

**TYPE**

**A CASE STUDY ON YOUNG ESTONIANS ENTERING THE JOB MARKET**

**PROBLEM DESCRIPTION****Problem typology**

Many young people in European countries have problems with finding a good job with high salary, to say nothing of finding any job at all.

**Actors involved**

Young Estonians

**The occurrence context**

Young Estonians face the same problems as their counterparts in Europe, but there is a twist to it -- a mismatch between their expectations and the reality on the job market. While our youth unemployment rate is around 16%, there are 8,300 vacant jobs out there.

**Description of the situation**

The first big problem is that young people are overqualified for the most entry-level jobs. They have their university degree and they want a good job with high salary, but there just is no place for them. Employers require work experience, but many young people do not have any as they have not had a job yet. Also, employers are interested in skills rather than diploma. For example, the jobs that young people desire are not vacant as the companies already have well-experienced, loyal and trustworthy employees. Young people can sometimes be irresponsible and lazy, many employers think. The truth is, however, that young people are very quick to learn and may even work faster than older people. That is the reason why many young people are leaving Estonia in the hope to find a (better) job abroad.

The second problem is attitude. Young people tend to be very picky. For example, they would sooner work from home than at the office. Some people also try to set up their own companies in order to become their own bosses and only work when they want. Still, they have no idea how to promote themselves, nor do they work hard enough to succeed. So, many end up unemployed or working the low-paying jobs. These young people therefore have to live with their parents as they do not have enough money for their own place. All this makes them feel down, stressed and even depressed.

The third problem is related to those young people who are disabled. Sadly, our society is not disabled-friendly. For example, disabled students cannot be well accommodated in most schools, especially in rural areas. Moreover, many have problems with transport as buses are crowded to the point where a wheelchair user does not have enough space to fit in, and the seats for blind people are usually taken, too. Still another problem is that disabled and/or mentally challenged young people cannot take the pressure forced upon them by school or university.

**What are the reasons for which we consider it a problem (or becoming a problem)?**

A part of the problem lies in people's expectations. Let us take IT studies at university, for instance. It is a highly regarded programme, but every third student drops out in the first year of their studies. Some already work full time and cannot study at the same time. Others find their studies too academic. So they drop out, but they do not realise that they cut themselves off their future career opportunities, too.

Another reason is that jobs are not flexible enough. Estonian youth prefer free hours instead of office hours. Young people want to have control over their schedule in order to be happy. Besides, the human brain actually starts properly working at 10 am, but school and work require an 8 o'clock start. As a consequence, young Estonians' sleep less and produce less.

**Possible risks**

The consequences are worrying. To start with, the youth are leaving Estonia in order to start a new life somewhere else. Many go to Finland. Some have families in Estonia and come to visit, but others choose to stay and eventually completely integrate. As a result, our population is increasingly losing young people at their highest productivity.

Secondly, young people choose to have children later and later. The threat of losing their jobs or not having enough time makes them very careful. Unemployed young Estonians are even more uncertain about raising a family.

Thirdly, the NEET syndrome (not in education, employment, or training) is getting more and more serious in Estonia, too. Low job rates are often linked to a higher crime rate as people are getting desperate.

**INTERVENTION**

We think that there are things schools in Estonia could do to help their students:

- training them how to communicate with strangers, and work in a team
- helping the disabled and those with psychological problems more effectively
- running a variety of career-related workshops, where students can learn how to write their CVs and motivation letters, how to act in job interviews and how to adapt to their potential employers' requirements
- practicing real jobs in form of apprenticeship and/or internship

**RESULTS**

The vision we hope for is a more inclusive Estonia – a country which cares for all of its citizens alike, the youth included. We want the Estonia we can proudly claim to be ours. We want the Estonia that cares for everyone and expects the best from them. We want young Estonians to be proud of their country, so they would choose to fulfil their potential here rather than abroad.