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Erasmus+ Key activity 3

GET INVOLVED IN EP4A: EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIPS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Needs Analysis Report - Serbia

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1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENTREPRENEURS, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES – ANALYSIS

Research within the **Get involved in EP4A: European Partnership for Apprenticeship** Project was done during February 2017 with the scope to identify needs of entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises in the u Raška and Moravica Districts.

The research was implemented via on-line questionnaire that was completed by entrepreneurs, small and medium enterprises on the territory of the Regional Chamber of Commerce of Moravica and Raška administrative districts.

Invitation for participation in the poll was sent to 93 addresses. For the needs of the poll, an online Google Forms questionnaire had been created. 31 questionnaires have been gathered from 7 municipalities (Kraljevo, Vrnjačka Banja, Novi Pazar, Tutin, Čačak, Gornji Milanovac and Lučani).

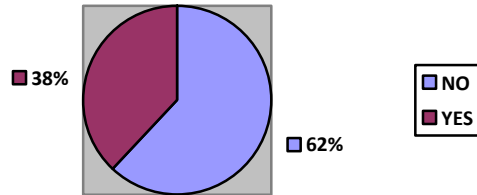
Considering that the response was of over 30%, we may conclude that businessman have shown great interest in the research because the usual response is under 10%.

The first part of the questionnaire referred to general information (entrepreneur/company name, address, registered seat, number of employees, activity title). The second part of the poll referred to employers' opinions in regard to practical classes and inclusion in the practical classes programs.

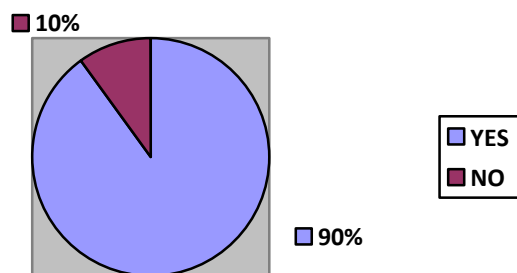
The research included the most companies with 20-50 employees (30%), followed by companies with 50-250 employees (26%), 10-20 employees (20%), 5-10 employees (10%), and the fewest with 1-5 employees (6%).

According to the activities, the metal sector is the most frequent with 22.6%, followed by textile industry with 19.4%, wood industry and other production activities with 16.1% each, food and beverage production 9.7%, while the service provision activity is least common with 9%.

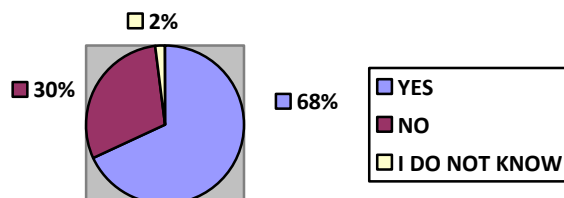
To the Question 1 "Have you participated in any apprenticeship programs", 62% respondents answered NO, while 38% answered that they have participated in apprenticeship programs.



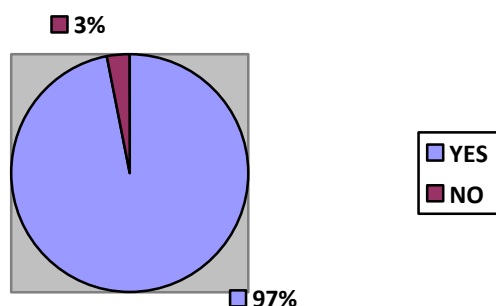
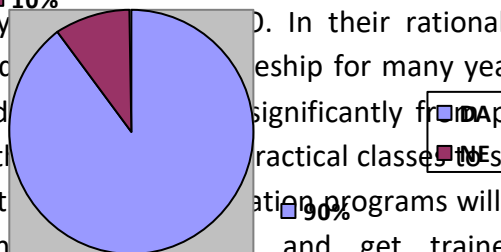
To the Question 2 “Do you know what apprenticeship in companies is?” 90% respondents provided affirmative answer - YES. Such outcome is the result of implementation of apprenticeship during the 1980s and the 1990s.



To the Question 3 “Do you believe that apprenticeship program exists in your country?” 68% answered YES, 30% I DO NOT KNOW, and 2% answered NO.



To the Question 4 “Would you accept a student for apprenticeship?” 97% replied YES and only 3% NO. In their rationale, businessmen stated that they have accepted students for apprenticeship for many years, however, the theoretical knowledge that the students have is significantly from practical classes. The businessmen have emphasized the importance of practical classes to secure quality staff, and they believe that good apprenticeship programs will be provided. They are willing to employ students who and get trained to work in certain professions.



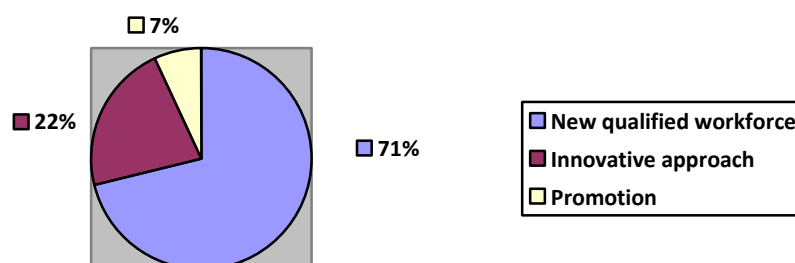
To the Question 5 “What is your estimate of the value of minimum costs in regard to the inclusion in an apprenticeship program in companies (annually)?” The most employers, i.e. 61% answered less than 24,000 EUR, 11% of them answered 24,000-50,000 EUR, while only 3% of them believe that minimum costs in regard to the inclusion in an apprenticeship program in companies would exceed 50,000 EUR annually.

To the Question 6 “Do you have any knowledge of the existence of any kind of financial assistance that would motivate you to accept a student for apprenticeship in your shop, small or medium enterprise (state assistance, financial incentives, bank loans with low interest rates for apprentice support)?” 97% of them answered NO, while 3% of them answered that they are aware of the support programs, and specifically the National Employment Service programs.

To the Question 7 “What do you think how many shops, small and medium enterprises would continue participating in apprenticeship programs (schemes) in companies longer than 3 years?” 32% respondents believe that 20-50% of them would continue participating in apprenticeship programs longer than 3 years, 30% of them

responded that they believe more than 50% of them would continue, while only 13% believe that less than 15% SMEs would continue participating in apprenticeship programs (schemes) in companies longer than 3 years. Such results of the research indicate that the most respondent employers are willing to participate in apprenticeship programs for a long period.

To the Question 8 “What would motivate you to accept a student for apprenticeship in your shop, small or medium company?” 71% respondents answered new qualified workforce, 22% think that new innovative approach would motivate them to accept students for apprenticeship, while 7% believe that they would achieve better promotion by engaging apprentices.



Question 9 On a scale 1 (least important) to 10 (most important), the businessmen evaluated how important is the support to apprenticeship programs in companies for the future of the labor market in Serbia?

52% evaluated with maximum mark 10
12% with mark 9
22% with mark 8

Large number of respondents (86%) evaluated the question of apprenticeship program importance with high mark, what indicates that the apprenticeship program is very important for the development of the labor market and obtaining quality workforce in Serbia.

Conclusion:

Notwithstanding the fact that most polled SMEs have not participated in any apprenticeship programs (62%), most of them (97%) would accept students for apprenticeship. The entrepreneurs are willing to employ students who show interest and get trained to work in certain occupations through apprenticeship programs. Employers (71%) would be most motivated to accept a student for apprenticeship in their shop, small

or medium enterprise by the fact that they would get quality staff in such a way. Considering that over 86% respondents rated the question of apprenticeship program importance with a grade higher than 8, we may conclude that businessmen believe that apprenticeship program is very important for the development of labor market and obtaining quality workforce in Serbia.

Notwithstanding the small number of specific support programs, and notwithstanding the fact that there are no state financial incentives, there is a potential in Serbia to develop apprenticeship programs because businessmen in Serbia are motivated to a large extent to get included in apprenticeship programs that would enable them to get quality workforce.

2. Interviews with SMEs on the territory of Moravica and Raška administrative districts

During January and February 2017, entrepreneurs and SMEs on the territory of the Moravica and Raška administrative districts were interviewed based on the „Employer questionnaire“ aiming to adjusting needs of the economy with the enrollment policy of secondary schools for the 2017/2018 academic year and establishing cooperation with schools.

The questionnaire was sent to 150 companies in the SME sector, and we have received answers from 65 companies, which is a high response of entrepreneurs with over 43% of the total number of the addressed ones. The interview included 40 SMEs from the Moravia and 25 SMEs from the Raška district. The total number of workers who are employed by the 65 entrepreneurs and SMEs amounts to 5530.

A long-term disparity between the educational profiles and the structure of the economy and its needs indicates that quality reforms of the education system cannot be implemented without active inclusion of employers in the design of the education system. As vocational education and training needs to provide each individual primarily with a possibility of employment after the completion of schooling, the chambers of commerce have started an initiative of introducing dual education system in the educational system of Serbia, it being tested and verified manner of connecting the education and the economy.

The interview was made via a questionnaire that included 4 groups of questions:

1. BASIC INFORMATION
2. DIFFICULTIES WHEN EMPLOYING WORKERS
3. PLANNED EMPLOYMENT OF WORKERS
4. COOPERATION WITH SCHOOLS

- **Basic information**

What is the age structure in your company?

Most entrepreneurs replied that they are not happy with the age structure and that it ranges from 30-50 years, and that they need younger staff to be trained for a longer time period.

Current number of employees according to the level of qualifications:

About 80% respondents replied that most employees have completed secondary schools and that such staff is what they need most.

- **Difficulties when employing workers**

To the question “Have you had difficulties finding workers and employing them during the previous year?” 75% respondents replied YES.

Most entrepreneurs emphasized that the most important reasons of finding new workers were as follows:

- Lack of workers of the required occupation
- Lack of workers with the required work experience
- Lack of interest or lack of motivation of workers

- **Planned employment of workers**

Is there a need to employ new workers in the next three years?

Over 80% respondents replied that they plan to employ new workers in the next three years.

Indicate work positions for the workers you intend to employ in the next three years

- Tailors
- Sewer – garment worker
- Machinist -welder
- Grinder
- Transporter
- Wood processing technician
- Chefs
- Butchers

- Mechanical engineers in production
- Graphic preparation officer
- Field workers – assemblers

- Cooperation with schools

Have you established cooperation with any schools in the previous year?

About 70% respondents have had cooperation with secondary schools or faculties.

How is cooperation with schools reflected?

Most respondents stated the following forms of cooperation:

- Accepting students for practical classes
- Advising schools on the staff required
- Willing of the employees to transfer professional knowledge to students and teachers
- Cooperation with teachers during practical classes
- Engaging experts from the company during the implementation of practical classes

To the question “Would you establish partnership with a school that is willing to educate staff you require?” 87% respondents answered YES.

To the question “What are your expectations from the school you would establish partnership with?” the entrepreneurs stated:

- taking into consideration our needs for staff when planning student enrollment
- engagement of the school to introduce educational profiles in compliance with our needs
- cooperation with professionals from the company when securing conditions for implementation
- participation of professionals from the company in the work of examination boards at the final exam

CONCLUSION:

The companies are highly motivated to cooperate with schools and high level of willingness to actively participate in the apprenticeship programs.

On the basis of the analysis of completed questionnaires and interviews on the needs of apprenticeship and introduction of dual education, analysis of the condition of the economy in the area of wood industry of the City of Tutin and Textile industry of the City of Čačak, and pursuant to the plan of enrollment for the 2017/2018 academic year, enrollments in three-year occupations have been proposed as follows:

- 30 students at the orientation of furniture production operator in Tutin and
- 30 students at the orientation of fashion tailor at the Mechanics Traffic School in Čačak.

Manner student selection for focus groups: a call for participation has been sent to the selected companies, small and medium enterprises that have or have not participated in the interviews and who have matched the given criteria.

Project activity: **Interviewing the focus groups**

Topic: **Introducing entrepreneurs to the dual education model**

Focus group in Tutin

- Venue: **Tutin, Tutin City Hall**
- Time: **24 February 2017 at 13:00-15:00 hours in Tutin**
- Objective of the activity:
- Presenter: **Ivana Marković**

The focus group in Tutin was organized partially because of the submission of a proposal of the enrollment plan for the 2017/2018 academic year, but also because of the need to open a furniture production operator department, an occupation enrolled according to the dual model since autumn 2016.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of business companies from Tutin engaged in the production of furniture, and they were interested in the manner of student education under the dual model, as well as the representatives of the School Board and the Municipality of Tutin.

Tutin is a municipality with highly developed wood industry, and the representatives of all four companies – Dallas Company, Dallas Furniture, Elan MMS and Jasen Style have emphasized the problem of the lack of qualified workforce.

Each year, the Technical School in Tutin has open competition in regular schooling for three-year occupation of a carpenter, however, only a small number of students enroll in this orientation. The attending representatives of the economy have emphasized that students are not familiar with the organization and the work processes in companies and they have also emphasized that students and their parents, as well as teachers, need to be introduced to the work conditions in companies. In addition, they pointed out that current economy could employ over 300 persons; however, although there are persons with completed secondary vocational education listed in the National Employment Service, they cannot be included immediately in the work process without prior education.

In order to stimulate more young people to enroll in three-year occupation of a furniture production operator, a proposal has been made to organize a meeting for the teachers of technical education who will be presented with the program and the manner of operation both at school and at the employer for them to be able to introduce students to the conditions, obligations and rules of this three-year occupation as early as in the fifth or sixth grade.

For the 2017/2018 academic year, the educational; profile of a furniture production operator will be also included in the proposal of the enrollment plan in the Forestry School in Kraljevo.

Focus group in Čačak

- Venue: **Čačak, office of the Regional Chamber of Commerce Kraljevo, Organization Unit Čačak**
- Time: **16 March in Čačak, 10:00-12:00**
- Objective of the activity:
- Presenter: **Gorana Tanasković**

The focus group meeting was attended by the representatives of the companies P..S... fashion, Weltex, Tiffany Production, Mechanical Traffic School and the Regional Center for Professional Development of the Employed in Education. There is no school in Čačak that educates staff required for the textile industry, but the economy gets such staff through retraining of other staff listed in the National Employment Service.

One of the educational profiles for the next academic year is a fashion tailor, and at the request of the economy, the Mechanical Traffic School wishes to include this three-year occupation in its enrollment plan. However, the concern of the companies is how much will the young who get enrolled in this three-year occupation be stimulated to stay and work in

the companies considering that they are provided with a possibility of permanent employment?

In order to stimulate as many young people to get enrolled in the above three-year occupation, the businessman have proposed that it is required to organize a meeting with the principals and educators of all primary schools in order to introduce them to the new occupation and arrange a presentation thereof at schools for students of the finishing grades in primary schools. The presentation would include showing a promotional film about the operation of companies in the area of textile industry and presenting thereof to the students with personal appearance of company owners and explanation of the security of employment and possibility of further advancement and education.

The same occupation – fashion tailor is planned to be included in the enrollment plan of the Textile and Leather Design School in Novi Pazar.

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Conclusion

As a law on dual education has not been enacted in Serbia yet, it has been planned to organize a new meeting for both focus groups in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia – Regional Chamber of Commerce for the Moravica and Raška administrative districts where external professional lecturers will present the advantages of such manner of education.