



# National Report / FRANCE

Y.U.S.S. – Addressing Youth Unemployment through Soft Skills Coaching Programmes

2011-1-ES1-LEO05-35958



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## Background and Country Context

### 1.1 Economic data

France has an advanced industrial economy and an efficient farm sector. Main activities include automobile manufacture, aerospace, information technology, electronics, chemicals and pharmaceuticals and fashion<sup>1</sup>.

The table here below it's an overview of the economical and general political background of France,. All data are referring to the year 2012:

Surface of France	550 000 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	65.35 Million
Age of population:	
under 20 years	24.53%
20 to 64 years	58,31%
> 60 years	17.15%
Gross domestic product	280 bn.
Rate of unemployment	10%
Development of employment (2000-2011)	-0.7 points
Youth unemployment rate	22,9

### 1.2 Unemployment

The unemployment rate rose in 12 Member States between 2010 and 2011, dropped in 13 and remained stable in two, France and Italy.<sup>2</sup>

In metropolitan France, 9.4% of the active population was unemployed, i.e. 2.7 million people. The unemployment rate has increased by 0.1 point q-o-q.

More generally, in metropolitan France, 3.4 million people did not work but would like to work, whether they are available or not for work within two weeks, or whether they look actively for a job or not.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/france/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/france/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics)

The INSEE provisional results show that the unemployment in 2011 Q3 is of 2678 thousands persons. This means that the rate of unemployment is of 9,4% (male: 9,2% and female: 9,7%).

Youth unemployment rates are generally much higher than unemployment rates for all ages. High youth unemployment rates do reflect the difficulties faced by young people in finding jobs. Mid 2010, youth unemployment rate started to increase more strongly than that of the EA-17.

In 2011, France has got the same rate of unemployment as the EU27.

France:	9,7%
EU:	9,7%

The table below shows the unemployment rate in 2011 in the YUSS project partner's countries (members of the European Union).

Spain:	21,7%
Portugal:	12,9%
France:	9,7%
Germany:	5,9%
Austria:	4,2%
EU:	9,7%

Source: Eurostat

The average unemployment period is of 13 months today.

Compared to the education of the unemployed in 2010 the following statistics can be made:

Persons without a school leaving certificate	16,1%
Brevet, CAP, BEP	10%
Persons with baccalaureate	8.9%
Persons with higher education	11%

In 2011, the "Observatoire de l'emploi" registers 263,100 hiring intentions in France. Their research shows that:

- 87% of employers that are not intending to recruit in this moment mention the inadequacy of candidate profiles (in terms of experience, educational level or motivation);
- The vast majority of recruiters experience hiring difficulties: a lack of candidates (71%) or inadequate profile of candidates (81%)

National Job center lists 440,000 unfilled job vacancies on the total that pass through its services. ACDC contests highlighting a job vacancy rate which stood at 0.4% in France; is well below the European average, which itself was 1.5% in the third quarter of 2010.

### 1.3 School and VET system in Austria

The French compulsory education system is divided into three stages, the primary education (for ages 6-11), lower secondary education (for ages 12-15) and the upper secondary education in either a General and technological "Lycée" or in a vocational "Lycée" (compulsory for ages 15 and 16)..<sup>4</sup>

School attendance in France is compulsory between ages 6 and 16.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/what-we-do/implementing-the-framework/france.aspx>

The Ministry of Education is responsible for education policy as pursued through vocational training in schools and through apprenticeships. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has a parallel responsibility for vocational training in agriculture. The Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Employment is in charge of continuing vocational training for young people and adult job-seekers and for the vocational training of employees in the private sector (it can thus make rules and regulations and set training fees, etc.). Other ministries, such as the Ministry of Youth and Sport, are in charge of training and vocational diplomas in the areas for which they are responsible

The French educational system is highly centralized, organized, and ramified. It is divided into three different stages:

- primary education (enseignement primaire);
- secondary education (enseignement secondaire);
- higher education (enseignement supérieur). The following degrees are recognized by the Bologna Process (EU recognition):
  - Licence and Licence Professionnelle (Bachelor)
  - Master (Master)
  - Doctorat (Doctorate)

There are 15 million students in public and private sector education combined. The French government spends €6,970 per student<sup>5</sup>.

### **Enrollment**

Total 15.0 million<sup>2</sup>

Primary 6.7 million

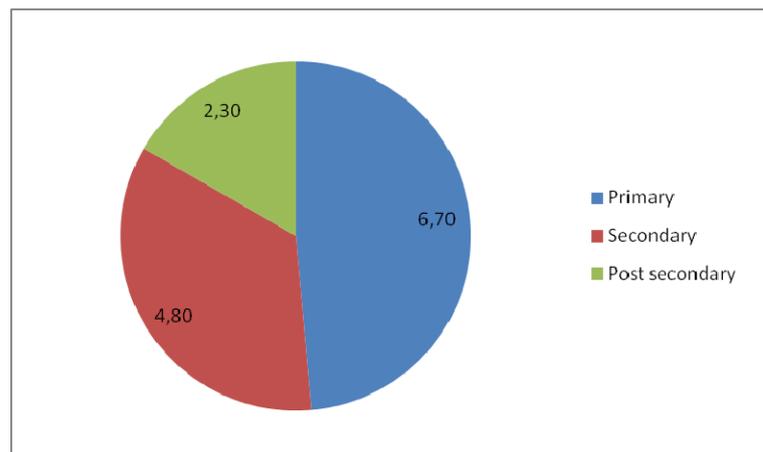
Secondary 4.8 million

Post secondary 2.3 million<sup>3</sup>

### **Attainment:**

Secondary diploma - 79.7%;

Post-secondary diploma 27%



## **Organisation/youth inclusion expert**

The following respondents answered to our questionnaires:

### **Respondent 1:**

- \* Manager / human resources manager
- \* Sector = services industry : consulting, territorial animation
- \* 0% to 20% of young workers in the organisation

<sup>5</sup> [http://ambafrance-us.org/IMG/pdf/education\\_system.pdf](http://ambafrance-us.org/IMG/pdf/education_system.pdf)

- \* 5 to 10 employees
- \* turnover < 500.00€

**Respondent 2:**

- \* Manager / human resources manager
- \* Sector = services industry: home care services, service to person
- \* 15% to 30% of young workers in the organisation
- \* 11 to 49 employees
- \* turnover < 500.00€

**Respondent 3:**

- \* Manager / human resources manager
- \* Sector = services industry: Office of Economic Studies
- \* 0% to 20% of young workers in the organization
- \* 5 to 10 employees
- \* turnover 500.00€ - 999.999€

**Respondent 4:**

- \* Manager / human resources manager
- \* Sector = services industry: entrepreneurial counseling and territorial engineering
- \* 21% to 40% of young workers in the organization
- \* 11 to 49 employees
- \* turnover < 500.00€

**Respondent 5:**

- \* Expert in youth social inclusion
- \* Sector = services industry = environment
- \* 21% to 40% of young workers in the organisation
- \* employees: < 4
- \* Turnover: < 500.00€

**Respondent 6:**

- \* Expert in youth social inclusion
- \* Sector = services industry =
- \* 21% to 40% of young workers in the organisation
- \* 11 to 49 employees
- \* no indication about turnover

## Questionnaire results and notes on interviews

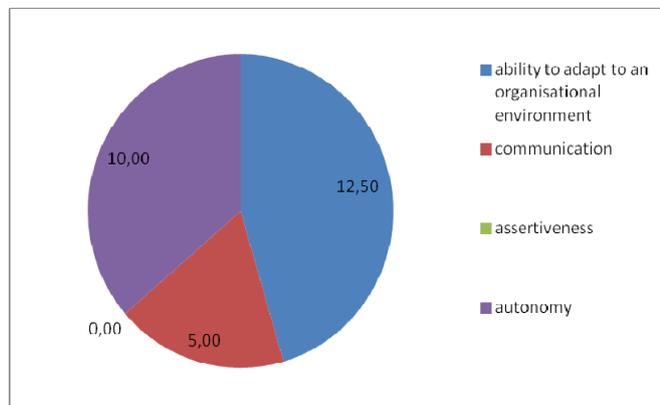
### 3.1 Order of soft skills

We asked to our interviewees to order the 4 main categories of social skills (ability to adapt to a company's environment, communication, assertiveness, autonomy) using ordinal numbers 1 to 4: 1 being the most important and 4 the least important). For the analysis we attributed values (table here below) to this ordinal numbers and calculating the median.

ordinal numbers	1	2	3	4
Values attributed	15	10	5	0

The analyze shows that the “ability to adapt to an organisational environment” seems to be the most important social skills, followed by autonomy skills and communication skills. The assertiveness seems not to be important criteria for the youth access on the labour market.

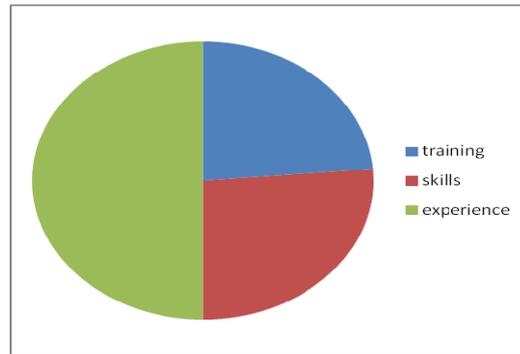
skills	median
ability to adapt to an organisational environment	12
communication	5,00
assertiveness	0,00
autonomy	10,00



### 3.2 Weight of training/skills/experience when hiring

The experience seems to be asked by experts and managers when hiring much more than training and skills.

	manager. 1	manager. 2	manager. 3	manager. 4	expert. 5	expert. 6
% training	30	40	20	20	20	20
% skills	30	20	40	30	25	40
% experience	40	40	40	50	55	40



### 3.3 Lack of social skills

#### Summarized comments of respondents:

- misunderstanding of the company and its codes
- no patience
- lack of mobility,
- difficulty to respect the rules,
- lack of communication,
- organizational problems,
- lack of reperes,
- wrong positioning,
- lack of initiative,
- difficulty to listen other persons
- unwillingness to succeed,
- lack of skills,
- bad guidance, inadequate profile for the job
- poor vision of the labor market,
- impatience related the evolution of their career,

### 3.4 Ability to adapt to a company's environment

Next questionnaire analyze shows how important are judged the 7 statements listed below:

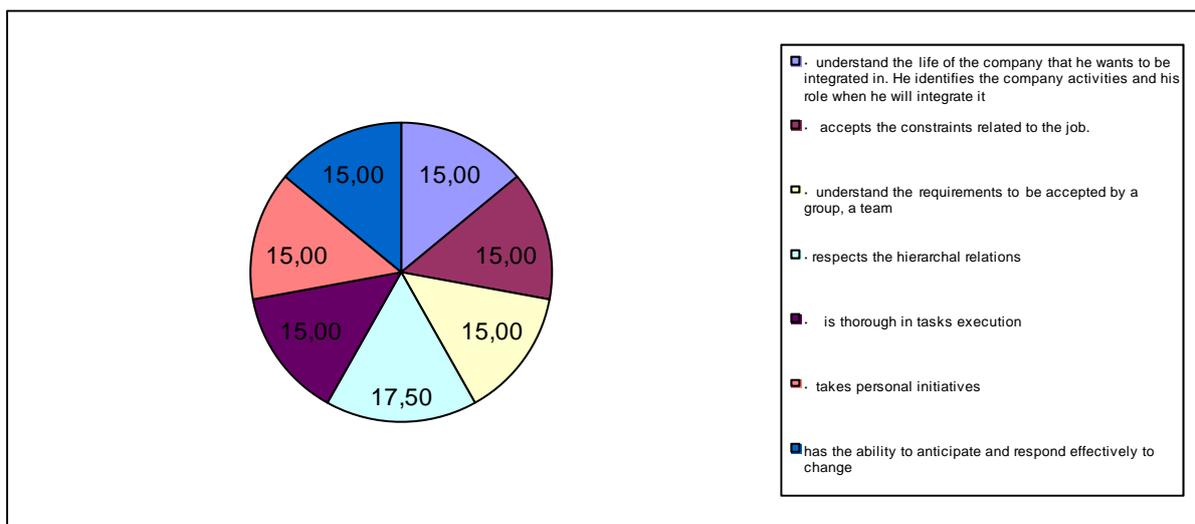
1. Understands the culture of the organisation that he wants to be integrated in. He identifies the company activities and his role when he will integrate in it
2. Accepts the constraints related to the job
3. Understand the requirements to be accepted by a group or team
4. Respects the hierarchical relationship
5. Is thorough in tasks execution
6. Takes personal initiatives
7. Has the ability to anticipate and respond effectively to change

Equivalent numerical values are assigned to the different levels of the perception common scales here below:

<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Slightly important</b>	<b>Average importance</b>	<b>Major importance</b>	<b>Fundamental</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>

The median of answers received for each question was calculated as in the table here below:

Skills	1st manager	2nd manager	3th manager	4th manager	1st expert	2nd expert	Median
understand the life of the company that he wants to be integrated in. He identifies the company activities and his role when he will integrate it	10	15	15	20	10	15	15,00
accepts the constraints related to the job.	15	20	15	15	10	20	15,00
understand the requirements to be accepted by a group, a team	10	15	15	15	10	15	15,00
respects the hierarchal relations	10	20	20	20	15	15	17,50
is thorough in tasks execution	10	15	15	20	15	20	15,00
takes personal initiatives	15	15	15	15	15	15	15,00
has the ability to anticipate and respond effectively to change	15	15	15	15	15	20	15,00



It can be seen that generally all the statements have a major importance for the interviewees. However, one of these social skills related to the ability to adapt to a company's environment is considered as more important than all the others. Thereby, this analysis shows that "Respects the

hierarchical relationship” is a fundamental skill for our territory that could help young people in transition from the educational system to access to employment.

This result could be explained as the French management is more hierarchical and more rigid compared with other territories. French society imposes a considerable amount of *implicit conformity* in all domains, from meal hours to the color of clothes. Respect for authority in French organisations is based on respect for competence. Usually, the patron does not have any personal relationship with subordinates in or outside of the office.

Summarized comments of respondents:

- compliance with the rules of the company
- respect of persons who have more experience

### 3.5 Communication

Next questionnaire analyze shows how important are judged the 6 statements listed below:

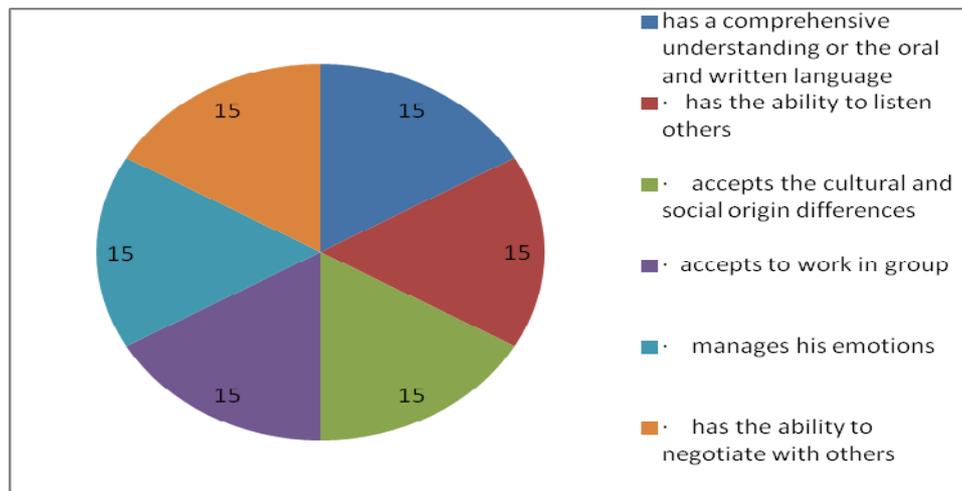
1. Has a comprehensive understanding of the oral and written language
2. Has the ability to listen others
3. Accepts the cultural and social differences
4. Accepts to work in group or team
5. Manages his own emotions
6. Has the ability to negotiate with others

Equivalent numerical values are assigned to the different levels of the perception common scales here below:

Not at all important	Slightly important	Average importance	Major importance	Fundamental
0	5	10	15	20

The median of answers received for each question was calculated as in the table here below:

Skills	1st manager	2nd manager	3th manager	4th manager	1st expert	2nd expert	Median
has a comprehensive understanding or the oral and written language	15	15	15	15	5	20	15
has the ability to listen others	10	15	15	15	15	15	15
accepts the cultural and social origin differences	10	20	15	15	15	15	15
accepts to work in group	10	15	15	20	15	20	15
manages his emotions	10	10	15	20	15	15	15
has the ability to negotiate with others	10	15	15	15	15	20	15



For the interviewees all the six statements seems to be very important.

Even if each interviewer has attributed different importance degree for the 6 communication skills that was mentioned, the median value is the same for each skill.

Summarized comments of respondents:

- Respondents would like to handle during the recruitment process with young showing more commitment, respect and using an appropriate language. For keeping the job, the new recruits must show respect for the elderly and have appropriate communication within the team.
- Respondents identified

- as positives aspect of the communication of a young unemployed : sincerity, commitment, knowledge of its role and responsibility within the company, good intergenerational communication, facilitate exchanges within the group, spontaneity
- as negatives aspects of the communication: fraudulence, lack of initiative, disrespect, spelling mistake, lack of ability to listen, mismanagement of emotions

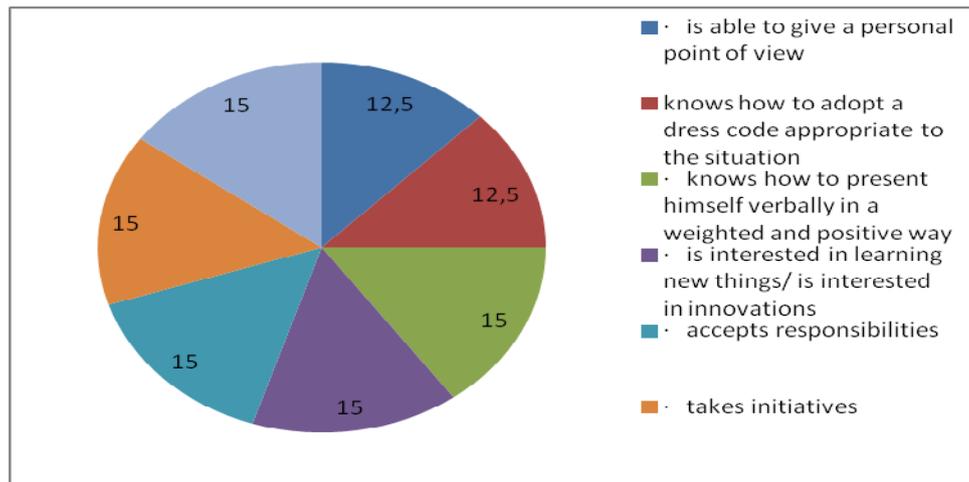
### 3.6 Assertiveness /Emotional intelligence

Within the social skills related to the Assertiveness and Emotional intelligence, managers and experts were asked to appreciate to what extent the following soft skills are considered important when recruiting young people in transition from the education system into the labor market:

1. Is able to give a personal point of view
2. Knows how to adopt a dress code appropriate to the situation
3. Knows how to present himself verbally in a weighted and positive way
4. Is interested in learning new things/ is interested in innovations
5. Accepts responsibilities
6. Takes initiatives
7. Emotional intelligence

Following the same methodology of analysis as above the median of answers received for each question was calculated.

skills	manager 1	manager 2	manager 3	manager 4	expert 1	expert 2	Median
is able to give a personal point of view	10	10	15	15	10	20	12,5
knows how to adopt a dress code appropriate to the situation	10	15	10	15	10	15	12,5
knows how to present himself verbally in a weighted and positive way	15	15	15	15	15	20	15
is interested in learning new things/ is interested in innovations	15	10	15	10	15	15	15
accepts responsibilities	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
takes initiatives	15	15	20	20	15	15	15
emotional intelligence	10	15	15	15	15	15	15



The first two statements are considered to be less important than the last four ones for which we've obtained a median value of 15.

#### Preference of type and comments of respondents:

When interviewees were asked to explore the Emotional Intelligence:

- 3 of them affirmed that the *conceptual* type is the most valued by their organization when recruiting young unemployed people
- 3 others identified the *organized* type.

They appreciate that the conceptual type allow to a young recruit to be operational as soon as possible on the workstation.

On the other side, the respondents consider that the organized type promotes a trusting atmosphere. For them, reliability and compliance with the commitments are essential qualities.

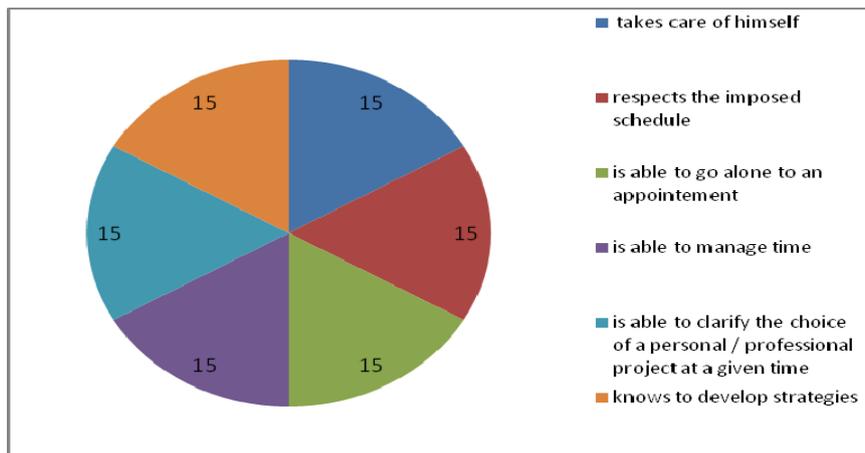
### 3.7 Autonomy

The interviewees were asked to appreciate to what extent the following soft skills are considered important when recruiting young people in transition from the education system into the labor market:

1. Takes care of himself
2. Respects the imposed schedule
3. Is able to go alone to an appointment
4. Is able to manage time efficiently
5. Is able to clarify the choice of a personal / professional project at a given time
6. Knows how to develop strategies

Following our methodology of analysis, here below, the table where the median of answers received for each question was calculated.

Skills	1st manager	2nd manager	3th manager	4th manager	1st expert	2nd expert	Median
takes care of himself	10	15	10	15	15	15	15
respects the imposed schedule	10	20	15	15	15	20	15
is able to go alone to an appointment	10	15	15	20	10	15	15
is able to manage time	10	10	20	15	15	20	15
is able to clarify the choice of a personal / professional project at a given time	10	15	15	15	15	20	15
knows to develop strategies	15	5	15	15	10	20	15



The received answers show that the skill from this category is considered as important to very important. When the median was calculated, the value 15 was obtained for each skill. In this case, we can affirm that these skills have the same degree of importance; each of them is considered as very important on our territory.

Summarized comments of respondents:

- 2 x the organization participates on a career planning process for apprenticeships
- 5 x the organization does require only the skills needed for each position

### 3.8 Intercultural competence

#### Summarized comments of respondents:

The intercultural skills are not considered as important by every respondent. It seems that these skills are obviously taken into account when hiring, but some organizations give more or less importance according to the targeted position.

Even if 2 of 6 respondents affirmed that intercultural competences are no important or slightly important for the good realization of a job position, generally they are looking for youth that accept the cultural and social origin differences. This competence actually has obtained a median value of 15 (equivalent to very important) as all the others competences mentioned in the main group of Communication (see page 8).

### 3.9 Networking skills

#### Summarized comments of respondents:

4 of interviewees affirmed that their organization value the creation of new business relationships which allows an information exchange and best practices sharing. They consider that the experience exchange is a key for activity development and most of them have already participated in European project. 2 of interviewees didn't give any answer.

### 3.10 Change management skills

#### Summarized comments of respondents:

1. Today, any organizations face many changes of different nature and extent. These changes appear firstly as breaks of varying strengths, questioning, ways of acting and thinking unsatisfactory; on the other side, these changes are the cause of some skills development leading the organization to a situation perceived as more satisfactorily. It is imperative in view of our business to include this skill in our work.
2. No answer
3. Slightly important
4. 2 \*Average importance
5. It is essential for young people to be able to adapt and manage any changes that a structure may know. This competence allows flexibility in a continuo changing environment.

### 3.11 Other skills that the respondents consider fundamental

No interviewee has identified other fundamental skills.

### 3.12 Importance of soft skills for young people to find a job

Summarized comments of respondents:

- Soft skills are complementary to the professional skills.
- Corporations are looking for these social skills even if this need is not explicitly indicated. Youth should be aware about the social skills role on the labor market.
- Soft skills allow an efficient integration within a team and an organization, but also a better understanding of the professional area that enable young recruits to face difficulties and find the better solution.

### Interpretation of results

The average of medians calculated for each soft skill is 14,9 (annex 2). The analysis shows that in general soft skills are considered as very important to facilitate the transition of young people from the education system into the labour market. It seems that being able to give a personal point of view and knowing how to adopt a dress code appropriate to the situation (skills included in the main group of competencies related to assertiveness) are less demanded on the labour market than all the others skills mentioned in the table from annex 2 (median =12,5 < the average =14,9).

Respecting the hierarchal relations seems to be fundamental to access to employment (median=17,5).

What the respondents are criticizing when they are hiring youth for a new job is especially their fraudulence, lack of initiative, disrespect, spelling mistake, lack of ability to listen, mismanagement of emotions and the fact that they often do not really know what they want.

Social skills are demanded on the labor market. Generally speaking, it can be said that soft skills are judged very important, but the employees are looking in priority for experience when recruiting.

## Annex I: Obtaining data.

1) We note:

$I = \{1 \dots i \dots n\}$  the set of questions

2) Equivalent numerical values are assigned to the different levels of the perception common scales here below:

not at all important -----	0
slightly important.....	5
average importance.....	10
very important -----	15
fundamental -----	20

3) We determine the median of answers received for each question:

$k(i, j)$  = median value for the answers collected at the question  $i$  for the partner  $j$

*Note: we shall summarize/ synthesis the responses by the Median in order to "neutralize" the answers considered too extreme even within a territory.*

*Median = the middle value of a set of ordered data.*

*The median is usually calculated for numeric variables, but may also be calculated for categorical variables that are sequenced. If observations of a variable are ordered by value, the median value corresponds to the middle observation in that ordered list. The median value corresponds to a cumulative percentage of 50% (i.e., 50% of the values are below the median and 50% of the values are above the median)*

*In order to calculate the median, the data must first be ranked (sorted in ascending order). The median is the number in the middle.*

## Annex II

<b>skills</b>	<b>median</b>
understand the life of the company that he wants to be integrated in	15,00
accepts the constraints related to the job.	15,00
understand the requirements to be accepted by a group, a team	15,00
respects the hierarchal relations	17,50
is thorough in tasks execution	15,00
takes personal initiatives	15,00
has the ability to anticipate and respond effectively to change	15,00
has a comprehensive understanding or the oral and written language	15,00
has the ability to listen others	15,00
accepts the cultural and social origin differences	15,00
accepts to work in group	15,00
manages his emotions	15,00
has the ability to negotiate with others	15,00
is able to give a personal point of view	12,50
knows how to adopt a dress code appropriate to the situation	12,50
knows how to present himself verbally in a weighted and positive way	15,00
is interested in learning new things/ is interested in innovations	15,00
accepts responsibilities	15,00
takes initiatives	15,00
takes care of himself	15,00
respects the imposed schedule	15,00
is able to go alone to an appointment	15,00
is able to manage time	15,00
is able to clarify the choice of a personal	15,00
knows to develop strategies	15,00
<b>Average</b>	<b>14,9</b>