

ARMENIA

1. The labor markets in Armenia, like those in other former soviet countries has gone through a profound transition since the start of political, economic, and social reforms in early 1990s. Those changes imposed new role and requirements for education. Despite some improvements in Armenia's labor market it is still characterized by an extremely high overall level of unemployment and a structural mismatch between labor supply and demand. The high unemployment rate, in itself, makes finding productive employment for graduates primarily because of first entering the labor market, and significantly increases the relative risk of unemployment of young people.

University graduates face the problem of finding the job each year not only to overall lack of awareness of job openings but also due to mismatch between graduate skills and the market demand. Some of the universities in order to bridge these challenges already have established Career Centers to assist students in career exploration and decision making or job seeking. The Centers also provide information and advice and organize trainings on successful job searching techniques. Employers are encouraged to use the Centers to post job vacancies.

During the last years regularly are organized Education and Career Expos which are a unique platform for education professionals looking to maximize the contacts between the businesses and decision makers in education sector.

Some of the universities that prepare teachers sign trilateral agreements with up to 50% of their students. According to the agreement they will have a guaranteed job after the successful graduation. The selection process is done on competitive basis.

Despite all the efforts the graduate employment is a serious problem. Sometimes graduates spent quite a long time for searching a job. Graduate self-employment is low though the Government values private sector development.

2. There is a dialogue at the national level carried between the universities and the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen(UMBA, Employers) of Armenia which has significantly increased during the recent years. The cooperation has two forms: individual cooperation and cooperation coordinated by the UMBA.

The individual cooperation between higher education institutions and employers is mainly expressed during traineeship programs of students in companies, which actually proves to be inefficient. Several IT companies resolve the lack of employees by funding the education of advanced students, especially providing necessary skills and competences during the practical training in their company.

The second form is cooperation with UMBA: working with employers- models of good practice; training schemes that are innovative; business start up; entrepreneurship; skill for running you own business. Curriculum projects with sectoral focus on generic skill for employability and occupational standards (e.g. in hospitality, tourism, financial services, food production, retail, fashion/design/textiles, creative industries) and also focused on innovation in technology, enterprise skill, English for work.

3. The best example can be the form of cooperation that has been developed by several local IT companies and the universities. In order to solve the problem with lack of skilled and knowledgeable employees they participate in the education process by helping to prepare curriculum based on the sectoral requirements and occupational standards, provide scholarships for the best students and possibility for trainings.