



Skills and Labour Market  
to raise youth employment

## Deliverable 9

### WP 3 Focus Group Synthesis Report



Skills and Labour Market  
to raise youth employment

CEPCEP, UCP

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**@ SALM Project**

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## **SALM –Focus Group Synthesis Report**

1. The aim of the focus group was to determine future youth competencies to meet the needs of the labor market in social services and tourism services for the elderly, while identifying existing discrepancies in national qualifications framework.

Other objective was to better understand the impact of the activities of both sectors undertaken in the field of youth employment.

2. The partner reports begin with a context description, methodology and the composition of the FG.

Concerning the composition, the Spanish partner has tried to set up a space for debate at intergenerational - and multidisciplinary level. This appears in the list of participants, representatives of government, business sector, involved the financial sector, and representing nonprofits in the area of youth employment and the participation of young people unemployed. So it has facilitated their direct introduction into the working reflexion.

### **Main conclusions on two subjects: job opportunities and skills needs**

The importance of youth employment in the social services and senior tourism for elder people is an overall important issue.

These sectors are important in particularly because of the ageing tendency at a national level, as well as a European one. This tendency will lead to a higher demand on social services, because of the increasing number of elder citizens, mostly living alone, due to the migration of youth factor. Also the senior tourism could become an important resource in some countries with huge touristic potential such as Malta.

### **Potentiality of the sectors in terms of job creation**

Both sectors present high potentiality of development in all partner countries but in some of them it is necessary to implement some strategies.

As said by UK (Scotland) Employment opportunities for young people in the social care sector follow a bifurcated path: on the one hand, the social care sector is one of those where job creation is expected to happen in the near future, thus, this is potentially an interesting area for young people looking for a job; on the other hand, though, young people are not the 'priority' in social care employers recruitment strategies. Most of

the care providers would, in fact, prefer hiring an experienced worker instead of a young person, perhaps just entering the labour market.

Thus in Romania the Youth Employment in the social field can be facilitated by a national strategy to increase the number of social services employees, according to a level closer to the European one, or by mobilizing the civil society (associations and foundations) to have a higher involvement. Without this adjustment, in policy / strategy / regulations, there is a risk of losing this human resource consisting of young qualified social workers and maintaining a low level in this field, quantitatively and qualitatively.<sup>1</sup>

According to Romania developing social tourism in general and senior tourism in particular will contribute to the development of social services, where the youth can be involved, such as: accompaniment, personal care during the sejour, kintotherapy, nutrition, animator, and medical assistant, so on.

On the effects of senior tourism on the industry for Malta these tourists (inbound) are important for the low season as they come for long stays and increase the hotel occupancy figures in many hotels. Senior tourism is essential to these hotels to minimize operational losses and retain full-time staff. Around 14% of tourist arrivals to Malta are seniors (65yrs+). This is a significant figure considering also that most seniors come over for long winter stays to avoid the harsh North European climatic conditions. The Government's strategy on tourism is to work together with the industry to generate more tourism professions, to safeguard an attractive, high-status working environment with competitive pay, rewarding equal pay for equal work and healthy work conditions. The Government is committed to invest in our younger generation through an educational campaign on tourism, through increasing awareness of job and career prospects in tourism and to change the prevailing perception that hospitality and service are jobs for low skilled and less educated workers, students or foreigners or a last-resort job when no alternative is found. Hospitality and service jobs are important and key to service industries and can offer satisfying jobs and a professional career.

In Spain, Galicia, the religious and nautical tourism show an important growth potentiality as well as thermal tourism targeted to seniors.

### **Addressing mismatch or gaps in the industry**

Soft Skills are considered as core skills for all the professionals working within both these Sectors - personal qualities/attributes (self-control, assertiveness, initiative,

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<sup>1</sup> In terms of tourism sector Malta is doing very well as more jobs are being created to address the ever increasing number of tourist visiting the Islands – the forecast for this year (2013) is to exceed 1.5 million tourist i.e. nearly four times the local population

responsibility, etc), communication skills (referred as strategic) and Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills (Coaching, dealing with conflicts, Interaction and collaboration with peers, Cooperation and team working, sharing of information) are competences to be acquired and developed within all learning pathways (formal/non formal) leading to Social Services and Senior Tourism Qualifications.

In Romania, in terms of new competences needed for the labour market in social services and senior tourism, the following were identified:

- Entrepreneurial skills – needed both sectors in order to create more jobs
- Socio-Civic skills – to increase the number of volunteers in the social service field
- Foreign Languages – in order to become a competitive country in attracting foreign tourists
- TIC – for a higher quality of services as well as promoting senior tourism

The participants pointed out the fact that the skills enumerated above are only part of the educational need. The real issue would be a change for attitude in the young generation towards social services and senior tourism.

In UK, interviewees stated that the social care sector requires skills (mainly soft ones) which young people do not possess: these are both “soft” and “hard” or, specific, skills. Soft skills, like communication, team work, bearing responsibility, time management, are considered key-features which young people lack. Moreover, young people are considered also missing specific skills that are considered essential requisites to work in the social care sector. For example, one of the interviewees, a care company working with young people in extremely vulnerable situation (i.e. young people suffering from abuse or substance dependence) said that a young employee would not possess the competence to deal with psychologically frail individuals, but they would also lack the competence to manage highly risky situations. This aspect related to psychological capacity/competence was also mentioned by a relatively young (on her 30s) social care worker that we have interviewed and who stressed how psychological challenging social care work is (workers are confronted with sick bodies and even with death).

In sum, UK detected two types of mismatch:

- a) the social care providers need to have workforce ready for use immediately after employment while young people would require a certain time to be trained and acquainted to the new role;
- b) for specific social care activities, young people are considered not “fir for purpose” as the challenges they would need to face would be too much for a young person (e.g. dealing with a peer suffering from abuse or illness).

In Malta it is not a question of mismatch between demand and supply, but more a question of attitude and culture. In other words the education system is not working together with the tourism industry to provide a skilled labour force with the needed competencies to perform the job, but it's rather the youth's attitude towards the industry.

Reaffirming this ITS members during the Focus Group mentioned that (although, no scientific tracer-study has been carried out) on corresponding with past students some have found jobs in different industries away from the tourism sector, mainly because of the 'irregular' hours and relatively low wages.

All those present agreed that ITS and other vocational colleges/institutes including the University of Malta, need to emphasis more on the 'soft' skills in preparing students. While by the inclusion of more hands-on practical sessions instead of academic subjects, which should have been provided for during earlier scholastic years, prepare youths for the labour market and retain their position. It was also suggested by the group; the introduction of short course just focusing on the trade and more apprenticeship programmes, where students spend more time in the industry than on campus.

In Spain, a more cohesive action between the education system and the employment system is proposed to facilitate the match between demand and supply translated into the following interventions:

Professional certificates are efficient to improve employability and employability of young people without qualifications tools.

The youth employment plan in Galicia and implemented in this year 2014 with the aim of improving the employment situation in the horizon of 2016.

The promotion of entrepreneurial culture is a key intervention shaft. In 2013 were approved state and regional laws to support entrepreneurship.

The mobility is a key element to facilitate the adjustment of supply and demand. Internal mobility and international mobility are two strategic elements. There are different programs that drive European voluntary mobility and professional formation.

In Spain, Galicia, concerning new skills we can identify:

Two lines of work related to the operation of employment sites linked to senior tourism:

\_ Specific professional profiles related to the senior religious tourism in the Camino de Santiago;

\_ Specific professional profiles related to the senior nautical tourism

Two lines of work related to the operation of employment sites linked to social services:

\_ Specific professional profiles related to the management of corporate volunteer programs.

\_ Specific professional profiles related to crowdfunding, fundraising and crowdworking, youth-oriented fundraising for NGOs for management of shared spaces for NGOs.

For Portugal the Soft Skills were also considered as core skills for all the professionals working within both these Sectors - personal qualities/attributes (self-control, assertiveness, initiative, responsibility, etc), communication skills (referred as strategic) and Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills (Coaching, dealing with conflicts, Interaction and collaboration with peers, Cooperation and team working, sharing of information) are competences to be acquired and developed within all learning pathways (formal/non formal) leading to Social Services and Senior Tourism Qualifications.

In general, existing qualifications and related learning pathways respond to the labour market needs in both sectors: Social Services and Senior Tourism.

Nevertheless, having in consideration the current challenges of the different target groups with whom professionals in these areas are in contact with, specific training units “end-users oriented” should be integrated in the existing learning pathways: for example within the Socio-Cultural Animator, senior oriented learning outcomes should be foreseen. Qualifications should be open and flexible supported by referential integrating on one hand a fixed minimum of training hours and, on the other hand, optional training units

On the other hand, the creation of two new jobs/qualifications was suggested:

- Operational therapists and
- Health and Well-being Coaches.

In the geriatric field level considering the increasing number of dementia situations within senior population, the need for specialized training is more and more critical. Within healthcare and social services units, all professionals, at all levels, must be trained and prepared to deal with these particular situations and deal with the specificities of dementia people care needs.