

# GUIDELINES ON A YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY PLAN

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Developed in the framework of the training course

**‘Youth work in action for youth employment’**

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## **Introduction**

This employability tool was designed to facilitate the development of youth strategic employability plans.

The tool has a two fold practical use; the first is to facilitating youth workers' development of concrete and feasible strategic plans that may boost youth employability in specific areas or communities. The second is to contributing to trainers' work in the field with groups of youth workers engaged in youth employability activities.

Following this two fold utility the tool is also divided in different parts that can be used and adapted depending on the objectives and the target group. The first part consists of a template that guides the reader into the various steps of development of a strategic employability plan. It was inspired in the work developed in the training course and in the booklet 'Inclusion through employability' (developed by SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre).

The second part of the tool contains various activities that may be used either by trainers working with youth workers on the subject of employability, or by youth workers themselves while developing the strategic employability plan. The tools available so far are: a community mapping activity, the problem tree and an activity on the topic of youth active involvement. Soon more tools will be developed!

For comments and suggestions you may write to Ana Afonso to the email [afonso@ceipes.org](mailto:afonso@ceipes.org)

Ana Afonso

# Youth Employability Plan

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## 1. Introductory information

“A youth employability plan consists in a local strategy aimed to increase youth employability in a certain area or within a certain group of young unemployed people.”

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“Employability refers to a person's capability for gaining and maintaining employment (Hillage and Pollard, 1998).

For individuals, employability depends on the knowledge, skills and attitudes they possess, the way they present those assets to employers, and the context (e.g. personal circumstances and labour market environment) within which they seek work (Hind and Moss, 2011). As such employability is affected by both supply-side and demand-side factors which are often outside of an individual's control.”

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“A strategy is a statement of intent which outlines where you are today, indicates where you want to go tomorrow, and defines the steps you will take to get there.

A ‘statement of intent’ is a declaration of where you intend to go and how you intend to get there. A good strategy describes the general intention and uses that as the platform for taking action. Bear in mind that ‘intent’ can change over time. No one knows what the future might bring. Circumstances change and when they do you might need to re-define your intent, sometimes radically. This is a normal part of strategy development.

There is a subtle difference between making a strategy and planning a project (even a large-scale one):

- When you plan a project, the first step involves figuring out where you want to go and how you are going to get there.
  - When you develop a strategy, the process is essentially the same but the range is very different. Strategies are generally designed for a longer period, sometimes over several years. As a result, they usually have a much broader scope (for instance a strategy may include many large-scale projects at once). Compared to a project, a strategy often involves many more people (an entire institution vs. an individual project team).”
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During the training we focused specifically on the role that youth workers can/should play in order to have an active and relevant role in increasing youth employability. The main factors that were explored were the following:

- Involvement and Participation
- Holistic Coordination and Governance
- Non-Formal Learning
- Entrepreneurship

To see in detail the various factors you can go to this page:

<http://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2316/InclusionThroughEmployability.pdf?>

## 2. Instructions

Now we ask from you to develop a strategic youth employability plan that helps you to put together the information you received and what you learned during the last days.

In order to facilitate your work this template offers you some information on how to develop a strategy and includes several guiding questions. Please read it before start to have an idea about the main questions asked.

### THE FOUR PHASES OF A STRATEGY

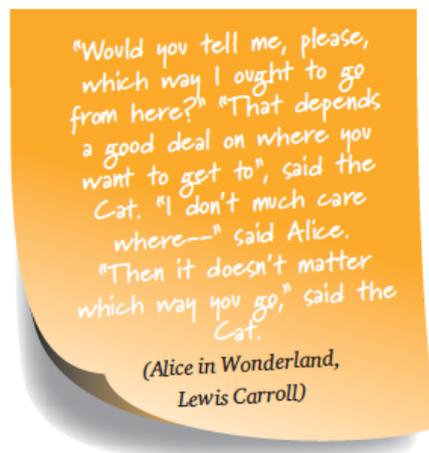


## The Analysis Phase

### WHERE ARE WE NOW?

A needs analysis involves:

- Collecting background information
- Understanding the real needs of the young people
- Identifying potential partners and potential obstacles in the youth employability field
- Making an inventory of the skills, competencies and resources available to you



### Some guiding questions...

1. What is the situation in your local community in terms of employment?
2. What are the needs of young people in terms of employability competences?
3. What are the main actors (public and private) working in your community in the framework of youth employability?
4. Are you cooperating with them? Why? Why not?
5. What are the resources and lacks of your organisation in this field?
6. How do you plan to involve young people at this stage?

#### Summary of the analysis phase:

SWOT Analysis	
<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

## The Planning Phase

### WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

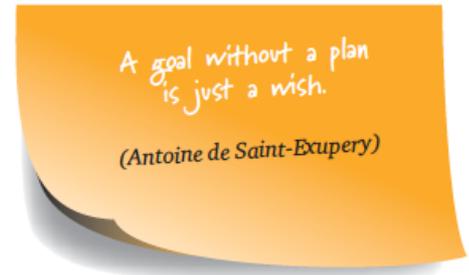
A well-thought out plan enables you to identify priorities and determines your course of action (Shapiro). Your plan is the tool that charts your direction and which maximises the effectiveness and impact of your daily work.

There are many different ways organisations can approach the Planning phase but in essence the process consists of three main steps:

1. Identifying potential action areas,
2. Choosing priorities,
3. Defining objectives and desired results.

In order to put together a strategic plan, you will need the following important tools:

- **The vision and mission statements** of your organisation. These outline your global goals and should (hopefully) also provide a global indication of your intentions in terms of youth employability.
- **The result of your organisation's needs analysis** from the previous phase.



### Some guiding questions...

1. What is your target group (specific groups of young people and areas of the city can be addressed instead of having a wide target)?
2. What are the potential areas of action you identify?
3. What are your priorities?
4. What are your specific objectives?
5. Which results do you expect to achieve?
6. How do you plan to involve young people at this stage?

Are your objectives SMART:

- S = Specific?
- M = Measurable?
- A = Agreed upon (by the team/young people)?
- R = Realistic?
- T = Time bound?

## C H E C K L I S T



Please check if your strategy respects at least 3 of the main factors we have learned during the training:

- Involvement and Participation
- Holistic Coordination and Governance
- Non-Formal Learning
- Entrepreneurship

To see in detail the various factors you can go to this page:

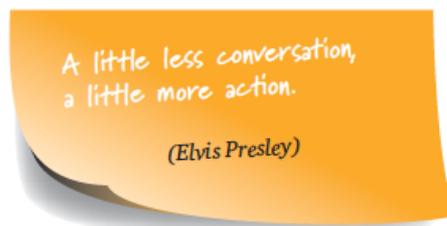
<http://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2316/InclusionThroughEmployability.pdf?>

## The Implementation Phase

### HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

In reality, an action plan is not very different from a “to-do” list but the success of your strategy is largely dependent on how well your “to-do” list is put together. Your action plan should provide clear answers to the following questions:

- What specifically do you want to achieve? (define short-term objectives)
- How do you intend to achieve it? (define the tasks)
- Who will do it? (define the responsibilities)
- When will it be done? (define the timeframe)
- How much will it cost? (define the budget – this can be expressed in terms of money OR in terms of time)



### Some guiding questions...

1. What are your short-term objectives?
2. Are these objectives connected with the factors for youth employability seen before?
3. What are the main actions/activities you foresee to reach your objectives?
4. What is your time frame?
5. How young people will be involved at this stage?

#### Sources:

\* INCLUSION BY DESIGN | <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusionpublications/inclusionforall/inclusionbydesign/>

\* INCLUSION THROUGH EMPLOYABILITY | <http://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-2316/InclusionThroughEmployability.pdf?>

## Tool 1 – Community Mapping

# Community mapping

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### Objectives:

1. To learn how to map the local community.
2. To have an overview of how the local community looks like in terms of available resources and population location.
3. To start to reflect and identify resources and lack of them in the local community.
4. To boost understanding of young people's lives.
5. To encourage a critical analysis of the local community in terms of employability.

### Duration:

3 hours

### Materials:

- ✓ Big flipchart papers or cardboard
- ✓ Coloured pens and pencils
- ✓ Pencils, rubber
- ✓ Post-its, small white or coloured stickers (round, square)

### Task description:

Ask participants to work together to draw a map of their community. If participants live in a city it might be necessary to focus on a specific area, but at the same time not to lose the big picture. So, for instance, participants can draw more details on a specific neighbourhood and less on the rest of the city.

Ask the participants to draw all of the resources in the community. Explain that “resources” are buildings, organizations, people, or services that are available to the community when they are needed, for example: roads, houses, health facilities (health posts, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics etc.), schools, religious buildings or leaders, water wells, public baths, markets, schools, factories, rivers, trees, midwives, social workers, teachers, doctors, etc.

## Tool 1 – Community Mapping

As the group is working on youth employability it is important that they also map:

- ❖ Where does young people hang out;
- ❖ Where are the education/training related places;
- ❖ Where are the organisations that work with young people providing free time activities/non-formal education;
- ❖ Where are the places where young people find support and or advice;
- ❖ Where are the job centres;
- ❖ Where is your and other organisations located;
- ❖ Public transportation;
- ❖ Where are the cultural places (cinema, theatre);
- ❖ Where are the risky/violent places (drug dealing, prostitution areas);
- ❖ Enterprises/employers especially sensitive to social issues and/or that employ young people;
- ❖ Other aspects the group may decide are important.

Ask the group to identify the various community resources by name or with a symbol.

Ask participants to mark where different groups in the community live (i.e. the wealthy, the labourers, different religious groups, different ethnic groups, original settlers, people who arrived later, etc.).

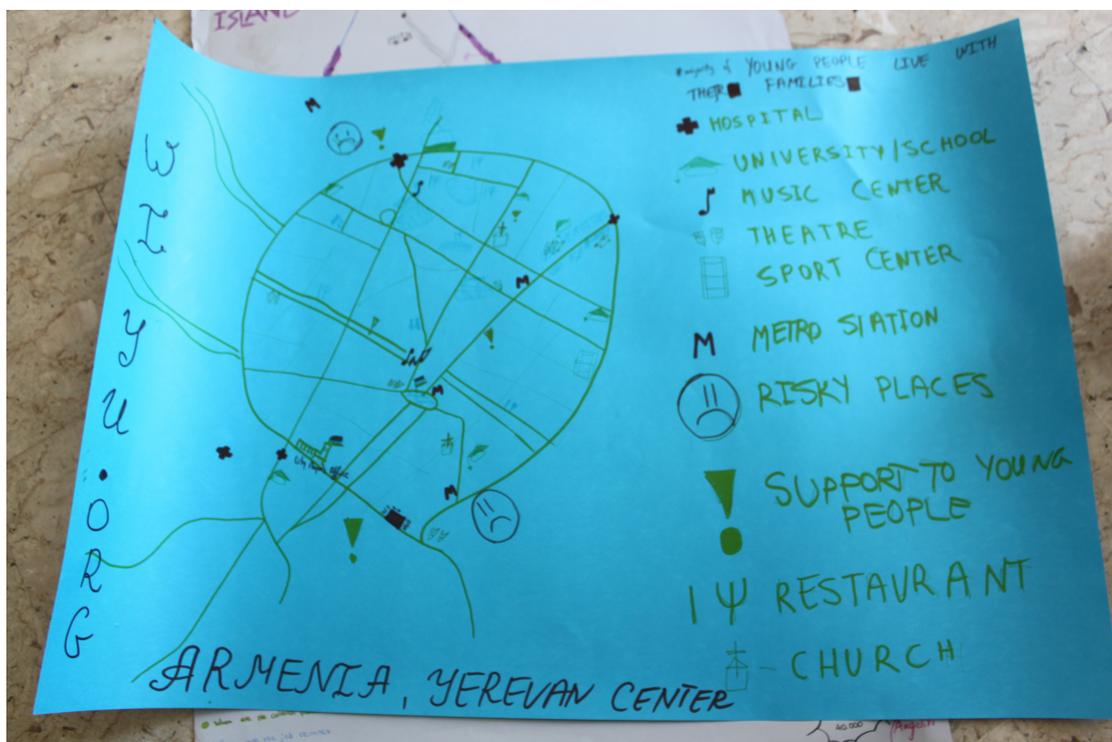
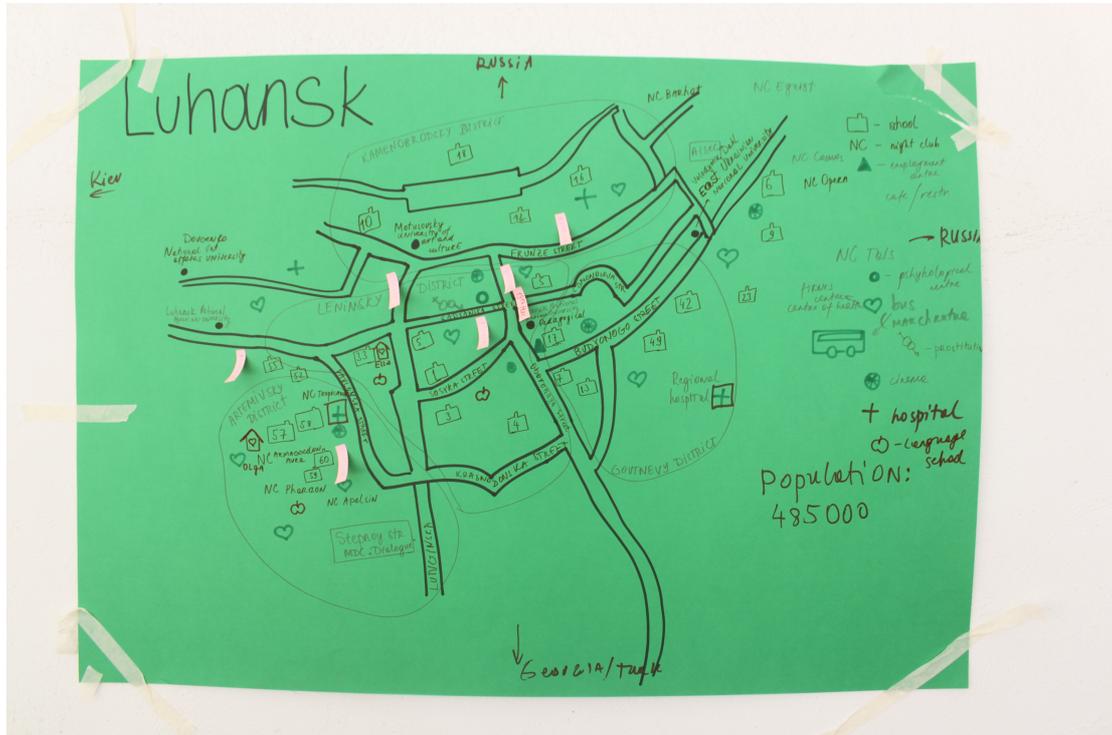
### Questions for debriefing:

- ❖ How it was?
- ❖ Do you feel you know more/understand better your local community now?
- ❖ What did you discover that you were not aware of?
- ❖ Does it look different than you see it normally?
- ❖ And in terms of youth employment, did you get any new insight?
- ❖ Did it help to identify concrete aspects/problems of your community that are relevant to young people and their employability?
- ❖ What else could you put on the map if you had more information? What is missing?
- ❖ Do you think the map can help you to devise solutions to the problems identified?

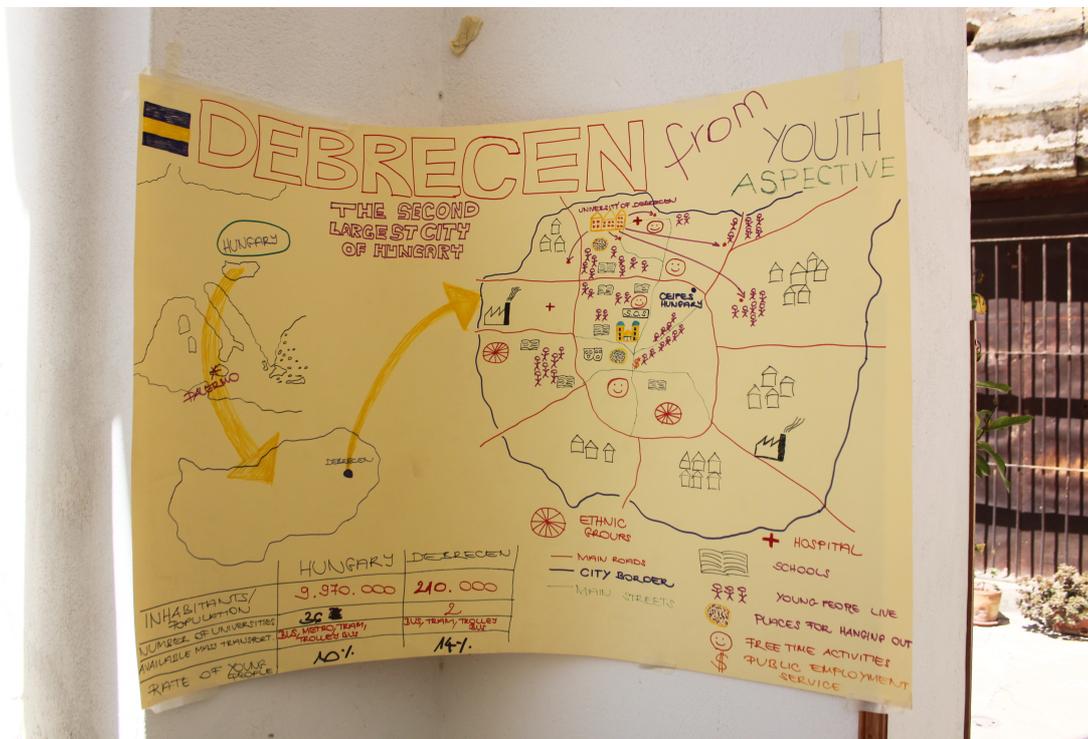
Source: Social mapping *in* [Tools for learning and action on gender and sexuality \(ISOFI Toolkit\)](#)

## Tool 1 – Community Mapping

### Examples of maps:



## Tool 1 – Community Mapping



## Tool 2 – Problem Tree

# Problem Tree

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### Objectives:

1. To deepen the understanding about an identifiable problem.
2. To get to know in more detail the main causes and consequences of a problem.
3. To be able to define a strategic plan of action with targeted activities.

### Materials:

- ✓ Big flipchart papers or cardboard
- ✓ Coloured pens and pencils
- ✓ Pencils, rubber

### Duration:

1 hour to 1 hour and a half

### Task description:

A useful tool for understanding the issue you will be working on is the problem tree. This is a method of breaking down an issue, looking at the causes and consequences, and fitting it into the context of other problems in society. The tool can be useful both in providing a better understanding for the group, and in helping to approach a solution in a more strategic way.

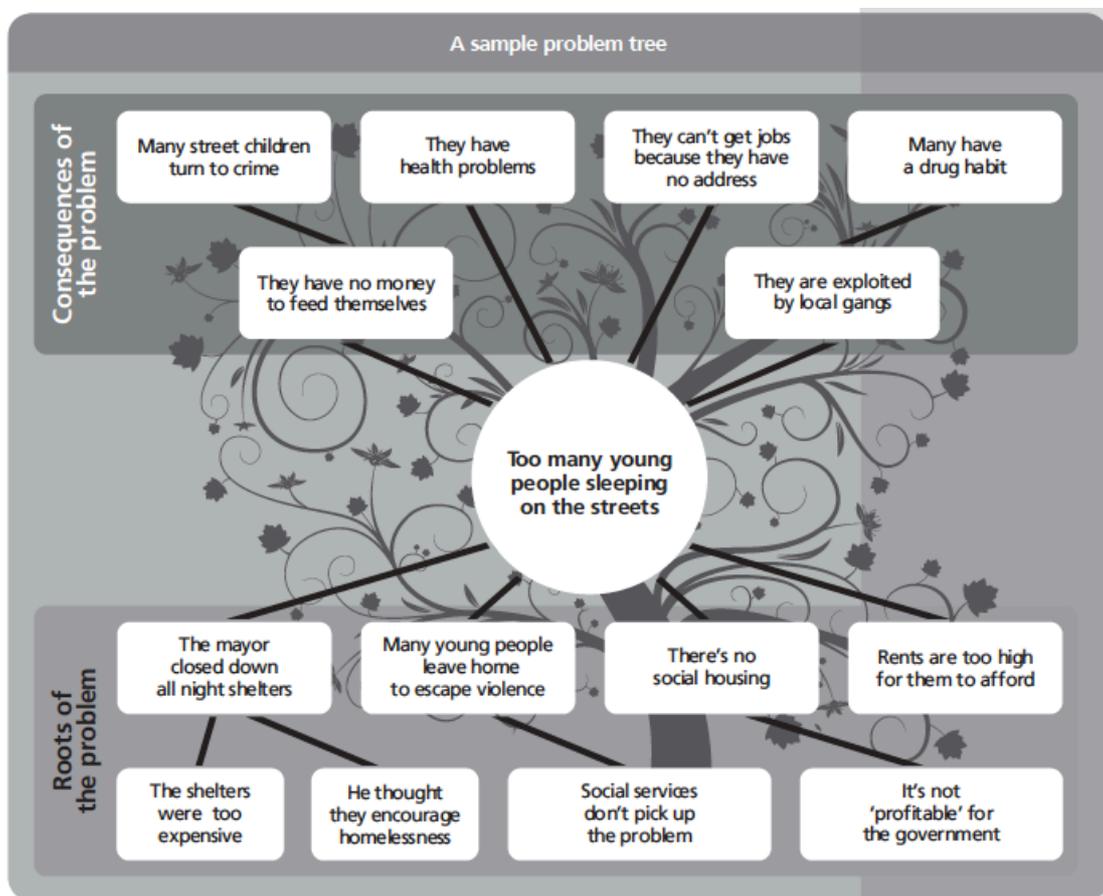
A sample problem tree can be seen on the next page, taking the problem of street children as a starting point. This is the procedure a group would use to draw one up for their own issue:

1. Start by writing down the problem that you wish to tackle in the middle of a large sheet of paper.
2. Underneath it, write in all the factors that contribute to the problem, and link them up to form the roots of your original problem.
3. Take each root at a time and think about its causes, drawing in the factors that contribute to the problem.
4. Keep tackling each root until you can take the exercise no further: the tree may have deeper roots than you think.

## Tool 2 – Problem Tree

5. You may also want to extend the “branches” of the tree in the same manner: these will be the consequences of your original problem. You may find that what you began with as your main concern is actually the root or branch of a different tree.
6. When you have finished, take a look at your tree. Should you tackle the task you originally set yourself or one of its contributing factors first?
7. Has the tree helped you to think of ways to go about tackling this problem?

### Example of a problem tree:



Source: Problem tree (p. 372) in [Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people](#)

## Tool 3 - Who are Young People?

# Who are Young People?

### Introduction:

This type of activity can be very useful in uncovering the stereotypes and prejudices society holds towards young people. Indeed young people are such a heterogeneous group that it is almost impossible to come up with characteristics that can describe it as a whole. There are however some psychological attributes/phases of development that can be considered (almost) transversal to all young people, at least in Occidental society. However, apart those what can we say about young people?

The main purpose of this activity is to understand that it is of utmost importance, when working with young people, to understand “the specific group” of young people which is the target of the activities foreseen. What are the main features this group of young people? What are their interests? What can engage them? And so on.

#### Some common stereotypes/prejudices about young people:

Young people are...

- ... influenced by media and advertisements.
- ... rebellious.
- ... lazy.
- ... energetic.
- ... like to travel.
- ... less experienced.

Stereotypes and prejudices such as those reported in the text box certainly have an impact in the life of young people when they're searching for a job, as the scheme below shows:



Moreover, they can be used as justification for exploitation, which most common situation is young people wages being lower than more experienced workers.

To close this introductory note it is worthwhile to do a quick reference to the gender dimension of employment and job search. Women often suffer from

## Tool 3 - Who are Young People?

multiple discrimination, and as such young women are subject to being discriminated against because of their age and because of their gender. Being aware about this dimension is a very important aspect as youth workers must be ready to address situations related with discrimination and, perhaps more important, provide young women and boys with the tools to recognise and address in a constructive way gender based discrimination.

### Objectives:

1. To be aware about the stereotypes and prejudices about young people.
2. To reflect on personal stereotypes and prejudices about young people.
3. To understand how stereotypes and prejudices about young people might influence their job opportunities.
4. To understand the importance of involving young people in the design of the youth employability strategy.
5. To collect creative ideas on how to involve young people.

### Materials:

- ✓ Big flipchart papers or cardboard with the titles written in (see below the suggested titles)
- ✓ Pens

### Duration:

2 hours

### Activity description:

Start by doing a short brainstorming on the meaning of 'young people'. This will permit to measuring the level of 'stereotyping/prejudicing' in the group.

Immediately after split the group in 5 smaller groups and ask them to spend 15 minutes in each the flipchart papers spread on the floor. Every flipchart paper has a different title:

- ❖ Characteristics of young people
- ❖ Reasons why it is important to involve young people in the strategic employability plan
- ❖ Ways to get young people involved

### **Tool 3 - Who are Young People?**

- ❖ Main obstacles and opportunities arising from young people's involvement
- ❖ If I were an employer would I employ a young person? Why? Why not?

The groups should engage in discussions about the main topics on the flipcharts (underline this is not an individual exercise but a group discussion) and by the end of the 15 minutes write down their conclusions. Immediately after they move on to the next flipchart.

At the end of the activity ask the group to go around and see what has been written in the various flipchart papers. The facilitator may want to start to write down the most relevant points in a notebook what will help the facilitation part that follows.

After the debriefing you may present the 'ladder of youth participation' of Roger Hart as it is a useful framework to understand youth participation that provides useful insight into practice. See below the ladder and reference websites and manuals.

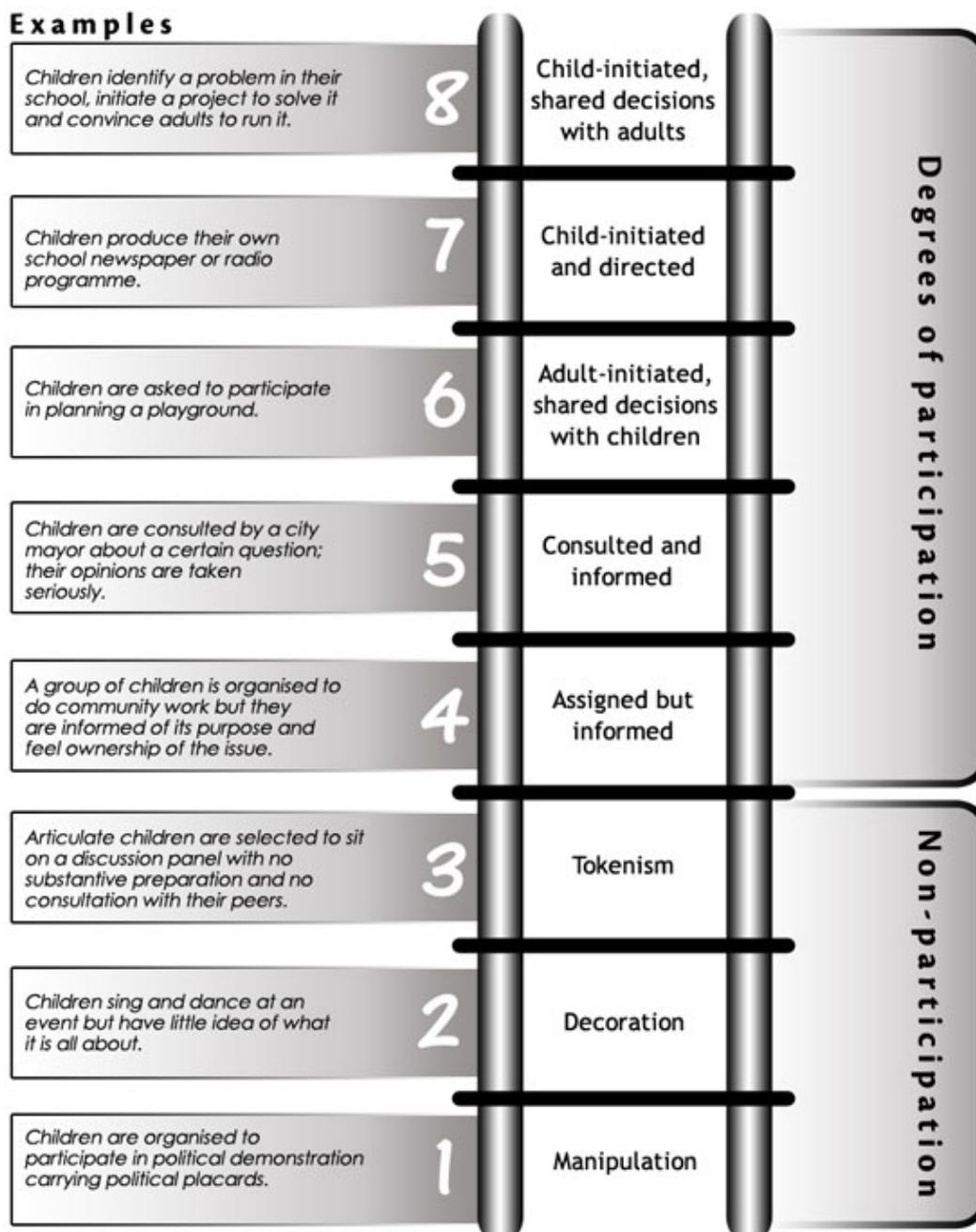
#### **Questions for debriefing:**

- ❖ How it was?
- ❖ Were there any remarkable differences in points of view inside the group? Which one?
- ❖ Does everybody agree with the characteristics of young people written in the flipchart? (Here it may be necessary to read them aloud together.) Why? Why not?
- ❖ Do you think all young people are...(add one of the characteristics in the flipchart)? And...?
- ❖ In your view what are the main consequences for youth work of this impossibility to categorise young people?
- ❖ Which were the main reasons given to employ a young person?
- ❖ And the main reasons not to employ her/him?
- ❖ In your view/experience is there any relation between the reasons why an employer may/may not employ a young person and the characteristics we have been discussing?
- ❖ Can we conclude anything from this relation? In your view, what can be concluded?
- ❖ Looking now at young people's involvement in employability projects targeted to them, what can we conclude/underline based in the flipcharts?
- ❖ What can we learn from the main obstacles and opportunities described?

### Tool 3 - Who are Young People?

- ❖ To you, what are the main learning points that can be extracted from this activity?

#### Ladder of youth participation (Roger Hart):



Source: [Compassito – Manual on human rights education for children](#)

## **Tool 3 - Who are Young People?**

### **Other references on youth participation:**

[Have your say!](#) (Council of Europe)

[Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship](#) (Roger Hart, Unicef Innocenti Essays n.4)

<http://www.freechild.org/ladder.htm>

**ANNEXE:**

**EXAMPLE OF A  
YOUTH  
EMPLOYABILITY PLAN**

# **Youth Employability Plan**

## *On the example of the Republic of Armenia*

1<sup>st</sup> draft

June 16, 2013 Palermo, Italy

Armenia is a young country. Young people (aged 15-34 years) make up 35 % of the population, but high unemployment has been a feature of the country's economy, confounded by as it is with the legacy of the breakdown of the former Soviet trading patterns. General unemployment is at 18 % according to poll conducted in 2011 with more women unemployed (52%) man (48%) reflecting gender based inequalities. Within unemployed population more than half 51 % are young people. The political and economic situation within the country has prompted a large exodus of young people in search of work, primarily to the Russian Federation and other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States. As well as unemployment, young people face a shortage of suitable housing, have poor access to and knowledge of health and other areas of youth information.

According to National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia 266.000 people who are willing and can work are unemployed, which means that out of every 5 citizens /who can and are willing to work. one is unemployed. According to Caucasus Barometer Survey out of every 2 citizens one is looking for a job. 26 % of Armenian citizens think that for finding a job the most important is to have connections, and then only come education 21 % and professional skills 11 %.

Only 10 % of Armenian citizens who are looking for jobs are registered at unemployment centers and this reflects that there is very little believe in the work the centers do, meanwhile 13 % are bored with looking a job.

In order to get decent jobs that ensure dignity young people in Armenia need to know at least English and Russian languages, have high level of computer skills, as well as have practical skills that are needed to complete tasks.

### **Strenghts**

- 99+ percent of young people are literate according to UNDP Human Development Indicators many young people speak and understand Russian language
- many young people speak and understand English language
- Young people have wide social networks

### **Weaknesses**

- Controlled market, economic monopoly
- Market-educational institution mismatch

### **Opportunities**

- State Budget financed higher education
- Enterprenuerthip in tourism field
- Internships in big organizations
- Wide social networks
- Rapid developments in IT field

## **Threats**

- Job migration to Russia and other CIS countries
- Overqualification
- Stereotypical thinking
- Family influence on decision making

Target group are young people aged 16-25: those who are in the process of deciding their educational field, students and young graduates looking for jobs in labor market. Since most of the issues are universal throughout Armenia this plan with minimal adaptations can be useful in approaching and analyzing any region in Armenia. Potential areas of action are

- Counseling on choice of profession, education with high school students
- Organization of job fairs
- Seminars, trainings targeted at developing “soft skills” and competences
- Orientation in job market for young graduates
- Active involvement of youth and NGO sector in developing youth policies on state level

Priority is to provide young people with realistic picture of job market and careers for succeeding in securing a decent job.

## **Objectives**

- Together with universities choose a specific month during which high school students can attend various university classes to decide which profession to choose
- Together with public and private organizations /potential employers/ decide one month during which high school students can spend some time in organizations to decide which profession to choose
- Real professionals in various fields /lawyers, gardeners, IT specialists, carpenters, etc./ attend high schools and universities to speak about their professional field and discuss various aspects of the job to give young people opportunity to discover the profession
- 2 times per year organize job fairs during which potential employers meet those looking for jobs
- every month organize CV writing workshops for young people
- every month organize communication skills, time management development workshops for young people

## **Short term objectives**

To involve young people, as well as number of universities and organizations.

To work on campaign visibility and active participation.

## **Results**

Through this various steps, youth employability will increase, employers and universities will develop ties to produce more practical courses suitable for future jobs, labor market demand and supply mismatch will be balanced /long term result/. This will eventually lead to providing employment opportunities for young people in Armenia, which will consequently bring to decrease in emigration.

## **Involvement of young people**

Young people will be “targeted” to take part in these actions and activities in their own spaces: Facebook, schools, universities, youth centers. A social advertising campaign will launch the project and Facebook groups and pages will be created. On the implementation stage of the project, young people will be offered these services and opportunities right in their study places or neighborhoods, so they don't have to go searching for these services, but in a way services will approach themselves.

### **Sources**

National Statistical Service of Republic of Armenia

World Bank

UN Human Development Indicators

CRRRC Caucasus Barometer

International Labor Organization