of soft/transversal skills (Gillinson & O'Leary, 2006), namely in: occupational skills (related to the specific qualities of activities performed in the given occupation); self-organizational (self-organization and motivation to work, showing initiative, timeliness, entrepreneurship, and resilience to stress) and interpersonal (contacts with people, both colleagues and clients, and cooperation in the group) (Gillinson & O'Leary, 2006; Kocór & Strzebońska, 2011, Górnjak, 2013). Also communication skills and creativity thinking are seen as competencies with failures in new employees leaving education (Gillinson & O'Leary, 2006).

In order to identify the competencies required by employers in the real context, all project partner countries provide 10 job offers for graduates or under graduates. For this collection only official job offers available at online job search platforms were considered. As official sources they were considered government or public institutions (e.g. Ministries), such as Employment and Vocational Training Institute, Universities or their careers services and public employment pool. It was defined a time limit for job offers advertised in the period between 2014 and 2016.

Considering immigration and globalization, that lead positions to be developed across countries, and aiming at diversifying the companies and type of positions in the data collected, only jobs developed in the country of the partner were considered (e.g. the Portuguese team should only collect job offers whose roles will be developed in Portugal).

In Table 2 it can be seen the most required skills in job offers, disaggregated by country.

Table 2. Most competencies requested in job offers by country

COUNTRY	TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES	TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES
Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • ICT skills • Initiative • Language skills • Self motivation • Team work • Work under pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote new campaigns and sell the company's product • Process data and apply in accurate manner to the database using technical and financial knowledge • Ability to carry out financial and management research reports
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to details • Communication skills • Flexibility • ICT skills • Independent • Initiative • Language skills • Management skills • Problem Solving skills • Customer-oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with Standard Template Library • Manage the reconciliation of supplier invoices to the various invoice systems (which includes eProcurement (R2P) and SAP AIP direct invoicing. • Process payments and security transactions related to new issues for Swedbank clients
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to detail • Communication skills • Creativity • ICT skills • Language skills • Management • Multi-tasking • Team work • Work independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge on SAP system • Basic knowledge on Java • Working knowledge of flash, rich media • Analyse data using VLOOKUP, COUNTIF, SUMIF, and IF functions
Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Dynamic • ICT skills • Interpersonal relationship skills • Language skills • Management • Responsibility • Problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling and design MySQL databases, SQL server, SQL server compact edition and Oracle application data to support • Projection and estimated sales • Experience in the management and implementation of quality management systems ISO 9001 • Prospecting for new customers

Most of the job offers analysed were related to functions for graduate staff, such as lawyer, junior Java developer, marketing director and finance administrator.

From the descriptive analyses it can be concluded that in all countries job offers are mainly focused on the desired transversal skills, namely generic competencies, rather than focused in technical competencies. Only in the intended functions of a more technical level, the technical skills appear and are described in more detail. For instance, for the data production analyst is specifically requested skills such as: good knowledge in programming (e.g.: VBA, JavaScript), knowledge Base manipulation, Access, SQL.

The most frequently mentioned skills in job offers are the fluency in foreign languages mainly in English idiom, ICT competencies (e.g. "Fluent in Microsoft Excel/Google Sheets"; "Good PC skills") and management skills (e.g. "management of the materials and financial means available"; "Project management skills"). Following as most referred

competencies appeared: attention/focus on details, communication skills, creativity, customer-orientation, flexibility, initiative, motivation, multi-tasking, organizational, problem solving, self-reliance, stress resistance, team work, time management, willingness to learn, work independently and work under pressure. All the above and most cited competencies in the job offers, fit in the transversal competencies category. Less mentioned but not less important, are highlighted the following skills: autonomous learning; availability to travel; driving license; motivation; networking; numeracy; organization; persuasiveness; previous experience; results orientation; stress resistance; and time-management.

In several job offers it was referred the need of the future employees to have university degree, but only in one case was asked a "very good grade". This fact goes in line with the authors that refer a less importance of grades to employers (Saunders & Zuzel, 2016).

Summary

In summary, the literature shows that there are a number of skills considered important and relevant to a future entrepreneur or someone that will be working for others. It is also notorious some unpleasantness by employers regarding the skills that young candidates have when they look for employment. According to the literature, a list of necessary entrepreneurship competencies was developed, divided into two main areas: transversal and technical competencies. Transversal competencies were divided in two sub-groups: personal and generic competencies. Attention to detail, cooperation, creativity, initiative, tolerance to stress, communication, foreign languages, management, problem solving, team work and ICT skills are some of the competencies listed as transversal competencies needed to find a job. Theoretical knowledge and knowledge of methods are the entrepreneurship competencies considered as technical competencies.

It was also made an exploratory analysis of a total of 40 job offers, resulting from desk research in the four partner countries involved in the project, that aim to identify the most desirable competencies for employers. ICT competencies, languages, management skills, attention to details, communication skills, creativity, initiative, motivation are some of the competencies most referred in the job offers, and are aligned with the list drawn on the basis of literature review.

Higher Education Institutions has an important role in the development of skills and the entrepreneurial culture of their students, that can produce a range of desirable outcomes, providing them several differentiator factors for their working and personal life. This issue is of high relevance to society and the current economy, and it is already a target of attention by policymakers. Chapter 3 addresses this theme.

Chapter 3. Training programs and services for youth employability

Entrepreneurship stands as one of the key competencies which has received special attention by policy makers all over the world, who find it as a mean to develop youngsters skills and even create their own job (Premand et al., 2016). Responding to a context of continuously changing economies across the world, entrepreneurial competences provide Youth the capability to encounter new challenges and to motivate them to face new realities.

Along with the governments focus on entrepreneurship, there is currently a trend on education, especially at Higher Institutions, to develop not only technical knowledge, but mostly other key transversal competencies (Saunders & Zuzel, 2016). The emphasis on a broader range of competencies aims at preparing graduates to the trials of the labour market, converting students into “business ready graduates”, as stated by (Saunders & Zuzel, 2016). The approach empowers students with new skills demanded by the market (Saunders & Zuzel, 2016), at the same time that appears as a solution for the difficulties they face in the transition from University to work life. On the one hand, entrepreneurship education supports the development of new ideas and businesses, enhancing the development of new entrepreneurs and on the other hand it provides a set of competencies considered crucial to become a successful professional, in any sector of the competitive contemporary economy (Frank, 2007).

Looking at entrepreneurship as a driver towards employability, VET institutions, namely Higher Education Institutions provide students with a diversified offer to develop entrepreneurial competencies, including training courses, entrepreneurial activities and various entrepreneurship and leadership clubs (Bagheri & Lope Pihie, 2013). Although empirical evidence of their efficacy is scarce, it seems that students enrolling these programs acquire higher entrepreneurial potential (Bagheri & Lope Pihie, 2013). Therefore, they are more likely to develop their own business, becoming self-employees and to find a wage job, fostering their employability (Acs, 2006; Bustamam et al., 2015; Premand et al., 2016).

Chapter 3 offers an exploratory analysis of a set of training programs and support services developed across the four project countries (Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal), revealing the main features of education offer in such countries. In order to allow a comparative analysis, the five entities were asked to list key programs on their countries, identifying key aspects of current courses and support services, such as their target audiences, syllabi and methodologies applied. The analyses reveal the most outstanding competencies offered, specifying transversal and technical skills.

3.1 Characterization of training programs across the project countries

Each partner identified a set of training programs, which reveal the training offer in the project countries. Since Eurosuccess and European University Cyprus belong to the same country, collection of data was conducted together by the two institutions. A total of 17 training programs were identified and characterized (5 from Cyprus, 4 from Lithuania, 4 from Poland and 4 from Portugal). The following pages address an overview on the main results obtained. Results will contribute to the following steps of the research, as they will help building the scripts for Data Collection Tools 5 and 6, interviews and questionnaires.

3.1.1 Type of provider

Training programs are offered by universities, research institutes and consultants, across all countries under study. It should be noted that most of them are funded by the European Commission. In fact, the EU has shown particular concern in the promotion of entrepreneurship in Europe as a mean to boost economic growth and create jobs, namely reinforcing education and training (European Commission, 2013), as stated in Chapter 1 of this document.

3.1.2 Target audiences

Courses identified are driven to University students (especially the ones in the last years of their degrees), young graduates who still did not find a job or the job they desire, and young people interested in establishing their own company or create their own job. It was also identified one course targeting professionals related to the investment and project funding, as well as a course specially driven to young people working in start-ups. No major differences were found between countries.

The selection aims at understanding the main features of courses especially designed for young people doing the transition between academy and labour market, which is the scope of the project.

3.1.3 Methodologies

Regardless the provider country, all programs adopt combined methodologies (theory + practice). Practical methodologies used include workshops, coaching, office hours with local directors, learning by doing, practical exercises and case studies. The less practical parts of the programs include classes, lectures and seminars. It is also evident a focus on team work activities, including activities with multidisciplinary groups, brainstorming and discussion groups.

3.1.4 Syllabi/contents

This section aims at analysing the contents of the training programs, regarding their objectives and the main competences offered. Transversal and technical competences are analysed separately, following the same categorization used in Chapter 2.

3.1.4.1 Objectives

Despite the target groups and providers seem to be very similar across countries, the training programs present different objectives, regarding the country where they are taught. Two main types of training programs are clearly identified:

- *Self-employed oriented*: courses aiming at preparing participants to develop their ideas, start a new business and become an entrepreneur;
- *Wage jobs oriented*: courses aiming at developing entrepreneurial competences desired by employers and considered important to work in a business environment (this type also aims at empowering people with competencies that may lead them to better jobs).

It is interesting to find a match between the educational offer and the potential identified in literature, regarding the applicability of entrepreneurial competencies to create own job and to foster employability in already existing companies.

3.1.4.2 Competencies offered

The following table summarize the most common competencies offered by the identified training courses, according to the country where they are taught. Since there are several competences offered by the courses, only the 10 most referred were chosen (both for transversal and technical competencies). In the case of Lithuania all transversal competencies offered by programs were listed

Table 3. Most referred competencies offered by training programs

PROVIDER COUNTRY	TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES	TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES
Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Creativity • Idea generation • Leadership • Legal and financial matters • Management • Opportunity recognition • Self-management skills • Team work • Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a revenue model • Business Information Technology or MIS • Electronic marketing • Logistics • Distribution • Mathematical modelling • Plan and build a product • Research skills • Technical competencies relevant to entrepreneurship
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Networking • Pro-activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying Data • Applying Technology Tools • Budget planning

PROVIDER COUNTRY	TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCIES	TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Self-assessment • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client's servicing • Creation and implementation of product development strategy • Creation and implementation of Sales strategy • Goal setting techniques • Market research • Marketing • Project planning
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Creativity • Flexibility • Management • Motivation • Negotiation • Problem solving • Self-management • Stress resilience • Team work • Time management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business plan development • ESF funds • Financial planning • Human resources management • Legal aspects of running a company • Marketing and sales • OPHC Preparation of an application in a generator of applications • Preparation of CV • Presentation skills • Supporting programs for start-ups
Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation to corporate environment • Decision-making • Entrepreneurial spirit • Financial literacy • Multi-culturalism • Organization • Reporting • Risk and fear management • Risk sensibility • Team work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic tools to create a start-up • Business plan development • Detect, analyse and evaluate innovative business opportunities • Economic and financial analysis • Finding leverage • Funding • Management tools • Marketing • Risk awareness • Structure proposed investment

It is important to stress that it was founded a focus on transversal competencies across the majority of the training programs identified. Regarding the most frequently offered competencies, team work is clearly the most offered, with communication, management and creativity appearing right after. It is also clear a focus on business plan development and several competences related to finances and economics.

3.2 Characterization of support services across the project countries

Besides the education and training offer for employability, it is also important to analyse existing support services, which help graduates to make a successful transition from school to work. The five partner institutions identified a total of 9 support services (2 from Cyprus, 2 from Lithuania, 3 from Poland and 2 from Portugal), which are presented in this section.

3.2.1 Type of provider

Partners institutions from the four countries identified services from Universities (the majority of them), the government and from private institutions – although this last group is less represented.

3.2.2 Target audiences

The identified support services target mostly students and graduates searching for a job, as well as employers who search for employees. There are also two services that aim to reach, in particular, would-be entrepreneurs.

3.2.2 Support area

Project partners were asked to classify the support area in five categories: (1) employment, (2) training, (3) entrepreneurship support, (4) certification of competencies, (5) other. The following section summarizes the most referred activities in each category, from all chosen support services by each partner institution. Activities classified as “other” were re-classified according to the categories 1-4, since they all fit in the existing categories.

In the category 1, which was the most referred, they were identified activities related to establishing the bridge between students/graduates and employers, help individuals setting up their CV, give information/counselling regarding working conditions and opportunities. Category 3 was the second most referred and included activities directly related to the process of setting up own company. Although categories 2 and 4 were also chosen in some cases, they deserved less attention; no activities in such areas stand as of much relevance.

3.2.3. Competencies offered

It was found that there is a wide agreement on the various skills offered in support services in the countries of the partners involved. The following competencies stand as the most referred: CV and cover letters preparation, preparation for interview, active search job competencies, competencies acquired through experiences in the company/work context and in international experiences (e.g. ERASMUS+), entrepreneurial skills and assertive communication. No major differences stand out across countries, except from Lithuania, whose support services are specially focus in providing consultancy for people wanting to start-up a company business.

Summary

The training programs and support services identified in the partner countries reveal the main features of the offer in entrepreneurial competences for employability. Both means of support are mainly offered by Universities, although governments play also a key role in the provision of support services. The main target groups are university students and young graduates looking for a job and would-be entrepreneurs. Employers, in the case of support services and professionals related to investment and project funding are also targeted, although the offer for them is somehow diverse.

In what concerns the contents, a common feature in training programs and support services was found, both means of support offer two alternatives: support for establishing own company and become self-employed; or acquire competencies to find a wage job or a more desirable job than the current one. The most frequent competences offered by training programs are transversal competences, including team work, communication, management and creativity. The development of business plan is one of the most outstanding activities in these courses. Methodologies tend to combine theory and practice, using different techniques and methods, evidencing a concern on the development of team work activities.

In the support services, training and certification of competencies is also offered, but the main focus is, indeed, in employment and entrepreneurship support. In this case, the main competencies offered are the ones related to tasks directly connected to searching for jobs, such as CV and cover letter preparation.

Although a small number of training programs and support services was analysed, the analysis provides an overview on the offer in the various countries participating in ActYouth Project.

Conclusion

As a result from several factors as well as the current economic crisis, the increase in the number of graduated people, the reduction of number of jobs and the increase on the age of the retirement, challenges such as youth unemployment emerged. Young people that leave education system find increasingly more difficulties to enter into the labour market. This is a concern for many policymakers, who believe that one way to combat this problem is to give more attention to the development of entrepreneurial skills in Higher Education Institutions.

Skills acquired and developed throughout the life cycle represent a key and a differentiator factor for the successful of a person. Many of the entrepreneurial skills could be acquired and developed at school/university context (Frank, 2007). Although there are other factors that influence the availability and characteristics for entrepreneurship, such as the existing of familiar business, innate factors and individual differences (Frank, 2007; Morris et al., 2013). This factors lead to a change in how a student is influenced by entrepreneurship education.

Literature lists a number of entrepreneurial skills which are important for new entrepreneurs or people who want to enter into the labour market better prepared. According the contributions of each country partner of ActYouth Project (Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland and Portugal) it was defined a list of key entrepreneurship competencies that are the most referred in literature, divided in to main categories: transversal competencies and technical competencies. As most transversal competencies cited are: adaptability, creativity, initiative, self-awareness, tolerance to stress, communication, foreign languages, leadership, management, use of ICT.

In also analysed 40 job offers from all project partners. In the real context, have good knowledge in ICT, foreign languages, management skills, communications skills, problem solving and team work seem to be good indicators of a high performance levels and the most required skills for employers. It appears that exist a strong degree of agreement between the skills that literature consider important that young people have when entering the labour market and skills requested in job advertisements by employers.

The emphasis, both in literature and in job offers analysed, is given to transversal competencies. In respect to technical skills the job offers refer them less often, with the exception of work with very specific technical component (e.g. software developer). This is consistent with the reported in the literature and may be linked with the fact that in jobs that require more technical skills these can be provided through on-the-job-training (Frank, 2007; World Bank Development & Private and Financial Sector Development Departments, 2011).

It is clear that competencies such as communication skills, team work (work with others), initiative, networking (contacts with people) are requested, and according to literature they are the ones which fail the most in the future employees (Gillinson & O'Leary, 2006; Kocór & Strzebońska, 2011, Górnjak, 2013). Possibly due to this fact, they are specifically requested in the job offers. The knowledge of foreign languages is also referred both in literature and in job offers as a differentiator factor in the employability of young people (Araújo, Costa, Flisi, & Calvo, 2015).

With regard to Chapter 3, the objectives of the training programs intersect with the main areas of support services, since both focus on providing employment support skills and entrepreneurship.

The training programs focus on the development of transversal competencies, which is consistent with what is most valued by employers, according to job offers. Among the offered skills stand out team-work, communication, management and creativity. The development of business plans is present in almost all courses, revealing an offer of several competencies required in job offers.

According to the literature review and data analysis along this report, it is important to ask young people/students/graduates and employers their opinion about the competencies needed to enter into the labour market with success.

As future steps of ActYouth project will be to develop Data Collection Tools for field work, that will support the collection of data in the four partner countries, namely protocols to interviews and questionnaires (DCT 5 and 6). These Data Collection Tools will target students/graduates, employers, training organisations and stakeholders. These tools aim to verify if the information extracted in previous phases, as in the literature review, match with the reality.

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