

EUROPEAN UNION OF WOMEN

Economics and Employment Commission

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Youth unemployment in Europe is a huge challenge. In December 2012 more than 5 million youngsters were out of work, nearly every fourth youngster was unemployed. At the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2013 discussions between politicians, business leaders and unions concluded that there is a huge gap between needed skills on the labour market versus current education. Many employers believe there are enough jobs but not right skills. The green sector will create new jobs in the same way as the IT sector did – but political initiatives are needed:

1. Education in school/universities must be aligned with needed skills on the labour market
2. Make youngsters employable – social skills, stimulate “first job”, apprenticeship schemes, basic entrepreneurial skills
3. Continuously education and retraining to adapt to a changing labour market
4. Stimulate small and midsize businesses
5. Stimulate investment in new jobs and infrastructure (informal sector is in average 40%)

In the economic commission we have discussed this subject and suggested it would be a project for the future. Below, the British section has presented an interesting report on apprenticeship schemes – a good example.

Report on Apprenticeship Schemes –from the British section

In this current economic climate it is considered that a survey into apprenticeship schemes is of vital importance to revitalise the business economy of each country.

This year marks the 650th anniversary of the first recorded apprenticeships. They have previously been associated with heavy manufacturing which are now in decline and are being replaced by modern technology. Training has now adapted and apprenticeship schemes are now booming and are needed to fill the skills shortages across a range of sectors.

In England, organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Small Businesses is taking a critical look at how apprenticeships can help businesses across all sections by offering a route to harness fresh new talent, build a skilled workforce and avoid future skills shortages. A survey was undertaken by the Federation of Small Businesses, 4327 firms were invited to take part, there was a 40% response rate. Of the replies, 46% considered that apprenticeships were not suitable for their business. The survey revealed that 1 in 10 firms who responded have taken on an apprentice or graduate internship. Four in 10 claim that a wage subsidy would encourage them to take on an apprentice.

The Skills Minister announced plans to set up a new traineeship programme. In 2012, 500,000 people (16 to 24 yrs) started apprenticeship schemes in. Traineeships would offer young people the opportunity to undertake a substantial work placement and work skills training, alongside support to improve their English and Maths. Depending on the young person's needs, a range of other support and flexible training may be offered to help them develop their skills and progress quickly onto an Apprenticeship or secure other employment.

There are wage incentives from H.M. Government. Firms can apply for incentives worth up to £2275 to hire 18 to 24 year olds who have been unemployed for over 6 months. H.M.Government

has introduced an Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds. (AGE). This is aimed at supporting businesses to grow by employing young people through Apprenticeship programmes. AGE provides grants to employers to support them to do this.

The National Apprenticeship Service will provide Apprenticeship Grants to employers with up to 1000 employees recruiting 16-24 year olds with a value of £1500 to encourage employers to develop their business and take on apprentices. The £1500 is in addition to the training costs of the Apprenticeship framework which are met in full for young people aged 16 to 18 and 50% for those aged 19 to 24. Eligible employers are those who have never employed an apprentice before or who have not recruited one in the last 12 months. Subject to budget availability and the employer's commitment to support the apprentice to the end of their programme, up to 10 grants can be made to any one employer.

H.M.Government is now investigating avenues for young people to enter professions, including law, accountancy and insurance, via on-the-job training instead of via a 3 year university degree. They are looking at apprenticeship schemes for craft, technical and professional jobs with apprenticeship at levels 6 and 7 – bachelors and masters degree level- being officially recognised. These higher apprenticeships will be employer led and are an effective and prestigious alternative to a solely academic route into the professions.

In Sweden, the government is just in a start-up of apprenticeship schemes to stimulate students/youngsters to get their “first job” by subsidizing part time education (25 %) and work (75%).

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