



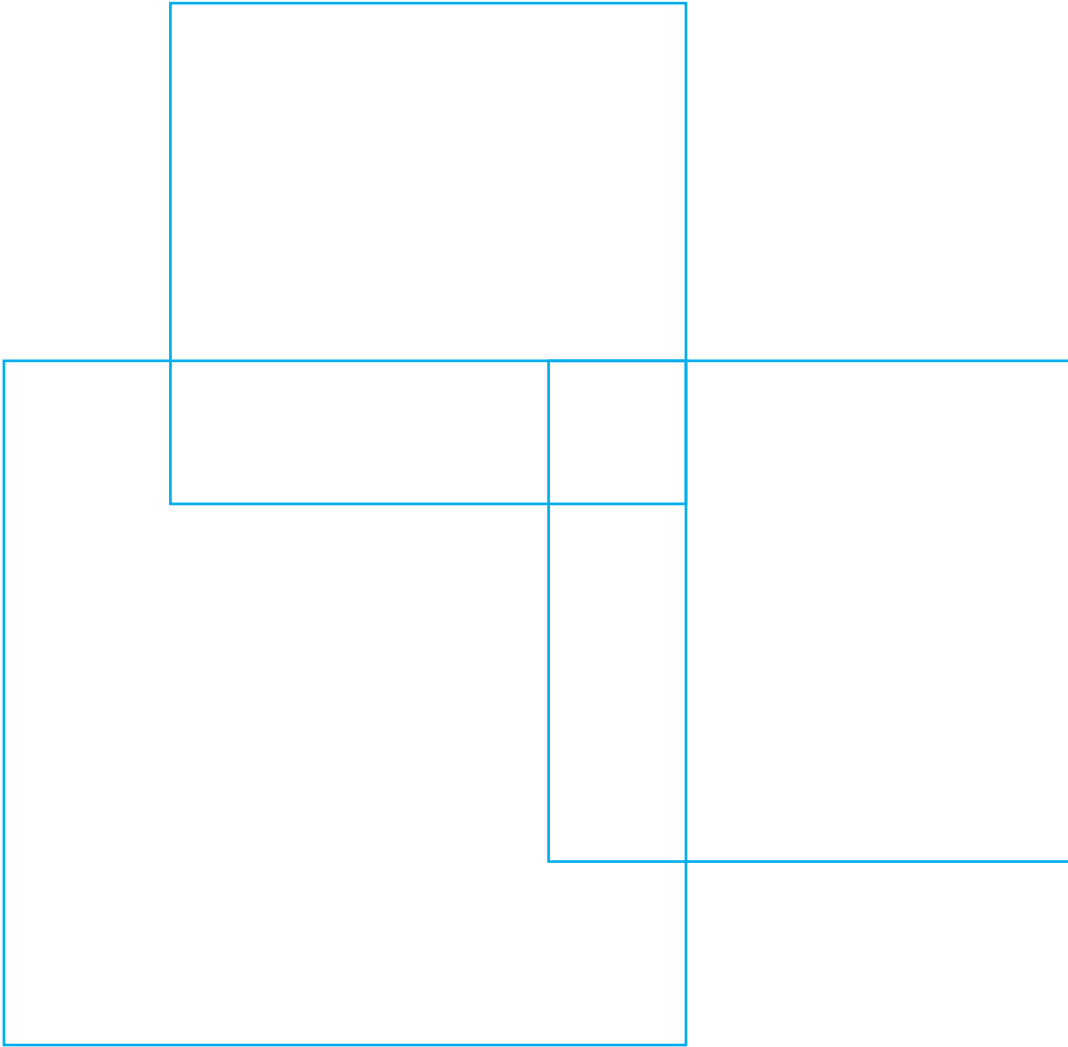
International
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Office



Final Evaluation Report
**PROJECT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
PARTNERSHIP IN SERBIA**



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**Project Youth Employment
Partnership in Serbia**



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Acronyms

ALMPs	Active Labour Market Policies
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Office
IPA	European Union Instrument of Pre-Accession
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoERD	Ministry of Economy and Regional Development
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sport
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
NES	National Employment Service of Serbia
NAP	National Action Plan on Youth Employment
OJT	On the Job Training
PES	Public Employment Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education and Training
YEF	Youth Employment Fund
YEPS	Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia

Foreword

This paper is an expanded and enriched version of the final evaluation report of the International Labour Office's Project Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia. It is the result of the joint efforts of the independent evaluation team - Mr. Frank Kavanagh, Ms Galjina Ognjanov and Mr. Francesco Petrera - the Project's implementation partners and the ILO staff.

The draft of the evaluation report was discussed with the Project's partners during a Tripartite Workshop organized in Belgrade on 25th November 2010. This discussion involved representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, the National Employment Service, the social partners, the donor and the ILO. The main findings, lessons learnt and recommendations contained in this report include the inputs provided during the above mentioned workshop.

ABSTRACT

Quick Facts

Geographical coverage:	Republic of Serbia
Mode of Evaluation:	Independent
Evaluation Manager:	Irina Sinelina (ILO)
Evaluation Team:	Frank Kavanagh (Team leader), Francesco Petrera and Galjina Ognjanov
Project Start:	September 2007
Project End:	December 2010
Project code:	SRB/07/01/M/ITA
Donor:	Italy (US\$ 1,200,000)

Background and context

Summary of the Project, logic and structure

Against a backdrop of economic restructuring, enterprise privatization and raising unemployment - especially among young people with low educational levels - the main thrust of the Project Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia, funded by the Government of Italy, revolved around two major components that combined the strengthening of the capacity of labour market institutions to implement youth employment policies with demonstration programmes directed at the creation of more and better jobs for youth.

The first component of the Project assisted the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development to coordinate action on youth employment across government agencies; supported labour market institutions, including the social partners, to develop an evidence-based youth employment policy and action

plan; promoted the establishment of a Youth Employment Fund to finance school-to-work transition programmes; and assisted the social partners in mobilizing action on youth employment and giving voice to young people. The direct assistance component focused on the piloting of an integrated package of employment services and programmes (counselling and guidance, job search assistance, off- and on-the-job training, work placement schemes and self-employment measures) to ease the transition of disadvantaged youth (especially those facing discrimination, poverty and social exclusion) to the labour market. This component was accompanied by institutional capacity strengthening of the National Employment Service of Serbia and of the employment offices in the Districts of Borski, Raški, Braničevski and Severno Bački.

A number of preparatory assistance activities were carried out by the ILO prior to Project inception as follows: the analysis of the youth labour market of Serbia, including a performance assessment of policies and institutions for youth employment; review of the employment promotion laws of a number of countries in the region to inform the drafting of the new employment promotion law; and the adaptation and translation of a number of employment-related publications of the ILO.

Purpose, scope and method of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the performance of the Project in a comprehensive, systematic and objective manner in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact. The evaluation assessed the relevance of the objectives and identified the extent to which the strategy had proved efficient and effective. Particular emphasis was placed on the review of project sustainability and impact as well as on possible innovative technical cooperation features in youth employment promotion. The evaluation also assessed the effectiveness of pilot programmes (direct assistance) and their instrumentality to the institution building and policy development processes.

Given the nature of the project, the methodology of the evaluation was based on quantitative and qualitative methods and included the analysis of various sources of information, including desk review of survey data and project files; interviews with government counterparts and project partners, direct beneficiaries, partner agencies, project management and staff; and direct observation.

Main Findings and conclusions

Findings

The members of the evaluation team are unanimous in their conclusion that the Project Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia has had a lasting, positive and systemic impact on policy making and operational activities in both the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and the National Employment Service. It has also forged valuable links among these two institutions, the social partners and other donor organisations. In this regard, the Project is considered an outstanding success and worthy of study as a good practice model of technical cooperation and project implementation.

The initiatives present original, but also complex, features, particularly in the development of coordinated youth employment action across different stakeholders with divergent organizational structures, expertise and resources. This Project was innovative and entirely suitable to an environment where the vocational education and training system is under reform and where no national qualifications framework exists. As many informants pointed out, the establishment of a modern adult vocational training system aligned to emerging labour market needs is desirable and feasible, and the Project has brought this to the forefront of public policy.

All stakeholders emphasized that the Project was remarkably singular in its ability to engender substantial learning at policy and programme level and improve the targeting of disadvantaged groups in a way that produces results in poverty reduction and promotes the ILO core principles of decent work and equal opportunities. The Project was considered superior to any other implemented in Ministry of Economy in the last few years. Such results were delivered with a relatively modest budget (US\$ 1.2 million).

There is no doubt that the substantial capacity developed by the Project will continue to be used in all future policy formulation functions. The direct assistance component has provided many lessons learnt that are already influencing the formulation of new approaches to combat long-term unemployment as well as the activities of other projects on youth employment promotion.

Highlights of the Project “Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia”

- Labour market information systems were built and a bridge established between the National Employment Service and the National Statistical Office. The structure of the Labour Force Survey was also improved through Project’s activities;
- The capacity of labour market institutions to monitor and evaluate active labour market policies targeting disadvantaged youth was strengthened;
- The concept of transferable skills was introduced as a means to place young unemployed in emerging occupations. The development of competency-based training approaches and the use of job analysis tools allowed a more effective matching of unemployed youth to jobs and to individually tailored training programmes;
- New approaches to skills surveys and forecasting were pioneering at both national and district level to provide evidence for youth employment policy making;
- The youth employment policy formulation functions of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development were strengthened and a Youth Employment Fund established to reach out to disadvantaged youth;
- The Ministry of Economy and National Employment Service approaches to programming on youth employment were improved and will also serve when the European funds come on-stream;
- New cooperation channels between the Ministry of Economy and national and international donors were opened to promote youth employment;
- The lessons learnt and good practice of the Project were mainstreamed in the design of the new National Employment Strategy (2011-2020);
- The effectiveness of integrated employment services delivery to address the multiple barriers that young unemployed face in the Serbian labour market was demonstrated.
- Employment services and the targeting of active labour market programmes were improved;
- The social partners were fully involved both through tripartite activities and needs-based assistance.

Conclusions

The technical assistance provided by the Project on the design of evidence-based youth employment policies contributed to the strengthening of the labour market governance system, while the work on active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth contributed to the decentralization of employment services' functions, the mainstreaming of the management by objectives approach, the sequencing of employment services and the tailoring of interventions to the needs of young individuals and the requirements of the labour market. Virtually all the lessons learned from the Project are positive:

- The provision of quality technical assistance to youth employment policy and programme development requires a full understanding of the economic growth dynamics and functioning of the specific labour market; a comprehensive knowledge of the operations of complex public administration organizations; and the exploration of public policies in very diverse areas. Such work demands that technical cooperation projects go beyond the specific outputs and activities planned to achieve objectives. However, project resource constraints (time, expertise and funds) may limit the scope of this work. For instance, the ILO project in Serbia succeeded in improving the collection and analysis of labour market data to inform policy-making, but additional funding sources had to be sought to complete the work.
- Policies aimed at improving youth employment prospects should be wide in scope, while programmes need to be targeted to those who are most at risk of exclusion. In the past, fewer resources have been devoted to implement programmes to redress the multiple layers of disadvantage that affect many young people, such as low educational and training levels, rural residence and ethnicity. A correct diagnosis of the causes of unemployment among young people (mismatch between labour supply and demand, sluggish labour demand, low job search intensity or wage reservation mechanisms) is essential to the design and targeting of effective interventions.
- Strategies that combine institutional capacity building with demonstration programmes directed at the creation of more and better job opportunities would seem to be more effective in responding to the needs of young people. This is because labour market institutions require extensive support to target disadvantaged groups and to implement innovative interventions. The use of coaching techniques as part of capacity building activities has proven particularly effective when piloting alternative employment service and programme delivery systems.

- Technical cooperation can provide a framework for piloting innovative approaches, methodologies and tools that can be up-scaled and replicated in other contexts through ILO regular programmes. The fact that the Project used the Regular Budget Supplementary Allocation of the ILO as an additional and joint resource to implement activities is considered to have been instrumental to the success of the Project. This included capacity building on the collection and analysis of labour market data; assistance to improve the functions of Local Employment Councils; and advisory services for the functional re-organisation of the Employment Department of the Ministry of Economy.
- Seeking co-financing and in-kind contribution to leverage on the funds available to a project is an approach that could be mainstreamed in most technical cooperation initiatives. Despite the considerable time investment that such practice entails, it does pay off in terms of quantity and quality of outputs, stakeholders' and beneficiaries' satisfaction as well as response capacity of the Project to emerging needs. It also serves as a capacity building tool for national partners in fund-raising and management of the project cycle.
- The participatory approach adopted, the constant involvement of stakeholders, partner institutions and other organisations as well as the subsequent extensive dialogue established amongst them by the Project, yielded higher results in terms of impact and sustainability.
- The experience of the ILO Project in Serbia has shown that well designed and targeted active labour market programmes attract the interest of enterprises even in a situation of contracting labour demand. On the other hand, the low rate of application to programmes demonstrated that the many young people registered as unemployed are in fact working in the informal economy. The availability of programmes targeting low-skilled youth allowed the National Employment Service to "treat" those who really need support in entering the labour market, identify informal workers and offer services geared to their formalization, and finally, flush out those young people that refuse the opportunities made available.
- The existence of an employment strategy is a necessary, but not sufficient condition to bring focus and coherence to labour market policies and programmes. Coordination among different ministries remains the most difficult area to be tackled – especially so during a labour market crisis – with coordination among line ministries fragmented and with too few initiatives taken in concert. Although progress in this regard has been made during the development process of the Action Plan on youth employment, more assistance will be required to reinforce this practice. In addition, the resources required to achieve the youth employment policy targets set by the Government are extensive and require the support of the ILO, the European Union and other donors.

Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development (MoERD) and the National Employment Service (NES) will soon be faced with the challenge to deliver on the objectives of the new employment and social inclusion policy framework aligned to the EU *acquis communautaire*. The NES service delivery system should re-organize its functional and staff structures, particularly in front-line services, introduce profiling and case management approaches to service delivery and improve active labour market programmes design, monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring approach tested by the Project to measure the performance of active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth offers decision-makers a tool to appraise the labour market returns of investing public funds to fight social exclusion. The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development should continue these endeavours and commit human and financial resources to regularly verify the outcomes of active labour market programmes.
2. The Government of Serbia should take urgent action to address the informal economy. The return on the investment made in active labour market programmes is often not realized due to informal employment practices. The involvement of young people in the informal economy gives rise to concern, as informal workers are more likely to be poor and mobility between informal and formal employment is low. The implications of extensive informality among young workers are multiple and relate to human and financial resources wastage, as well as forgone productivity and development. Involvement in the informal economy early in the working life can have a negative impact on future labour market outcomes, increasing the risk of future unemployment, inactivity and poverty.
3. The development of a follow-up project to establish a labour market oriented adult training system would greatly improve the means available to the NES to deliver on the objectives of the *Operational Plan on Human Resource Development* and improve the cost-effectiveness of competency-based training programmes. Increasingly, education and training delivery in Europe is aimed at integrating social inclusion and labour market policy objectives, with preventive intervention to decrease dropout and early school-leaving at the forefront of public policy. Hence, vocational training providers, including the Workers' University network, should develop synergies with active labour market and local development policies, as well as with those services (career guidance, mediation, vocational and core employability skills training) geared to ease labour market transition and improve human capital.

4. The involvement of social partners can bring focus on issues (e.g. informal economy, decent working conditions, youth discouragement and inactivity, the promotion of socially responsible enterprises) that are not always in the government's agenda. To this end, it seems worthwhile that the ILO continues to provide assistance to further strengthen the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to shape the youth employment policy agenda.
5. The project allowed the local employment offices to decide the mix of programmes to be delivered and specific resource allocation. This was key to the success of the direct assistance component of the Project. The extension of this model of decentralized management of active labour market programmes should be encouraged within the National Employment Service. In addition, there is a strong case for more and better investment in the development of NES human resources. The complex architecture of vocational training and active labour market programmes requires sustained efforts and staff able to manage complex and integrated systems.
6. As it is the practice in modern Public Employment Services (PES) around Europe, front-line NES mediators should be responsible for the management of innovative active labour market interventions, as they are in a better position to select and case-manage disadvantaged clients and understand the needs of employers. This requires that the NES staff-client ratio be reduced to allow more time for counselling and contacts with employers. A flatter staff structure of the employment service would ensure that more human resources be available to case-manage disadvantaged youth.
7. Quantitative targets for active labour market programmes should be established on the basis of accurate costs and needs analysis as well as the experience gained in similar projects. To improve the placement rate of the on-the-job training programme and once labour demand start increasing, it is suggested that consideration be given to obliging employers to recruit a minimum of 50 per cent of the young unemployed trained. This should be accompanied by an increase of the training grant provided to employers and longer training periods.
8. Mechanisms should be established so that ILO technical cooperation projects assisting member states to implement active labour market policies remain open after the project's end date to provide advisory services to assess net impact. The ILO Project in Serbia, in particular, should conduct a longitudinal study of the performance of participants to the on-the-job training programme against that of

a control group extracted from the unemployment register. This will give a more complete and rounded measurement of the programme success rate.

9. The portfolio of measures available under the Project was not fully exploited. Future interventions targeting youth should take this into account and promote the use of the full range of measures available. Different programmes should be developed for the three age groups (15-19, 20-24 and 25-29), as they have different individual characteristics and face different barriers in entering the labour market. Furthermore, individuals in the age group 25 to 29 years old should not be the target of programmes that are designed for youth.
10. Finally, it is recommended that the good practice and lessons learned stemming from the ILO Project in Serbia be considered by other countries engaged in the design of interventions to address the needs of disadvantaged youth.

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

1. Background on the project and its logic

The project Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia (SRB/07/01/ITA), financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a contribution of US\$1.2 million and implemented by the Employment Department of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development (MoERD), started its activities in September 2007. The Project had an initial duration of twenty months. In December 2009, the Project Steering Committee granted the Project a no-cost extension until December 2010. The Project was managed from January 2008 to December 2009 by an international Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), supervised by the Employment Specialist of the ILO Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe.

The government counterpart at the time of project formulation was the Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP). The new ministerial framework established after the election of 2007 moved the competence on employment to the MoERD, which became the Project counterpart since its inception in September 2007. The progress of the Project was assessed regularly by the Steering Committee, which met twice a year throughout the Project life.

A number of preparatory assistance activities were carried out by the ILO with own funding prior to the Project's inception. These activities included: i) the analysis of the youth labour market of Serbia, including a performance assessment of policies and institutions for youth employment, which served as baseline for the development of the youth employment policy and the national action plan; 2) the assessment of the employment promotion laws of a number of countries in the region to inform the drafting of the new employment promotion law of Serbia; and 3) the adaptation and translation of a number of employment-related publications of the ILO (Annex 2).

The main thrust of the ILO Project strategy revolves around two major components that combined the strengthening of the capacity of institutions to implement youth employment policies with demonstration programmes directed at the creation of more and better jobs for young people. Such work is reflected in Priority 2 of the Decent Work Country Programme for Serbia (2008-2010), namely "Improving the formulation and implementation of employment policy as well as of measures targeting disadvantaged youth".

The following paragraphs outline the two strategic components of the Project. A summary of key results and main activities is set out in Section 4.

1.1. Youth employment policy development

Years of economic downturn, rising unemployment and insecurity have exacerbated the vulnerability of many segments of the Serbian population, especially of young people. Notwithstanding the positive growth path experienced by the country since 2001, the economy continued to face low employment intensity, with young labour market entrants particularly affected.

The main problems identified during the formulation of the Project were: the fragmentation of policy interventions, with poor synergies across the various government agencies and actors; the little attention deployed to addressing the needs of young people facing multiple disadvantages in the labour market; the narrow scope of youth employment interventions, often focused either on labour demand or on labour supply measures; the lack of appropriate monitoring and evaluation that created distortions and did not allow implementing evidence-based policies nor targeting public services; the limited involvement of the social partners in mobilizing action on youth employment as well as in giving voice and representation to young people.

Against this backdrop, the Project aimed at increasing the effectiveness of labour market institutions, including the social partners, in developing evidence-based youth employment policy and programmes. The main problems were addressed through: i) capacity building of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development to coordinate action on youth employment; ii) the design, monitoring and evaluation of a youth employment policy and action plan; iii) the piloting of integrated school-to-work transition programmes targeting disadvantaged youth, iv) the establishment of a Youth Employment Fund (YEF) to reach out to disadvantaged youth; and v) technical assistance to the social partners to mobilize action for youth employment.

The direct recipients of the Project were decision-makers and staff of the Employment Department of the MoERD, the National Employment Service (NES), the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Republic Statistical Office, as well as the social partners (staff of employers' and workers' organizations) and youth groups.

1.2. Design, monitoring and evaluation of school-to-work transition programmes

The second component of the project focused on the design and piloting of a number of school-to-work transition programmes sponsored by the Youth Employment Fund. These initiatives included measures that combined vocational education and training with work experience and promoted young people's access to employment. The institutional capacity building component comprised technical assistance to the managers and practitioners of the NES and of local employment offices. The ultimate beneficiaries were young women and men aged 15 to 29, mainly low-skilled youth and school dropouts, young people living in rural areas and young workers in the informal economy.

Box 1: Summary of main lessons learnt

- **Policies aimed at improving youth employment prospects should be wide in scope.** In the past, fewer resources have been devoted to implement interventions to redress the multiple layers of disadvantage that affect many young people. A correct diagnosis of the causes of unemployment among youth is key to the design of effective measures, while coordinated and concerted action among different government agencies brings focus and coherence to youth employment policy. Strategies that combine institutional capacity building with demonstration programmes may be more effective in fostering cooperation among stakeholders.
- **Targeted employment packages that meet labour market demand can help disadvantaged youth gain decent work.** Well designed packages of services (that combine job search assistance, off- and on-the-job training, and subsidized employment in private sector enterprises are better suited to respond to the needs of disadvantaged youth and attract the interest of enterprises even in periods of labour demand contraction.
- **Performance monitoring helps assess what works and for whom.** Monitoring has an important role to play in ascertaining what works, for whom and under what conditions. It is key to draw lessons that are useful to inform future youth employment policy and programme development.
- **Both tripartite activities and needs-based assistance to employers' and workers' organizations are essential to promote social dialogue on youth employment.** The Project ensured a broader participation of the social partners in youth employment policy and programme development. This helped the social partners discuss a number of policy issues and yielded considerable results in terms of impact and sustainability
- **Leveraging on co-financing is an approach that could be mainstreamed in most technical cooperation initiatives.** Such approach pay off in terms of quantity and quality of outputs, stakeholders' and beneficiaries' satisfaction as well as response capacity of the Project to emerging needs. It also serves as a capacity building tool for national partners in fund-raising and management of the project cycle.
- **Combining technical cooperation activities with regular programmes of the ILO can result in a win-win situation.** Technical cooperation can provide a framework for piloting innovative approaches, methodologies and tools that can be up-scaled and replicated in other contexts through ILO regular programmes. In addition, regular programmes may provide additional resource to implement activities that are instrumental to the achievement of objectives of technical cooperation initiatives.

2. Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the Project in a comprehensive, systematic and objective manner in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact. The evaluation is designed to assess the relevance of the Project objectives and approach as well as identify the extent to which: i) the Project has achieved its planned objectives, ii) its strategy has proved efficient and effective, and iii) the long-term impact the Project is likely to have.

The evaluation is designed to analyze strategies and implementation modalities in order to provide recommendations to be integrated into the planning process of the ILO's technical assistance in the region. Particular emphasis is placed on the review of the Project's sustainability and impact, as well as on possible innovative technical cooperation features in youth employment promotion. The evaluation also assesses the achievements and effectiveness of the pilot programmes implemented at district level; their relevance to the institution building and policy development processes; and possibility for their replication on a national scale. Finally, the evaluation reviews the relevance of the:

- Initiatives aimed at mainstreaming gender in technical cooperation;
- Involvement of the social partners;
- ILO's integrated approach and methodology for the development of youth employment policy and national action plans;
- ILO's employment-oriented approach to skills development (introduction of competency-based labour market training, delivery of individualized employment services and design of integrated youth employment programmes);
- Technical assistance to the reform of the public employment service and to the introduction of comprehensive, multi-service active labour market programmes (ALMPs);
- Partnerships and alliances established by the Project.

3. Methodology

A pragmatic approach has been adopted to the evaluation based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. The following data sources and data collection methods were used by the evaluation team:

1. A comprehensive analysis of various sources of information including desk review of survey data and project files, including the project document, technical and policy papers produced by the Project; work plans; progress reports and minutes of Steering Committees' meetings;
2. Interviews and meetings with governmental counterparts and project partners, direct beneficiaries, partner agencies, project management and staff. To that purpose a mission was fielded to Serbia from 1st to 5th November, 2010.

4. Review of implementation

The project rationale was based on the ILO's experience on youth employment assistance to member States and consisted of two major components that combined the strengthening of the capacity of institutions to implement youth employment policies, with demonstration programmes directed at the creation of more and better jobs for young people. For easy reference, the key outputs achieved by the project are summarized under two separate headings: youth employment policy development and design, monitoring and evaluation of active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth.

4.1. Youth employment policy development

This component of the project revolved around the strengthening of the capacity of labour market institutions and the social partners in the design, monitoring, and evaluation of evidence-based youth employment policies. It comprised technical assistance and advisory services to the inter-ministerial working group established to formulate the Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAP). The Project organized from April 2008 to June 2009, a capacity-building programme for the members of the working group, which included: i) a series of thematic seminars on youth employment (April 2008-January 2009); ii) a training workshop on youth employment policy development (May 2008); iii) a number of follow-up and promotional activities (June-September 2009); and iv) policy endorsement (September 2009). The thematic seminars brought together policy-makers from several ministries, representatives of the social partners and youth organizations to discuss policy options to address youth employment (Box 2).

The Action Plan revolves around five key objectives: 1) improving the employability of young people; 2) fostering employment-intensive private sector development; 3) promoting decent work prospect for young people; 4) promoting labour market inclusion of young people's through targeted measures; and 5) strengthening the governance of the youth labour market at both central and local level¹. The analysis provided by the ILO working paper *In search of a decent job: Youth employment in the Republic of Serbia* shed light on the scale and patterns of youth employment in Serbia and offered the knowledge base to craft feasible policy options to tackle the challenges of the youth labour market. This working paper also provided the groundwork for the design of an integrated package of active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged young people.

1. The Action Plan on Youth Employment was approved by the Government of Serbia's Conclusion 05 Number 11-5709/2009 of 17 September 2009. (Official Gazette, LXV, No 78, 23 September 2009) and it was officially launched during the national conference Youth Employment in Serbia: a national challenge organized jointly by the Project and the MERD in October 2009.

Box 2: Serbian Action Plan on youth employment (2009-2011)

The Serbian Action Plan on youth employment was developed by a working group including policy-makers from six ministries (economy and regional development, labour and social policy, education, youth and sports, agriculture, European integration), and representatives of the National Employment Service of Serbia, the Republic Statistical Office, as well as employers' and workers' organizations. The work was coordinated by the Employment Department of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development. The Serbian institutions involved in the development of the Action Plan are now part of a standing working group that is regularly convened to discuss the employment interventions to be implemented through the annual National Plan on Employment. In June 2010 the same working group was entrusted to formulate the Serbian employment policy framework for the period 2011- 2020.

The Action Plan on youth employment comprises three parts: i) the first analyzes the youth employment situation in Serbia, drawing from the ILO working paper *In search of a decent job: Youth employment in the Republic of Serbia*; ii) the second elaborates on a set of policy options identified as priority by the working group; and iii) the third describes the operational aspects relating to the implementation of the Action Plan.

A monitoring cycle on the progress made in youth employment was undertaken as part of the labour market analysis conducted for the development of the Serbian employment policy framework (2011-2020) and the *Operational Plan on Human Resource Development*. This exercise found that, despite the resources put at disposition by the Government, the impact of the 2009 crisis has affected young people more than adults. To avoid the emergence of a group of hard core disadvantaged youth, the Government is planning to scale up the actions and resource available for youth employment in the next policy cycle and with the support of the European funds for pre-accession.

Capacity building activities on youth employment policy development were preceded by an appraisal of the performance of labour market institutions and their capacity to deliver on employment objectives. The assessment revealed a number of outstanding issues that were addressed by the ILO through the coordinated action of the Project and other technical assistance packages (Decent Work Country Programme, Regular Budget Supplementary Allocation for Serbia and Youth Employment and Migration joint programme). Specifically, the Project carried out three staff development programmes – one for key experts of the MoERD and the NES, one for the representatives of employers' organizations and another for activists of the trade unions. The training workshops centred on: i) key youth labour market indicators

and policies affecting youth employment; ii) design and funding of targeted youth employment policies and programmes, and iii) monitoring and evaluation approaches. For the last section of the training programme (monitoring and evaluation approaches) the three groups (government, employers and workers' organizations) were brought together to discuss and agree upon the final design of the school-to-work transition programmes to be piloted under the aegis of the Project. This resulted in the drafting of a set of guidelines on the implementation of youth employment programmes that served also as training and coaching material during the capacity building activities organized for practitioners of the local employment offices.

Another strand of the work of the Project focused on assistance to the social partners in mobilizing action on youth employment. Such work unfolded through a set of dedicated activities with the Serbian Employers' Association (SEA) and the trade unions Nezavisnost and CATUS

The Serbian Association of Employers (SAE) developed a range of services and materials targeting young, potential entrepreneurs in setting up their business, (information and advisory services on taxation, regulations, liabilities and access to networking opportunities). Such work resulted in the publication of a booklet (*How to start a business in Serbia*) and the design of an internet page linked to the employers' organisation web site, which also hosts an internet forum connecting young people and SAE experts. Under the aegis of the Project, the Serbian trade unions finalized training and awareness raising materials on the promotion of young people's rights at work (*Facilitator's guide and toolkit to promote young people's rights@work*). The Guide and accompanying awareness-raising brochure were distributed through the network of the employment services, trade unions and employers' organizations as well as in education institutions. This material was also used to organize training and information sessions targeting different groups of young people (students, workers, unemployed and inactive youth). The implementation of capacity building activities was accompanied by the development of context-related tools, guidelines and other training material (see Annex 2)

Box 3: Promoting social dialogue on youth employment in Serbia

Being the main actors in the labour market, employers' and workers' organizations have an important contribution to make in the design and implementation of policies and programmes promoting decent employment. Social dialogue at all levels can provide a mechanism to balance, through consensus, the interests of governments, employers' and workers' organizations. Often, however, capacity building is necessary to enable employers' and workers' organizations and their youth networks to effectively participate and contribute to the shaping of national youth employment agendas.

Against this backdrop, the ILO project in Serbia adopted an approach that envisaged both tripartite activities and needs-based assistance to each partner. The project worked closely with the coordinators of the youth networks of employers' and workers' organizations and supported them in the design and monitoring of activities aimed at promoting youth employment.

Such learning-by-doing approach built the capacity of the youth networks vis-à-vis their organization and the government, empowered them to contribute to the shaping of the youth employment agenda, fostered dialogue between employers' and workers' organizations and ensured broader consultation and participation in policy and programme design and implementation.

To conclude, the Project's work on youth employment aimed at fostering inter-ministerial coordination and the involvement of social partners in policy design and implementation; addressing efficiency gaps in the provision of employment services; and providing a solid management base for diversifying active labour market policies and programmes targeting young people. Such work generated a number of spin-off effects, including the decision of the government to continue, with funding from the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) and the Fund for an Open Society in Serbia the implementation of ALMPs for young unemployed at risk of exclusion.

4.2. Design, monitoring and evaluation of ALMPs targeting disadvantaged youth

The design of employment programmes targeting disadvantaged youth followed the development of the youth employment policy and action plan. Thus, the programmes piloted at district level were an integral part of the implementation of the Action Plan on youth employment. To support Serbian labour market institutions in the provision of a comprehensive package of services targeting both labour demand and supply, the Project established with the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development a Youth Employment Fund (YEF). The Fund is financed by three different sources: the ILO Project (RSD 29,9 million) the Serbian Fund for an Open Society (RSD 36.8 million); and the Government of Serbia budget (RSD 23.8 million). Box 4 below summarises the operations of the YEF since April 2009.

The youth employment programmes piloted by the ILO Project targeted young men and women 15 to 29 years old, with low education level, long unemployment spells and considered “hard-to-place” due to their personal and household characteristics (e.g. at risk of social exclusion). Employment services and programmes were sequenced to individual needs and envisaged the possibility for an individual to be exposed to multiple interventions according to the specific disadvantages faced in entering the labour market. The type of programmes offered included intensive and individualized counselling and guidance; labour market training (on- and off-the-job); and employment creation programmes.

Box 4: The Youth Employment Fund in Serbia

In the period April 2009-October 2010 the Youth Employment Fund provided the resources to treat 590 young people (56.7 per cent young women and 43.2 per cent young men) at an average cost per participant of US\$ 1,500. The current allocation balance (approximately US\$ 360,000) will allow the targeting of 240 additional participants, bringing the overall total of beneficiaries to 830 youth.

The portfolio of services available under the YEF includes individualized counselling and guidance, including job search training (100 per cent of participants benefitted for this service); off-the-job training, organised with a training provider (4.9 per cent of participants); on-the-job training, organised with a private sector enterprise (50.2 per cent); work placement schemes (2 per cent of participants) and self-employment measures (42.9 per cent of participants).

Most programme participants (56 per cent) are in the age group 25 to 29, over 35 per cent are young people 20 to 24 years old and 9 per cent are teen-agers. Over 60 per cent were long-term unemployed prior to programme participation (with 30 per cent having unemployment spells of two years or longer). Over half (52 per cent) had no prior work experience.

The work on the design and implementation of integrated youth employment interventions was accompanied by a staff development programme to strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Employment Service, the development of a performance monitoring system and training materials on the design monitoring and evaluation of active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth.

4.3. Project outputs, indicators and results achieved

The complete breakdown of the project outputs and indicators of achievements is appended as Annex 1. Overall, an impressive body of work and achievements both at institutional and operational levels has been delivered by the Project using innovative and collaborative approaches.

All the planned outputs of the first component of the Project - capacity building of labour market institutions to develop the youth employment policy - have been achieved and activities completed with the exception of the evaluation cycle of the Action Plan on youth employment (2009-2011). This output remains unachieved since the implementation of the National Action Plan is still ongoing and will end only in 2011, after the termination of the Project.

Most of the planned outputs of the second component - integrated package of active labour market programmes targeting youth - have been achieved. However, the target of 2,500 young people participating to active labour market programmes has not been attained (the YEF had supported 590 young individuals at the time of writing this report). The key constraint related to the achievement of quantitative targets is the overall costs of interventions targeting low-skilled youth. The cost of training services in Serbia is high. Since the employment service cannot rely on a network of public adult training providers, skills training courses are contracted on the market. This does not allow the achievement of economies of scale in training. Non-wage labour costs in Serbia are high and, consequently, programmes designed to reduce the costs for enterprises to hire disadvantaged unemployed are costly. The self-employment programme implemented by the employment services comprised a non-refundable grant of €1,300 per person. Such grant, provided to individuals on a competitive basis, has proven to be effective in increasing the survival rate of start-up enterprises and the employment fall-out of these programmes, but at a higher cost per individual participant. Finally, active labour market programmes targeting youth with higher educational attainment (**First Chance Programme**) – which are rather generous in terms of duration and compensation levels – are much more attractive for enterprise compared to the programmes designed for low skilled youth. This created a sort of “competition” among programmes for the (limited) number of vacancies available especially during the peaking of the job crisis in 2010. In addition, the contraction of labour demand negatively

affected the implementation of the youth employment programmes that were designed on a “work first” approach.

The target to have at least 60 per cent of participants employed in decent work after participation, also was not achieved. This is partly due to the fact that not all data on programme completion is available yet, as each local employment office was left discretion to decide the starting date of programmes’ implementation. Whereas end beneficiaries and providers began to be selected in September 2009, the Call for Applications was published by local employment offices between October and November 2009, with most programmes effectively starting in 2010.

Given the timeframe of the Project, the performance of only one of the programmes piloted (on-the-job training, OJT) could be monitored and on a (very small) sample of participants. The findings indicate a placement rate of 23 per cent. But it is too early to take this as a final outcome figure. This issue is discussed further in Section 5.

5. Presentation of findings

The findings presented in this section of the evaluation report are listed under the headings: i) relevance and strategic fit; ii) validity of design; iii) project progress and effectiveness; iv) efficiency of resource use; v) effectiveness of management arrangements; vi) impact orientation and sustainability.

5.1 Relevance and strategic fit

Many young people in Serbia have difficulty making a smooth and quick transition from education to work. But young people with low educational attainment are much more likely to be affected by long-term unemployment, inactivity and difficult school-to-work transition compared to their more educated peers. Many interventions for youth employment were narrow in scope and limited in time, with emphasis placed either on labour supply or labour demand side measures.

The project set out to address these issues by strengthening the capacity of labour market institutions to develop evidence-based youth employment policies and implement active labour market programmes targeting the most disadvantaged groups among the youth population. The Project came at a time when Serbian institutions were grappling with the urgency to tackle the youth employment challenge. It facilitated the development of a youth employment policy, which took the form of an Action Plan on youth employment and promoted the establishment of the Youth Employment Fund that allowed other donors to contribute to initiatives targeting young people at risk of exclusion.

In the view of the officials of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development the project was of key importance and totally relevant to policy formulation, institutional and staff development and created a robust demonstration model for active labour market programmes. In particular, the competency-based approach to training is being considered as a model to be mainstreamed to other unemployed individuals in the new programming cycle.

A particular feature of the project was its ability to engage the social partners. The project facilitated their access to policy and programme formulation and decision-making more than any other technical cooperation initiatives to date.

During the meetings with the staff of partner institutions, a constant theme was the strategic importance of the Project for their personal and institutional development which was realized through training programmes, workshops and the production of training and other materials. The identification with, and ownership of the project by all the players interviewed was

singular and exceptional. A large part of this was attributed to the strong participatory approach used to respond to the needs of labour market institutions; the quality of the consultants engaged by the Project; the ILO approaches to youth employment and gender equality; the dynamism, dedication and availability of the Project staff; and the flexibility in the delivery of active labour market programmes to end beneficiaries.

5.2 Validity of design

The project had two distinct components. The first component combined youth employment policy development with capacity building of labour market institutions. The second focused on the design, monitoring and evaluation of employment programmes targeting disadvantaged youth. The project spent a greater amount of its financial resources on the first component and did not commence the second until later on in the project life. This means that young beneficiaries started to participate to active labour market programmes only at the end of 2009.

This phasing of project activities was valid in that the gaps identified in both policy development and institutional capacity were addressed before any direct support was provided to young unemployed. Such an approach allowed the development of a well-founded and robust Action Plan on youth employment and the establishment of the Youth Employment Fund. This raised the confidence of partner institutions and was instrumental in attracting additional donors' resources (MDG Achievement Fund and Fund for an Open Society), thus leveraging on available resources to the benefit of unemployed youth.

The planned institutional and policy development outputs were ambitious, but realistic and have been achieved to the great credit of the Project Steering Committee.² The planned outputs of the second component have proven to be more difficult to achieve from a quantitative, but not from a qualitative perspective. Indeed, it is the focus on quality that has had - in a sense - the greatest impact on the quantitative targets.

The Project based its appraisal of the capacity of the public employment service on the functional review carried out by the EU-funded CARDS project (2006) and the assessment done by UNDP for the implementation of the severance-to-job project. A more specific analysis carried out by the Project would have shed light on: i) the capacity of the National Employment Service

² The Project Steering Committee is composed by representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development; National Employment Service; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Youth; employers' organization; trade unions; Italian Technical Cooperation and the ILO.

to implement Project activities, ii) the requirements of employers and the needs of young unemployed, and iii) the cost and quality of education services in Serbia. If such analysis were to have been part of an inception report - not carried out due to urgency to develop the youth employment action plan - the targets set at Project formulation could have been adjusted to become more realistic and achievable.

More than a year after the Project started it became obvious that the quantitative targets set for beneficiaries would not have been achieved. This was explicitly stated in the Project Progress Report (July-December 2009) where a number of factors were listed (the cost of training services, high non-wage labour costs, self-employment grants; competition with other, more generous programmes targeting youth with higher educational attainment). It was originally planned that 2,500 disadvantaged youth would benefit from integrated packages of employment services and programmes, with 60 per cent employed in decent work after completion of the programmes. To date, approximately 590 young people have participated to active labour market programmes (mainly on-the-job training and self-employment measures). The monitoring of performance carried out by the Project in October 2010, found that the placement rate of participants ranged from 13 per cent (administrative data) to 23 per cent (survey-based data). The sample of participants, however, is too small to draw any firm conclusions on employment outcomes. The evidence gathered by a number of evaluations conducted around the world, should have suggested that measures targeting disadvantaged youth may not have a significant effect on placements. Remedial labour market measures should rather be combined with early interventions in the education system to prevent dropout and early school-leaving. The Project could also have focused on preventive policies to reduce the emergence of risk factors.

The qualitative aspects of the direct assistance component were most successful and particularly the design of training programmes based on competencies. Such approach required that: i) the employment service counsellors implementing the programmes be trained in competency-based training approaches; ii) competency profiles for priority occupations be developed (twenty-six profiles were drafted by the Project); iii) a training plan be compiled to take account of the particular characteristics of the young person and the requirements of the partner enterprise; iv) an instructor be appointed by the private firm to ensure quality training; and v) an external assessor be assigned to evaluate the training outputs at the end of the programme.

This model is obviously demanding from the point of view of the employer and the NES counsellor, with additional costs associated with the mandatory, external assessment of each trainee. The qualitative outcomes for individual participants, however, have proven to be substantial. Young beneficiaries interviewed during the evaluation mission regarded the competency certificate received as highly valuable for their future work. This is an extremely important

outcome in a country where a modern national qualification framework has yet to be established and accreditation of prior learning is not yet available.

While the immediate placement and progression outcomes are somewhat disappointing, the positive impact on the employment outlook of participants - who are mostly long-term unemployed - should not be underestimated. This was also confirmed by beneficiaries themselves and by the management and staff of local employment offices implementing the active labour market programmes.

The performance monitoring indicators have been well constructed and outcomes can be tracked efficiently with the help of the new unified information system available in the NES. The performance report prepared by the Project indicates that approximately 56 per cent of participants to the on-the-job training programme (OJT) are in the age group 25 to 29 years of age; young adults 20 to 24 represent 31.9 per cent, whereas teenagers are only 12.1 per cent. Nearly 75 per cent of young participants are long term unemployed, with nearly 46 per cent having been unemployed for two years or longer prior to programme participation. Over 74 per cent had no work experience prior to programme entry (Table 1).

Table 1: On-the-Job training (OJT) beneficiaries by sex, age-group, length of unemployment spell and prior work experience (percentage)

	Total	Men	Women
Age group			
15-19	12.1	7.3	4.7
20-24	31.9	17.7	14.2
25-29	56.0	29.3	26.7
Unemployment spell			
Less than 9 months	12.1	7.8	4.3
9 to 12 months	13.4	8.6	4.7
12 to 24 months	28.9	19.4	9.5
> 24 months	45.7	18.5	27.2
Prior Work Experience			
Without experience	74.6	35.8	38.8
With experience	25.4	18.5	6.9

Source: NES Unified Information System, October 2010

Table 1 above shows that targeting approach of the Project, based on unemployment spell and prior work experience, worked for both sexes. Men were more likely to be long-term unemployed compared to women (69.8 per cent for men and 59.4 per cent for women). More women than men had no work experience prior to programme participation (84.9 per cent of women and 65.8 per cent of men had no prior experience).

The distribution of beneficiaries by target employment offices is shown in Table 2 below. Požarevac and Novi Pazar managed to maintain a balance between the sexes, whereas in Subotica and Bor the number of men largely exceeds that of women. In Kraljevo, women are 2.4 times the number of men. This is largely due to the economic sectors of the partner enterprises in Kraljevo, where female-dominated jobs prevail. The age structure of beneficiaries is similar across local employment offices, with most entrants being in the age-group 25 to 29 years old.³ It is questionable whether individuals in this age group should be regarded “youth”; rather, it would seem more appropriate to place this group in the prime age category. Only Požarevac presents a more balanced age structure, with a good share of teenagers and young adults enrolled in OJT programmes (17.6 and 23.5 per cent, respectively).

Table 2: Programme beneficiaries in target branch offices, by sex, age-group, unemployment spell and prior work experience (percentage)

	Total	Bor	Kraljevo	N. Pazar	Požarevac	Subotica
Sex						
Men	54.3	66.7	28.8	47.5	50.0	82.0
Women	45.6	33.3	71.2	52.5	50.0	18.0
Age-group						
15-19	12.1	6.1	13.5	11.5	17.6	8.0
20-24	31.9	24.2	30.8	41.0	23.5	34.0
25-29	56.0	69.7	55.8	47.5	58.8	58.0
Unemployment spell						
> 9 months	12.1	12.1	3.8	8.2	23.5	18.0
9-12 months	13.4	12.1	9.6	4.9	17.6	26.0
12-24 months	28.9	30.3	26.9	18.0	38.2	38.0
> 24 months	45.7	51.5	59.6	68.9	20.6	18.0
Prior work experience						
Without	74.6	72.7	84.6	93.4	82.4	40.0
With	25.4	33.3	15.4	6.6	17.6	60.0

Source: NES Information System, October 2010

³ This is partly the result of NES offices giving priority to long term unemployed youth.

As regards unemployment spell, in Bor, Kraljevo and Novi Pazar most programme beneficiaries falls in the category of the very long-term unemployed (two years and longer). The NES offices of Požarevac and Subotica, on the other hand, involved also good shares of young people with shorter unemployment spell. With regard to experience, all offices except Subotica selected primarily young people with no work experience⁴ Overall, dropout accounted for 12.5 per cent of total beneficiaries (5.6 per cent for men and 6.9 per cent for women). Approximately 34 per cent of young dropouts had a valid (justified) reason for leaving the programme, while roughly 66 per cent dropped-out for other reasons (unrealistic expectations about the training programme and the job, household duties conflicting with the pace of the training and so on).⁵

The Project adopted a gender sensitive approach in both design, implementation and monitoring of active labour market programmes. Labour market statistics and data are presented for men and women separately. Particular emphasis was placed on the fact that young women - even if better educated - are more disadvantaged than their male peers in the Serbian labour market. All Project documentation -including training materials, researches and reports - emphasize the need to take into consideration the different impact that labour market interventions may have on men and women, respectively. The target of maintaining a sex balance in ALMP participation was almost achieved (46.1 per cent of all beneficiaries are young women).

5.3 Progress and effectiveness

Considering that the larger share of the Project's funds was invested in policy development and capacity building, progress and effectiveness can only be regarded as excellent. The delivery of advisory services geared towards institutional capacity building, the development of the Action Plan on youth employment as well as the publication of important guides and good practice documents were performed in a universally praised manner.

The direct assistance component of the Project absorbed less funds, but it also achieved very good qualitative outcomes, as mentioned above. The fact that it started later on in the Project life is to be commended, as this allowed the development of a sound policy approach, the building of staff capacity to manage competency-based approaches and the construction of an effective and replicable model for ALMP delivery.

⁴ In agreement with the ILO project, the Subotica office decided to extend the availability of programmes also to youth workers dismissed as a result of the economic crisis that hit Serbia in 2009. This fact explains the predominance of young entrants with shorter unemployment spells in the district.

⁵ The branch offices reported that a good share of young people abandoned the training programme once the agricultural season started, giving priority to their household needs.

The NES managers and practitioners appreciated the opportunity to “hasten slowly”: this allowed them “to get it right” in terms of matching young unemployed and enterprises as well as design of individualized competency-based training programmes. The placement approach also envisaged that each beneficiary be exposed to a three-week intensive case-management and guidance process so that all possible intervention options were explored prior to programme entry. Such an approach was new in the NES and required a considerable resource commitment. This produced another spin-off in that those young people already working - albeit in the informal economy - and unwilling to participate to ALMPs were “flushed out” during this initial phase. The quantitative targets on ALMPs beneficiaries were adjusted, in the course of Project implementation, at 193 (minimum) and 467 (maximum) beneficiaries. Actual achievements are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Beneficiaries of ILO funds, by type of programme and sex

Programme	Total	Men	Women
Institution-based training	9	4	5
On-the-job training	232	124	108
Work-trial contracts	2	1	1
Employment subsidy	4	4	0
Work-training contracts	0	0	0
Total	247	133	114

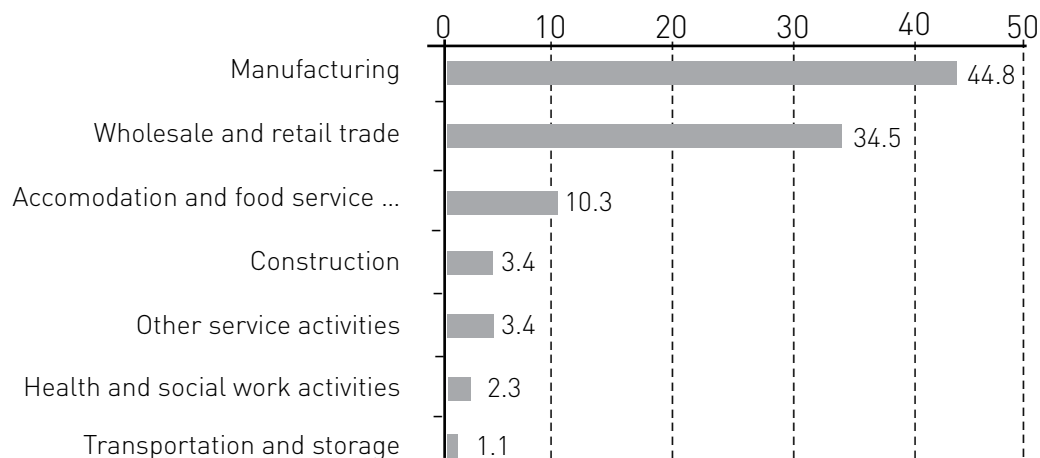
Source: NES IT system; October 2010 and Project documentation on the Youth Employment Fund

This data shows that 94 per cent of programme beneficiaries participated to on-the-job training programmes. Compared to this, participation to institution-based training is insignificant. This is due to the respective design features of the two programmes. The on-the-job training programme was the most popular due to the fact that - unlike other measures - it did not require enterprises to employ participants at programme’s end.

It is too early to measure the effectiveness of this programme on the employment prospects of beneficiaries. However, it is worthwhile noting that most partner enterprises (44.8 per cent) operate in the (light) manufacturing sector. The second largest economic sector represented is wholesale and retail trade (34.5 per cent), followed by accommodation and food services (10.3 per cent). Although the programme was successful in involving manufacturing

enterprises, the high share of wholesale and retail trade and accommodation and food activities - which are more likely to offer seasonal and temporary employment - is a matter of some concern for the sustainability of the jobs created.

Figure 1: Partner enterprises, by economic activity sector (percentage)



Source: NES Information System, October 2010

The cost effectiveness of the OJT programme piloted by the ILO Project can be measured by looking at the total disbursements recorded by the NES in the reference period (RSD 22,318,560), plus administration costs. The administration costs are calculated as the total NES costs (excluding unemployment benefit and active labour market programmes) by the average stock of unemployed registered (Table 4). The resulting average cost/unemployed/month is then multiplied by the total number of treatment/months of the on-the-job training programme (630 training months of which 279 for men and 351 for women plus 230 months for the counselling and job search period). This calculation shows that the average cost per programme participants is RSD 87,394.54 (approximately US\$ 1,100). Project calculations shows that the final average cost/participants including the cost of assessment, is likely to be RSD 95,000 per individual (US\$ 1,238),

Table 4: Overall OJT cost in the reference period (RSD)

1 Total disbursement OJT (RSD)	2 Average admin. cost unemployed/month(RSD) *	3 Total OJT entrants and dropouts	4 Total treatment months **	5 Overall OJT cost *** =1+ (2*4) RSD
22,318,560.00	356.16	259	889	22,635,186.24

Source: NES Information System, October 2010

[*] The average number of unemployed registered in the reference period was 747,393 persons. The total NES administration cost in the same period was RSD 2,928,085,206.60 (equal to 3,917.73 RSD per person for 11 months).
 [**] Treatment months is the sum of training months (calculated for each of the 230 individuals on the basis of the start and end data of the OJT programme) plus one month more for each entrant and dropout (29 persons) for counselling.

[***] Average cost per entrant is derived by dividing the amount of column 5 by total number of entrants and dropouts (259), e.g. RSD 87,394.54 per entrant. The same process is used to derive average cost per participant.

However, the real cost effectiveness of the on-the-job training programme from a governmental point of view cannot be calculated until its costs are measured against the tax revenue contributed by young participants who are working added to social welfare benefit payments that are saved.⁶ The costs of the on-the-job training programme compare favourably to those of the **First Chance Programme** (approximately US\$1,890/participant), which targets youth with higher educational attainment. The placement rate of the **First Chance Programme** is 37 per cent, some of which is realised in the informal economy. In addition, this latter programme appears to be subject to deadweight and substitution effects⁷.

In the view of the officials interviewed during the evaluation, the Project was one of the most effective interventions delivered in Serbia in the last six years. All Project partners reported a high degree of ownership and were consistently praising the institutional development achieved. For instance, representatives of the workers' organizations reported to have acquired a good grasp of ALMPs monitoring concepts and indicators, as well as tools to measure performance.

Monitoring and evaluation were a key element of ILO's assistance. The design of relevant indicators coupled with capacity building to increased the knowledge on monitoring approaches proved to be a very successful outcome of the Project. This is reflected in the wealth and quality of the statistical evidence available and the high quality of the individual assessment process of the on-the-job training programme.

⁶ This is the $(B + tW)$ formula used to measure long-term outcomes of ALMPs, where B is the benefit payments saved, t is the tax rate and W is total participant earnings (i.e. the product of employment rate and wage rate). When impact is measured over long periods, the earnings component in the formula can be relatively large.

⁷ ILO Project, Active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth: Results of performance monitoring, October 2010

Another striking example of project performance was the positive results achieved in the capacity building of the employers' organization and trade unions' youth network as well as the publication of awareness and training material on young people's rights at work and entrepreneurship development. The staff of the statistics sector of the NES felt that the training received helped them in identifying what the employment service would require from future technical assistance and allowed them to critically review the advisory services provided by other funding sources. This would not have been possible without the skills gained through the Project training programmes, including the workshop held at the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin).

The project also ensured that the core ILO principles regarding workers' rights, gender equality and decent work, as well as good practice in the design, monitor and evaluation of ALMPs were embedded in the Project's delivery. This was, in the view of the evaluators, a fundamental element of the Project effectiveness.

5.4 Efficiency of resource use

Resources (funds, human resources, time and expertise) were allocated strategically to achieve significant outcomes. As mentioned above, there is an issue on the cost of the OJT programmes piloted under the aegis of the Project. However, it appears that it would have been extremely difficult to deliver the same level of training at a cheaper rate. The phasing of the project has also proven to be the right approach in that institutional capacity was developed prior to direct assistance.

There was widespread agreement amongst Project partners that funds were used in an extremely effective way and that both funds and activities were delivered in a very timely manner. This contributed to the achievement of the good results and to an efficient delivery of outputs.

5.5 Efficiency of management arrangements

The Project management and governance -operationalized through the Project Steering Committee, the backstopping of the ILO and the assistance of the ILO's Chief Technical Advisor - was efficient and effective.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) executed its advisory and guidance role very effectively. All members interviewed during the evaluation mission rated highly the work of the Committee and their ownership of the process. They felt that they had a genuine policy and management role in the Project.⁸ Communications channels among the Project, the partners and other agencies functioned very well and in an open manner.

⁸ The representative of the Ministry of Education was the only member of the PSC who could not be interviewed.

The Project had the full backing of all senior officials of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and of the National Employment Service. The Government of Serbia delivered the promised human resources and facilities and co-financed the Youth Employment Fund for the implementation of active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth. The overall contribution of Serbia, calculated in October 2010, amounted to RSD 25.4 million equal to 85 per cent of the amount provided by the ILO Project⁹

The Project management monitored project performance closely and had appropriate systems to do so. Cooperation with project partners was effective and the project made good use of coordination and collaboration opportunities whenever they arose.

5.6 Impact and sustainability

As mentioned throughout this report, the activities undertaken by the Project had a wide and sustained impact. The most significant is the learning that occurred among the officials of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, the National Employment Service and the social partners. The Project also succeeded in:

- Strengthening the labour market information system and establishing bridges between the National Employment Service and the National Statistical Office. The structure of the Labour Force Survey was also improved thanks to the learning gained during the project;
- Developing the capacity of labour market institutions to monitor and evaluate active labour market policies targeting youth;
- Introducing the concept of transferable skills as a means to place young unemployed in emerging occupations. The development of a competency-based training approach and the use of job analysis tools allowed a more effective matching of unemployed youth to jobs and to tailored training programmes;
- Pioneering new approaches to skills surveys and forecasting at both national and district level to provide evidence for policy making;
- Strengthening the youth employment policy formulation functions of the MoERD and setting up a Youth Employment Fund to finance interventions;

⁹ Such contribution is reported in the Project document entitled Active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth: Results of performance monitoring, October 2010. The same report states that the Government of Serbia contribution is likely to equal the ILO Project contribution by the end of 2010.

- Improving MoERD and NES approaches to programming on youth employment, which will serve when the European funds come on-stream;
- Opening new cooperation channels between the MoERD and other donors. This was particularly praised by the representatives of the Ministry of Economy;
- Maintaining cooperation high among all stakeholders throughout the project;
- Mainstreaming the lessons learnt and good practice of the Project in the design of the new National Employment Strategy (2011-2020);
- Demonstrating the effectiveness of integrated employment services delivery, and particularly the introduction of child care and mobility grants to address the multiple barriers that young unemployed women face in entering the Serbian labour market. This was highly appreciated and worthy of up-scaling;
- Improving employment services delivery and the targeting of ALMPs to the most disadvantaged groups. The Project gave the possibility to the NES to pilot-test new targeting tools and case management approaches in a self-paced manner;
- Involving the social partners in Project's activities both through tripartite activities and needs-based assistance.

All stakeholders emphasized that the Project was remarkably singular in its ability to engender substantial learning at policy and programme level and improve the targeting of disadvantaged groups in a way that yields results in poverty reduction and promotes the ILO core principles of decent work and equal opportunities. To quote the representatives of the national counterpart, the Project was superior to any other implemented in the Ministry of Economy in the last few years. Such results were delivered with a relatively modest budget (US\$ 1.2 million).

There is no doubt that the substantial capacity developed by the Project will continue to be used in all future policy formulation functions. The direct assistance component has provided many lessons learnt - and while these will not be immediately replicated since the 2011 ALMPs have already been programmed - they are already influencing the formulation of new approaches to combat long-term unemployment as well as the activities of other projects on youth employment promotion.¹⁰

¹⁰ The project Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration is a joint programme financed by the MDG Achievement Fund and implemented in Serbia by the ILO, IOM, UNICEF and UNDP.

6. Conclusions

The members of the evaluation team are unanimous in their conclusion that the ILO Project Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia has had a lasting, positive and systemic impact on policy making and operational activities in both the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and the National Employment Service. It has also forged valuable links among these two institutions, the social partners and other donor organizations. In this regard, the Project is considered an outstanding success and worthy of study as a good practice model of technical cooperation and project implementation.

The technical assistance provided to the Employment Department of the MoERD on the design of evidence-based youth employment policies contributed to the strengthening of the labour market governance system. The results of this assistance is reflected in the 2010 National Employment Action Plan (NEAP), the new Employment Strategy 2011-2020 currently being drafted and in the *Operational Plan on Human Resource Development* to be supported by EU funds.

The ILO's work on active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth with local employment offices contributed to the decentralization of employment services' functions, the mainstreaming of the management by objectives approach, the sequencing of employment services and the tailoring of employment interventions to the needs of individuals entering the labour market. This Project component was innovative and entirely suitable to an environment where the vocational education and training (VET) system is under reform and where no national qualifications framework exists. The certification of competencies acquired in enterprise settings required a high level of input and support from both the employment service and the employers. The model has already been used experimentally by the ILO in other Western Balkan countries, but with the back-up of dedicated adult training centres. It is worthwhile considering such an approach also in Serbia, if and when this type of adult training provision is made available at a reasonable cost.

The mainstreaming of the intensive case management approach piloted by the Project would require most of the limited NES resources. Such mainstreaming will not be possible unless the workloads already being managed by employment service staff are reduced - e.g. the high unemployed to staff ratios are decreased. However, the introduction of competency-based principles and practices was very successfully trialled and the outcomes for individual participants were considered very valuable, especially the awarding of the competency certificate.

The interviews with the Project partners clearly show the success of the participatory strategy used, with a high level of satisfaction among the stakeholders.

It is indeed the partners' full involvement in the Project that guarantees its sustainability.

The outputs achieved confirm the validity of the project idea to provide, through technical assistance, a platform where the different actors dealing with youth employment could cooperate and pool resources and expertise to respond to the most urgent youth employment challenges. The initiatives present original, but also complex, features, particularly in the development of coordinated action across different stakeholders with divergent organizational structures, expertise and resources. As many informants have pointed out during the interviews, the establishment of a modern adult vocational training system aligned to emerging labour market needs is desirable and feasible.

Virtually all the lessons learned from the Project are positive ones. The most important lessons learnt were discussed during a tripartite workshop, held by the ILO Project in Belgrade on the 25th November 2010. These are detailed in the following headings.

- The provision of quality technical assistance to youth employment policy and programme development requires a full understanding of the economic growth dynamics and functioning of the specific labour market; a comprehensive knowledge of the operations of complex public administration organizations; and the exploration of public policies in very diverse areas. Such work demands that technical cooperation projects go beyond the specific outputs and activities planned to achieve objectives. However, project resource constraints (time, expertise and funds) may limit the scope of this work. For instance, the ILO project in Serbia succeeded in improving the collection and analysis of labour market data to inform policy-making, but additional funding sources had to be sought to complete the work.
- Policies aimed at improving youth employment prospects should be wide in scope, while programmes need to be targeted to those who are most at risk of exclusion. In the past, fewer resources have been devoted to implement programmes to redress the multiple layers of disadvantage that affect many young people, such as low educational and training levels, rural residence and ethnic belonging. A correct diagnosis of the causes of unemployment among young people (mismatch between labour supply and demand, sluggish labour demand, low job search intensity or wage reservation mechanisms) is essential to the design and targeting of effective interventions.
- Strategies that combine institutional capacity building with demonstration programmes directed at the creation of more and better job opportunities would seem to be more effective in responding to the needs

of young people. This is because labour market institutions require extensive support to target disadvantaged groups and to implement innovative interventions. The use of coaching techniques as part of capacity building activities has proven particularly effective when piloting alternative employment service and programme delivery systems.

- Technical cooperation can provide a framework for piloting innovative approaches, methodologies and tools that can be up-scaled and replicated in other contexts through ILO regular programmes. The fact that the Project used the Regular Budget Supplementary Allocation of the ILO as an additional and joint resource to implement activities is considered to have been instrumental to the success of the Project. This included capacity building on the collection and analysis of labour market data; assistance to improve the functions of Local Employment Councils; and advisory services for the functional re-organisation of the Employment Department of the Ministry of Economy.
- Seeking co-financing and in-kind contribution to leverage on the funds available to a project is an approach that could be mainstreamed in most technical cooperation initiatives. Despite the considerable time investment that such practice entails, it does pay off in terms of quantity and quality of outputs, stakeholders' and beneficiaries' satisfaction as well as response capacity of the Project to emerging needs. It also serves as a capacity building tool for national partners in fundraising and management of the project cycle.
- The participatory approach adopted, the constant involvement of stakeholders, partner institutions and other organisations as well as the subsequent extensive dialogue established amongst them by the Project, yielded higher results in terms of impact and sustainability.
- The experience of the ILO Project in Serbia has shown that well designed and targeted active labour market programmes attract the interest of enterprises even in a situation of contracting labour demand. On the other hand, the low rate of application to programmes demonstrated that the many young people registered as unemployed are in fact working in the informal economy. The availability of programmes targeting low-skilled youth allowed the National Employment Service to "treat" those who really need support in entering the labour market, identify informal workers and offer services geared to their formalization, and finally, flush out those young people that refuse the opportunities made available.
- The existence of an employment strategy is a necessary, but not sufficient condition to bring focus and coherence to labour market

policies and programmes. Coordination among different ministries remains the most difficult area to be tackled – especially so during a labour market crisis – with coordination among line ministries fragmented and with too few initiatives taken in concert. Although progress in this regard has been made during the development process of the Action Plan on youth employment, more assistance will be required to reinforce this practice. In addition, the resources required to achieve the youth employment policy targets set by the Government are extensive and require the support of the ILO, the European Union and other donor organizations.

7. Recommendations

During the evaluation meetings and the tripartite workshop held to discuss the preliminary findings, the Project partners expressed the hope that the ILO would continue its technical assistance to Serbian labour market institutions. The following recommendations stem from the discussions held and are based on the challenges that lie ahead for Serbia in its path towards the European Union.

1. The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and the National Employment Service will soon be faced with the challenge to deliver on the objectives of the new employment and social inclusion policy framework aligned to the EU *acquis communautaire*. The NES service delivery system should reorganise its functional and staff structures, particularly in front-line services, introduce profiling and case management approaches to service delivery and improve active labour market programmes design, monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring approach tested by the Project to measure the performance of active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth offers decision-makers a tool to appraise the labour market returns of investing public funds to fight social exclusion. The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development should continue these endeavours and commit human and financial resources to regularly verify the outcomes of active labour market programmes.
2. The Government of Serbia should take urgent action to address the informal economy. The return on the investment made in active labour market programmes is often not realized due to informal employment practices. The involvement of young people in the informal economy gives rise to concern, as informal workers are more likely to be poor and mobility between informal and formal employment is low. The implications of extensive informality among young workers are multiple and relate to human and financial resources wastage, as well as forgone productivity and development. Involvement in the informal economy early in the working life can have a negative impact on future labour market outcomes, increasing the risk of future unemployment, inactivity and poverty.
3. The development of a follow-up project to establish a labour market oriented adult training system would greatly improve the means available to the NES to deliver on the objectives of the *Operational Plan on Human Resource Development* and improve the cost-effectiveness of competency-based training programmes. Increasingly, education and

training delivery in Europe is aimed at integrating social inclusion and labour market policy objectives, with preventive intervention to decrease dropout and early school-leaving at the forefront of public policy. Hence, vocational training providers, including the Workers' University network, should develop synergies with active labour market and local development policies, as well as with those services (career guidance, mediation, vocational and core employability skills training) geared to ease labour market transition and improve human capital.

4. The involvement of social partners can bring focus on issues (e.g. informal economy, decent working conditions, youth discouragement and inactivity, the promotion of socially responsible enterprises) that are not always in the government's agenda. To this end, it seems worthwhile that the ILO continues to provide assistance to further strengthen the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to shape to shape the youth employment policy agenda.
5. The project allowed the local employment offices to decide the mix of programmes to be delivered and specific resource allocation. This was key to the success of the direct assistance component of the Project. The extension of this model of decentralized management of active labour market programmes should be encouraged within the National Employment Service. In addition, there is a strong case for more and better investment in the development of NES human resources. The complex architecture of vocational training and active labour market programmes requires sustained efforts and staff able to manage complex and integrated systems.
6. As it is the practice in modern Public Employment Services (PES) around Europe, front-line NES mediators should be responsible for the management of innovative active labour market interventions, as they are in a better position to select and case-manage disadvantaged clients and understand the needs of employers. This requires that the NES staff-client ratio be reduced to allow more time for individualized counselling and contacts with employers. A flatter staff structure of the employment service would ensure that more human resources be available to case-manage disadvantaged youth.
7. Quantitative targets for active labour market programmes should be established on the basis of an accurate costs and needs analysis as well as the experience gained in similar projects. To improve the placement rate of the on-the-job training programme - and once labour demand start increasing- it is suggested that consideration be given to obliging employers to recruit a minimum of 50 per cent of

the young unemployed trained. This should be accompanied by an increase of the training grant provided to employers and longer training periods.

8. Mechanisms should be established so that ILO technical cooperation projects assisting member states to implement active labour market policies remain open after the project's end date to provide advisory services to assess net impact. The ILO Project in Serbia, in particular, should conduct a longitudinal study of the performance of participants to the on-the-job training programme against that of a control group extracted from the unemployment register. This will give a more complete and rounded measurement of the programme success rate.
9. The portfolio of measures available under the Project was not fully exploited. Future interventions targeting youth should take this into account and promote the use of the full range of measures available. Different programmes should be developed for the three age groups (15-19, 20-24 and 25-29), as they have different individual characteristics and face different barriers in entering the labour market. Furthermore, individuals in the age group 25 to 29 years old should not be the target of programmes that are designed for youth.
10. Finally, it is recommended that the good practice and lessons learned stemming from the ILO Project in Serbia be considered by other countries engaged in the design of interventions to address the needs of disadvantaged youth.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

Summary achievement of the Project's indicators

PROJECT OBJECTIVE No.1:

The capacity of labour market institutions to develop and implement the youth employment policy and to design, monitor and evaluate targeted measures for youth employment will have been strengthened by the end of the Project.

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
Output 1.1: Coordination framework, including the composition of the Steering Committee (SC), established and operational	The Steering Committee meets regularly and the minutes of the meetings are available and disseminated	Status: Complete The Steering Committee (SC) conveyed five times during the implementation of the project. Meeting were regularly followed by the dissemination of the proceedings to the members by the Secretariat (ILO). The SC is composed of one representative from the following institutions: Employment Department, (Ministry of Economy and Regional Development); National Employment Service; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Youth; Serbian Association of Employers (SAE); Trade unions (CATUS and Nezavistnost); the Italian Technical Cooperation in Serbia and the ILO.
Output 1.2: An inter-ministerial Committee established and responsible for the design, monitoring and evaluation of an evidence-based youth employment policy and national action plan (NAP).	An inter-ministerial Committee (YE-ICM) with own mandate and procedures appointed and comprising representatives of various Governmental Ministries	Status: Complete The composition of the youth employment inter-ministerial committee was jointly agreed upon with the Employment Department of the MERD to include representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sport; Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management; Poverty Reduction Strategy Team; European Integration Office; Republic Statistical Office of Serbia; National Employment Service (NES); Serbian Association of Employers (SAE); Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions (CATUS) and Independent Trade Unions of Serbia (Nezavisnost). The working group met regularly from April 2008 to January 2009 to draft and finalize the main pillars of the Action Plan on youth employment; produce the operational matrix; and discuss the allocation of resources.

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>The Serbian institutions involved in the development of the Youth Employment Action Plan are now part of a standing working group that is regularly conveyed to discuss the employment actions to be implemented through the National Plan on Employment compiled annually. In June 2010 the same working group was entrusted to discuss the Serbian employment policy framework for the period 2011- 2020.</p>
	<p>At least five training workshops, including international fellowships, on the design, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment policy conducted</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The first meeting of the inter-ministerial committee was held in mid April 2008. The youth labour market analysis and the ILO guide for the preparation of national action plans on youth employment were distributed to start building the knowledge-base on youth employment policy development. Two meetings were held between the end of April and mid May 2008 to fine-tune the review of policies and institutions for youth employment and to identify and analyze the problems of the youth labour market for policy prioritization.</p> <p>A five-day workshop was held at the International Training Centre of the ILO (26-30 May 2008) to discuss youth employment policy approaches, examine the policy trade-offs, the costs and benefits of the initiatives proposed, prioritized youth employment policy action and design objectives and targets.</p> <p>Two additional meeting were organized in June and November 2008, respectively, to finalize the NAP, discuss monitoring and evaluation approaches as well as management arrangements. The final meeting for the preparation of the Action Plan was held in January 2009 to agree upon the changes necessary to take account of the impact of the global economic and financial crisis on the youth labour market. Since mid 2009, the working group was conveyed regularly by the Employment Department (MERD) for the preparation of</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>the National Action Plan on Employment. Youth employment issues and the progress made towards the achievement of youth employment objectives are regularly discussed in this setting.</p>
	<p>One National Action Plan (NAP) and operational matrix developed and approved</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The work on the Action Plan on Youth Employment (2009-2011) was completed in March 2009. The Plan centres around five key objectives: strengthening the governance of the youth labour market; improving the employability of young people, fostering employment-intensive private sector development, promoting decent work prospect for young people, and promoting labour market inclusion of young people's through targeted measures.</p> <p>In March 2009, the amount of resources to be pledged by the Serbian Government was revised downward, due to the structural adjustment to be undertaken to tackle the budget deficit. The Action Plan was adopted by the Government of Serbia on 17 September 2009 (Conclusion 05 Number 11-5709/2009).</p>
	<p>One monitoring and evaluation cycle concluded</p>	<p>Status: Incomplete</p> <p>A monitoring cycle on the progress made in youth employment was undertaken as part of the labour market analysis conducted for the development of the Serbian employment policy framework (2011-2020) and the Operational Plan on Human Resource Development. This exercise found that, despite the resources put at disposition by the Government, the impact of the 2009 crisis has affected young people more than adults. To avoid the emergence of a group of hard core disadvantaged youth, the Government is planning to scale up the actions and resource available for youth employment in the next policy cycle and with the support of the EU funding for pre-accession.</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>Given the time frame of the project, it will not be possible to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the impact on the NAP.</p>
<p>Output 1.3: The capacity of labour market institutions (staff of the Employment Department and NES) to design, monitor and evaluate targeted youth employment measures strengthened.</p>	<p>One performance assessment of labour market institutions' capacity to design, monitor and evaluate ALMPs conducted</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The design of the staff development programmes (see below indicator) was preceded by an appraisal of the performance of labour market institutions and their capacity to deliver on youth employment. This appraisal was carried out through: a) the review of economic and social policies implemented in Serbia since 2003, b) focused interviews with key stakeholders; and c) training needs analysis. This exercise revealed a number of issues that were addressed by the ILO through coordinated action of the youth employment project and other technical assistance (Decent Work Country Programme, Regular Budget Supplementary Allocation and youth employment and migration joint programme, YEM).</p>
	<p>Six workshops on the design, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment measures conducted</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The project implemented from February to May 2009 three staff development programmes – one for staff of the Ministry of Economy and the NES, one for employers' organizations and another for trade unions' representatives. These programmes –delivered in parallel to the three groups comprised four workshops for each group centred on: i) key youth labour market indicators and policies affecting youth employment; ii) design and funding of targeted youth employment policies and programmes, and iii) monitoring and evaluation approaches. For this latter leg of the programme the three groups (government, employers and workers' organizations) were brought together to discuss and agree upon the final design of the youth employment</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>programmes to be piloted under the aegis of the ILO project. Such discussion resulted in the drafting of a set of guidelines on the administration of youth employment programmes (see output 1.5) that served also as training and coaching material during the capacity building activities for staff of the NES local offices.</p>
	<p>One coaching cycle carried out during the design, monitoring and evaluation of active measures</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The coaching cycle on the implementation of youth employment measure was carried out in the period June-October 2009 while the Guidelines on the administration, monitoring and evaluation of employment programmes targeting disadvantaged youth (see Output 1.5) were being drafted. This exercise resulted in a set of internal procedures approved by the NES for the administration of ALMP targeting disadvantaged youth in the five target branch offices of the NES. The coaching on monitoring ALMPs took place in September-October 2010 with NEs staff at central and local level.</p>
<p>Output 1.4: The capacity of the social partners to mobilize action on youth employment strengthened</p>	<p>One performance assessment on the capacities of social partners on ALMPs conducted</p> <p>One staff development programme on targeting ALMPs to disadvantaged youth designed and conducted for at least 15 participants of the social partners</p> <p>One workshop carried out on the monitoring and evaluation of active measures conducted</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>See description under Output 1.3</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
<p>Output 1.5: A package for the design, monitoring and evaluation of gender-sensitive ALMPs targeting youth developed and used by the Employment Department and the NES.</p>	<p>One package on the design, monitoring and evaluation of ALMPs targeting youth pilot-tested and published</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The Guidelines on the administration, monitoring and evaluation of employment programmes targeting disadvantaged youth, used by the NES Branch Offices of Bor, Pozarevac, Novi Pazar, Subotica and Kraljevo were designed and pilot tested in the period June-October 2009. The Serbian language version was published in December 2009.</p> <p>The monitoring chapter of the Guidelines was further developed by the project into a step-by-step guide for the performance monitoring of ALMPs targeting disadvantaged youth.</p>
<p>Output 1.6: A Youth Employment Fund (YEF) established by the Employment Department, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development.</p>	<p>One staff development programme for the staff of the Employment Department on the design and management of employment funds conducted</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The workshop on the design and management of employment funds was conducted during the capacity building programme on ALMPs described under Output 1.3. The Joint Programme on Youth Employment and Migration (YEM) followed up on this activity with international expertise on lessons learnt and practices in EU member states.</p>
	<p>A Youth Employment Fund, inclusive of a contracting system and disbursement procedures, established</p> <p>A monitoring and evaluation system to appraise the relevance, cost-effectiveness and net impact of the measures funded by the YEF drafted and approved.</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>To support Serbian labour market institutions in the provision of a comprehensive package of services targeting both labour demand and supply, the project co-financed with the Ministry of Economy a youth employment and training fund (YEF). The ILO's contribution to the YEF (US\$ 450,000, equivalent to SRD 29.9 million) was transferred to the NES in mid June 2009. The funding put at disposition by the ILO project was placed by the Central NES in a dedicated sub-account. The total amount of funding was initially allocated to each branch office based on the number of potential young beneficiaries as follows: Novi Pazar: 30% of the amount (SRD 8,970,953);</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>Bor: 25% of the amount (SRD 7,475,794); Subotica, Pozarevac and Kraljevo 15% of the total available (SRD 4,485,476 each). During the implementation of the programmes, the respective allocation was shifted among targeted branch offices to respond to different delivery rates.</p> <p>The Guidelines on the implementation of employment programmes targeting disadvantaged youth also offer step-by-step guidance on contracting training and disbursement to beneficiaries, training providers and partner enterprises. The Guidelines also include a part on monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>The YEF was granted in November 2009 an additional US\$600,000 from the Open Society Foundation (Soros) of Serbia. The same procedures and disbursement modalities established by the Youth Employment Project were used for these funds throughout 2010.</p>
<p>Output 1.7: Programme proposals to improve decent work for young people developed.</p>	<p>One assessment on the conditions of work of (self)employed youth conducted and key challenges identified</p> <p>Employability and job creation schemes discussed and approved</p> <p>Initiatives to improve working conditions for youth in the informal economy discussed and approved</p> <p>A set of tendering documents and programme proposals discussed and approved by the Government</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The ILO publication In search of more and better jobs for young people of Serbia (2009) provided indications on the magnitude of the challenge in terms of youth employment in the informal economy. Since the drafting of this paper, the Statistical Office of Serbia has been collecting data on informal employment through the semi-annual Labour Force Survey.</p> <p>In agreement with the Employment Department and the NES it was decided to extend the availability of the pilot youth employment programmes to young people working in the informal economy and registered as unemployed in NES. The sequence of services and programmes is highlighted in Part II of the Guidelines.</p> <p>The ILO project also drafted, at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, a concept note on a national programme to tackle the informal economy in Serbia.</p>

PROJECT OBJECTIVE No.2:

An integrated package of active labour market programmes aimed at enhancing the employability and improving employment prospects of young people will have been successfully piloted by the end of the project.

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
<p>Output 2.1: Programmes linking training to employers' requirements, providing work experience and targeting disadvantaged youth designed and implemented in selected occupations that are in demand.</p>	<p>A set of guidelines for selecting youth at risk of labour market exclusion, training providers and partner enterprises are available and used by the NES Guidelines, formats and procedures for contracting training are available and used by NES</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The steps to be followed to identify and select youth at risk of labour market exclusion, as well as the formats and procedures for contracting training, are contained in the Guidelines for the administration of ALMPs. See Outputs 1.5. and 1.6.</p> <p>As the evaluation literature on active labour market programmes consistently found that on-the-job training yield the best results in terms of (re)employment prospects for low-skilled youth, the project organized a system of competency-based training carried out in private enterprises. The training is based on job competencies for occupations most required by the target labour markets. The learning acquired is assessed independently. Priority occupations were selected on the basis of the job vacancies posted in the six months prior to programme implementation. The Project prepared competency lists and descriptors for 21 occupations as well as guidelines for the assessment of training. The external assessment was entrusted to practitioners drawn from lists compiled by the Ministry of Education and the NES.</p>
	<p>Eight training workshops are conducted and 15 participants per workshop are trained</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>One training workshop was organized at the end of May 2009 with the staff of the Employment Department and of the Central NES to discuss the key elements of the programmes targeting disadvantaged youth (eligibility criteria, type of programmes and objectives, duration and compensation criteria), as well as indicators to measure performance.</p> <p>The first workshop for the counsellors of the branch offices selected to implement the pilot youth employment programmes,</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>as well as staff of the Central NES, was held in Belgrade on 13 and 14 July 2009. During the workshop the participants reviewed: 1) primary and secondary eligibility criteria for end-beneficiaries, partner enterprises and training providers; 2) screening of young beneficiaries and providers in target branch offices (procedures, forms and workflow); 3) matching process among individual needs, available programmes and labour market requirements, 4) approaches to target young workers in the informal economy and 5) performance monitoring (procedures and workflow).</p> <p>Three additional workshops for the staff of the branch offices were conducted between September and November 2009. A number of coaching sessions were organized directly in the local offices throughout 2010.</p> <p>The last cycle of training took place in October 2010 for the performance monitoring of the measures implemented under the aegis of the ILO Project.</p>
	<p>2,500 disadvantaged youth - 50 per cent of whom are women - have participated in employment and training programmes</p>	<p>Status: Incomplete (quantitative target expressed unachievable)</p> <p>A major constraint related to the implementation of youth employment programmes is the overall costs of interventions and the impact of these on the achievement of the quantitative targets expressed in the project document (2,500 disadvantaged youth participating to ALMPs).</p> <p>First, the cost of training programmes in Serbia was found to be much higher than anticipated. Since the NES cannot rely on a network of public adult training providers, skills training courses are contracted on the market on an annual basis and based on available resources. This does not allow the achievement of economies of scale in training.</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>Second, non-wage labour costs in Serbia are high and, consequently, programmes designed to reduce the costs for enterprises to hire disadvantaged unemployed is high.</p> <p>Third, the self-employment programme implemented by the NES comprised a non-refundable grant of €1,300 per person. Such grant, provided to individuals on a competitive basis, has proven to be effective in increasing the survival rate of start-up enterprises and the employment fall-out of these programmes, but at a higher cost per individual participant.</p>
		<p>Finally, the on-going active labour market programmes targeting young people with a higher educational attainment (First Chance Programme) – which are rather generous in terms of duration and compensation levels –are much more attractive for enterprise compared to the programmes designed for low skilled youth. This created a sort of “competition” among programmes for the (limited) number of vacancies available especially during the peaking of the job crisis in 2010. In addition, the contraction of labour demand also negatively affected the implementation of the youth employment programmes that were designed on a “work first” approach. A preliminary calculation was made based on the costs of interventions and the amount of funds made available by the ILO project (and excluding the Government of Serbia contribution). The funds available allow targeting a minimum of 193 and a maximum of 467 young individuals.</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
		<p>Disaggregated data on programmes' performance are available in a separate report.</p>
	<p>At least sixty per cent of programme participants are in decent employment.</p>	<p>Status: Incomplete</p> <p>Each target branch office was left discretion to decide the starting date for programmes implementation. Whereas end-beneficiaries and providers started to be selected in September 2009, the Calls for Application was published by branch offices between October and November 2009. The performance monitoring of the active programmes was conducted in October 2010. Given the timeframe of the project, the performance of only one programme (on-the-job training) could be monitored. The findings of the performance are available in a separate report.</p>
	<p>Seventy per cent of trainees of the network of training institutions are aged 15-29</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>The whole target group of the employment promotion programmes being implemented under the aegis of the ILO project are between 15 to 29 years of age (see detailed report).</p>
<p>Output 2.2 A range of employment services, including labour market information, employment counselling and career guidance and job placement tailored and made available to disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>See under Output 2.1</p>	<p>Status: Complete</p> <p>See Output 2.1</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
<p>Output 2.3 A set of employment creation programmes to improve labour demand for young people – including employment subsidies and employment intensive public works and community services – developed and implemented as part of the comprehensive package of ALMPs.</p>	<p>See under Output 2.1</p>	<p>Status: Complete See Output 2.1</p>
<p>Output 2.4 Entrepreneurship promotion programme for disadvantaged youth – including access to information and training, as well as financial and non financial services – developed and implemented.</p>	<p>One audit of self-employment and entrepreneurship development institutions and services conducted</p>	<p>Status: Complete The self-employment programmes offered as ALMPs were reviewed jointly with the staff of the NES, whereas youth entrepreneurship development and small and medium-size enterprise promotion were reviewed as part of the Action Plan on youth employment. The self-employment programme offered by NES was found to be in line with good practices except for the duration of the conditionality period (24 months). Upon ILO's advice, this period was shortened to 12 months and it now includes mentoring services for all beneficiaries. Given also the limited resource available, it was decided that the Government of Serbia contribution to the Youth Employment Fund be provided by funding self-employment programmes targeting youth 15 to 29 years of age. In the period October 2009-August 2010, the Government of Serbia invested in the five branch offices targeted 85% of the total amount given by the ILO Project.</p>
	<p>One model for NES to offer self-employment and entrepreneurship development assistance designed and pilot-tested</p>	<p>Status: Complete See above</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
	<p>One mentoring system for youth available</p>	<p>Status: Complete See above</p>
	<p>Guidelines, formats and procedures for self-employment are available and used by NES</p>	<p>Status: Complete The new procedures for the implementation of self-employment programmes was drafted and approved by the NES at the end of 2009.</p>
	<p>Two sets of training material (job-search skills for youth and self-employment for young people) are available in the national language</p>	<p>Status: Completed The publication (Serbian language) Biz-Up. Self-employment skills for young people is a support tool for training activities geared to the promotion of self-employment among young people. It provides a guide and a toolkit for practitioners (employment service advisers, trainers, youth leaders and peers) to assist young people in making informed decisions and consider different employment options, including that of setting up their own economic activity. The training material Job navigation skills provides a guide and a toolkit to help young people develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes for navigating the labour market and making informed career choices. The objective is to offer an effective career instruction tool that facilitators can use with students and young adults looking for work or exploring their future career paths.</p>

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
<p>Output 3.1 Advocacy measures and communication strategy on youth employment developed and implemented</p>	<p>Advertising tools developed and widely disseminated</p>	<p>Status: Completed</p> <p>The ILO flagship brochure on youth employment was translated into Serbian language and was distributed during the National Youth Employment Conference, organized on 30th October 2009 (see Output 3.2). A specific brochure for the Serbian context was prepared as part of the dedicated activities organized with the youth sections of the trade unions of Serbia. This accompanies a fully-fledged training package to raise the awareness of young people on their rights at work.</p>
	<p>Advertising and promotional campaign targeting enterprises for the recruitment of young people conducted</p>	<p>Status: Completed</p> <p>The leaflets to advertise the youth employment programmes to be sponsored by the project and the Government of Serbia were designed and distributed through the network of NES branch offices of Serbia in Autumn 2009.</p>

PROJECT OBJECTIVE No.3:

Awareness on the youth employment challenge and of the possible ways to tackle it will have been improved in Serbia by the end of the project.

OUTPUTS	INDICATORS:	RESULTS ACHIEVED AND STATUS
<p>Output 3.1 Advocacy measures and communication strategy on youth employment developed and implemented</p>	<p>Advertising tools developed and widely disseminated</p>	<p>Status: Completed The ILO flagship brochure on youth employment was translated into Serbian language and was distributed during the National Youth Employment Conference, organized on 30th October 2009 (see Output 3.2). A specific brochure for the Serbian context was prepared as part of the dedicated activities organized with the youth sections of the trade unions of Serbia. This accompanies a fully-fledged training package to raise the awareness of young people on their rights at work.</p>
	<p>Advertising and promotional campaign targeting enterprises for the recruitment of young people conducted</p>	<p>Status: Completed The leaflets to advertise the youth employment programmes to be sponsored by the project and the Government of Serbia were designed and distributed through the network of NES branch offices of Serbia in Autumn 2009.</p>
<p>Output 3.2 A national event to raise awareness on the youth employment challenge in the country and to launch the NAP conducted.</p>	<p>One national Youth Employment Conference conducted Conference documents and results widely advertised The NAP full documents and executive summary published in English and Serbian language</p>	<p>Completed The national conference to launch the Action Plan on Youth Employment was organized on the 30th October 2009, as the key closing event of the United Nations Week focused on youth employment. Approximately 200 persons participated to the event, which received ample coverage in the media. The National Action Plan on Youth Employment was published in both the English and the Serbian language in September 2009.</p>

List of training tools and materials developed/adapted/translated by the Project

- 1. Guide for the design, monitor and evaluation of active labour market programmes for youth** (development and publication of the Serbian edition). This tool provides guidance to policy makers and practitioners of labour market institutions for the design, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment programmes that respond simultaneously to the needs of young people and to labour market requirements
- 2. Guidelines to detect the skills needs of enterprises** (development and publication of the Serbian edition). This tool is geared to support managers and practitioners of employment and training services in planning and conducting skills needs surveys. It suggests a step-by-step approach to design the survey methodology (sampling and questionnaires) and it provides tips for data analysis and for the use of findings to improve employment and training service delivery.
- 3. Youth rights at work** (development and publication of the Serbian Edition). This material (guide and toolkit) helps practitioners and teachers to inform young people about their rights at work. It is a reference tool not only for staff of labour market institutions in charge of employment promotion, but also for trade unions' and employers' organisations', employment service advisors, trainers, youth leaders and peers.
- 4. Navigating the labour market: Job search skills for young people** (development of the toolkit). This tool has been designed for the promotion of job-search workshops and learning events organized by teachers and trainers of secondary schools and training institutions. It can also be used by counsellors of the employment offices for the organization of group session as well as during promotional activities organized by the staff of employers' organizations and trade unions
- 5. Competency-based training programmes** (development of the material). This material has been prepared for training practitioners of the National Employment Service on job and task analysis, competencies, occupational areas, and assessment of competency-based training programmes.
- 6. Units of competency for twenty-one occupations required by the Serbian Labour Market** (development of the material). This material has been developed to ease the design and organization of enterprise-based training programmes targeting disadvantaged unemployed youth under the aegis of the project.
- 7. Guidelines to conduct competency-based assessment** (development and publication). This material has been prepared to guide independent, external assessors to organize and conduct the assessment of competencies acquired by young people during enterprise-based training organized by the National Employment Service.

- 8. ILO Guide for the preparation of national action plan on youth employment** (translation in the Serbian language). It describes a methodological framework for the development of National Action Plans on youth employment, as well as the process underpinning their development and the institutions to be involved.
- 9. Biz-Up. Self-employment skills for young people** (publication of the Serbian edition). This training material is a support tool for training activities geared to the promotion of self-employment among young people. It provides a guide and a toolkit for practitioners (employment service advisers, trainers, youth leaders and peers) who assist young people in making informed decisions and consider different employment options, including that of setting up their own economic activity.
- 10. Guidelines to private employment agencies** (translation and publication of the Serbian edition). This tool offers an overview of country practices in the design and enforcement of laws for the regulation and monitoring of private employment agencies.
- 11. Resource manual and guidelines for the promotion of employment of persons with disabilities** (translation and publication of the Serbian edition). This package provides a step-by-step guide to experts of the Employment Department and of the NES on the design of policies – including laws and regulations – and programmes to increase the employment prospects of persons with disabilities.



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