

**YouMatch**Global Initiative on Innovative
Employment Services for Youth**Contact**
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Job Fairs are initiated, planned, implemented and evaluated by a provider network consisting of:

- Municipalities have a leading role in initiating, coordinating and evaluating the annual Job Fairs.
- Public Employment Offices have a key role in the organisation of the local fairs.
- The youth sector (e.g. Local Youth Councils, Municipal Youth Offices, Youth centres and organisations) has good access to young people.

Employers are contributing partners and benefitting participants (exhibitors). Private sector institutions (e.g. chambers, sector associations) support the outreach to employers.

**Target Groups**

On the supply side, young graduates and job-seekers are invited through the youth sector and media to the fair and to a preparatory training (shortly before the event).

Formally established enterprises looking for long-term employees, seasonal workers or interns are the main beneficiary on the demand side of the labour market.

**Objectives****On target group level:**

- Matching and placing significant numbers of young people into employment, internships, or self-employment is the main purpose of the event (filling many vacancies, respectively).
- CV-writing and job interview-training is delivered by youth sector institutions shortly before the event. This is to prepare participating young job-seekers to gain maximum benefit from the event.

On institutional level:

- The cooperation of the diverse providers enables the network to achieve a common goal for a public benefit. Each partner institution brings its specific strengths and operates within its mandate.
- This type of Job Fair has become a model in Kosovo. It is subject to continuous improvement. Good practice experiences are transferred to other municipalities.

These Job Fairs focus on matching and placement. Preparatory application trainings enable young job seekers to make effective use of the Employment Service. Number and types of vacant positions advertised by companies reveals a segment of the labour market with significant demand for labour. This information can be used for orientation.



Intervention Approach

Local Stakeholder Collaboration (Background)

- Job fairs were one of several Employment Services identified during stakeholder meetings in three initial (pilot) municipalities as an effective and practical tool for promoting youth employment, among others.
- Different institutions collaborate on youth employment promotion at a local level: Municipal administration contributes staff and budget and implements the fairs jointly with public employment offices and the youth sector.
- Cross-institutional organising teams are formed to plan and implement the Job Fairs

Placement-Focused Job Fair

- Starting point is the current and specific demand of local businesses for workers, employees and interns. Demand for skilled labour is assessed in a pragmatic and coordinated way involving related departments of the municipality (e.g. Economic Development) and the local branches of National Employment Services.

Outreach to Employers

- In collaboration with private sector institutions (e.g. chambers, sector or business associations) employers are contacted and supplied with simple templates to draft job adverts for each vacant position. The number of vacancies ranges between 200 and 500 per fair (in cities of about 70,000 to 110,000 inhabitants).

Outreach to Young People

- The collection of current and profiled vacancies forms the basis for communicating with young people before and during the fair.
- This establishes a soft filtering mechanism: Young people, who have some interest in the advertised work places and on the job-learning opportunities are attracted to the fair, and no one is excluded from participation.
- Young people are offered preparatory application training, which is delivered by partner institutions of the youth sector. A 'CV writing-corner' at the fair offers similar support to spontaneous visitors.

Follow-Up

- Evaluation. Initial feedback is gathered from a randomly selected sample of young visitors and from all exhibiting employers during the fair. A second evaluation takes place one or two months after the event to gain precise information on its outcomes (number of interviews, number of placements).
- A reflection meeting of all local stakeholders after the fair reviews the evaluation results and gathers experiences from all perspectives.
- Good practice and feedback have been compiled into implementation guidelines (for the next implementation and to transfer good practice to other municipalities).



Activities

The one day-event is the end result of a long and intense preparation phase. The Job Fair event covers activities like:

- Two volunteers register young participants prior to the event or random visitors upon entry (name, residence, phone number, email).
- An overview of all vacant positions is displayed at the entrance.
- Short opening speeches by the city's Mayor, Public Employment Service, and sponsors.
- Participants visit the 'CV Writing Corner' for support with completing application forms and/or preparing short CVs.
- Young job-seekers meeting with exhibiting employers is the core activity
- Employers provide first-hand information on their open positions, collect CVs and shortlist candidates for in-house interviews.
- Collecting feedback from employers and young job-seekers.



Resources

Staff

- The Steering committee (Local Stakeholder Meeting) with its partners plans, conducts and evaluates the fair, involving stakeholder staff as appropriate.
- One energetic main coordinator with excellent communication, social and project management skills helps to establish viable partnerships among stakeholders and coordinates processes.
- Support from additional youth volunteers.

Time

- The planning phase takes two to three months and several meetings.

Budget

- Financial resources are required for:
 - renting the venue, booths, and technical equipment,
 - the production and dissemination of promotional materials
 - preparation training
 - services (cleaning, translation if necessary, small catering)



Results

Every fair involves between 25 and 40 exhibitors (employers) and receives between 300 and 1.300 visitors. 70 students have been placed into internships in 2016. Based on the experiences of seven Job Fairs implemented in five major cities in Kosovo, guidelines have been developed to support an additional four cities with implementation instructions.

Tips for Practitioners

- Municipalities are interested in a functioning labour market and may want to allocate some municipal budget for a local job fair.
- Approaching employers and supporting them to draft job adverts is the starting point for fairs with high placement rates.
- The collection of a significant number of vacancies is the basis for communicating with young job-seekers. It filters interested young people without excluding anyone.
- Involve institutions close to the target groups to assist outreach (e.g. youth centres and NGOs for youths, chambers and associations for employers).
- Identify the benefit that employers and young job-seekers would be able to gain from the fair and create messages to promote the fair to both target groups (in different languages, through different media).
- Create a brand (logo, slogan) and disseminate promotional materials for publicity.
- Preparing young job-seekers how to engage with the fair is important to enable them to seize the opportunity.
- A final check just before the event is important to make sure that everything is ready (e.g. venue prepared, trainers and courses prepared, youth informed, last confirmation calls to employers to avoid empty booths and disappointed visitors, media attendance, speakers, volunteers, evaluation forms).
- Interpretation of evaluation results from different perspectives offers both, a good closure (celebrating achievements and recognising lessons learnt) as well as a good starting point for planning the next fair.
- Groups working together can achieve more than their individuals can. Networking and collaboration by different institutions is a key success factor for Job Fairs (and other Employment Services).
- Keeping partners committed requires good people skills, excellent communication skills as well as patience and persistence on the part of the organisers.