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PREGLEDNI NAUČNI RAD

# MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR THE PREPARATION OF FUTURE PROFESSIONALS WHO WILL BE EMPLOYED IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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**Abstract:** *The Macedonian society in its transition is characterized by two important dimensions which depict all aspects of life. Firstly, the democratization of the social flows, and secondly, the market orientation of the economy and the public sector. While we could say there is not much to discuss about the business processes, apart from the dynamics and its more authentic accomplishment, the market orientation on the other hand is perceived as a possible concept for accomplishing a certain activity directly or indirectly, except for the for-profit organizations. Hence, this triggers the issue of the market character of the public institutions and the access to the jobs offered within these institutions. The analysis of the basic principles of economy which refer to the establishment of a greater level of economic freedom and equal requirements for obtaining a job position in the economic entities, the support of entrepreneurship, the advancement of the dynamic implementation of the economic reforms for improving the business climate and enhancement of the Macedonian economy's competitiveness, predicts the continuity of the already established economic reforms. The implementation of the aforementioned projects enables the direct contribution to the increase of the economic growth as well as the reduction in the unemployment rate which is a structural problem of the Macedonian economy. The issue of structural unemployment in the Republic of Macedonia is a top strategic priority in the analysis of this paper.*

**Key words:** *strategies, employment, competition, labor market, principles.*

**JEL:** *E23, E26, J21, M00.*

## INTRODUCTION

The development of the technology in the past few years has been happening so rapidly that the majority of the most sought-after job positions on a global level nowadays did not even exist just a few years ago. Modern education system

prepares the future workforce for professions which are yet to be developed. The main role of education is the ability to predict the changes and successfully adjust to them. It is understandable that the education system cannot keep pace with the changes that are being made in the industry. On the other hand, what the education system can do is train the future professionals and allow them to gain skills that could enable them to adjust quickly and easily to the new requirements made by the market. Many skills such as critical thinking, creativity and courage are becoming much more important than the actual professional knowledge. These and other similar skills are considered as the most significant ones in today's "economy based on knowledge" where being successful is on a par with being competitive. This means investing in people – their education and qualifications which are more important for the new investments than competitive pricing. Combining education with the labor market represents a matter which has always defined their relations, but has never provided the real image i.e. the systematic analysis and definition. In modern society, we put a great emphasis on the marketing strategy as the best means for long-term, complete planning in order to achieve an effective and efficient outcome in regard to the goal that is to be achieved. Long-term planning i.e. the strategy that is being used by many countries in the world has proved to be the best and the most effective means for predicting and planning the changes and challenges which arise in the future, i.e. the adjustments of the old practices and the implementation of the new ones, all in order to achieve success. The biggest problem that future professionals will face after graduating is employment, i.e. putting their knowledge into practice.

By analyzing the conditions on the labor market, this research will depict the relation between the future staff and the labor market and how their education affects their preparedness to respond to the needs of the labor market. In the research part of this paper, we will put an emphasis on the unemployment and employment rates, the active politics that is carried out in terms of employment at present and in the future, as well as the most important part i.e. the practical training as part of the future professionals' education. However, this research aims to offer a comprehensive analysis of the relation and the incompatibility between the future professionals and the labor market and to emphasize the strategy as the best means for predicting the changes on the labor market as well as train successful staffs that will entirely respond to the changes on the labor market in the future. The result of the research provides specific strategies for overcoming the problematic aspects and establishing a more intense cooperation between the future staff and the labor market. Taking into account the complexity of the matter, we applied different methods of collecting data. Quantitative methods include processing secondary data available through the Department

of Statistics and the EARM (Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia). They were mainly used for evaluation of the current state of the available staff, their working skills as well as data necessary for long-term planning of employment and responding to the labor market's necessities.

## ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE LABOR MARKET IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

- **The state of the labor market in the Republic of Macedonia** – In compliance with the legal regulations, the rights of the people who are currently looking for a job or already have a job are divided into two groups according to the EARM<sup>1</sup>:

- An unemployed person – a person who is registered in the Agency, who is unemployed and actively seeking employment and meets all the requirements stated by the law on employment and insurance in case of unemployment.
- Another person who is looking for a job is an economically active or inactive person who is registered in the Agency, but is not actively seeking employment and is not prepared to work.

**Table 1<sup>2</sup>.** State of the labor market in the Republic of Macedonia in 2015/2016

Educational background	Labor force		Employed		Unemployed	
	2015/I	2016/I	2015/I	2016/I	2015/I	2016/I
	<b>Вкупно / Total</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>959 388</b>	<b>945 821</b>	<b>697 248</b>	<b>714 435</b>	<b>262 140</b>	<b>231 386</b>
No education	(3399)	(4972)	(1721)	(3064)	(1678)	(1908)
Incomplete primary education	28 497	18 752	18 500	14 894	9 997	(3859)
Primary education	194 230	186 569	133 504	128 706	60 726	57 862
3 years of high school (secondary) education	79 771	69 694	55 393	53 901	24 378	15 793
4 years of high school (secondary) education	434 285	421 961	314 973	315 229	119 312	106 732
Higher education (associate's degree or similar)	23 025	18 590	18 445	16 314	(4580)	(2276)
University Higher Education (Bachelor's degree or higher)	196 182	225 283	154 713	182 327	41 469	42 956

<sup>1</sup> Državen zavod za statistika "Godišen izveštaj", Skopje, 2016 godina.

<sup>2</sup> Državen zavod za statistika "Pazar na trud", Skopje, 2016 godina.

<b>Мажи / Men</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>580 322</b>	<b>582 602</b>	<b>415 727</b>	<b>429 154</b>	<b>164 596</b>	<b>153 448</b>
No education	(1589)	(3862)	:	(2397)	:	:
Incomplete primary education	16 854	9 479	10 540	7 946	6 314	(1533)
Primary education	130 307	133 154	86 390	88 967	43 917	44 186
3 years of high school (secondary) education	55 304	46 263	37 923	36 283	17 381	9 980
4 years of high school (secondary) education	269 959	271 951	195 097	197 379	74 862	74 572
Higher education (associate's degree or similar)	12 332	9 511	9 526	8 388	(2806)	:
University Higher Education (Bachelor's degree or higher)	93 977	108 382	75 618	87 794	18 360	20 588
<b>Жени / Women</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>379 066</b>	<b>363 219</b>	<b>281 521</b>	<b>285 281</b>	<b>97 544</b>	<b>77 938</b>
No education	(1809)	:	:	:	:	:
Incomplete primary education	11 643	9 273	7 959	6 948	(3683)	(2325)
Primary education	63 923	53 415	47 115	39 739	16 808	13 676
3 years of high school (secondary) education	24 467	23 432	17 470	17 618	6 997	5 814
4 years of high school (secondary) education	164 326	150 010	119 875	117 850	44 450	32 160
Higher education (associate's degree or similar)	10 694	9 079	8 920	7 926	(1774)	:
University Higher Education (Bachelor's degree or higher)	102 205	116 901	79 095	94 533	23 109	22 368

**Source:** EARM, Annual report for 2016

From the table above we can see the current state of the unemployed persons and other persons who are looking for a job. In the last quarter of 2016 there has been an increase in the number of unemployed people and in the other part i.e. other people who are looking for a job there has been a certain percentage of reduction.

**- Employment rate in the Republic of Macedonia** – The term “employed” refers to all the people who have formed a working relationship with a business entity, regardless of whether they are employed under fixed-term or indefinite-term contracts, as well as whether they work full-time or shorter than full-time. The data on the number of employees, presented in the annual report, are gathe-

red based on the “Report on employees and wages” which comprises the selected business entities and their constituent units that perform a business activity in different communities in the Republic of Macedonia. The working-age population consists of all persons aged 15 to 79 (including 79). Economically active population includes both employed and unemployed people (workforce). Table 1 shows the employment of both males and females. Male-employment rates are higher, but there is a high percentage of employed women as well. The majority of people are employed in the following industries: manufacturing, trade, public administration, agriculture and services.

**Table 2<sup>3</sup>.** Unemployed persons according to age in the Republic of Macedonia

АГЕНЦИЈА ЗА ВРАБОТУВАЊЕ НА РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

П - 2

ПРЕГЛЕД  
 на невработени лица според возрастна структура  
 со состојба на 31.07.2016 година

Центар за вработување		Вкупно		од 15 до 19 години		од 20 до 24 години		од 25 до 29 години		од 30 до 34 години		од 35 до 39 години		од 40 до 44 години		од 45 до 49 години		од 50 до 54 години		од 55 до 59 години		од 60 години и повеќе	
1	2	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени	Се	Жени
1	Берово	1318	548	21	6	112	51	162	73	117	62	144	68	123	44	143	75	152	54	168	71	176	42
2	Битола	5947	2935	62	22	454	214	770	423	656	387	632	370	556	321	584	306	664	325	760	354	809	213
3	Валандово	644	259	15	4	75	39	93	43	65	33	61	25	53	19	54	26	72	26	65	19	91	25
4	Велес	3646	1498	58	27	340	154	410	200	369	182	372	177	343	154	364	150	410	178	491	171	489	107
5	Виница	698	242	17	8	67	33	68	36	55	20	62	27	45	12	61	20	85	23	104	25	134	38
6	Гевгелија	1025	445	15	2	76	46	80	50	89	45	96	54	89	34	83	31	118	59	173	59	206	65
7	Гостивар	6384	2121	113	43	718	319	846	351	706	272	710	257	686	207	775	224	727	199	664	181	439	68
8	Дебар	1677	471	25	8	224	74	211	61	181	61	199	68	183	69	192	57	156	40	170	18	136	15
9	Делчево	1288	546	18	9	93	54	140	76	128	62	119	65	138	60	144	56	156	64	178	61	156	39
10	Демир Хисар	1119	556	12	6	112	49	133	68	139	77	122	85	142	83	143	81	122	55	128	35	66	17
11	Кавadarци	2253	1078	44	16	206	112	270	139	247	142	211	112	198	98	232	134	258	124	279	109	308	92
12	Кичево	3560	1551	46	12	403	179	512	253	407	200	406	199	412	186	394	173	385	146	352	139	243	64
13	Кочани	2599	945	62	22	228	109	260	131	200	97	251	105	209	70	237	89	305	105	391	104	456	113
14	Кратово	879	458	14	7	63	40	90	48	104	67	86	58	90	60	94	47	129	63	113	39	96	29
15	Крива Паланка	3274	1578	34	9	235	113	344	173	319	177	319	190	359	172	445	231	471	228	446	200	302	85
16	Крушево	1051	370	20	4	113	44	141	44	104	44	126	51	116	49	107	31	130	49	126	36	68	18
17	Куманово	10107	3844	136	65	996	454	1237	613	1033	483	1006	458	1202	446	1279	400	1167	348	1121	377	930	200
18	Македонски Брод	1301	566	20	7	112	49	158	75	115	63	104	54	126	61	177	87	202	87	182	63	105	20
19	Неготино	1274	597	35	12	176	91	143	81	137	73	100	62	114	57	99	51	131	53	183	86	156	31
20	Охрид	3978	1812	48	19	328	159	463	236	435	243	387	206	365	187	360	158	461	213	566	221	556	170
21	Прилеп	8018	3689	114	61	908	393	1064	558	970	462	914	492	867	432	783	358	823	362	851	341	704	200
22	Пробиштип	1454	577	17	9	99	52	146	79	138	78	111	60	145	61	158	53	213	71	272	74	155	40
23	Радовиш	1501	640	40	14	157	71	190	80	140	74	141	70	162	67	156	63	162	77	203	80	150	44
24	Ресен	1485	632	25	9	151	73	233	108	196	95	172	76	128	59	117	42	150	58	183	78	130	34
25	Свети Николе	1336	519	18	7	137	51	167	89	130	59	117	51	110	56	120	44	160	63	191	61	186	38
26	на град Скопје	16544	7037	168	68	1087	532	1661	831	1532	764	1608	795	1963	901	2029	856	2024	795	2328	870	2146	625
27	Струга	2950	1209	76	36	376	175	402	203	313	154	269	125	337	129	289	106	318	111	306	109	234	61
28	Струмица	3010	1233	106	46	355	167	389	187	308	135	296	126	294	115	282	98	332	129	365	142	283	88
29	Тетово	13233	4438	156	70	1338	620	1847	897	1548	648	1443	462	1512	458	1642	406	1547	403	1340	313	851	161
30	Штип	2198	933	40	11	187	105	248	141	197	80	184	87	146	66	177	69	212	73	307	169	440	132
	Вкупно	105731	43325	1575	639	9926	4622	12898	6347	11078	5339	10796	5035	11211	4733	11720	4522	12242	4669	13075	4665	11210	2874

Source. EARM, Annual report for 2016.

**- Unemployment rate in the Republic of Macedonia** – Unemployment is one of the most serious problems that modern society faces. Unemployment is a socially-economic occurrence during which part of the active workforce in a certain country or region is looking for a job but is unable to find one. According to the law, unemployed are those persons who are at least 16 years old, who are capable of working and are willing to work, but cannot find a job.

<sup>3</sup> Državen zavod za statistika “Nevработенost”, Skopje, 2016 godina.

**Table 3<sup>4</sup>.** Occupied posts and job vacancies by sectors of activities

**T-01: Пополнети и слободни работни места според секторите на дејности**  
**T-01: Occupied posts and job vacancies by sectors of activities**

Сектори на дејности	Број на пополнети работни места Number of occupied posts	Број на слободни работни места Number of job vacancies	Стапка на слободни работни места Job Vacancy Rate (%)	Sectors of activities
<b>Вкупно</b>	<b>435 681</b>	<b>6 973</b>	<b>1.58</b>	<b>Total</b>
Б Рударство и вадење на камен	4 166	20	0.48	B Mining and quarrying
В Преработувачка индустрија	107 724	2 533	2.30	C Manufacturing
Г Снабдување со електрична енергија, гас, пареа и климатизација	7 916	5	0.07	D Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
Д Снабдување со вода; отстранување на отпадни води, управување со отпад и дејности за санација на околната	9 878	93	0.93	E Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
Ѓ Градежништво	23 965	658	2.67	F Construction
Е Трговија на големо и трговија на мало; поправка на моторни возила и мотоцикли	72 995	1 135	1.53	G Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Ж Транспорт и складирање	25 839	885	3.31	H Transportation and storage
З Објекти за сместување и сервисни дејности со храна	16 483	207	1.24	I Accommodation and food service activities
С Информации и комуникации	8 567	115	1.32	J Information and communication
И Финансиски дејности и дејности на осигурување	9 583	73	0.76	K Financial and insurance activities
Ј Дејности во врска со недвижен имот	1 519	-	-	L Real estate activities
К Стручни, научни и технички дејности	12 016	119	0.98	M Professional, scientific and technical activities
Л Административни и помошни услужни дејности	14 834	169	1.13	N Administrative and support service activities
Љ Јавна управа и одбрана; задолжително социјално осигурување	43 363	100	0.23	O Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
М Образование	32 874	319	0.96	P Education
Н Дејности на здравствена и социјална заштита	30 336	241	0.79	Q Human health and social work activities
Њ Уметност, забава и рекреација	9 681	183	1.86	R Arts, entertainment and recreation
О Други услужни дејности	3 942	118	2.91	S Other service activities

**Source.** EARM, Annual report for 2016.

Based on the data provided in this table, we can determine the number of unemployed persons throughout the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The data provide clear view of the fact that the most affected persons are aged 30-34, 40-44, 60-64. The least endangered category of unemployed persons is of those aged 15-19. The rest of the categories are less endangered because they are already employed or they have resigned due to lack of fulfillment of the working assignments.

<sup>4</sup> Državen zavod za statistika "Anketa za работна сила", Skopje, 2016 godina.

- **Necessary professions in the Republic of Macedonia** – The Republic of Macedonia is facing major changes in the supply and demand of professional staff that will respond to the needs of the market, thus allowing them to obtain the status – employed in a certain company. The discrepancy between the education system and the needs of the market is one of the reasons why many of the necessary occupations in Macedonia are not even included in the education system, and the deficient staff, due to higher wages, usually remains employed because they cannot find a suitable place in the system.

According to the data provided by the state Department of Statistics in this table, the highest rate of 3.31% of job vacancies is within the sector “Transportation and storage”, while the lowest rate of 0.07% can be found in the sector “Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply”. Business entities that employ 10 to 49 people have the highest rate of job vacancies. The Pelagonija region has the highest rate of job vacancies and the largest number of job vacancies is in the process industry<sup>5</sup>. The lack of work experience and additional skills are the main problem which employers have to face in the process of filling the job vacancies.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE LABOR MARKET IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

Higher education in the Republic of Macedonia is being reformed for a long time already. Certain difficulties need to be dealt with in this process which eventually reflects on its quality. In the period of opening a common European higher education ground, when it is expected of the higher education institutions to enhance in order to become more competitive on the global market of higher education, they are facing criticism for the inappropriately implemented transformation of the system and the programs. These omissions in the teaching methods and programs trigger the question whether the students are prepared for a quick transition to the labor market after finishing their educational cycle. Simultaneously, opening up more and more higher education institutions and the simplified access to higher education are considered to affect the general decrease of its quality. Despite these warnings, there is a lack of comprehensive analyses of the higher education system that would cover all the institutions concerned and would check the grounds of the aforementioned criticism.

- **The state of higher education in the Republic of Macedonia** – There are

<sup>5</sup> Državen zavod za statistika “Slobodni radni mesta”, Skopje, 2016 godina.



four public universities and five private universities in Macedonia. Besides these, there are also eight private faculties. The total number of graduates in 2013 was 8.360, and in 2014 this number increased to 10.027, while in the academic year 2014/2015 there were 18.583 people who enrolled in the first year of undergraduate studies. Due to the high rate of unemployment, many young people perceive enrollment in college as a temporary way out of unemployment. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2008, 83% of the people who finished high school enrolled at a university (as opposed to 64% in 2013 and 42% in 2014)<sup>6</sup>. One of the reasons for this situation is the fact that the number of vocational schools as well as the interest in them decreases and most of the students after completing high school have no specific 'profession' that would make them competitive on the labor market. Before the establishment of private universities, a significant number of students with lower high school achievements did not usually continue their education at a university or they enrolled in less popular faculties where the requirements for academic success were lower. At present, many popular programs (business, law, IT) are being offered at the private faculties where the process of selection is less rigorous which makes enrolling in the desired course more available. Although the goal of the private faculties/universities is to follow the needs of the labor market, they are also contributing to the "saturation" of the market with certain profiles/occupations. Consequently, the policies for reducing the enrollment quotas of several public faculties in the field of social sciences cannot really affect the alignment of the supply and demand because the rest of the students find their place at the private faculties, where social sciences programs prevail.

- **Labor supply in the Republic of Macedonia** – Macedonia is facing a serious issue on the labor market. In conditions of reduced, but nevertheless high rate of unemployment of 25,5%, the companies complain about the underqualified professional workforce. The trend of "producing" profiles in the field of social sciences has been predominant for a long time. In the past few years we can note that there has been a largest number of graduated economists and teachers/educators. However, as far as the supply and demand for economists are relatively aligned, the situation remains most problematic for those who receive a Bachelor's degree from the pedagogic faculties. In the following years, they comprised 19,5% of all graduated staff and the percentage of their demand in one quarter of 2013 was 7,3% of the total number of advertised vacancies. In the meantime, we need to take into account that the analysis of the content of these

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<sup>6</sup> Državen zavod za statistika "Obrazovanie", Skopje, 2016 godina.



advertises was made in the period from August to November when there is a highest demand for this type of staff and the data could be considered as pretty relevant considering the fact that these positions must be advertised in printed media<sup>7</sup>.

IT workers who are the most sought-after staff on the market are insufficiently present among graduates. Hence, a large number of IT companies do not require having a university degree as a condition for employment and some even recruit staff that is still in college. However, despite these alternative ways of recruitment, the stance the most representatives of IT companies have is that what we are lacking is staff with working experience which is why they often prioritize experience over the degree.

It is expected to have an improvement in the supply of IT staff in the future, considering the fact that the quota for enrollment of students will be expanded and there are new faculties that opened up which offer this profession and the overall number of enrolled students is significantly larger. Despite the necessary changes, the quantity should not be prioritized over the quality of education. If we take into account that there is a deficit in terms of academic staff in the IT field, there is a need for activities for further professional academic improvement of new staff, including staff in the practical field as lecturers at the faculties and hiring academic staff from abroad. In terms of social sciences, what is lacking is more intense development of programs in modern interdisciplinary scientific fields such as: public relations, human resources, public administration. While many of the faculties acknowledge these needs and are partially trying to respond to the rapid changes on the market, the majority remain rigid in terms of adapting the teaching programs and introducing new fields which are in demand on the labor market.

## **TRANSFER EDUCATION – LABOR MARKET**

The collaboration from education to labor market is very complex and broad in scope. Future professionals improve and are being directed in their chosen field i.e. their future professional activity while they are still in the educational process. In this part we have divided several segments in order to clarify and explain them better.

### **- Legal regulations and strategic documents:**

- Law on higher education: This law prescribes the studying method for any

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<sup>7</sup> Državen zavod za statistika "Aktivnost na naselenieto", Skopje, 2016 godina.

cycle of higher education. It lists and defines the obligations that the student needs to fulfill until his graduation, i.e. finishing the first cycle of studies.

- Law on volunteering: This law prescribes the volunteer's rights and responsibilities in a certain institution or company, which the volunteer needs to fulfill and to improve his professionalism.
- Strategy for development of education: This strategy aims at flexibility in the studying programs and their academic validity and relevance.
- National employment strategy: The primary parts which need to be fulfilled in order for the young people to be able to express their potential are being defined with the help of this strategy: conducting analyses for the skills needed, better coordination between education and training and the needs of the employers, voluntary practice of students during their education, employment of trainees, training of young unemployed persons no later than 6 months in the period of unemployment in order to eradicate long-term unemployment among young people.

#### **- Institutions – a link between education and the labor market<sup>8</sup>:**

- Employment agency: Has made a contract with several universities to track the future professionals who finished their education as well as guide them in the process of employment in the adequate activity.
- Career centers: At universities, these represent a direct link between the students and the companies and serve to facilitate the transition from education to the labor market. They try to train the students to present themselves better on the market, through trainings on how to write CVs, motivation letters etc.
- Student organizations: They are quite active in the development of offering their members the possibility to upgrade their practical skills by connecting them to companies from complementary fields, sending their members to do practical work abroad, organizing job fairs, seminars and workshops for developing various skills and other things.
- Centers for training and non-formal education: They offer trainings for various skills which are sought-after on the labor market (communication, organization, project management, team work, sales etc.) and they are growing in number. Their appearance is mainly due to the discrepancy between the skills acquired in the education system and those considered necessary by the market and the growing necessity for continuous/lifelong learning.

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<sup>8</sup> Državen zavod za statistika "Analiza na potrebite od veštini na pazarot na trud", Skopje, 2016 godina.

## **- Harmonization of the educational policies and the labor market in the Republic of Macedonia**

The process of transition from the educational institutions to the labor market differs from one country to another. The differences in the education system which could be academically or professionally oriented i.e. oriented towards acquiring general knowledge or profession-specific skills are considered to be especially important. Although potential workers in the second case are quite popular among employers due to their “immediately applicable” skills, these skills are usually relevant for a small number of positions whose absence renders the risk of potential long-term unemployment very high. Companies usually seek already prepared staff that would quickly adapt to their requirements although they are not always open for collaboration with the educational institutions. In order to overcome this obstacle, different national policies are being established for the reduction this occurrence.

More and more frequently, employers have a tightly defined list of competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, personal features) that the candidates need to possess, which range from specific knowledges and skills to personal characteristics of the candidates. The following steps are in demand and are the best steps to follow in order to get a job: learning foreign languages, knowing how to use MS Office, being communicative, dedicated, to plan and fulfill the tasks and assignments.

## **- Strategies for preparation of future professionals in the Republic of Macedonia**

It is necessary to emphasize that these policies do not have the capacity to influence the reduction of unemployment like macroeconomic stability, legal and institutional security and sustainable economic growth do, because they influence greatly the creation of new job positions and the reduction of the unemployment rate. But, if they are appropriately designed, the active employment policies can affect the improvement of the employment level to a certain extent.

In Macedonia, the first operational plans for active employment policies were made in 2007 by the Ministry of Labor and Social Politics, and certain types of active measures on the labor market are being implemented since 2002. The budgetary allocations for this type of policies can be compared to that of the new EU Member States, up to 0.2% of the GDP, which is actually a low volume of investments.

In the past few years, the following several active policies within the operational plan have been defined<sup>9</sup>:

- Performing public work in local communities with maximum engagement duration of 3 months. In this part they will directly face real-life work performed in the local communities.
- Supporting self-employment (family business) and support for first employment of persons under 27 (internship) intended for people from deprived areas, long-term unemployed (over 5 years unemployed), beneficiaries of monetary compensation due to unemployment and young people to 27 age of first employment. The goal of the program is to reduce poverty and unemployment by starting new businesses. This program will cover new categories of applicants with greater focus on the efficiency of the support in promoting entrepreneurship.
- Hiring unemployed people in the least developed regions in the execution of civil works, environmental projects: This activity will improve and will fill the jobs vacancies for the relevant category of persons.
- Subsidizing employment of single parents, disabled people and orphans (disadvantaged social categories). Subsidizing employment includes providing gross salary by the state for a period of 6 months, after which the employer is obliged to keep people at least 18 months on the job. Subsidizing employment is done in order to aid the socialization of this category of unemployed persons and their integration in the labor market.
- Training and advice on retraining for the unemployed, contact with the employers, advancement of their knowledge and skills, computer trainings and so on. Under this program, persons are involved in training programs for a known employer (through retraining the unemployed are admitted to work with the agreed employers after completion of the training and with it companies have an obligation not to dismiss these people at least one year).
- Self-employment programs: by assisting in getting loans and irretrievable funds.
- Program to formalize an existing business (the goal is to reduce the gray economy: This activity encourages people to open their own business and be independent in the performance and conduct of business in accordance with the prescribed legal regulations. This measure will include unemployed people with education and skills close to the needs of the employer where the

<sup>9</sup> Centar za istraživanje i kreiranje politiki, "Kako do kvalitetno visoko obrazovanje", Skopje, 2009 godina.

employer cannot perform more than one preparation for employment of one person for in the occupation of the same field.

- Trainings and preparations for employment and retraining.
- Programmes for subsidizing employment: The aim of this measure is to provide financial support to orphans for their involvement in the labor market after they are no longer taken care of in institutions or foster families. This will provide financial support for employment of registered unemployed persons having the status of orphans after the termination of their care in institutions or foster families.
- A program for formalization of existing businesses: The purpose of the measure is to enhance the capacities of the EARM to educate unemployed people through training of trainers and training of unemployed people on how to start businesses.
- Training, additional training, retraining: This will reduce the mismatch of qualifications which are required and the existing qualifications on the market, thus improving employment opportunities through training, retraining and reducing the loss of skills and qualifications during unemployment. The measure is aimed at training unemployed people about skills that will help them improve their competitiveness on the labor market.
- Program for subsidizing employment: To increase the demand for workforce, to improve the process of alignment of supply and demand on the labor market.
- Program for organizing public jobs.

## CONCLUSION

In the past few years, according to the state Department of Statistics, the labor market's analysis has shown tendencies of growth in regard to the rate of activity of the working population, a slight increase in the employment rate and a reduction of the unemployment rate from 33,8% in 2013 to 29% in 2014. Despite the decrease of the unemployment rate, Macedonia remains a country with the highest level of unemployment in Europe. The lowest rate of activity and employment is seen with the young population and the persons with lowest level of education. The rates of activity and employment of young people in the period between 2013 and 2014 mark a trend of decreasing.

These conditions are greatly affected by the small chances of employment of young and inexperienced workers (especially in times of crisis), the process of transition from schooling to work, unpreparedness of employers to invest in

training the inexperienced workers, but also stimulation policies in the domain of higher education and dispersed studies which influenced the reduction of pressure on the labor market and the postponing of the job-seeking period. Analyses point out an alarming trend of reduction of employment and an increase in the unemployment rate among highly educated persons between 2013 and 2014. The high unemployment rate among young persons and the large percentage of long-term unemployed persons, create state of immobility on the labor market and due to the low level of new job posts creation, the employed tend to remain employed and those seeking employment for a longer period – to remain unemployed.

With the help of the strategies implemented for the preparation of the future professionals who will be employed, not only will the professionals per se improve, but they will also be prepared to respond professionally to the challenges set before them by the job post, i.e. fulfill the working assignments and obligations in the given time period.

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