



University of *Ljubljana*



DEHEMS Second International Conference:

**Employability of Graduates & Higher Education
Management Systems**

Slovenia, Ljubljana, 27 & 28. September 2012

ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS

Paul Serban Agachi, Carmen Loredana Pop, Sonia Pavlenko and Camelia Moraru

Addressing Employability Through Strategic Decision-making – the Experience of BBU

Addressing employability has become a key aspect in universities' strategic management decisions regarding the increase in the quality and quantity of the insertion of graduates on the labour market. In this paper we would like to present a case study based on Babeş-Bolyai University's activity aimed at highlighting three fundamental steps of the strategic decision making process in relationship to employability, namely:

- a) the background informing the decisions (investigating the opinion and status of stakeholders – graduates and employers - , the status of the labour market, the employability of graduates, etc);
- b) the decisions taken with the purpose of improving graduates' employability (setting up specialised centres, introducing new subjects in the curriculum, increasing the focus on practical skills, etc); and
- c) examining the impact that these decisions had on the graduates.

The threefold perspective will take into account how universities, labour market and graduates (should) jointly shape higher education's landscape, offering further insight into the decision making process of an individual university, i.e. Babeş-Bolyai University.

Alenka Braček Lalić

Facilitating the Enhancement of Student Employability – the Role of Quality Assurance Agencies

The presentation is focused on researching contributions which could be made by quality assurance agencies to the enhancement of the student employability. The purpose of the presentation is to give answers to the following questions: *1) What is the current role of Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in facilitating the enhancement of student employability?; 2) Which activities provided by Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency could contribute to enhancement of student employability?; 3) What could be the role of Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in this field in the future?*

Neda Bokan, Petar B. Petrović, Miša Živić

How to Improve the Employability of Graduates

Globalization of markets, technology sophistication, rapid changes in economic and business environment and demand for high profile individuals with specialized knowledge, created a shift in labor markets around the globe. The number of graduates with different academic backgrounds, abilities, skills and practical knowledge increases from day to day, raising the bar and competition on labor markets in that respect. However, in this competition, graduates from all countries do not play the same role. But despite the competitiveness, we also have to have in mind that one among the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals is to develop a global partnership of all countries in order to achieve this development. We discuss here some aspects of economy and higher education developments in the Republic of Serbia which are strongly connected with the employability of graduates and with its improvement, as well as the ways of achieving this competitiveness in the realization of this previously mentioned goal.

Julien Calmand, Jean-François Giret, Christine Guégnard

Vocational Bachelor Graduates in France: Labour Market Integration and Social Mobility

In France, the vocationalisation of the higher education at the university have resulted in increasing numbers of graduates and created new opportunities. The influx of these vocational Bachelor graduates on the labour market raises the issue of their professional prospects amid changing economic and social circumstances. This communication will focus on the labour market transition of the vocational Bachelor graduates in a period of economic crisis, especially on the social benefit of this diploma in France: What were the impacts of changing economical conditions and influx of vocational Bachelor graduates on their transition and on their chance for an upward social mobility?

Carmen Delia Davila Quintana, Jose-Gines Mora Ruiz, Luis E. Vila Lladosa

Fostering Three-dimension Leadership Behavior at Work Through Competency Development in Higher Education

The purpose of this study is to gain insight on the relevance of higher education practice for later behavior of graduates at the workplace regarding three key leadership dimensions: task-oriented leadership, relation-oriented leadership, and change-oriented leadership. Professional competencies are considered here as a transmission mechanism from higher education to work performance. Multi-level mixed-effects models (MLMEM) and Structural equation models (SEM) are used to estimate the effects of higher education and initial post-graduation work experience on the development of professional competencies shaping graduates three-dimensional leadership behavior at work on a sample of some 3500 recent graduates from Spanish universities. Estimation results show that individual capacity for the three dimensions of leadership behavior considered depend on the development of a specific set of professional competencies that are identified from a list of 19 items. The competencies related to 3D leadership are partially provided by means of higher education and developed further through initial work experience. The analysis also contributes to identify, from a list of 11 items, those teaching and learning modes with stronger effects on the development of 3D leadership skills. The main implication is that the promotion of adequate higher education practice may be effective to foster the development of leadership skills by graduates at the time of graduation, which in turn would improve the chances of further development of leadership competencies in earlier career stages, thus increasing the propensity of graduates to act as effective task-leaders, relation-leaders and change-leaders in the organizations they work for.

Alenka Flander

What do Employers Look for When Employing Our Graduates?

Since in Slovenia we lack analyses of companies' opinions of international mobility, we at CMEPIUS prepared a study based on the Finnish model (CIMO, 2005). The purpose was to examine whether international experience (study or placement) during studies actually affects Slovenian employers' decisions regarding employment. The online questionnaire was then sent to 520 addressees, and we received 144 responses (27.7%).

38.6% of the responses represent the public sector and 61.4% represent the private sector. Among the responses received, most respondents came from education (28%); trade and services (25%) and other public, social and personal services (11.4%).

The participants were mainly from companies (39.5% in total), 29.5% from small- and medium-sized companies (SMEs) with fewer than 250 employees and 10.7% came from large companies. Other respondents represented staff in educational organisations (16.4%) and public institutions (5.7%).

In assessing the competencies that are considered with regard to employment, the respondents thought the following were very important or important: capability of the applicant (80.33%); work experience or a placement in the field of expertise (64.06%); the applicant had completed a practice in a company abroad (53.13%); work experience in general (50.00%); a degree of the appropriate level (university, graduate qualification) (47.62%); that the applicant had studied abroad (41.27%); and a degree in the relevant field (39.68%)

Almost the same level of importance as a degree from the appropriate field was attributed to the fact that the applicant was known (37.10%) or that they themselves knew someone who had recommended the applicant (43.55%).

In evaluating the importance of the skills held by students who have just graduated, they believed that the most important factor for employment is that the candidate: is responsible and able to bear responsibility (75.81%); is reliable (75%); can seek information and use it (73.44%); can apply their knowledge to different and new situations (70.97%); is able to collaborate (69.35%); and is proactive (67.19%).

I will further on do some comparison between some groups of employers (for example SMEs and public institutions) to see whether their expectations in regards to graduates competences they would favour in employment are similar or different.

I will also compare some results in Slovenia and Finland.

Christelle Garrouste, Margarida Rodrigues

Employability of Young Graduates in Europe

The Education Council adopted in May 2012 a new ET2020 benchmark on graduates' employability, defined as the share of 20-34 year-olds, not currently engaged in any further education or training, that is employed 1 to 3 years after graduation. Using the same data source as the benchmark (namely, the annual LFS microdata from 2004 to 2010) and the ad-hoc 2009 LFS data, this paper presents pre-crisis and crisis estimates of that employment probability, by country, by country and gender and by country and field of education, controlling for individual and institutional characteristics, including specific education reforms. Finally, to understand the nature of this youth employment, among those who are employed, we estimate the probability of having a permanent vs. temporary contract and the probability of working full-time vs. part-time.

Bénédicte Halba

Bridging the Gap Between University and the Community: a Key for Graduates' Employability and Career Success - From the VAB to the ALLinHE

Many European countries are faced to huge rates of unemployment especially among youngsters. On the one hand, graduates are now faced to unexpected difficulties on the labour market. On the other hand, people without any qualification or diploma are willing to have access to Higher Education to enhance their professional opportunities.

The Bologna process initiated on a European level is meant to propose a European Qualification Framework (EQF) with the aim to link countries' qualifications systems together acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe but also for employers. Each European country has made an effort to express the content of the diplomas/certificates with regards to the skills and competences acquired and their link with the labour market (types of employment to be proposed).

At the same time, the "Copenhagen process" launched the European strategy for enhanced cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET). Initial and continuing VET share the dual objective of contributing to employability and economic growth and responding to broader societal challenges, in particular promoting social cohesion.. The overall aim is to improve the quality of vocational training and to encourage more individuals to make wider use of vocational learning opportunities, whether at school, in higher education, in the workplace, or through private courses.

We intend to show that bridging the gap between University and Community might be a challenging issue to enhance employability and career success. For graduates, integrating non formal and informal learning in complement to their diploma is a way to facilitate access to the labour market. For "potential" graduates, valuing the learning outcomes gained through non formal and informal learning is a way to have an access to Higher Education and so to validate their experiences with a diploma to enhance their professional opportunities.

Bridging the gap between University and Community is a two way process. On the one hand, graduates should be able to enrich their diploma with other experiences (professional, social, personal) gained in complement to their academic cursus. We will first insist on the necessary support to be offered to graduates to facilitate their professional integration and career success in introducing the Leonardo da Vinci project, VALunig Experience beyond University (VAB).

On the other hand, access to Higher Education should be facilitated among public with special profiles in making VPL strategies be clearer and more accessible. We will then present the Erasmus project ALLinHE which focuses on a multi-targeted VPL model (integrating both formative and summative approach) and will propose a comparative analysis of the VPL methods and approaches to under-represented (target) groups in Higher Education.

Anna Horvath

Measuring Employability in the European Higher Education Area: Sources, Limits and Perspectives

The presentation discusses issues arising from the chapter on Effective Outcomes and Employability in the Bologna Process Implementation Report. The report, prepared for the 2012 Bucharest Ministerial Conference, is a joint piece of work undertaken by Eurostat, Eurydice and Eurostudent, and was overseen by the Bologna Follow-up Group. The presentation will introduce some of the main findings of the report and will highlight some of the problems and dilemmas the authors faced when trying to describe graduate employability in Europe. In this respect, the presentation will ask the following questions: What do available data really measure? What are the limits and weaknesses of available datasets? What is missing from our collective understanding of employability? Finally, the presentation will consider possibilities for future European-level reporting on this topic.

İnci Kayhan Kuzgun

On the Job Training for Students as an Instrument for Increasing Employability of Graduates: a Proposal for Turkey

On the job training for students has been used as a traditional instrument to increase employability of graduates with connected demand for the labor market. Although trainee is a concept related to the labor market in Turkey; it does not have a comprehensive legal basement. The study is structured in three sections. In the first section it provides a brief review of the existing literature related to the employability of graduates. In the second section, regulation of on the job training for students has been proposed as an instrument for increasing employability of graduates in Turkey. With this framework, the characteristics, performance and constitution of proposal have been analyzed in the sub-sections.

The characteristics of the proposal have been considered such as below.

- It is an active employment policy instrument.
- It is an integrated strategy for the students to the economic activities.
- It is based on the dynamic demand model.
- It is based on the voluntary cooperation between universities and enterprises in Turkey.
- It can be concluded in the concept of public and private sector partnership.

The performance of this instrument has been considered individual, institutional and social level. The apprenticeship training can be taken as a model for constitution of on the job training for students.

- Size of firm has been used as criterion.
- The cost of application has been financed by the enterprises.
- The premiums of two social security branches have been paid by the state from the budget of the universities.

The main conclusion has been considered in chapter three.

Mareike Landmann

Demands of the Teacher Profession and Graduates' Ability to Fulfil These Demands - the Potential of Results From Graduate Tracer Studies for the Evaluation of Teacher Education in North-Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

The article describes the design for an evaluation of teacher education in Germany related to standards for teacher education. These standards were published in 2004 and 2008 by the German *Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs*. It goes on to discuss the implications of the research design on the potential and limits of the results to evaluate teacher education programmes at North-Rhine-Westphalian universities. To tackle the subject of teacher education standards and the respective quality of teacher education programmes by conducting graduate tracer studies in Germany, a scale on the demands of the teacher profession was developed within the framework of the German 'Cooperation Project for Graduate Tracer Studies' (KOAB). This article presents the second and the final version of the scale as well as results from the second version. The results show that teaching graduates' abilities to fulfil demands of the teacher profession vary between different teacher action fields. The match between perceived demands and self-assessed abilities to fulfil these demands in different action fields also depends on the teaching programme respectively the type of school the programme prepares for. To shed light on the question, in how far these evaluation results can be used to evaluate teacher education or adjust study programmes, the research methodology of the evaluation at hand is examined on the basis of general evaluation attributes introduced by Chelimsky (1997). An understanding of the type of evaluation performed, identified by its purpose, is sought to point out the potential, but also the restrictions of this evaluation project of teacher education in North-Rhine-Westphalia, Germany.

Giunio Luzzatto, Stefania Mangano, Roberto Moscati, Maria Teresa Pieri

Employability and Competences of University Graduates in Italy

Since 60% of Italian Bachelor graduates enrol immediately in a Master programme, the public often assumes that this is a consequence of very limited employment opportunities for these graduates. We show that this is contradicted by existing data on the employment rate of graduates that show a small difference in the employment rates of Bachelor and Master graduates. Bachelors who only looked for a job right after graduation have a high rate of employment, while many of those who enrolled in a Master programme are also working. However, employers often remark that university graduates are well prepared in their disciplines, but lack general competences. By analyzing the responses to a questionnaire sent to heads of university programmes, we investigated the general competences indicated as learning outcomes in the curricula offered by Italian universities. We present here some of our results.

Gregory Makrides

Development of Liaison Offices Between Academia and Industry in Cypriot Universities - Quality in Placements - INENTER Project Results

One of the large ESF Projects where all Cypriot Universities participate in a Consortium is the above mentioned project, which started in 2009 and expected to be completed by the end of 2014. The project is coordinated by the University of Cyprus, the main public university in Cyprus.

The aim is to foster closer links with industry for collaborative projects, promote the upgrading of industrial research interest and infrastructure and to support and promote young researcher placements and internships in industry.

As the connection with industry both on the research and training areas is limited, the project aims also in the improvement of adaptability of businesses and employees to changing market environment and connection with academia. This is expected to support the restructuring of industry and academia for future labour market challenges, and the development of innovative methods of structuring business and employment practices at the national level.

At the European level it is expected that the project will contribute to more and better jobs creation, improvement of skills and innovation with a goal to development, adaptation of education and training systems to the new needs for skills.

The target groups are Cypriot businesses, all sectors and at national level, Cypriot researchers and students, Cypriot Higher Education Institutions. The presentation will show how the project is structured, its content and plan, challenges, progress and outcomes.

Relating to the aims of Liaison Offices for supporting the placements of students, a European funded project (INENTER: Improving the Placements and Internships from Academia to Enterprises”, 509962-LLP-1-2010-1-CY-ERASMUS-ECUE) to be completed by the end of September 2012 provided results in supporting quality issues relating to placements and internships. Main outcomes will be presented.

Minoru Nakayama

Case Study on the Influences of Economic Factors on Employment of Graduates of Japanese Engineering Programs

The employment of university graduates may be influenced by the economic situation, the composition of industry and by other conditions. Though it is recognized that Engineering graduates seek work in manufacturing and related industries, their employment is not limited to these specific industries. A case study was conducted by surveying the employment statistics of graduates from various Science and Technology departments in Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. courses at a Japanese national university at 5 year intervals between 1985 and 2010. The results show that new graduates continue to be employed by certain companies, but that graduates' types of preferred industries have been changing as business conditions have changed. The annual statistics for engineers graduated from university departments and the industrial sectors they entered were analysed using multiple correspondence analysis. Two dimensional scales were extracted using the industries and the graduates' academic departments. In comparing the relationships between university departments, industrial sectors, degree levels and year of graduation, these relationships have changed over the years. The factors causing these changes are discussed in context with the changes in the relationships between them.

José Navarro and Sandra Fachelli

From Expansion to Crisis: University Pathways and Professional Insertion in the Labour Market

This document focuses on the conclusions of a typological analysis on the occupational insertion of graduates of Catalan public universities in 2004 and 2007. The data come from a periodic survey on the labour market outcomes of graduates from Catalan universities, carried out by the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU). A comparison element has been introduced in order to contrast labour market outcomes among graduates in 2004 (interviewed in the first quarter of 2008), who studied and made its labour insertion during a period of economic expansion in Spain and graduates in 2007 who completed their degrees about a year before the start of the recent economic crisis (interviewed in early 2011). Although we can see a decline in the employment rate of graduates as a whole, with regard only to occupied graduates no significant differences were found between the two cohorts.

Ashly H. Pinnington

Graduates who Find Jobs Difficult to Obtain

The literature on careers offers a variety of alternative perspectives on the transition from higher education to work and the early stages of career exploration. Many of the differences between these perspectives reflect changes in labour markets and society. Over recent decades, theoretical models of career have moved away from a focus on male-dominated patterns of work with the aim of understanding more of the diversity in working patterns as well as changing concepts of career.

The paper reports the findings from exploratory interview studies of graduates in their early stage of career who experience differing degrees of success with obtaining jobs and work in an area of their choice. The focus is on graduates who are less successful in their career search. After their graduation award, they experience difficulty with commencing suitable paid employment and do not make significant progress in developing a viable career. This is a group of people who arguably most need active support from HE institutions with their job search as well as their initial and subsequent career development.

Large scale quantitative survey research and secondary document analyses presented by researchers at the first DEHEMS conference (WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, 22nd-23rd September 2011), uncovered some distinct patterns of employability in various degree subjects and occupations. Graduates who fail to find employment in their preferred areas of expertise and who undergo a succession of short-term job contracts which are comparatively poorly remunerated, present challenges for HE institutions in terms of how they should be supported. National economies, societies, employers, graduates and their families all stand to benefit from institutional initiatives which optimise graduates' chances of securing viable jobs and work experiences. These then provide major opportunities for early career development, which then require active individual participation and some degree of improvisation by new graduates.

The particular challenges faced by this group of graduates draw attention to the role of career guidance, including students' skills preparation in job search, as well as actual experience of relevant job tasks and workplaces prior to graduation. They also demonstrate the need for more accurate and responsive information on available jobs and vacancies together with advice on practical ways that individuals create their job opportunities and career growth. This all becomes particularly important in the run up to graduation and immediately afterwards.

Parents, as well as other members of the family, are influential on young graduates, who often need assistance with being properly updated on the realities and challenges they face. Graduates and their families should be clear about practical considerations such as going rates of pay for jobs in the local region and elsewhere, so that they can use their knowledge and understanding in ways relevant to the current environment of work. HE, employers, government institutions and media organisations can all assist with providing this information.

Danuta Piróg

Transition From Higher Education to Labour Market in Poland on the Basis of Geography Graduates

The paper presents a fragment of empirical studies on the transition process of geographers in period of six months from completion of higher education. The purpose of the research was to diagnose the situation of geography graduates at the labour market in reference to prior aspirations, expectations and plans with the respect to the labour market. The verification includes planned and actual work places, planned and actual criteria of work place selection, expected and actual recruitment criteria, expected and received amount of remuneration.

The study shows that the transition of geography graduates to the labour market is a difficult and complex process in Poland, ending in partial success and that it is quite distant from aspirations and expectations registered by such persons at the moment of completion of university education.

Pittia P., Silva C.L.M., Costa R., Schleining G., Dalla Rosa M.

The ISEKI_Food Projects and Network: Strategies and Activities to Implement Skills and Abilities of the Future Generation of Graduates in Food Studies

Food studies networks started in 1998 with a long term objective of creating effective tools and guidelines that promote the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) for food studies, and has also been disseminating it at an international level, through constant renewing networks at European level with Erasmus programme support and at International level with Erasmus Mundus programme support. All the activities, tools and materials developed are sustained by a non-profit organization, the ISEKI Food Association (IFA) that has now a worldwide network, reaching all the Continents. A variety of tools have been created which the most significant are: a number of databases of curricula, teaching materials and food industry stakeholders; an International journal and regularly published books in an international publisher; a periodic international conference on bridging education, research and industry; a quality assurance label for Food Science and Technology curricula (EQAS); partnerships in other research and education projects.

Darka Podmenik, Ivana Čančar

The Importance of Career Centres as Mediators Between HE Students and Their Potential Employers

First part of the paper documents an increasing trend of uncertain graduates' employment prospects, especially those from so-called soft HE programs. Data from two different researches - large scale international project HEGESCO and case study of Slovene students - are used to verify the hypothesis that HE educators and students should invest more into skills and competencies, needed for successful transition from HE to Work.

The second part focuses on career centers (CC), which are for some countries like Slovenia, a new form of training students. Main assumptions of the CCs "case study" are: CCs have the role of mediator between students&graduates, HE institutions and employers; CCs use innovative ways of training students to obtain employment after graduation. Semi-structured interviews were done with the representatives of five Slovene, two German and one British CCs. In regard to CCs innovativeness, performance and differences among them, the sampled CCs are divided into two groups: so called good practices and "average" ones. It should be discussed which of the activities of "good practices" are transferable and useful to the successful operation of career centers in general.

Anna Prades

Promoting the Use of Graduate Surveys – Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency Tale

There is no discussion about the fact that graduate surveys provide valuable information for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) regarding their effectiveness and the context in which they are involved. But once the data is collected, once the reports are printed, how do HEI use these data to make decisions? Information on the results of graduate employment does not generate change in itself. Based on 10 years of experience and 4 graduate surveys, this paper will explain how a Quality Assurance Agency tries to promote the use of graduate survey results. Three key points are stressed: 1) A survey designed to make decisions, 2) The need to design reports *ad hoc* for key stakeholders and 3) The embedding labour market results in quality assessment and accreditation. These points are necessary but not sufficient conditions for data-informed leadership in higher education institutions or career services. The challenge is to foster a data-driven culture at all levels and to assure that key stakeholders have the appropriate framework to interpret and complement data, including between others, employment indicators. In the end, the ultimate goal of quality assurance is "self-regulation" of institutions who have internalised the modes of thinking that quality represents.

Victor Pushnykh

The Role of Leadership by Running a University Under Uncertain Conditions

Coping with new challenge requires the university to improve all the processes inside a university including the ways on how the university is run. For improving of those ways it is necessary to understand how the university leadership works, to take a look at the roots of the leadership decision making. In this paper a model of the leadership decision making under uncertain conditions is presented. The model assumes the decision making as a way of cultivating of the organizational culture corresponding to the values of the leadership. Experimental results illustrating the mechanism of this cultivating are displayed.

Péter Róbert

Changes in Job Mismatch and Skill Mismatch in Graduate Employment in Four New EU-Member States

The paper investigates the mismatch between qualification and current occupation for young graduates in four post-communist societies: Slovenia, Poland, Lithuania and Hungary. The paper focuses on job mismatch and skill mismatch in current occupation. The mismatch is operationalized in objective and subjective way: working in a graduate job as defined by the job title, on the one hand as well as evaluating the job from the perspective of the field of studies, on the other hand.

The analysis reveals a slight disadvantage for women, significant differences for parental background and for the various fields of study. Study-related work experience improves the match, while job mobility and unemployment experience increases the odds of a mismatch between qualification and current occupation. Mismatch in first occupation has strong and long-lasting effect on the match even five years after the graduation.

Yulia Shumilova, Yuzhuo Cai

Employment and Professional Capabilities of International Graduates from Finnish Higher Education Institutions

Following the Bologna process and its policies aimed to enhance the attractiveness of European Higher Education Area, international graduates' employment is increasingly becoming a concern in terms of both attracting international students to higher education and supporting the national labour market development and economic growth. However, there is still a research gap on the issues of international graduate employability in continental Europe. This paper presents the main outcomes of the VALOA study conducted in 2011-2012 in Finland focusing on the international graduates' transition from higher education to the world of work, identifying some weaknesses of international higher education and providing suggestions for further research.

Oon-Seng Tan

Development of Teacher Quality: Rising Above Structures, Standards and Stereotyping

Quality education through quality teacher has become an issue of much debate in recent years. Education researchers and policy makers have been looking at educational reforms internationally to learn from the best performing educational systems such as Finland, Korea and Singapore. How do we develop teacher quality? Is it about creating structures for entry requirements, recruitments and compensation? Is it about raising standards of accreditation and accountability? In learning from the best systems can we replicate successful types of practices and policies. This presentation provides a perspective of teacher education and development from Singapore and successful East Asian countries and argue that secrets of success in developing teacher quality goes beyond the structures, standards and stereotypes. Using case illustration the presentation focuses on the importance of teacher symbolism, teacher calling, subcultures of professional care and development as well as teacher leadership and inspiration. The paper concludes with recommendation on how to balance the big picture management of policies and practices with the logos, ethos and pathos of teacher symbol.