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Evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of EU investments and Youth Employment Initiative, including the implementation of Youth Guarantees Initiative

SUMMARY



2014–2020 metų
Europos Sąjungos
fondų investicijų
veiksmų programa

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PURPOSE, OBJECT AND GOALS OF THE EVALUATION

The primary **goal of this evaluation** is to assess the **effectiveness, efficiency and impact** of EU investments and specially appropriated measure of Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) with the purpose to report back to the European Commission (EC) and improve implementation of future interventions in youth employment area.

Specially appropriated YEI funds were granted to Lithuania as the country belonged to 20 regions where youth (15-24 years old) unemployment level exceeded 25%¹ in 2012. Every country that acquired similar YEI special appropriation funds had to use it according to the principles of the Youth Guarantee Initiative (YGI), which stipulated that the appropriation shall be used to ensure that all young people (15-24 years old) should receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. In addition, as outlined in the implementation plan of actions of YGI² of Lithuania, YGI is included into the Operational Programme for EU Structural Funds Investments for 2014–2020 (OP) under the Priority Axis 7, Specific Objective 7.4.1 “Reduce the number of young people between 15 and 29 years of age not in employment, education or training”. This objective is being achieved by the implementation of “Youth Employment Enhancement” (07.4.1-ESFA-V-404) and “Youth Employment Enhancement (II)” measures. It is also important to note that the target group of the YEI in Lithuania was extended to cover all young people not in employment, education or training between 15 and 29 years of age.

The main **object of this evaluation** was the two mentioned measures funded by the EU structural funds and YEI special appropriation fund – measure “Youth Employment Enhancement” (07.4.1-ESFA-V-404) and its funded projects “Find Yourself” and “The New Start” and planned activities of the measure “Youth Employment Enhancement (II)” (07.4.1-ESFA-V-414) implementing the OP’s Priority Axis 7 “Promoting Quality Employment and Participation in the Labor Market”, Specific Objective 7.4.1 “Reduce the number of young people between 15 and 29 years of age not in employment, education or training”. However, given the purposes of this evaluation, the primary evaluative priority was given to the analysis of the measure “Youth Employment Enhancement” (07.4.1-ESFA-V-404) and its projects “Find Yourself” and “The New Start”. The following summary therefore presents conclusions of the evaluation analysis of the mentioned measure and its projects.

As it was already mentioned, according to the measure “Youth Employment Enhancement” (07.4.1- ESFA-V-404), two projects were implemented in Lithuania - primary intervention project entitled “Find Yourself” and secondary intervention project entitled “The New Start”.

“Find Yourself” was implemented by two institutions - Lithuanian Labor Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor (LLE)³ and Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor (DYA).

DYA worked with its targeted group of economically inactive youth (not employed, not in education or training and not registered in LLE). The services planned under the project “Find Yourself” for the

¹ European Commission (2013), Youth Employment Initiative, COM(2013) 144 final, Strasbourg. <<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0144:FIN:LT:PDF>>.

² Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labor „Regarding the confirmation of implementation plano of actions of Youth guarantees initiatives“ 19 May, 2014., No. A1-416, Vilnius

³ From 1 October, 2018 named as Agency for Employment under the Ministry of Social Security.

economically inactive youth were provided by 55 youth organizations, organizations working with youth, municipal and other institutions which were selected through an open tender to work with the targeted group. Furthermore, 64 local DYA YGI coordinators were employed in the mentioned organizations and provided their services to participants of the project. Services provided by the mentioned organizations and coordinators were available in every municipality. Every participant had to sign a participation contract which delineated an individual plan of required and offered participatory services. The array of services provided to economically inactive youth was huge and ranged from more general ones such as facilitation of social skills, promotion of self-awareness, lectures on motivation, provision of information about opportunities available for young people, intermediation with educational institutions or inclusion into socially beneficial activities to more individually-oriented which required involvement of narrow field specialists (lawyers, psychologists, financial literacy specialists, family care specialists, etc.)⁴. These services had to be provided within the period of 1-3 months. Every young individual also had an option to take part in voluntary activities for up to 3 months organized by non-profit organizations. In this instance, a young individual besides the aforementioned services could also acquire help on finding a non-profit organization seeking for volunteers, organizational help on completing volunteering activities and various training and mentorship services during their volunteering. In addition, participants had an opportunity to register at a Territorial labor exchange (TLE) at any time during the participation in the project.

LLE worked with its targeted group of young people who were not in employment, education or training but were registered at a local labor exchange. This group was further divided into two separate subgroups: prepared and not prepared for the labor market young individuals. Similarly to DYA, LLE was cooperating with other organizations such as a TLE branches to implement the project. Furthermore, 62 coordinators were additionally employed at TLE branches for this purpose. Individualized activity plan was formed for every participant. The plan laid out services needed and to be provided for a participant. However, differently from DYA, a certain share of services to the participants was delivered collectively and not individually. Also, in addition to LLE YGI coordinators and narrow field specialists, other service providers and lecturers were chosen through a public tender to work with participants. Depending on the level of preparation for the labor market, participants of LLE organized activities could acquire services adopted for prepared for the labor market unemployed and not prepared for the labor market unemployed young individuals. Services provided for prepared for the labor market young individuals encompassed help on finding a job, time planning, stress control and provision of other, similar in nature “soft” services. In addition, meetings with potential employers were organized for participants, while some could participate in a short-term informal education programs. Duration of activities for prepared for the labor market young individuals was around 2-3 weeks.

Not prepared for the labor market young individuals acquired services geared towards self-awareness. These services included psychological consultations, assessment sessions of working skills, professional interests and character traits. After the needs of participants were identified, they were provided with orientation towards education, self-employment or hired labor services. Participants oriented towards hired labor were provided with information about the conditions of local labor market, help on finding a job and on communication skills with potential employers. In addition, trips to local firms were organized. Young individuals who were oriented towards education were provided with information on educational institutions located in their municipalities, entry requirements there, services of job shadowing in their selected firms and organized visits to educational institutions. Young individuals who were oriented towards self-employment were provided with information on regulatory framework of self-employment,

⁴ LLE and DYA application to finance the project from EU structural funds, p. 47.

lectures on entrepreneurship and meetings with representatives of local small businesses. Duration of activities for not prepared for the labor market young individuals was 2-3 months.

Individuals who successfully finished their cycle of activities of the primary intervention and its project “Find Yourself” but, nevertheless, could not find a job or acquire an offer for studying had an option to participate in the activities of the secondary intervention and its project “The New Start”. Participants of “The New Start” could participate in various active employment promoting activities: formal and informal vocational training, recruitment through subsidies, improvement of labor skills, work placement or acquire a subsidy for self-employment⁵. In addition, participants could take part in several activities, for instance, finish informal vocational training and later on take part in recruitment through subsidies measure. The project was supervised and implemented by LLE and all participants were required to register at a local labor exchange.

For the purpose of achieving the primary goal and providing a comprehensive analysis of the main object of this evaluation, evaluators completed these tasks:

1. **Completed analysis on the performance results the measure “Youth Employment Enhancement”** of Priority Axis 7, Specific Objective 7.4.1 “Reduce the number of young people between 15 and 29 years of age not in employment, education or training” and **provided conclusions and recommendations regarding the logic, efficiency, effectiveness, performance results, impact and sustainability of the mentioned interventions;**
2. **After taking into account the main conclusions of this evaluation, provided two implementation alternatives to the measure “Youth Employment Enhancement II”** (implementation models) in accordance to its budgetary constraints and its pre-determined performance indicators. One alternative to the currently planned measure encompassed evaluation of the already planned model of implementation of the measure and its activities. Another was suggested by the analysts who completed the evaluation.

METHODS OF EVALUATION AND APPLIED THEORETICAL MODEL

The evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency and impact of EU investments and YEI was premised on the theory of change.

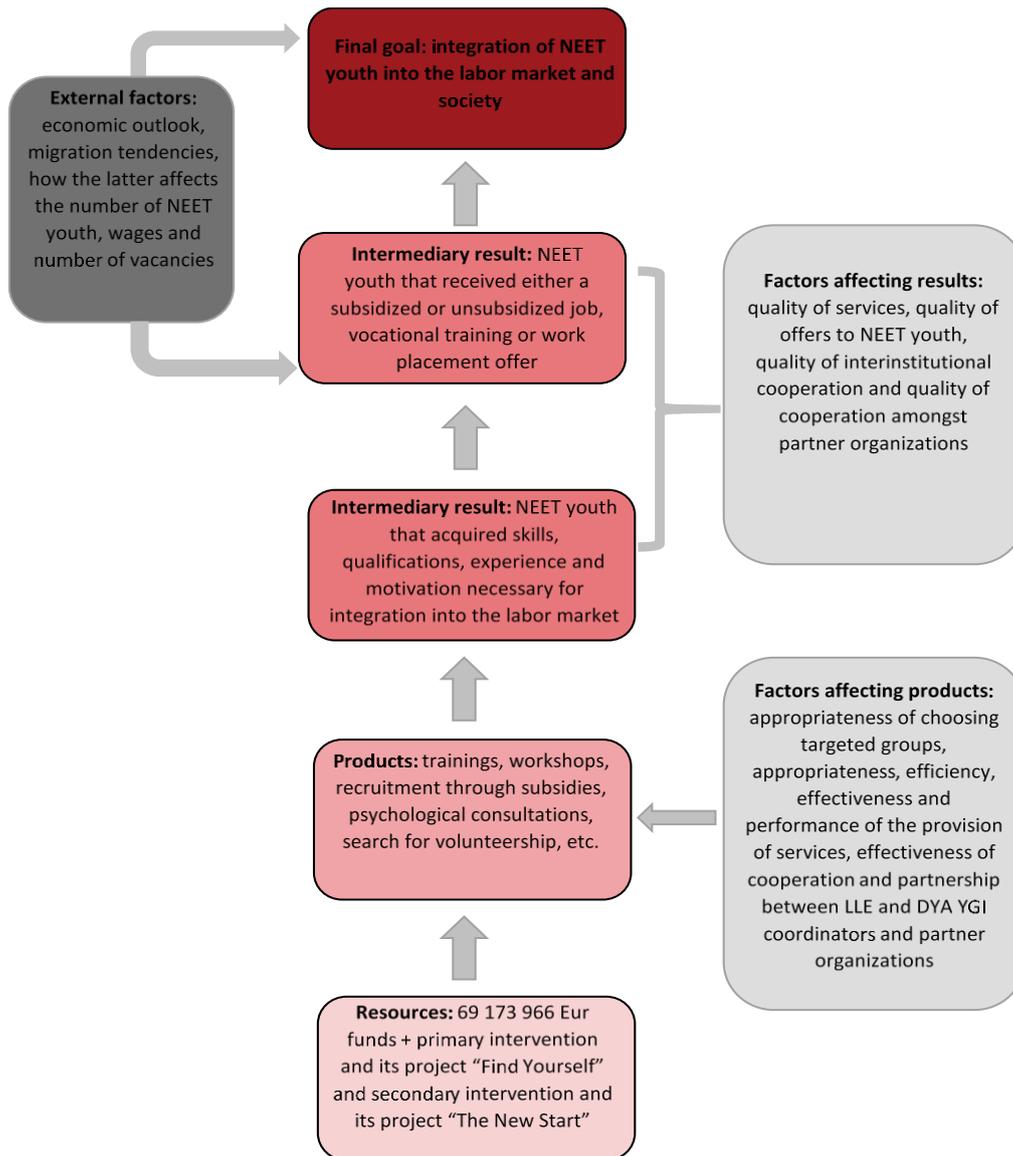
When building the model of the theory of change it is important to specify such elements as:

- **Final goal** – the main change that is sought by interventions and towards which intermediary changes are oriented;
- **Strategy of changes** – sequence of intermediary changes which are crucial for the achievement of the final goal;
- **Assumptions** – theory or evidence based interpretation which identifies causality and explains necessary conditions for changes to take place⁶.

⁵ According to the information provided by Lithuanian Labor Exchange

⁶ Isabel Vogel, *Review of the use of ‘Theory of Change’ in International Development. Review Report* (sponsor – Department for International Development, UK), 2012, 4.

Model which was created for the purpose of evaluating YEI’s intervention stipulated successful integration of NEET youth into the labor market and society as its final goal. For the successful achievement of this goal, the model also suggested that it was crucial to transform resources (funds granted for YEI’s implementation and planned interventions) to real products. The latter would produce intermediary results, without which the final goal would be unattainable. From this follows then that it is also crucial to create necessary conditions (as shown in the light-grey coloured boxes on the right in the model graph below) for the creation of the planned products and attainment of the results for it would allow to transform the current resources into real products, which will in turn produce intermediary results.



PICTURE 1. THEORETICAL MODEL OF EVALUATION

Source: created by "BGI Consulting".

Even though the model explicitly delineates necessary conditions for the attainment of the final goal, these conditions could also be reformulated in terms of the main criteria of this evaluation. In other words, it is crucial for YEI intervention to be appropriate, effective and have a lasting impact. It is also important to ensure that the implemented measures are of high quality. In addition, it was important to assess whether

the achieved results are sustainable in the long-run. To be more precise, whether NEET youth (re)integration into the labor market and society is a long-lasting phenomenon.

The main premises of the model were assessed using the collected data. The latter allowed to assess whether the necessary conditions were created (whether resources were used appropriately, efficiently, effectively and created a long-lasting impact) in order to achieve the intermediary results and this way attain the final goal of the intervention.

Data was collected using various data-collecting and analysis methods – analysis of academic literature and relevant legislation, SFMIS, data available on esinvesticijos.lt, data provided by LLE, surveys of six targeted groups (coordinators of the projects “Find Yourself” and “The New Start”, mentors of Youth volunteering agency, participants of activities of both projects and directors of DYA partner organizations) and comprised a sample of 5086 respondents, 6 semi-structured interviews with 7 stakeholders, 5 case studies of municipalities that involved 21 interviews, cost – effectiveness analysis, 3 case studies of similar projects in other countries and analysis of depersonalized data of 43 605 participants which was provided by SSIFB.

MAIN EVALUATION RESULTS

APPROPRIATENESS

Results of the evaluation of implementation of YEI special appropriation in terms of appropriateness suggested that the determined targeted **values** (number of participants attracted to both projects) of product indicators **were over-ambitious**. It is also important to note that the targeted values of indicators did not reflect the socio-economic situation of the measure’s implementation period. This occurred mainly due to the mismatch between the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the time when the measure was planned and when it was actually being implemented. **Socio-economic situation was more favorable to NEET youth during the implementation phase** meaning that their number was declining not necessarily because of the measure itself but because of the business cycle. However, the targeted values of indicators were not corrected accordingly.

In addition, the over-ambitious targeted values of the product indicators and the delayed start of the measure’s implementation meant that it was hard to achieve the planned indicators. For instance, coordinators of both DYA YGI and LLE YGI experienced an excessive workload burden. The latter, on the one hand, meant that the quality of services provided declined and there was a lack of time devoted to individual engagement with participants. On the other hand, in some cases it was hard to tell whether participants were involved into the planned activities on a voluntary or compulsory basis. For instance, some late-joined participants were demanded to remain involved in the planned activities up until their planned end irrespective of whether it was feasible to deliver the guaranteed services. In addition, in numerous cases participants were involved into the projects’ activities irrespective of their actual labor market needs or could acquire only those services that were still available. The latter inevitably suggested that the needs of some participants were not or not fully met.

The evaluation has also revealed that the services offered by **both projects “Find Yourself” and “The New Start” were not exhaustive enough** and could only help to meet the challenges of part of NEET youth population. To be more precise, services offered could only help to meet the challenges of those who lacked motivation to study or/and work, were inexperienced or did have a qualification that was relatively low in demand. However, **challenges and needs of participants who faced more serious labor force or education participation obstacles (i.e. disabled, having family obligations, addictions or low levels of education) were not met through project financed means at all** (i.e. in case of LLE organized

activities during both projects “Find Yourself” or “The New Start”) **or their solutions lacked any lasting impact and thus were ineffective** (i.e. in case of DYA organized activities during the project “Find Yourself”). Coordinators of both LLE and DYA YGI said that participants having needs that could not be fully met by the activities funded by the projects made up to around 25% and up to 50% of all projects’ participants respectively.

In addition, project “Find Yourself” financed activities **could only partially help to meet the needs and challenges of the targeted group that was most well-suited for the labor market. This group consisted of highly motivated, goal-oriented participants who wanted to participate in the project “The New Start” as soon as possible and acquire a qualification or job experience immediately.** For instance, these participants did not have a formal option of transitioning more quickly to the secondary intervention project “The New Start” as they were obliged to fully complete the planned course of activities at the project “Find Yourself”. Coordinators of LLE YGI mostly worked with these participants and solved this problem by **redirecting them to activities organized by coordinators of DYA YGI.** However, this type of **informal ad hoc solution raised difficulties to both participants and DYA YGI coordinators.** DYA YGI specialists had to additionally coordinate and supervise a new group of participants besides their own targeted group (young individuals that are not in employment, education, not registered at a labor exchange and facing the most severe challenges).

Even though the selected cooperative **model of implementation** between two institutions (DYA and LLE) **of the project “Find Yourself” created conditions for enhanced cooperation, coordination of activities and allowed coordinators to meet the needs of targeted groups better, it raised additional problems and challenges of its own.** For instance, it created confusion for some potential participants of the project and did not guarantee a smooth process of cooperation between DYA YGI and LLE YGI coordinators in the same municipality. Given the mentioned problems, challenges and the fact that the cooperation between the two institutions could have allowed to meet the needs of targeted groups better even if they had implemented projects separately, the selected implementation model of the project “Find Yourself” was concluded to be unsuccessful.

It is important to note that the evaluation analysis also suggested that the **selected implementation model of the project “Find Yourself”, when each institution worked together with partner institutions in each municipality, was more successful in LLE’s case.** Because LLE was working with its structural branches – TLE branches – meaning that it had already established network of cooperation, it was much easier to maintain and use it for the purposes of the project. DYA, on the other hand, had to create a new network of partner organizations. The latter was already apparent in the early implementation periods of the project when DYA found it difficult to find partners who primarily worked with young individuals. In addition, **DYA did not manage to establish long lasting relations with the selected partner organizations.** DYA mainly focused on direct cooperation with DYA YGI coordinators leaving the cooperation with partner organizations in the background. In general, the role of partner institutions was vague and uncertain in the implementation process of the project. Their main function was to simply employ DYA YGI coordinators **leaving them actively uninvolved in the implementation process of the project.**

EFFECTIVENESS

After evaluating the measure “Youth Employment Enhancement” (07.4.1-ESFA-V-404) and its projects “Find Yourself” and “The New Start” in terms of effectiveness it was found that DYA’s implemented **selection of partner organizations was open, transparent and non-discriminatory.** However, even though the priority was given to organizations whose primary line of work is working with young individuals, **only half of selected partner organizations fulfilled this criteria.** Although the achieved results of different type partner organizations did not diverge significantly, **there was an observed**

tendency that organizations whose primary line of work is working with young individuals fared better at the implemented activities of the project.

The completed evaluation also suggested that **the main determinants of performance success of partner organizations was experience and competence level of coordinators employed and level of support given to a coordinators from their colleagues.** However, **it was hard to ensure the competence level and experience of an employed coordinator for DYA partner organizations.** In the majority (85%) of DYA partner organizations, employed coordinators did not work before at the selected organization. In addition, partner organizations had to select from a small array of applicants and the majority of these did not have enough previous experience of working with young individuals or qualifications.

Because of the aforementioned reason, **the level of competence of DYA YGI coordinators was not always sufficient enough to ensure that the implemented activities of the project “Find Yourself” were of high quality or perfectly met the challenges and needs of participants.** For instance, around 68% of DYA YGI coordinators said that they lacked experienced or competence. This figure stood at 58% for LLE YGI coordinators. Lack of experience and competence was mostly felt by coordinators who joined the project as substitutes for leaving coordinators late in the project.

Most of DYA YGI coordinators acquired help at their job from their colleagues. However, the help was effective only when the organization’s primary line of work was with young individuals. In addition, there were some cases where colleagues of a newly employed coordinator hindered her work at the project or wasted her time to complete ordinary activities of the organization, which were completely unrelated to the main responsibilities of the project.

The results of the evaluation also suggested that LLE YGI coordinators were more successful at identifying potential participants and attracting them to project “Find Yourself” activities compared to DYA YGI coordinators. This was mainly due to the fact that LLE YGI coordinators had an access to LLE’s database, which provided records about registered unemployed young individuals. **DYA YGI coordinators, on the other hand, faced challenges identifying and attracting participants to the project activities.** At the beginning of the project, project implementing parties had an idea to create a new database (consolidate databases of LLE, educational institutions, citizen’s registry, etc.) to make it easier to identify NEET youth. However, **this idea was not carried out during the project and thus DYA YGI coordinators had to resort to other means to identify and attract participants to the project.**

The completed evaluation found out that the most effective way employed by DYA YGI coordinators to identify and attract new participants was proactive engagement. This proactive engagement ranged from collecting information from socio-economic partners, cooperating with them to direct engagement with potential participants in their gathering places, visiting places where they usually spend time or identifying them from their already involved friends with similar challenges. **However, this method of proactive engagement was only applied by a few DYA YGI coordinators.** Others lacked experience to engage directly with potential participants, felt unsafe approaching them alone or faced legal constraints (strict legislation of personal data protection meant, for instance, that socio-economic partners not always conceded to provide coordinators with relevant information).

Publicity measures as a mean to attract participants to the project “Find Yourself” were identified as relevant to 20% of the project participants. The most effective publicity mean was information provided on the official DYA’s website or on social networks. **Announcements on radio, leaflets, posters in streets or public announcements during specially organized events were practically ineffective.**

The completed evaluation also found out that the quality of services provided during the project “Find Yourself” by both of its implementing institutions – LLE and DYA – was good. To ensure the

quality of services provided, DYA YGI coordinators were encouraged to cooperate together, common supervisory and general meetings between DYA YGI coordinators and DYA workers were organized. In addition, every DYA coordinator had a special DYA appointee to whom a coordinator could refer to in case of administrative and substantive general matters. However, **direct supervision and audit of the quality of services provided was not carried out** (i.e. work of DYA YGI coordinators with participants were not supervised or assessed). In addition, **intensive cooperation between DYA and DYA YGI coordinators and help provided to the latter happened only at the beginning of the project “Find Yourself”**. **When the implementation of the project “Find Yourself” was already in the middle of it, cooperation between DYA appointees and DYA YGI coordinators was only in terms of administrative issues**, while newly-joined DYA YGI coordinators acquired more attention and help from other DYA EYI coordinators rather than DYA appointees.

In order to ensure the quality of services provided by LLE, cooperation between LLE YGI coordinators was similarly encouraged. In addition, LLE YGI coordinators were encouraged to consult with the main coordinator of all coordinators - the main supervisor of the project. For the purpose of quality control, LLE specialists carried out on-the-spot checks, while the quality of services provided by external lecturers was assessed by LLE YGI coordinators themselves during the activities provided by these lecturers to participants of the project.

PERFORMANCE RESULTS

After evaluating the measure “Youth Employment Enhancement” (07.4.1-ESFA-V-404) and its projects in terms of effectiveness it was found that **most of the planned value targets of the measure’s product and result indicators were already achieved during the implementation period of the measure**. However, during the implementation period of the projects “Find Yourself” and “The New Start”, **the attainment of the set goals was complicated because of the fact that the successful return to either educational system or labor market was recorded only if a participant managed to achieve one of the set goals within 28 days after the end of their participation in both projects**. For instance, the analysis of SSIFB’s submitted data revealed that the number of successfully employed economically inactive and not prepared for the labor market unemployed participants who did not receive a subsidy during the secondary intervention was around 20 p.p. higher in 6 months compared to the mentioned benchmark of 28 days. The same applied to participants who were categorized as prepared for the labor market but were unemployed. In this instance, the increase in figure was 26 p.p. Even if the benchmark was increased from 28 days to 2 months, the success rate would increase by 7-10 p.p. depending on the group analyzed.

The evaluation of performance results also **identified some particular flaws of the controlled performance indicators**. It was observed that in case of economically inactive participants, **no performance indicators that could monitor individual progress were set and assessed**. Because of the nature of problems this group face and the fact that financed measures are not always enough to tackle these problems, their performance results were significantly worse compared to other groups. However, the latter does not imply that the intervention did not help them in any significant way.

It is also important to note that **there is a need to review the monitoring methodology of performance indicators such as “R.B. 103 Unemployed participants who after their participation in the project returned to education system, acquired qualification or became employed or self-employed”, “R.B. 106 Long-term unemployed participants who after their participation in the project returned to education system, acquired qualification or became employed or self-employed” and “R.B. 109 Economically inactive participants who after their participation in the project returned to education system, acquired qualification or became employed or self-employed”**. Even though these performance indicators should reflect the impact of the measure in terms of the results achieved by participants after the end of their participation in the project, current monitoring methodology of these

indicators includes participants who became employed, self-employed or returned to the educational system with the help of a subsidy (i.e. participated in the secondary intervention). Hence, **the current method of calculation reflects not only the performance results achieved but also the fact that some participants simply became involved in the activities of the secondary intervention.**

Analysis of the demographical data provided by LLE indicated **that participants of the projects “Find Yourself” and “The New Start” were similar in terms of their characteristics.** A representative participant was 18-25 years old male or female with a secondary education or a secondary education and a professional qualification. This participant was unemployed for a small amount of time – up to 6 months, and did not belong to at-risk social groups. **An average participant of activities organized by DYA somewhat diverged from a representative participant** – he/she had a secondary education more often and belonged to at-risk social groups.

The evaluation also found out that despite the fact that activities of the project “Find Yourself” organized by DYA were mainly targeted towards the most excluded from the labor market, **the project’s activities attracted a large number of participants that did not belong to this main targeted group.** Around one third of economically inactive participants who returned to educational system, labor market or acquired qualification had skills or/and working experience that favored them in the labor market. This observation is proved by the fact that this group spend the least possible amount of time in the activities of the project “Find Yourself”. In most cases, these participants simply wanted to begin to participate in the activities of the project “The New Start” or already had an employer. The latter may suggest cases of collusion between a participant and employer: a young individual would return back to an employer with a job subsidy.

The evaluation of quality of jobs, traineeship, work placement or education acquired after the end of participation in either or both projects suggested **that most of the jobs fulfilled the minimum requirements of quality** (i.e. the jobs acquired by participants corresponded to the competences, education, previous work experience of participants, participant’s expectations about the job and health conditions of successfully employed participants allowed them to work the demanded amount of time by an employer while the travel time to work and back from it did not exceed 3 hours a day). **The same conclusion applies to the majority of participants who found a place for education or traineeship. In addition, education and traineeships acquired after the participation in projects’ activities had helped these participants to better integrate in the labor market.** However, **the evaluation of quality of jobs in terms of wages received suggests that the received wages were smaller than country’s average.** After the end of their participation in the activities of both projects participants received higher than average wage less often and smaller than minimum wage more often than on average in the whole employed population. It is important to note, however, that the mismatch between the distribution of wages of participants and country’s averages should rather be attributed to the lack of work experience of participants and not the quality of jobs.

The separate evaluation of wages of participants who received a subsidy during their involvement in the project “The New Start” and participants who found a job without a subsidy suggests that wages were slightly higher in the latter group. This result shows that an employment subsidy did not help participants to find a better quality job and did not increase their wages on average. It was rather more suited for employers who could reduce their labor costs due to subsidies.

IMPACT

The analysis of the impact of special appropriation YEI to the targeted group suggested that 43% of all economically inactive participants of the primary intervention project “Find Yourself” **returned to education system and labor market** (*hereinafter* - successfully finished intervention), and 13% of this group found a job **without a subsidy. About half of young individuals who were prepared for the labor market successfully finished the primary intervention and 20% of this group successfully found a**

job without a subsidy. Similar results were achieved in a group consisting of young individuals who were not prepared for the labor market. **In this group, 48% successfully finished the primary intervention, while only 18% of all the group found a job without a subsidy.**

The analysis also found out **that the time spent in the primary intervention activities did not have any impact on the performance results.** Irrespective of whether unemployed young individuals who were prepared for the labor market successfully finished the project “Find Yourself, they spent less time in the project than their counterparts who were unprepared for the labor market – around 46 hours. The latter group also irrespective of the outcome of their participation in the project spent around 70 hours undertaking its activities. Economically inactive young individuals who came back into the educational system, labor market or acquired qualification spent the least amount of time in the project – around 21 hours. However, the ones who unsuccessfully finished the project – around 54 hours. **The latter once again proves that a large amount of economically inactive participants of the project “Find Yourself” could not be ascribed to a subgroup of unreachable or excluded individuals.**

Economically inactive participants who unsuccessfully finished the project most of the time belonged to socially vulnerable groups, lived in rural type municipalities and had relatively poorer education. Prepared for the labor market and successfully finished the project young individuals do not significantly differ in terms of characteristics from the same group individuals who unsuccessfully finished the project. The same conclusion applies to not prepared for the labor market unemployed participants. Hence, in case of economically inactive young individuals their characteristics had an impact on their performance results, while performance results of both prepared and not prepared for the labor market young individuals were influenced by other reasons, unrelated to their characteristics.

After the participation in the secondary intervention 24% of economically inactive, 34% of prepared for the labor market and 17% of not prepared for the labor market youth successfully found a job without a subsidy. The highest portion of participants of the secondary intervention found a job without a subsidy after undertaking activities in measures entitled “Support for the improvement of labor skills”, “Recruitment through subsidies”, “Apprenticeship” and “Promotion of self-employment”. More than 90% of participants of these measures successfully found a job within 28 days after they finished participation. Smaller number of participants of measures “Vocational training” and “Work placement” successfully found a job within 28 days after they finished participation (45% and 55%, respectively). However, **it is important to note that a much higher portion of participants who successfully found a job after participating in the measures providing subsidies** was because these measures were selected by participants who were already prepared for the labor market, had all the necessary skills and wanted to apply them in the labor market.

The evaluation analysis also revealed that only primary intervention measures geared towards self-employment but without further provision of a subsidy for self-employment were unsuccessful and did not improve performance indicators of self-employment. On the other hand, however, **the measure “Promotion of self-employment” of the secondary intervention was successful.** From all participants of the secondary intervention, 21% became self-employed, while 88%⁷ of participants of the measure “Promotion of self-employment” successfully became self-employed within 28 days.

⁷ It is important to note here that in reality this number is equal or close to 100%. Given that an applicant for a subsidy was under the obligation to become self-employed and maintain this position for more than two years, this divergence of numbers is justified because of some inaccuracies in SSIFB’s database. For instance, some participants who became self-employed established their own firm and began working there. However, SSIFB’s database report them as hired labor rather than a self-employed.

FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY

The evaluation analysis identified that **a cost of a typical economically inactive** (365 Eur after eliminating the impact of all participants who finished the participation very quickly) **young individual who successfully finished participation in the primary intervention project “Find Yourself” was much smaller than of both prepared** (569 Eur) **for the labor market and not prepared** (864 Eur) **for the labor market young individual who successfully finished participation in the project.** Group of prepared for the labor market young individuals had the highest rate of successful employment without a subsidy within 28 days in comparison to other groups.

Among the participants of the secondary intervention project “The New Start” the smallest cost of 2 746 Eur per one individual was in the group consisting of prepared for the labor market participants. Cost per one individual in the group of not prepared for the labor market and economically inactive was 4 345 Eur and 3 848 Eur, respectively. The largest portion of successfully employed within 28 days was within the group of prepared for the labor market (in comparison to other targeted groups) participants. Given the results of primary and secondary interventions, **it can be concluded that the services provided for the group of prepared for the labor market young individuals were delivered most effectively** (the highest portion of employed with the smallest per head costs). However, it is also important to note that there was a need of more investments devoted to economically inactive and unprepared for the labor market young individuals to achieve the same results.

SUSTAINABILITY

Both DYA and LLE began to offer services (for instance, services of narrow field specialists, apprenticeship, subsidized work placements, etc.) **that were not offered before, increased the scale of services that were already provided** (for instance, volunteering services) **and changed the nature of some services** (for instance, more focus put on individual needs of young individuals). The evaluation, however, **suggested that the sustainability of these services and practices will not be maintained properly.** The majority of DYA YGI coordinators (77%) and LLE YGI coordinators (93%) who both implemented the project “Find Yourself” no longer work in partner organizations or in TLE branches. Sustainable network of YGI partner organizations was not established meaning that the relevant infrastructure will not be available to implement similar projects in the future. In addition, DYA partner organizations cannot continue to pursue similar projects as they do not have resources, while some of LLE services provided (for instance, services of narrow field specialists, vocational training, apprenticeship, recruitment through subsidies, etc.) for young unemployed individuals will be provided by similar projects in the future with the help of EU structural funds meaning that the sustainable national infrastructure (funded by the national authorities) for such services will not likely be created.

In general, the evaluation analysis revealed that **performance indicators of labor market sustainability of the measures were high in the short and medium run** (83-97% of all participants remained in the labor market for at least 3 months, 53-71% - at least 6 months). However, **in the long run** (analyzing at least 9 months) **these performance indicators steeply decline and only around one third or half of all participants** (depending on the group) **remain employed or self-employed. Sustainability results were better of participants who became employed or self-employed after the participation in the project “The New Start”** compared to participants of the project “Find Yourself”.

The completed evaluation analysis also showed that **prepared for the labor market unemployed participants fared best in terms of labor market sustainability after the project “Find Yourself”.** **The worst performers were not prepared for the labor market unemployed participants.** Prepared for the labor market unemployed participants also remained in the same work place unimpededly for the

longest amount of time. **Participants who undertook measures “Promotion of self-employment” and “Recruitment through subsidies” of the project “The New Start” were the most stable group in terms of labor market sustainability.** However, **participants who undertook measures “Promotion of self-employment” and “Vocational training” of the project “The New Start” remained in the same work place unimpededly for the longest amount of time.**