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HORIZON 2020

PUA / WP4 Case Studies

Case Study 2: "An Integrated Intervention for Connecting Vocational Schools Graduates with the Labour Market"

SUMMARY

For the research purposes of *WP4 Case Studies* we conducted a number of interviews as part of the evaluation of the programme "An Integrated Intervention for Connecting Vocational Schools Graduates with the Labour Market". The interviewees can be classified into three categories: a) the stakeholders and project team members of all participating social partners who provided us with valuable information as they were the key actors in designing and implementing the programme, b) the members of project teams as well as the educators, counsellors and quality inspectors at the regional cities were the pogramme took place that helped us outline a fine "how things went in the local area" picture, and c) the beneficiaries who participated in all three (3) actions of the programme: a) theoretical training, b) vocational counselling, and c) internship. The main problems we faced while organising and conducting the interviews were related to issues of time and distance, as most interviewees resided in places far from our location (Athens). Also, the fact that the programme had been established at the time of the evaluation was an important parameter that had to be considered. Eventually all problems were overcome and, thus, we gathered a wealth of information that helpfully resulted in forming an inclusive picture of all programme's sides and aspects: objectives, target population needs, possible changes provoked, process and impact evaluation.

The programme turned out to be a quite ambitious yet successful initiative. It was implemented on a pilot basis and it involved a large number of social partners, administrative and scientific staff, and beneficiaries (7.000). Despite minor organisational and bureaucratic difficulties programme activities reached the target population. It was almost unanimously reported that the programme was implemented well and that it produced potentially significant effects. The beneficiaries socialised, met new people, made acquaintances, e.g. developed and

established professional networks, and discovered new challenges and means of self-development. They acquired a sense of identity and personal achievement, while levels of empowerment and self-confidence increased, even though this was somehow temporary. Also, they were equipped with socio-intellectual skills, tools and knowledge that could innovatively be embraced towards new types of employment or the implantation of entrepreneurship initiatives, enhancing the transition from education /training to the labour market. Interest and enthusiasm in the programme was great, though the scholarship the beneficiaries received was among the primary incentives for participating, given the prolonged economic and unemployment crisis in Greece.