GUIDANCE AND OUTREACH FOR INACTIVE AND UNEMPLOYED

CZECH REPUBLIC

ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA
CZECH REPUBLIC
The thematic perspectives series complements the general information on vocational education and training (VET) systems provided in 'VET in Europe' reports. The themes presented in the series feature high on the European agenda.


This thematic perspective was prepared based on data/information from 2017. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of Cedefop. Thematic perspectives are co-financed by the European Union and ReferNet national partners.

ReferNet is a network of institutions across Europe representing the 28 Member States, plus Iceland and Norway. The network provides Cedefop with information and analysis on national vocational education and training (VET). ReferNet also disseminates information on European VET and Cedefop’s work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Iceland and Norway. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet
Guidance and outreach for inactive and unemployed

Many countries across the European Union (EU) have high levels of unemployment and of inactive adults. These phenomena are frequently associated with low levels of qualification and insufficient basic skills. They may also reflect lack of adjustment between skills demanded in the labour market and skills developed in formal education and training. In both cases up-skilling and re-skilling solutions could be explored to increase the employability of adults.

The national reports developed by ReferNet partners reflect efforts done by Member States to reach vulnerable groups affected by unemployment and inactivity and help them reengage in learning and employment. The reports refer, in particular, to measures which may include young adults not in employment, education or training (NEET) and adults undergoing long term unemployment (LTU), given their persistence in many countries and the high challenges these groups face.

The policy strategies and initiatives in focus shed light over ways to support the most vulnerable to find learning and qualifying solutions. Career guidance and counselling support to people with decaying skills, low levels of motivation and insufficient basic skills are addressed. Its instrumental role in providing information, identifying skills needs, clarifying career options and developing positive attitudes towards learning is made clear.

Whenever possible, outreach measures were described, addressing the ones who fall out of the scope of standard policies to support registered unemployed or recent education drop-outs. Many reports entertain an important discussion on the entitlement to social protection and its effectiveness in addressing the challenges of all demographic groups.

Lastly, Cedefop trusts that these reports will provide an important characterisation of current opportunities and challenges across the EU in establishing appropriate upskilling pathways for adults. Current European policy initiatives urge MS to integrate skills assessment measures with flexible learning and validation solution, where guidance services and outreach will necessarily play a key role.
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CHAPTER 1.
Indicators

1.1. **NEETs**

In 2016, the share of NEETs in the Czech Republic (in the age category 20-34) was 16.2%, 2.1 pp below the European Union average. The indicator corresponds to the percentage of the population of the given age group which is not employed and not involved in further education or training. In the past five years, their share has been slowly decreasing, following trends in the EU (18.7% in 2012, 16.2 % in 2016).

*Figure 1*

Source: Eurostat *(edat_lfse_20)*
According to gender, NEETs are more often women than men in all the EU countries except Lithuania. In the Czech Republic, the difference between men and women is the highest among all the member states. In the age group of 20-34 years, 26.4% of women and only 6.4% of men were neither in employment nor in education and training in 2016. For the EU, the corresponding shares are 22.7% of women and 14% of men in the given age category.

Similarly to the EU, the group with the higher risk of becoming NEETs are young people with the upper secondary and post-secondary education level...
(ISCED 3-4). 8.6% of them are neither in employment nor in training (8.3% in the EU). Compared to the EU, the group of low educated (ISCED levels 0-2) is less risky – 3.6% of them are NEETs in the CR while 6.6% in the EU. This difference is probably due to the fact that the upper secondary education in the Czech Republic is almost universal – 90% (1) of the respective age cohort of 15-19 is enrolled in upper secondary education. As regards young people with higher education (ISCED 5-8), the share of NEETs among them is 4.0% in the CR, compared to 3.4% in the EU.

Figure 4

The share of NEETs (aged 18-24) among unemployed people varies greatly between regions of the Czech Republic. The highest share is in the Severozápad region, the lowest share is in the capital city of Prague. This illustrates well the cumulating of labour market and social problems in the regions of Severozápad and Moravskoslezsko. They have the highest unemployment rate in general as well as highest share of socially disadvantaged people and excluded localities. This is partly due to the historical structure of their regional economies where heavy industry (e.g. mining) was dominant, but has been subject of a decline in recent decades.

Source: Eurostat (edat_lfse_21)

Table 1.  NEETs (18-24 years) by NUTS 2 regions in the Czech Republic (2016) (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUTS 2 regions</th>
<th>Percentage in unemployment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severozápad</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moravskoslezsko</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severovýchod</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jihozápad</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strední Morava</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strední Cechy</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jihovýchod</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praha</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat (edat_lfse_22)

1.2. Long term unemployed

The long term unemployed (LTU) are people who have been unemployed for more than 12 months. In the Czech Republic, 42.1% of unemployed people are long-term unemployed, which is 4.3 pp below the EU level. It means that 89 thousand persons in the Czech Republic are long term unemployed. The LTU can be further divided into those who are unemployed longer than 12 months and less than 24 months and those who are unemployed longer than 24 months (the very long-term unemployed). 15.6% of unemployed people are in the first group and 26.5% of unemployed are very long-term unemployed in the Czech Republic (17.1% and 29.3 % in the EU).
There are more long term unemployed women than men in the Czech Republic (53%; 47% respectively); the situation is reversed in the EU (53% are men and 47% are women in LTU).

The shares of LTU increase by age, most of LTU are in the age category 55 and higher. The representation of individual age groups in the Czech Republic is similar and slightly lower than in the EU. In the age group 15 to 19 years, women are significantly more represented among LTU than men in the Czech Republic, as opposed to the EU.
The share of the long-term unemployed in total unemployment also varies among regions of the Czech Republic. The highest share is in the Moravskoslezsko region, followed by the Severozápad, the lowest share is in the Střední Čechy region (which is, among other things, thanks to the fact that this region surrounds the capital of Prague, that traditionally provides plenty of job opportunities and many people from the Střední Čechy region commute to Prague).

Table 2. Long-term unemployment by NUTS 2 regions in the Czech Republic (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuts 2 regions</th>
<th>Percentage of unemployment</th>
<th>Thousand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moravskoslezsko</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severozápad</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jihovýchod</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Střední Morava</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jihozápad</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OECD (Incidence of unemployment by duration) (2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuts 2 regions</th>
<th>Percentage of unemployment</th>
<th>Thousand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severovýchod</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praha</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Střední Čechy</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Eurostat (lfst_r_lfu2ltu)
CHAPTER 2.
National strategies

2.1. Overview of the system

The career guidance is provided mainly within two independent systems: (a) in the framework of initial education (under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports) and (b) in the framework of labour market and employment policies (under the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). Besides them, also various NGOs and independent private consultants play their role. In general, career guidance for adults is currently seen as not sufficiently developed in the Czech Republic. The country lacks a systematic framework and coordinated approach interlinking individual parts of the system.

The guidance services provided within the education system deal with the students in initial education and take place dominantly in the schools or school counselling facilities, so an outreach is not used in this framework.

In relation to the labour market, the guidance services are provided by the Labour Office of the Czech Republic (LO). The Labour Office primarily targets people who are registered as jobseekers (officially unemployed). Overwhelming majority of socially disadvantaged people apply for the registration as there are noticeable financial benefits (besides the unemployment and/or social benefits also their social and health insurance is covered in most cases). The registered people are subject of regular Labour Office measures (active labour market policies) and are bound to cooperate with the Office (stick to the agreed commitments such as visits at the Office etc.). Non-registered unemployed either voluntarily or by exclusion due to not following agreed commitments tend to be marginalised. Outreach tends not be used by the Labour office.

The legislation (the Employment Act) assigns the Labour Office to pay a special attention to their clients who need it because of their health, age, childcare or other serious reasons. For these clients (and in cooperation with them), an individual action plan (IAP) is drafted. The IAP is based on client’s qualification and other conditions and contains a timetable of suitable steps and measures aiming to increase the employability of the client, who is obliged to follow the agreed commitments. The IAP is drafted also for all job seekers registered for longer than 5 months.

Regional units of the Labour Office can define risk groups according to their specific regional situation, but usually the younger job seekers (under 25 or 30 years) and the long-term unemployed (e.g. over 12 months of registration) are
among them. The regional units use the ESF co-funded projects adjusted to their regional needs to support their risk groups. Retraining courses and career guidance belong among frequently used tools within this framework.

Formally, there is an opportunity for everybody to return to the formal education system, but in reality it is used only exceptionally. Since 2007 the Czech Republic has been developing a new element – a possibility of validation and recognition of skills, regardless how they were acquired (the system is based on Act 179/2006 Coll. on validation and recognition of the results of further learning and on the National Register of Qualifications) (3). However, the general public does not have enough information about this opportunity and they have difficulty to access the professional services of career advisors.

The outreach method is not used systemically in the Czech Republic; nevertheless, there are many various platforms (especially non-profit and charitable organizations) which use this approach (namely streetwork, low-threshold clubs, etc.). Their task is generally a complex support to clients, part of which often is also assistance to return to employment or to education. But the initiatives are usually project-based, with insufficient staffing, availability in limited locations and differences in approach.

2.2. National strategy background

The most important national strategy papers in the field of guidance and upskilling of disadvantaged youth and adults are the following:

**Strategy for Education Policy of the Czech Republic** until 2020 (*Strategie vzdělávací politiky do roku 2020*) (4), adopted in 2014 and a document entitled the Long-term Plan for Education and Development of the Educational System of the Czech Republic for the Period 2015-2020 (*Dlouhodobý záměr vzdělávání a rozvoje vzdělávací soustavy České republiky na období 2015-2020*) that follows the Strategy define the main priorities of the Czech government in the field of education and training. The documents pay attention to ensuring equal access to education for all children, young people and adults regardless of their initial conditions, especially their socio-economic status, region, ethnicity etc. An informed environment stimulating demand for continuous (further) education, especially among low-skilled and socially disadvantaged people, is to be

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(3) The NRQ contains descriptions of qualifications that are derived from the labour market, including assessment criteria (employers participate in its development).

promoted. The Strategy envisages a higher support of the successful transition of schools graduates to the labour market, by, among other things, supporting linkages between the schools and the world of work such as for instance promotion of internships in companies (see below). The development of a more comprehensive and integrated system of life-long career guidance is also to be promoted that would be available to everybody during their whole life. The schools should be further supported in widening their offer of life-long learning programmes.

In the framework of another follow-up strategy paper Action Plan for Inclusive Education 2016-2018 (Akční plán inkluzivního vzdlívání 2016-2018) (5), the regions (which are responsible for most of the upper-secondary level schools) are supported (including financially) to implement their regional measures to promote inclusive education at the upper secondary level and successful transitions of graduates to work and their initial training period at the workplace. For this purpose they are supposed to organize the cooperation of all relevant services (school guidance centres, NGOs, training providers, social services and others).

The strategy paper that deals with the youth in general is the Youth Support Strategy 2014-2020 (Koncepce podpory mládeže 2014-2020) (6). In a general way, it also proposes support for activities that help young people to gain relevant education and increase their employability, with a special attention to be given to youth from socially disadvantaged background. The implementation of the priorities is mostly ensured by launching relevant national and regional grant schemes.

A key strategy paper in the field of labour market is the Employment Policy Strategy until 2020 (Strategie politiky zaměstnanosti do roku 2020) (7) from 2015. Supporting the access of disadvantaged people to employment is among its main priorities. It identifies main problems and target groups for intervention, namely the socially excluded localities where many handicaps cumulate and unemployment rate can be as high as 90-100%; young people under 25 (especially graduates from upper secondary education); older people over 55; people with health handicaps; socially excluded people; and people with low

qualifications. To support these target groups, the paper proposes the following measures:

(a) Creating supported jobs, socially beneficial jobs, supporting social entrepreneurship etc.; these tools must be applied in line with specific local conditions, in cooperation with local partners and primarily in the endangered localities.

(b) A better and more flexible use of the current system of active labour market policies provided by the Labour Office. The measures should be more targeting individual needs of the client, the level of support should be linked to the level of client’s handicaps, etc. The cooperation and coordination with other local subjects, especially schools, in the field of career guidance and counselling is to be increased. Complex measures covering more areas of clients’ needs by combining more existing tools are preferred.

(c) Continuing in realisation of the national Youth Guarantee Programme (see below), with a special support aimed to regions with a high youth unemployment (NUTS 2 Severozápad), mainly with the help of targeted ESF calls and accompanied by an information campaign.

(d) Increasing successful transitions of graduates to the labour market for instance through the support of internships in companies (see below).

Another relevant document is the Social Inclusion Strategy for 2014-2020 (Strategie sociálního začleňování 2014-2020) issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Strategy aims in general to reduce and prevent poverty and social exclusion. Among its main priority target areas belong employment and training of people at the risk of social exclusion. In general is supports guidance and motivation measures, closer cooperation of the Labour Office with local employers, programmes of work and social rehabilitation, local coordination of activities and better targeting of active labour market policies (ALMPs), etc.

In 2013, following the European initiative Youth Guarantee (Záruka pro mládež), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports prepared the national Youth Guarantee Programme (Program Záruky pro mládež). The main implementer of the programme is the Labour Office. The aim is to create a wide offer for various groups of young people according to their individual needs and possibilities. The programme proposes 23 suggestions/initiatives, which are mostly incorporated into the already ongoing programmes and projects. They include, among others, also:

(e) a public promotion of the Programme (e.g. press conferences, website information and informing potential clients during guidance activities);
(f) improving the system of career guidance in the framework of IVET (with the aim to increase the ability of young people to manage their own career path in the future);

(g) strengthening the role of IVET schools in providing also CVET (including courses leading to recognized certificates) with the aim to increase the possibilities to engage NEETs back to education;

(h) increasing the capacities of Labour Office information and guidance centres;

(i) a further development of the integrated information system (www.infoabsolvent.cz) providing a wide scope of information and tools supporting career and education choices;

(j) research and monitoring activities about the underlying factors of youth unemployment;

(k) a further support of the development of key competences within initial education and a better linking of the vocational training to the competences defined by the National Registry of Qualifications (8) to increase the future employability of young people;

(l) education projects realized by the Further Education Fund (see below);

(m) the projects of Labour Office regional units (see below).

The programme is implemented in the whole territory of the Czech Republic; in Karlovarský and Ústecký regions (the NUTS 2 Severozápad region), the measures of the programme are also financed from the funds received by the Czech Republic from the European Commission within the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) as this region was the only one in the Czech Republic meeting the entry requirement of the initiative on unemployment of young people up to age 25 higher than 25% (in 2012). The Czech Republic has taken the opportunity from the proposal of the ESF regulation and has voluntarily committed itself to extend the target group to young people under the age of 30.

2.3. Implementation of the strategies

The abovementioned strategies are implemented mostly with the help of ESF co-funded projects. Among those that target specifically the NEETs and LTU, especially the following should be mentioned:

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(8) The NRQ contains descriptions of qualifications that are derived from the labour market, including assessment criteria (employers participate in its development).
2.3.1. Training projects of the Further Education Fund (FEF) (9)

PROKOP project (Improving competences to increase employability) runs from 2016 till 2019. In the framework of active labour market policies of the Labour Office (which is a partner of the project), additional continuing education and individual guidance programmes are being provided to overcome main obstacles that make it difficult for the target group to participate actively at (or return to) the labour market. The target group are mainly people threatened by social exclusion – namely the unemployed registered at the Labour Office (especially the long-term unemployed), people registered at the Labour Office repeatedly, employees endangered by mass dismissals (identified as such during the cooperation of the Labour Office with employers) or inactive people (e.g. mothers at their maternity leave). Mainly the training in the field of financial literacy, citizenship skills and soft skills is provided. Within the project, a team of external trainers and counsellors is built to perform the guidance and training in individual regions. The emphasis is put on the quality of training, targeted personalised approach and complexity of supporting activities, involving especially interactive features, engaging trainees in active participation, with the use of e.g. training of model situations, etc.

Close Look to the Places (Místa zblízka) is a social innovation project for implementation in 2017-2020, which seeks for a change leading to the formation of self-sufficient, sustainable and learning locations. During the project, people learn how to use the internal resources and potential of the place where they live and work. The overall goals are to support the creation of new job opportunities and increase employability and competences of local people. The project is implemented in four selected locations in the Czech Republic (Aš, Sokolov, Louny and Podbořany areas). Courses, workshops, participatory and facilitation meetings, guided walks and meetings with experts, etc. are held for local interested people. The primary target group are active locals from the ranks of employers and employees, public administration (management of municipalities), educational and counselling institutions, employees of NGOs and social enterprises. The secondary target group consists of interested people and job seekers, socially excluded persons or persons at risk of social exclusion.

(9) The FEF is an institution operating under the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. It realizes projects in the field of further education as tools to implement national strategies and policies.
Project entitled Education through Practice (Vzdělávání praxí), running from 2016 till 2019, is aimed at providing interested individuals with an opportunity to undergo an internship in a company. The eligible target groups include job seekers registered at the Labour Office, parents at the parental leave or after its termination, persons over 50 years old or persons with no qualification or only a lower level of vocational qualification (up to two years of vocational training). The project follows a similar project Internships in Companies (Stáže ve firmách) that was realized in previous years.

2.3.2. Projects of Labour Office regional units

Youth Guarantee in NN Region (Záruky pro mladé v NN kraji). Under this title, the regional projects are currently being implemented in 11 of 14 regions of the Czech Republic which are directly linked to the national Youth Guarantee Programme. Their aim is to integrate young people into the labour market. The project targets jobseekers under the 30 years of age, regardless of achieved education, with maximum work experience up to three years, who have been registered at the Labour Office for a minimum of three months. Within the project, the following activities can be implemented: counselling (to identify the personality and qualification prerequisites of the client, to mediate suitable employment, to select suitable tools of active labour market policy and consultancy in the area of further participation in education), retraining, support of activities to gain working habits and experience (for instance community work, socially beneficial jobs, short-term employment opportunities, internships), support for the start of self-employment, motivation activities aimed at increasing the orientation of young people in the requirements of labour market, etc.

The Youth Employment Promotion Initiative for the NUTS 2 Severozápad Region (Iniciativa na podporu zaměstnanosti mládeže pro region NUTS 2 Severozápad) is implemented in the Ústecký and Karlovarský Regions. The main goal of these two projects is to ensure that young people gain the necessary work experience and then a stable job. The target group is job seekers aged 15-29. The support is aimed at acquiring practice and consequently a stable job, at returning applicants or interested persons to education process and, with a previous language training, at a possible participation in a foreign labour market.

The Initiative also includes two innovative measures – Internships Abroad and Return to Education, which run as pilot projects in Ústecký and Karlovarský Regions. Within the Internships Abroad activity (Stáže do zahraničí), the participants can travel abroad to work there to gain experience and increase their
qualification. The Labour Office will pay for their accommodation, meals and travel expenses. Part of the activity is also the recognition of the achieved level of education abroad – the nostrification, which is necessary and important for entering a foreign free labour market. The participant will go through an intensive language course (aimed specifically at German language as the region borders with Germany).

The aim of the Return to Education activity (Návrat do vzdělávání) is to motivate a participant without education to return to school though both individual and group counselling. Study programmes focused mainly on practical training which will subsequently ensure to clients a good position in the labour market are preferred. Within this activity, the Labour Office closely cooperates with suitable schools. The cooperation has various forms. Visits and tasters in selected schools are organized for the interested clients. Teachers may also attend meetings with clients organized by the LO to present their schools and study fields. An education counsellor at the school is appointed for the returning student (most often it is the class teacher of the student) who supports the student, motivates him/her to stay in education and helps him/her to solve related issues (e.g. housing), etc. Return to Education provides motivation activities, diagnosis of professional orientation and study skills, preparation for admission to education – assistance of professional worker, ‘tasting’, admission to education with the help of an educational counsellor, and accompanying measures (reimbursement of travel costs, accommodation, meals, medical examinations, school aids).

Labour Office projects targeting LTU. The Labour Office implements through its regional units a total of 7 regional projects (in 7 out of 14 regions of the Czech Republic). The main objective is to increase employment and the employability of long-term registered persons. The concrete definitions of the target group differ slightly according to regional needs, but people unemployed for longer than 12 months are always included (in some regions also those who are unemployed for longer than 5 month or people with other social disadvantages). In general, active labour market policy tools such as guidance and counselling including diagnostics, motivation courses, retraining, and socially beneficial jobs are offered to the clients in a targeted way.

### 2.3.3. Projects of regional authorities in the NUTS 2 Severozápad - Regions

The measures described above are operating within the existing structures and schemes where the client first needs to contact the institution, to register as jobseeker and/or to apply for services. Reaching out of the existing structures to
approach people in their environment is rather exceptional. This approach is represented by three ESF co-funded regional projects that are funded within the Call of the Ministry of Labour - The Youth Employment Promotion Initiative for the NUTS 2 Severozápad - Regions (Iniciativa na podporu zaměstnanosti mládeže pro region NUTS 2 Severozápad – kraje) that was also launched in the framework of the national Youth Guarantee Programme. The Regional Authorities of the two regions were eligible to apply. The target group here is similar as in the previous measures, with the difference that unemployed or inactive people under 30 can be included regardless if they are registered job seekers or not, with the priority given to those who are not registered. It concerns especially NEETs from marginalized communities in a high risk of social exclusion. Three projects are being realized within this framework:

The Do Not Stand And Come II project (Nestůj a pojď II) is realized by the Karlovarský Region and its partners: the Regional Unit of Labour Office in Karlovy Vary, the Regional Council of Children and Youth of Karlovy Vary (Krajská rada dětí a mládeže Karlovarská - KRDMK, z. s.), the Association of Non-governmental Non-profit Activities of the Karlovarský Region (Asociace nevládních neziskových aktivit Karlovarského kraje - ANNA KK, z. s.), and Regional Chamber of Commerce of Karlovarský Region (Krajská hospodářská komora Karlovarského kraje - KHK KK). The aim is to stabilize young people in the labour market or to return them into the education system and provide them with such an education which will enable them to return to the labour market. The target group is the persons, who are neither employed nor included in the education system, and, at the same time, are not registered at the Labour Office. If they had been previously registered there, they were excluded from the register for non-cooperation. The project offers career guidance and counselling, assessment centre (assessing work-related abilities of selected clients by performing simulated job related tasks and situations), work and balance diagnostics, motivation courses, validation and recognition of already acquired skills, retraining, new subsidized jobs for 6 months, personal coaching services, return to IVET in selected fields, learning professional German (the region borders with Germany) and supporting the start of one’s own business. Part of the project are also counselling centres and mobile counsellors.

The project supporting young people on the labour market in the Děčín area and Šluknov area (Ústecký Region) was called We Are the Děčín Area – THE WAY (Děčínsko jsme my – CESTA). The project is implemented in the regional partnership of the Labour Office, schools, local authorities and the non-profit sector and it addresses in particular the local specifics of the Děčín microregion. The main objective is to reduce the number of young people under 30 years of
age who are neither involved in the labour market nor part of the education system. There are regional counselling centres including mobile ones and streetworkers functioning within the project which search for and contact the potential clients directly in the field. The centres are staffed by personal counsellors hired for part-time contracts. Clients are then invited to guidance and education services according to their needs, including vocational training and supported job positions in a close link to the needs of local employers. The scheme of the implementation of activities and the content of the offers to the clients is very similar to the complementary regional project called Transfer, described in Example 1 (see below).

TRANSFER – The Comprehensive Programme of Support for Young People on the Labour Market in Ústecký Region. As the biggest of the three projects, the Transfer project was selected for a closer description as Example 1 – see below.
CHAPTER 3.
Examples

3.1. Example 1: Transfer project

Transfer – the Comprehensive Programme of Support for Young People on the Labour Market in Ústecký Region (Transfer – Komplexní program podpory mladých lidí na trhu práce v Ústeckém kraji) is a project implemented in 2016 - 2018 in the Ústecký Region. The main objective of the project is to increase the employment and employability of young people under the 29 years of age. It targets people who are not registered at the Labour Office and are not part of the stream of education. The priority is to reach to the people who are not registered at the Labour Office. The engaged clients are offered counselling, where their prerequisites and needs are identified. Based on these recommendations, they then undergo selected programmes that may include guidance, education and training, job tasting, job mediation and other with an aim to help them to increase employability and get a job. They are individually supported to overcome all kinds of barriers and to stick with the process.

The Ústecký Region has been for a long time one of the Czech regions with the highest unemployment rate; at the same time, the region has the youngest age structure of all regions. It has the lowest average educational level, and a high share of people at risk of social exclusion (aggravated by the higher proportion of Roma population relative to other regions) as well. The project is directly linked to the European as well as the national Youth Guarantee Programmes. The budget of the project is approximately 99 mil CZK (3.8 mil EUR), of which 85% comes from the ESF, 5 % is co-financed from the budget of the Ústecký Region and 10 % from the state budget of the Czech Republic. The partners of the project are the Ústecký Region (coordinator), the Labour Office (represented by the regional unit in the Ústecký Region), the Regional Chamber of Commerce of the Ústecký Region, Economic and Social Council of the Ústecký Region and non-profit organizations: WHITE LIGHT I., People in Need (Člověk v tísni, o.p.s.), OMNI TEMPORE o.p.s., THE HOUSE OF ROMA CULTURE (DŮM ROMSKÉ KULTURY o.p.s.), FOR LITVÍNOV (PRO LITVÍNOV, o.p.s.) and Bridge to Hope for Most (Most k naději).
3.1.1. Personnel and organisational provision of the project

3.1.1.1. Regional counselling team

Firstly, an expert cooperative platform of all the major labour market actors has been created to contribute to an improvement of the position of the target group in the labour market. In addition to the representatives of the Regional Office and project partners, also representatives of the towns and municipalities from the participating regions, representatives of non-profit sector as well as representatives of the Labour Office and employers were invited. Thus a consulting team was created with approximately 20 people, having as one of its main roles to provide bottom-up insights, reflecting the local reality. This enables the implementation team to reflect flexibly the actual needs of the specific location. The counselling team also discusses the possibilities or needs of local authorities and employers in creating job opportunities and providing internships for the target group, possibilities of schools in realization of programmes for the target group, and eventually expanding the professional services beyond the work programme of the project (especially in the social field). The activity of this team takes the form of regular meetings at three-months intervals; its composition varies according to the actual needs of the project.

3.1.1.2. Network of regional counselling centres – Transfer Help Desk (THD)

A network of sixteen contact counselling centres, the THDs, was set up in the selected towns of the region, forming the core backbone of counselling activities for clients. Each of the centres is staffed by a personal consultant with adequate competences to perform this position. The personal counsellor accompanies every client personally during his/her participation in the project, helps with his/her specific situation and potential problems, and, based on his/her needs, recommends him/her for further counselling programmes of the project (see below).

3.1.1.3. Implementation team – internal management and evaluation mechanisms

The project has established internal management mechanisms within the implementation team which are necessary to manage a project extensive in terms of territory, number of clients and stakeholders involved. The project involves a project manager, two full-time regional coordinators of project activities responsible for a respective part of the region, and six administrators of the projects on the local level. In addition, the project management team was extended by the representatives of coordinators and partners. In addition to
intense regular communication, the team meets once a month, to assure coordination and ad hoc corrective measures. If needed, also representatives of the cooperating stakeholders get involved (towns, municipalities, non-profit sector).

Evaluation feedback from the clients is provided in the form of questionnaires. Reports from these surveys serve as the source of information for possible corrections of project activities. The implementation team has a very good experience with this. The clients can influence its performance and quality and this way be even more involved in its realization and have their motivation strengthened. Due to the large number of clients and regional scale of the project, one special worker for evaluation is responsible for this activity.

3.1.2. **Raising awareness - motivational and information campaign**

A motivational and information campaign, aimed at the target group of potential project clients, was developed four times during the project. The campaigns were originally planned to precede waves of selection. The selection waves have been created due to continuous interest of clients in entering the project allowing for flexible application schedules according to individual needs and availability. The campaign reflects the specifics of the target group where these persons exist out of the classical structures of the labour market and education, and they need to be first provided with basic information on the existence of the project and its possible contribution to them personally.

The campaign uses especially the information channels of the Ústecký Region such as the broadcast of regional TV, regional newspapers, and information leaflets in the network of regional public transport, in schools, on websites, in other public spaces or in non-profit organizations. Other utilized communication channels in relation to the target group of the project are social networks which are popular among young people. Information is also permanently available on a website of the project.

A secondary target group for the information campaign are employers who should get information on what the project can offer to them. This part of the campaign is implemented by the Regional Chamber of Commerce, a partner of the project.

3.1.3. **Addressing and selecting project participants**

The participants of the project are selected primarily among young people, who are very difficult to be captured within the existing systems. This is why a key place in the project is given to direct field work. Usually it concerns individuals who combine more economic, social and health issues (addictions, social exclusion, behavioural disorders, low qualification, wanted dependence on the
system of state social support, homelessness, criminal history, etc.). These are often persons who were sanctionally removed from the registry of job seekers. Therefore, it was necessary to create good advisory facilities also in smaller regions to eliminate as many obstacles as possible which may prevent the target group to get involved in the programme (clients do not need to commute, it is possible to have a close cooperation with local labour market actors, it facilitates effective streetwork, etc.)

In each counselling centre (THD), one streetworker (streetworkers are mostly people with upper secondary education and relevant practical experience) is involved in addressing potential clients directly in their environment (mainly socially excluded localities in the relevant area). During the months, which are reserved for selections into the project, the streetworker then coordinates the entry of those who get interested. In case of, for instance, clients’ poor attendance of the planned programme, the streetworker looks for them in the field and motivates them to respect the rules again. Streetworkers also provide personal assistance in accompanying clients to the authorities, if necessary to medical facilities, etc.

Another form of addressing and selection of clients is realized in cooperation with the Labour Office, where especially the former job seekers, who were sanctionally excluded from the registry, are identified and informed by the Labour Office about the opportunity to enter the Transfer project. However, the project activities are open also to the regular job seekers if interested. In the cooperation with the Labour Office, not only individual client entries, but also group information seminars for potential participants are organized.

It is expected that a total of approximately 700 persons from the target group will be recruited to participate in the project during its whole duration.

### 3.1.4. Counselling programmes and activities within the Transfer project

Within the project, several consulting programmes and activities are realized aiming at various life situations of clients which together form a comprehensive whole of measures effectively supporting the target group in entering the labour market.

#### 3.1.4.1. Ongoing counselling

(a) Individual counselling towards the labour market

Throughout the whole project, the THD provides clients with ongoing counselling directed mainly to the labour market and attempts to maintain their motivation to change their position both in the labour market and in society. The THD centres are open for clients every working day from 8.00 to 16.00; during
the time, scheduled individual meetings take place and also the premises and equipment are available to the clients, for instance to use the ICT for job search.

The content of counselling is creating an individual action plan for each client, informing about vacancies, housing, state social benefits, debt counselling, training of CV and motivation letter writing, information from the field of labour law, etc.

Communication of participants with potential employers is ensured mainly by their personal counsellors. The service may include accompaniment to job interviews by a streetworker (or by the personal counsellor), and job interview simulation. Thanks to the accompanying streetworker the clients who are uncomfortable and uncertain in this situation feel psychological support. Post-employment assistance is also provided, if necessary, with the aim to minimize possible friction between the new employee and the employer.

(b) Professional individual counselling

This part of counselling services is provided only to those clients whose need is defined by their personal counsellor on the basis of introductory meeting. These are the participants who have not completed their education and have no clear idea about their future career orientation or who need to change an unfitting qualification. In such a case, counselling is outsourced to a professional psychologist (who is also a guidance practitioner) and is intended to help the client clarify his/her professional and personal orientation.

3.1.4.2. The “New Perspective” (Nová perspektiva) counselling programme

This counselling programme is designed especially for those clients who exist totally out of the system of education as well as labour market, who are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion. Young people are shown alternative perspectives, and supported in developing working habits, self-esteem, responsibility and break with negative career patterns passed down through families. A motivational programme is recommended by personal counsellors. Its content focuses on: legal minimum (basics of work related legislation), communication techniques, CV writing motivation letter drafting, principles of phone call with employers, motivational activities, labour market information, equal opportunity issues, meetings with Labour Office representatives, debt counselling and financial literacy. The programme ends with a final interview, and the graduates receive a certificate on the completion of a counselling programme with national validity.
3.1.4.3. The “From School to Business” (Ze školy do podnikání) counselling programme

It is a programme designed for recent graduates of schools with the priority of technical education (e.g. electricians, plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers, IT professionals) who are interested in opening a business as entrepreneurs in the field. Suitable participants are again recommended by their personal counsellors. The programme enables clients to develop entrepreneurial competences such as knowledge and skills related to small businesses, tax declarations, accounting, staff activities, business documents, marketing activities, among others. The courses are outsourced and include the use of simulation software training various business situations, manuals for guidance in specific fields of business, a practical overview of price maps (labour costs, materials, etc.) and other information necessary for the correct setting up of a business plan. It also includes “coaching” implemented by a professional entrepreneur, who helps participants – in the form of individual consultations – to set up their own business plan. The course is finished by the final test and the successful graduates will receive a certificate of completion.

3.1.4.4. Individual coaching programme

The programme is designed for those who have the technical competences in demand in the labour market, but feel limited by doubts, fears or low self-confidence. Personal counsellors recommend participation in the programme to clients, who have the final decision. The activity is provided by a subcontractor – professional coach with appropriate professional qualifications.

3.1.4.5. Vocational education and retraining

This programme addresses clients with low or inadequate qualifications relative to labour market demands. Clients map their interests and training needs in cooperation with a personal counsellor. Subsequently, the appropriate courses are selected taking into account clients’ interests, optimal size of the study groups, regional composition of the candidates and budget possibilities of the project. Ad hoc purchase of these courses from external suppliers is ensured. The most demanded courses include IT skills of all levels, crafts, services, administrative activities as well as preparation for work in social services.

3.1.4.6. “Motivation to Work” (Motivace do práce) guidance programme

The aim of this programme is to eliminate unrealistic views of labour market demand for skills and inadequate salary expectations. The programme is implemented in two consecutive activities:
(a) Branch-oriented workshops of business representatives with clients

The aim of the workshops is to confront the ideas of clients with business reality. The workshop is always focused on a specific field where several employers present to the clients current labour market needs. The clients are then actively involved in a free discussion. An important motivation element is also the participation of young employees who have successfully started their career in the field.

(b) Excursions to companies

Excursions provide clients with the opportunity to learn directly about specific companies in their day-to-day functioning. Clients thus have a better chance to understand what a normal working life looks like and whether the company or the field of activity is interesting for them.

3.1.4.7. Team guidance programme

In this programme, the clients are supposed to get real work experience and skills and create basic work habits (such as respecting working hours, responsibility for an assigned task or ability to properly finish the assigned job). Participation in the programme is recommended to the clients by their personal counsellors. The programme has two parts:

(a) Training workshops

The workshops are developed in cooperation with the schools founded by the Ústecký Region in response to the regional needs of labour market (training workshops in technical fields and chemical industries, also in administrative activities or gastronomic industries). The training workshops last a total of 2 months, with increasing duration (for the first two weeks the clients attend 3 hour sessions once a week for, and in the last two weeks 8 hour sessions five times a week for).

(b) “I take it for myself” (Beru to za své)

This part of the programme enables the performance of employment in a form of generational cooperation through the method face-to-face (sharing one work position by an employee in pre-retirement age and a young new employee). The employer hires at his/her expense the new worker under the regime of “work outside an employment relationship” (10). The employee remains a client of the

\[10\] There are two types of work agreements under this regime. They can be concluded for performing of limited amount of work (maximum hours are set by the law) and their rules are looser than in regular employment relationship (e.g. the employer as well as the employee can terminate the agreement anytime upon a 15 days notice without stating any reason). These agreements are frequently used for part-time work at the labour market.
project, while working in cooperation with an older experienced worker. If the new employee is deemed successful, the employer is offered the opportunity to change this form of work contract into a subsidized full time job under the project activity “Employment mediation” (see below). Otherwise, the client with newly acquired experience and skills returns to the project and further efforts are made to mediate his/her search for a new job.

3.1.4.8. **Employment mediation**

Mediating the search and placement on a sustainable job is one of the main goals of the project. In total, 130 new work positions are planned to be created, of which 50 will be sustained by wage subsidies. At the same time, also non-subsidized jobs are mediated.

Due to the large scope of work and vast region, this activity is provided by three full-time professional workers who work with employers in various parts of the region. These workers closely cooperate with personal counsellors and use the wide network of the Regional Chamber of Commerce. The job mediation itself is provided by an external employment agency.

For the purpose of internal sharing of information in this activity and matching suitable clients with potential employers, the project website is used. It contains an internal secure section with a detailed database of clients which contains a number of information on professional qualifications and clients' prerequisites (work experience, skills and internships, languages, driving licences, IT skills, etc.), that was inserted by the personal counsellors. The database enables quick filtering and searching.

3.1.5. **Accompanying measures**

The purpose of accompanying measures is to remove as many barriers as possible which would prevent clients from participation in project activities and active job search, especially financial costs. The clients are reimbursed for travel expenses, initial medical examinations or criminal records necessary for admission to employment, etc. In project activities longer than five hours a day, the clients are provided with meals and, if needed, they can receive a subsidy for childcare/babysitting.

The employers are reimbursed for 12 month salary costs of future employees coming through the project (see above – Employment mediation).
3.2. Example 2: Erasmus+ GOAL Project

Although there are ALMP (11) measures specifically targeting the long-term unemployed, they do not make use of outreach methodologies. According to valid legislation, a long-term unemployed person is defined as a person registered at the Labour Office. However, if such a person has been excluded from the registration because of non-compliance with the rules or has never been interested in registration, he or she will not benefit from ALMP measures. Outreach measures targeting specifically persons, who have not worked for a long time, basically do not exist in the Czech Republic. They are outside the scope of standard labour market policies and are only irregularly developed by NGOs or charities. The international project GOAL “Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners”, financed through the Erasmus+ programme, was selected as an which applies outreach method. In the Czech Republic it’s co-financed by the National Institute for Education – an institution under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The GOAL project is a collaboration of six partner countries: Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, Iceland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia. It aims at developing existing models of guidance and orientation for adults so that these services can specifically reach low skilled adults, early school leavers without upper secondary education and socially disadvantaged adults. In the Czech Republic, the project has not specifically targeted the long-term unemployed, covering all low-skilled and people at risk. The bulk of the group is, nevertheless, composed by individuals who have undergone long-term unemployment.

GOAL is a three-year project, running from February 2015 to January 2018, and is coordinated by the Flemish Government’s Department of Education and Training. General objective of the project is to contribute to more participation of low skilled adults in education and learning programmes to increase their chances on inclusion in society and in the labour market. The project also has two other specific objectives: first - to identify critical factors and criteria of success as basis for evidence-informed policy development and implementation of centres for guidance and orientation with opportunities for validation of prior learning in Europe and the second - to develop a structural support basis amongst decision makers and relevant stakeholders for scaling up the model of educational guidance and orientation in all partner countries.

(11) Active labour market policies
GOAL serves as a pilot project in the Czech Republic – the programme developers are de facto starting from scratch. As mentioned above, there is not sufficient support for the target group in the Czech Republic: services related to career guidance are not widespread and the general public is usually not aware of them.

3.2.1. Creation of career guidance centres

Within the project, the activities of the National Institute for Education (Národní ústav pro vzdělávání, NUV) were focused on the creation of career guidance centres in two regions, which would provide support for the target group. They were established in Olomouc (the Olomoucký region) and in Most (the Ústecký region). Each centre is operated by two trained consultants (guidance practitioners). The centres are focused on providing information and career guidance services especially in the field of education (linked to the existing lifelong learning centres and using existing structures). Validation (retraining) centres are often part of VET schools (lifelong learning centres) and the project aims to introduce career guidance services as a new part of these centres. Nevertheless, the career guidance does not serve for particular school needs – it works as a centre with regional outreach. Although there are no official partners/networks involved in the project, the cooperation takes place on a non-formal basis. There are extensive contacts with VET schools, social partners, local units of the Labour Office, social services, employment agencies, job providers and other relevant stakeholders in the regions. Within the project, success factors are identified as a basis for evidence based policy development.

In order to provide high quality guidance to the clients and to overcome the difficulties the counsellors may face during career guidance process, the GOAL counsellors have received an intensive training focused on obtaining core competences for work with this particular target group, self-management of client (to teach client to “take responsibility for their life”), implementation of guidance process (from initial contact to feedback), selecting appropriate tools and methods "in line" with client's needs, structuring the interview, setting up control mechanism, stages of guidance process etc.

3.2.2. Identifying and contacting clients

Clients are referred to the counsellors mostly through the regional units of the Labour Office (in some cases, particularly in Most, by the non-profit organisations focusing for example on the Roma minority and disadvantaged

(12) They provide also assessment and related certification.
groups in the labour market). Due to the cooperation with Labour Office units, initial challenges in reaching the target group have been overcome. Direct contact remains the most effective way to reach the target group. Clients easily approach counsellors by telephone contact they receive in the Labour Office. In terms of client recruitment and referral, the GOAL service is reliant on advisers travelling to clients, as clients largely live in areas where public transport is limited and beyond their means.

The additional information is provided to the clients according to their individual preferences (phone call, email, face-to-face conversation). Project websites contain general information about the project, contact details of the counsellors and their working hours. The aim of the website is to provide clients with basic information about the GOAL services, regular updates, contact details, etc. Nevertheless, regarding clients’ recruitment, the direct contact through cooperation with relevant stakeholders is seen as the most effective tool. The number of those clients who contacted counsellors through website remains very small.

The GOAL service in the Czech Republic has mainly reached unemployed Czech citizens in early middle age (36 to 45 years old) but also young unemployed with a low level of education. The aim of the project is to involve 100 clients in total (50 in each centre).

3.2.3. Guidance process

The guidance process itself has several stages including the identification of client’s needs, meeting the objectives, career diagnosis (mapping the past, present situation), educational trajectories, personal development journeys, setting the “action plans” and “checkpoints” in clients’ development based on their career goals. The tools counsellors use in order to find out the level of client’s skills include career portfolio, mapping the client’s competences, level of education, current life situation. Career diagnosis/mapping the client’s needs and attitudes are developed in the first stages of the guidance process. It is a crucial phase because clients find out (often for the first time) what their skills are, how and if they can achieve their career goals. One of the methods counsellors use in order to identify client’s needs and attitudes is structured interview with the help of GROW method (13) which is extensively used in coaching.

In the later stages, guidance and counselling is provided. Available web services are often used during sessions (National Registry of Qualifications website, portals focused on educational opportunities for adults, etc.). It is

considered important to show the client practically where and how they can obtain information related to their possible career development or learning pathways. Especially the following tools and information sources are used:

(a) www.infoabsolvent.cz – an information system for the education outcomes of school graduates on the labour market providing information on options within both education and the labour market, information on the current labour market demand, etc.;

(b) www.narodnikvalifikace.cz (website of the National Register of Qualifications) – lists detailed descriptions of qualifications which can be obtained through the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning;

(c) www.nsp.cz – information on the National Register of Occupations, monitoring the requirements of the labour market;

(d) laws and regulations concerning education, guidance, etc.;

(e) worksheets for clients aiming to encourage self-discovery, self-reflection and awareness, identification of interests and learning how to plan and manage one’s own career;

(f) pictures, cards – a set of cards displaying emotions and feelings.

The long-term unemployed without completed upper secondary education with limited access to the labour market constitute a significant number of clients. The most effective way to support this group is convincing them to return to education process (through formal education, retraining). Clients were regularly informed about those options during the entire process, including the option to have their skills recognized and validated (none of the clients was previously aware of the possibility).

3.2.4. Results and evaluation

Feedback data gathered from the clients suggest that the GOAL service users view education as a means of accessing labour market that is currently closed to them. Clients are usually looking to career guidance to steer them towards higher qualifications required to make them more competitive in the labour market, although they are not always specific about their career ambitions. Their expectations are generally met by obtaining information they require. Most clients felt motivated after the session and that they were better prepared for the next steps. A major part of the clients stated that they were motivated to start some course after the counselling session and that they were now more aware of education options.
The positive outcomes of the service include client enrolment in further education courses on the basis of recommendations during guidance sessions successfully driving to qualifications within the National Register of Qualifications. None of the GOAL clients had previously received any guidance service. This was their first experience. They have usually responded positively to the opportunities and information provided by counsellors and there is definitely demand for these services in future. However, at this stage of project implementation, it is hard to determine if the clients’ motivation for further education activities is real or just a reaction to their current social situation. It is not possible to precisely describe the effects of guidance sessions at this moment, but those activities have been seen, both by the counsellors and the clients, as “a missing piece”.

There is a will at the regional level to maintain the cooperation at the current level after the project will conclude, which is also a good achievement of the project. The initial difficulties that included mainly cooperation with strategic partners (Labour Office regional units) and target group acquisition (this target group is usually very hard to reach and they don’t have good experiences with services provided by schools or by the Labour Office) have been successfully overcome. Among the policy makers, the GOAL is taken as a significant step to the integrated system of career guidance and there is awareness about this service at the regional level.

Cooperation with regional Labour Office units is crucial in the Czech environment because they are “the” institution having access to the target group (unemployed, very often low skilled adults). The cooperation should be done within the existing networks (lifelong learning centres, etc.) and should involve other schools as well in order to get access to dropouts from the upper secondary education. Career counsellors must have an extensive knowledge about continuous education system (National Register of Qualifications). Direct contact with the client remains the most effective tool – the GOAL project enables this kind of opportunity for client. This approach has a huge impact on the psychological aspects and confidence of the clients.