



National Study and Statistics on Early School Leaving in Lithuania

Target group of students aged 16-24

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Introduction

Lithuanian schools establish conditions for every pupil to learn according to his capabilities and to reach as high achievement as possible and there are also persons who are responsible for coordination of monitoring and improvement of learning achievement as well as for organization of learning support.

The school ensures systemic support in learning which includes low achievement prevention (by foreseeing possible problematic cases and trying to avoid them), intervention (in solving the problems that have arisen) and low achievement compensation measures (to grant the pupils the things they do not receive at home, etc.). Educational support specialists and pupils' parents (guardians, carers) are informed about emerging difficulties in learning and probable causes of them. Thus, the problems of low learning achievement are solved together with them. Unfortunately, not always the problems can be overcome and a part of young people early leave schools.

The concept of early school leavers corresponds to a clearly defined Eurostat indicator which in accordance with the research is calculated in 35 European countries including Lithuania. The definition of drop-out can refer to different forms of school leaving: non-attendance, leaving at one's own wish, drop out of school. The persons dropped out of the consistent education system include children and adults who leave school without attaining lower or upper secondary education as well as pupils and students who drop out of vocational training and educational institutions without acquiring qualification required for entering the labour market.

Therefore, the goal of the Erasmus+ partnership project *Reducing Upper Secondary ESL with Practice Enterprise* is to reduce the number of early school leavers and to provide the pupils aged 16 to 18 with business skills by applying the practice enterprise model to general education schools. The major outcome of the project shall be developing teaching methods and creating environments that would increase learning motivation of pupils being at risk of ESL with the practice enterprise model.

While implementing the project, primarily, each participating country (Lithuania, Spain, Italy and Bulgaria) summarized the situation of early drop-out of the education and training system in the country by surveying the following fields:



- Youth participation in education and labour market;
- The situation of early drop-out of the educational and training system;
- Reasons for early leaving;
- Indicators of early leaving from the education and training system;
- Preventive measures intended for reducing early drop-out of the education and training system;
- School experience.

The present situation analysis will establish conditions for project partners to compare the data of different countries and to make the most suitable innovative educational model for schools which encounter problems with early school leavers.



1. Youth Participation in Education and Labour Market

1.1. Employment and Education Indicators by Age and Gender

Recently a decrease in the number of permanent residents has been observed in Lithuania. The survey of 15-24 year olds by gender and age group shows that 250 thousand men and 246 thousand women resided in the country in 2005 and accordingly 161 thousand men and 155 thousand women resided in 2017. At present the number of 15-24 year-old residents is less by 180 thousand in comparison with the year 2005.

According to Eurostat data early leavers from the education and training system aged 15-24 by gender are shown in Table 1.

Early leavers (aged 15-24) by gender	2013	2016
Men	15,4	9,3
Women	6,5	5,2

Table 1. Early leavers from education and training (aged 15-24) by gender (year 2013 and 2016)

A constant trend that more boys than girls leave the education and training system is observed in Lithuania (accordingly 9.3 and 5.2 per cent in 2016). The results of the survey carried out by the Department of Statistics show that the highest level of unemployment among the young people (aged 15-24) who dropped out of the education and training system was in 2010. It accounted for 46.6 thousand (35.7% including 20.65% of young men and 15.1% of young women). The results improve every year and as the data in Figure 1 demonstrate it reached the level of 14.5% in 2016. However, we are not delighted with the results because 17.8 thousand young people were unemployed at that time.

The employment indicators by gender are illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 of Chapter 1.2.1.

1.2. Youth Employment

On 01 July 2017 **the Law on Employment of the Republic of Lithuania** came into force. In accordance with this law the labour market provides different services for job seekers. For the



purpose of services implementation active labour market policy measures, employment growth programmes, compensation of income or its part not earned due to unemployment are used. The active labour market policy measures are aimed at rendering assistance to job seekers in increase of their employment opportunities and coordination of job offer and demand. That is support for learning, support for mobility, employment sponsorship and support provided for job creation.

The support measures for learning applied to early school leavers are as follows:

- organization of vocational training according to formal vocational training programmes under the provisions set forth in a tripartite or bipartite agreement;
- employment under the contract of apprenticeship;
- traineeship as a period of voluntary practical training intended for improvement, renewal or development of work-related skills or vocational qualification, it may be organized for the unemployed who have relevant vocational qualification or competences acquired by means of non-formal adult education and who have not worked under this vocational qualification or competences acquired by means of non-formal adult education for no less than 6 successive months;
- recognition of competences acquired by means of non-formal education or self-education arranged under the provisions specified in the bipartite agreement by and between the territorial labour exchange and the unemployed whose competences acquired by means of non-formal education or self-education shall be recognized.

The labour market gives additional support to the following persons:

- non-qualified unemployed persons who have not acquired any vocational qualification or whose vocational qualification acquired abroad has not been recognized in accordance with the procedure prescribed by laws;
- the unemployed who have no any competences acquired in a non-formal way and recognized in accordance with the procedure prescribed by laws;
- **long-term unemployed persons under 25 years of age whose unemployment continues for more than 6 months;**
- and long-term unemployed people from 25 years of age whose unemployment continues for more than 12 months starting from the date of registration at the territorial labour exchange.



For the purpose of solving the problems of residents' employment which are especially urgent nowadays by combining the efforts of business, education and labour market sectors and by including social partners and municipalities in the formulation of the employment policy the **Employment Growth Programme 2014-2020** was prepared in Lithuania. The preparation of the programme was conditioned by the need to reduce the youth unemployment. Due to lack of vocational skills and work experience the young people (aged 15-24) are the most vulnerable group encountering the problems of integration into the labour market. For several recent years the rate of youth unemployment in Lithuania has been one of the largest in the European Union (hereinafter - EU) and amounted to 35.1 per cent (in 2010). According to Eurostat data of July 2013 the youth unemployment fell to 23.1 per cent, however, this indicator is still high enough (the average rate in EU is 23.4 per cent). A number of young people without any qualification and even without lower secondary education increased. The youth not in education, employment or training lacks incentives to learn, to acquire vocational qualification or to work.



1.2.1. Level of Unemployment

In recent years, the problem of youth unemployment became a particular focus of attention in Lithuania. Though youth unemployment rapidly decreases, the level determined in 2007, i.e. 8.4 per cent, has not been reached yet. According to the data of the Statistical Office of European Communities (Eurostat) the rate of unemployment of young people under 25 years of age reduced from 26.7 per cent in 2012 to 13.3 per cent in 2017 (Figure 1). The youth still faces challenges in the labour market and is not capable of competing with experienced specialists under equal conditions.

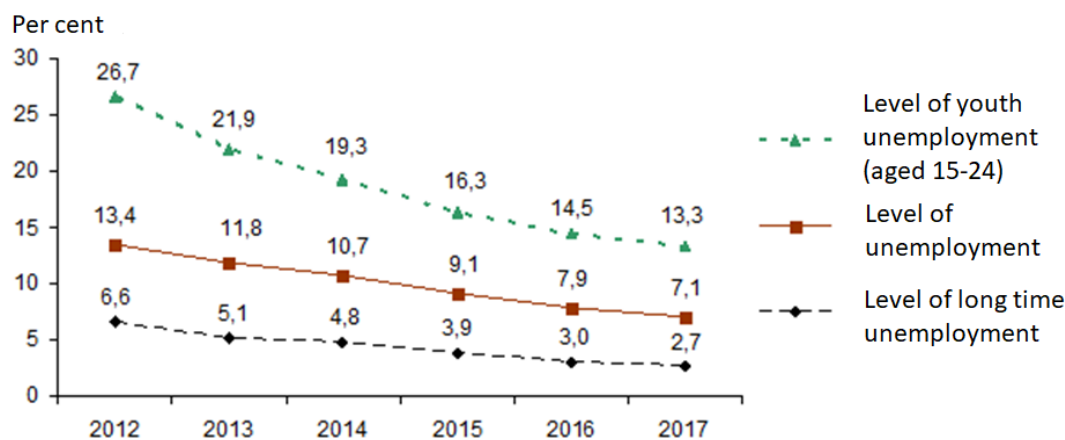


Figure 1. Level of youth unemployment (aged 15-24)

The major causes of youth unemployment in Lithuania are as follows:

- Not acquired or acquired but insufficient vocational qualification;
- Non-conformity of the acquired qualification with the labour market needs;
- Lack of practical experience;
- Lack of young people's persistence, job seeking skills;
- Lack of young people's motivation and social competences;
- Quality of workplaces and inadequately great expectations of the youth.

According to the data presented in Figure 2 a different number of young people aged 16 to 25 and registered as unemployed, their opportunities for employment and willingness to participate in the active labour market policy measures are observed in the counties of the country. Throughout the



year 2016, 45398 persons were registered as unemployed including 26016 young men and 19382 young women but only 8165 started participating in the active labour market policy measures.

The number of the registered unemployed persons, their employment opportunities and willingness to participate in the active labour market policy measures vary from county to county in the country (Table 2 and Table 3).

Young people (16-24)	01-01-2017	Year 2016								
	The number of the registered unemployed persons	Registered as unemployed			Employed	Started participating in the active labour market policy measures				
		Total	Young man	young women	Total	Total	Vocational training	Sponsored Employment	Support for job creation	Territorial mobility
Lithuania	3,3	45398	26016	19382	25478	8165	3973	3069	1040	83
Alytus district	4,5	2645	1562	1083	1465	616	259	259	95	3
Kaunas district	2,6	8586	4709	3877	4963	1183	749	355	71	8
Klaipeda district	3,8	5657	3194	2463	3101	950	468	343	136	3
Marijampole district	3,8	2585	1481	1104	1315	567	231	274	56	6
Panevezys district	3,4	4012	2410	1602	2028	792	320	362	100	10
Siauliai district	3,5	4422	2625	1797	2287	881	374	378	125	4
Taurage district	4,3	1908	1151	757	1028	462	248	136	73	5



Telsiai district	3,7	2668	1563	1105	1428	611	259	248	98	6
Utena district	4,3	2228	1399	829	1231	561	211	248	99	3
Vilnius district	2,9	10687	5922	4765	6632	1542	854	466	187	35

Table 2. Registered unemployment of young people (aged 16-24) by district of the country 2016

Young people (16-24)	01-01-2018	Year 2017								
	The number of the registered unemployed persons	Registered as unemployed			Empl oyed	Started participating in the active labour market policy measures				
		Total	Young man	young women	Total	Total	Vocational training	Sponsored Employment	Support for job creation	Territorial mobility
Lithuania	3,6	43617	25363	18254	22072	8716	4763	3217	457	279
Alytus district	4,1	2317	1363	954	1139	597	305	249	33	10
Kaunas district	3,5	8820	4946	3874	4571	1133	583	504	23	23
Klaipeda district	3,4	5142	2985	2157	2623	1006	574	363	50	19
Marijampol e district	3,8	2392	1428	964	1096	478	220	203	33	22
Panevezys district	3,6	3767	2343	1424	1655	1052	613	330	56	53
Siauliai district	3,1	4256	2562	1694	2078	1032	552	412	42	26



Taurage district	3,8	1909	1217	692	875	576	317	189	34	36
Telsiai district	3,6	2563	1489	1074	1135	583	275	236	67	5
Utena district	3,8	1908	1168	740	979	476	249	172	39	16
Vilnius district	3,6	10543	5862	4681	5921	1783	1075	559	80	69

Table 3. Registered unemployment of young people (aged 16-24) by district of the country 2017

It is difficult for the youth to find a job in Lithuania – there is still a high rate of youth unemployment in the country. In accordance with the data of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics 24.4 thousand unemployed persons (aged 16-29) who accounted for 16.1 percent of all the unemployed were registered on 01 January 2017. The level of unemployment of the youth (aged 15-24) accounted for 13.3 per cent in 2017 and it was less by 1.2 percentage points than in 2016. On the 1st of January 2018, 24.1 thousand young people (aged 16-29) were registered as unemployed and this figure is less by 0.3 thousand in comparison with the preceding year (there were 24.4 thousand of them on 01 January 2017). On 01 January 2018, the youth of 16-29 years of age accounted for 15.8 per cent of the total number of the unemployed (16.1 per cent on 01 January 2017). Throughout the year 2017, 11.0 thousand graduates were registered in the labour exchange and in 2016 there were 12.3 thousand of them.

The data (Figure 3) show that in 2017 there were 43617 persons including 25363 young men and twice less, i.e. 18254, young women registered as unemployed. Unfortunately, in 2017 the number of the people who were employed fell to 22072. Meanwhile, in 2016 the number of the young people employed was 25478. However, in 2017 more registered unemployed persons started participating in the active labour market policy measures, i.e. 8716.

In accordance with the results presented in Figure 2 it is obvious that in recent years, the share of young people under 25 among all unemployed has remained constant, i.e. approximately 17.3 per cent.

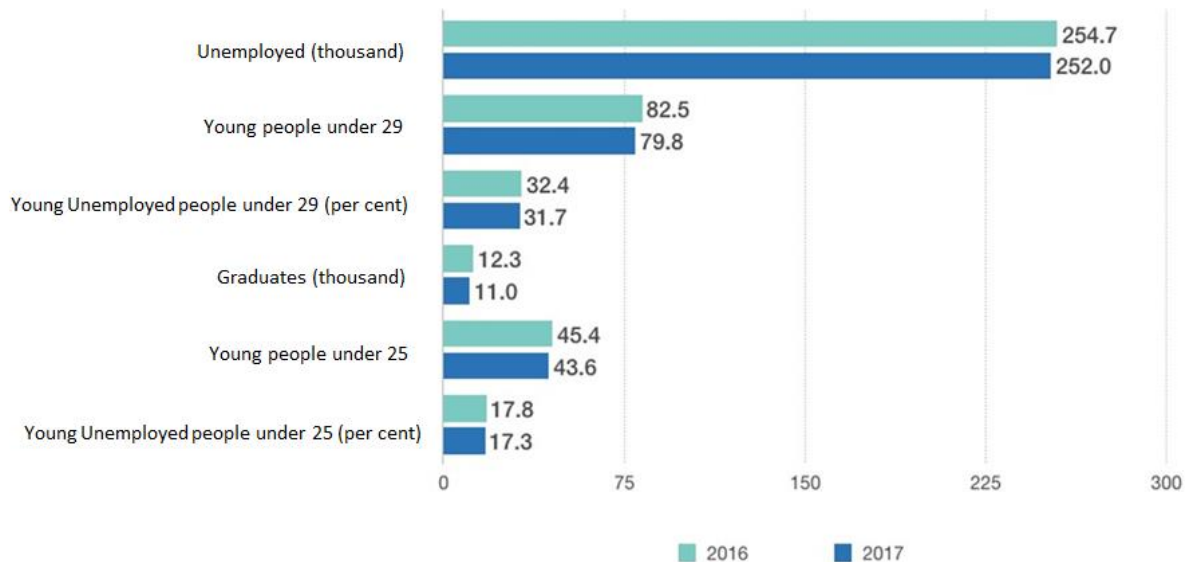


Figure 2. Share of youth (under 25 and 29 years of age) among all unemployed in percentage terms

The situation of unemployment differs in separate Lithuanian municipalities and in accordance with the data of Figure 3 it varies from 3 to 7 per cent.

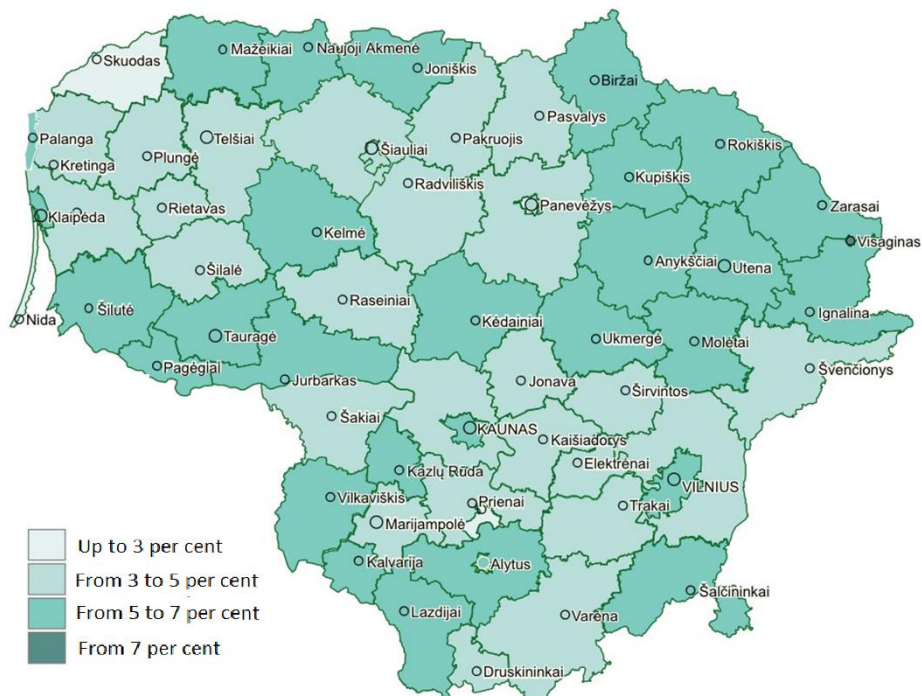


Figure 3. The situation of young people (under 24 years of age) in the labour market in 2017 by municipalities, 01 January 2018

The Figure 4 shows that 43.0 thousand registered young people (aged 16-25) were employed (this accounts for 54.0 per cent of the registered youth) throughout 2017 and throughout 2016 – 49.8 thousand (60.4 per cent), therefore the benefit and prospects of the applied measures is rather obvious.

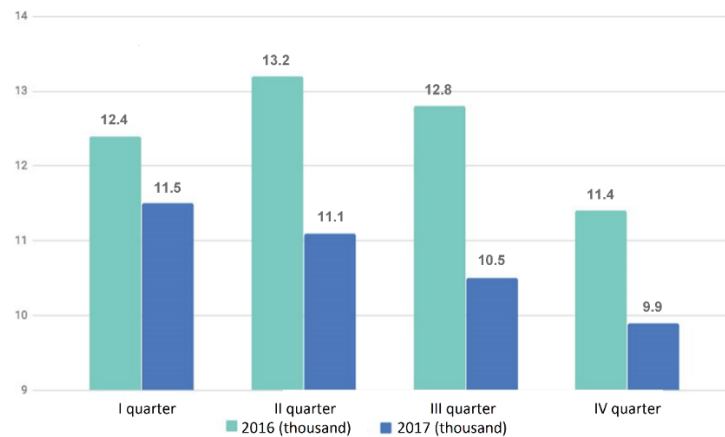


Figure 4. Employment of youth (aged 16-24) registered in the labour exchange

1.2.2. Average Length of Transition from School to the Labour Market

11.0 thousand graduates were registered at the labour exchange in 2017 (Figure 5) and 12.3 thousand of them – throughout the year 2016. The share of graduates among registered unemployed young people accounted for 13.7 per cent in 2017. Last year the share of graduates accounted for 14.9 per cent, therefore, reduced length of transition from school to the labour market is observed.

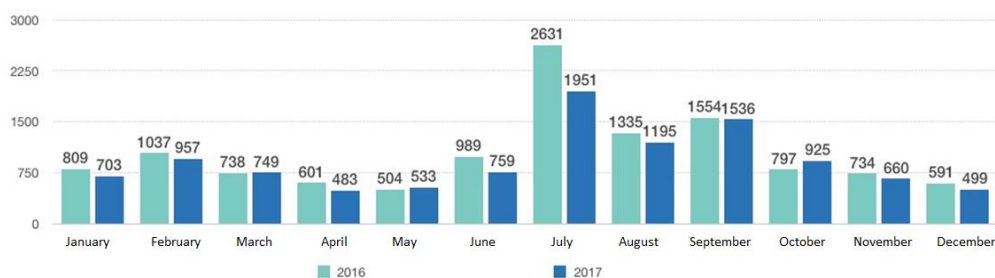


Figure 5. Graduates registered at the labour exchange



Since 2014 the Lithuanian Labour Exchange has started implementing the Youth Guarantee initiative trying to provide support to young people whose transition from the education system to the labour market and adoption to its changes were more successful. All young people (aged 15-29) who lost their job or dropped out of the formal education system are provided with a qualitative offer for work, further education or practical training within four months from the first day of registration at the labour exchange. It is forecasted that by implementing the Youth Guarantee initiative 65 thousand young people will participate in the projects financed by EUF within the period from 2014 to 2020. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange offers young people to participate in various projects carried out by it, e.g. “Discover Yourself”, “New Start”, “Support of Employment of Long-Term Unemployed Persons”, “Improvement of Competences of People without Qualification”, etc.

The youth employment indicators which consistently improve in Lithuania demonstrate that transition from the education system to the labour market becomes smoother. In 2017 three of four young people were provided with engagement in one way or another: 54 per cent of the youth were employed, more than 21 per cent took part in the measures organized by the labour exchange, i.e. they acquired qualification and work-related skills on the job places, received support for establishment of a job placement and were hired as the employers were compensated for part of pay and tax expenses. After participation in such measures 83-92 per cent of these young men (depending on the measure) successfully integrated themselves into the labour market within 6 months.



2. Situation of Early Leaving from the Education System

2.1. Reasons for Early Leaving

It is difficult to point out one reason why children play truant, unwillingly go to school, episodically miss lessons and finally stop learning at all. Teachers more and more express their concern about lack of pupils' motivation for learning, insufficient learning efforts, truancy and avoidance to take an active part in school activities. This shows that quite a lot of our pupils have already stepped into the drop out of school process.

One can distinguish not only between the groups of persons not attending due to certain reasons but also between the groups at risk of drop out of the education system. They are:

- Persons at concealed risk, i.e. the persons whose learning achievement is low, who experience continued failure. Their reactions to continued failure do not attract the attention of adults. They are able to suffer and not to resist the environment.
- Persons with poor educational performance - they often have failures but react to this showing disruptive behaviour. They avoid learning failure by non-attending the educational institution. They are punished both for their behaviour and for non-attendance.
- Persons influenced by external and socio-economic factors - their problems are not related to the educational institution. They can be addicted to alcohol and drugs, they can come from poor families, have poor health, etc. They cannot attend school because they are tired, hungry and full of fear.
- A group of persistent persons at risk - their achievement is low but they contrive to foster sufficient compensatory behaviour in order to remain at the educational institution. This may be after-school activities. Some of them finish school, but the education level they have is low.
- Pushed-out persons - they suffer from an overcrowded curriculum. They try to adapt to it without demanding the change of the curriculum according to their needs.

Thus, all persons being at high risk of dropping out of the education system are characterized by low level of achievement and frequently suffer from educational failures.

Early leavers from education and training are often identified with the following groups at risk:

- Young people from antisocial families lacking social skills;



- Independent creative young people rejecting an academic structure;
- Practical-activity-orientated young people having interest in an unqualified job;
- Ethnic minorities not easily adapting themselves to school environments;
- Children in critical situations whose parents have little interest in them;

The analysis of the survey carried out in Lithuania reveals that children do not attend school most often because of these reasons:

- Failure to learn educational material and lack of timely educational support;
- Psychological characteristics of the person (low self-esteem, lack of confidence, etc.), emotional and behavioral disorders;
- Conflictual relationships with teachers and peers;
- Unsatisfactory socio-economic situation of the pupil or his family;
- Insufficient competence of teachers to work with not motivated and school avoiding children;
- Negative attitude of teachers towards pupils having learning difficulties.

The reasons for early school leaving are related, interacting and frequently affect each other. Some of them, e.g. emotional insecurity, learning difficulties, working activity of the person engaged in education can directly predetermine truancy and absenteeism. Other reasons are more profound and related to insufficient preventive work, inefficiency of the educational support system. The decision not to attend an educational institution is predetermined not only by personal qualities and situation in the family but also by improper organization of education, compelled change of school, absence of alternative forms of education, etc. The microclimate at school, relationships with teachers and peers can trigger learning and psychological difficulties.

Most persons who drop out of educational institutions “have been sending signals” for several months or even years before final farewell. These signals may be quite different but most often the first warning signs are as follows: truancy; bad behavior; bad marks; poor evaluation of certain subjects; incompleteness of the study course; repetition of the study course; falling under the supervision of social service or law enforcement agencies, etc. The heads of educational institutions, teachers and support specialists shall know how to recognize such signals of danger, how to find pupils being at risk, they must evaluate their needs and provide necessary support.



2.2. Indicators of Early Drop-Out of Education and Training

Lithuania is among twelve countries of the European Union which already are above the target defined by “Europe 2020” strategy, i.e. 10 per cent. Lithuania implemented the national target defined by the State Education Strategy for 2012, namely 9 per cent, already in 2005. The share of early school leavers exceeds the indicator provided for in the new State Education Strategy (project) for 2013-2022, i.e. 8 per cent. Such good enough Lithuanian indicator can be explained by the fact that quite a large number of young people aged 18-19 still study at general education schools and later on most of them enter higher schools. In 10 recent years, the share of young people of 16-24 years of age not in education has been decreasing both in the whole Europe and in Lithuania. However, the progress in Lithuania has been more rapid. As Europe takes measures to attain the defined target, Lithuania sets a task for itself, if not to achieve better results, then at least to retain the existing level.

Traditionally, the number of persons who have not completed education is not large and decreases (Table 3).

		Lithuania		EU average	
		2013	2016	2013	2016
ET 2020 benchmarks					
Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)	Total	6.3%	4.8%	11.9%	10.7%

Table 3. Indicators of early leaving from education and training

(Source: Education and Training Monitor 2017. Country Analysis)

The fact that not many children attend early education and care institutions does not predetermine a large number of persons who have not finished school. In 2016, Lithuania in which the share of early school leavers accounts for 4.8 per cent (that is less than the EU average – 10.7 per cent) took second place in EU after Croatia. Having distributed the data by gender and school location, the largest number of early school leavers is among boys at rural areas (12.5 per cent).



3. Prevention of Early Leaving from Education and Training System

3.1. State Policy Actions Aimed at Reducing Early School Leaving from Education and Training

At present the Action Plan 2017-2019 intended for implementation of the National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011-2019 approved by Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania is of great importance.

The Lithuanian Government is worried about the problem which manifests itself in development of social security, education and health systems which do not ensure the young people's needs. For establishment of conditions for cultural education and stimulation of creativity of the youth the Lithuanian state budget funds are allocated for support of cultural education, professional and non-professional art of young people. An increase of 2.5 times in financing was observed within the period from 2009 to 2016. Nevertheless, the problem of youth involvement in public and creativity stimulating activity is still urgent, therefore, the necessary conditions for stimulation of youth creativity and cultural education shall be provided.

The involvement of young people in active leisure activities creates conditions for development of the fundamentals of public spirit and democracy. In order the youth were involved in diverse leisure activities or would communicate among themselves and were as much active and public-spirited as possible, they shall be involved in non-formal education. It was found out by the survey of Youth problems conducted in 2015 that most often young people spent their leisure time by meeting friends (81.7 per cent), watching TV (67.8 per cent) and only 13.5 per cent participated in the activity of public organizations. Even 46.6 per cent of the youth stated that they had never participated and did not participate in any activities on a voluntary basis. In accordance with the aforesaid survey it was ascertained that the problem of young people's inactivity in participation in the public life still needs to be dealt with.

From the Government's standpoint, there is one more important problem, i.e. the system of work with the youth has not been sufficiently expanded and the development of youth employment infrastructure is not ensured, therefore, while implementing the youth policy, open youth centres (hereinafter - OYC) are established. They focus on execution of open work with young people having few opportunities. In accordance with the data of December 2016, 36 OYC and 154 open



spaces for youth (hereinafter - OSY) (190 in total) functioned in Lithuania. As compared with the year 2011, there were only 20 OYC and OSY in the country. Thus, the development of the system of open work with youth is observed.

In 2009, 3900 young people took part in the activities of OYC and OSY. Throughout 2016, the number of young people who participated in OYC and OSY activities was 6849. These indicators show that within the period of seven years (2009 - 2016) OYC and OSY succeeded in attracting almost twice a larger number of young people. The improvement of the situation related to youth involvement in employment encouraging activities is obvious.

The share of funds granted by the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania for financing institutional programmes of youth or work with youth organizations per direct participant was 7.3 Eur in 2013 and that is twice as less as in 2011. Low youth involvement in the activity of youth or work with youth organizations still remains a problem so it is necessary to support these organizations by improving their organizational skills, retaining their distinctive features and consistency of activity.

No detailed statistical research on the situation of the youth is carried out in Lithuania. Having learnt about the needs, habits, lifestyle of young people residing all over the country, expedient youth policy measures may be applied by taking the peculiarities of specific municipalities and (or) regions into account. The last survey of youth problems performed on order of the Department of Youth Affairs under implementation of the project "Integrated Youth Policy Development" was carried out in 2012. At present the information is not considered as topical. For the purpose of carrying out the research on youth problems more often, in 2010, on order of the Department of Youth Affairs the methodology of conducting surveys on problematic issues of the youth in municipalities was worked out. The methodology was aimed at preparation of the system of indicators reflecting the situation of young people and embracing all areas of youth policy implementation.

One more field which seems to be problematic is not active enough cooperation between public, private and non-governmental sectors in developing and improving youth policy implementation. In accordance with the Law on Youth Policy Framework of the Republic of Lithuania the youth policy is the horizontal area of policy involving a lot of fields: development of public spirit, education, non-formal education, labour and employment, provision with accommodation, leisure, social security and health care, wellness, sports, prevention of drug use and other forms of



addiction, prevention of delinquency, etc. Therefore, development of this policy requires inter-agency cooperation as well as cooperation between public, private and non-governmental sectors. While implementing the youth policy in Lithuania, Lithuanian state institutions shall also cooperate with foreign institutions and adopt the good examples of foreign countries. Though international events take place, however, cooperation between public, private and non-governmental sectors at municipal, national and international levels is not ensured yet.

It is expected that implementation of the Youth Guarantee initiative in Lithuania to be aimed at providing with a consistent, versatile package of services meeting individual needs of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). It shall ensure the youth's preparation for participation in the labour market or returning to education and training systems. Owing to Youth Guarantee initiative approximately 63 per cent of all registered young unemployed persons are employed per year. The process of employment accelerates and participation in active labour market policy measures is growing – every year more than 20 thousand (about 22 per cent) young unemployed persons acquire qualification and work-related skills on the job places, receive support for establishment of a job placement and are hired as the employers are compensated for part of pay and tax expenses. It is important to notice that after participation in such measures 83-92 per cent of these young men (depending on the measure) successfully integrate themselves into the labour market within 6 months.

The Government included a full-day school concept in the programme. The concept is not new in Lithuania as many people engaged in education have experienced this. Inclusive education, pupils' achievement, social exclusion, emotional safety – there is no one method which would solve the arising problems. It is supposed that the right solution may be reached only by improving school activity, educational process, by ensuring the possibility for school to function all day long. A full-day school is chosen by pupils of different age in different countries. Such programme is applied to 1st through 12th class.



3.2. Good Practice against Early School Leaving

3.2.1. Programmes Implemented at Lithuanian Schools

The gap of the early school leaving indicator between a village and a town, between different schools in the same city is observed in Lithuania. This indicator in certain regions of Lithuania exceeds requirements defined by the European Union for countries.

Therefore, at the end of 2015, the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Education Exchanges Support Foundation (by implementing the projects “Euroguidance” and “eTwinning”) announced a project “Initiative for Municipalities” the key goal of which was to provide the selected municipality and schools suggested by it with expert, methodological and other support. Taking the presented material and arguments into account the municipality of Kupiškis was selected. The main arguments were as follows: large percentage of pupils receiving free meals (83 per cent), a large number of missed lessons per pupil, a large number of pupils with special educational needs at the suggested schools, lower results of standardized tests (of 4-class and 8-class pupils) in comparison with the country average and relationship between pupils and teachers that could lead to better learning results. Five schools of Kupiškis region decided to accept changes and improve the educational process by increasing learning achievement of pupils. The experts engaged in the project, namely school heads, eTwinning ambassadors, psychologists and other specialists analyzing the causes of low achievement of pupils provided and still provide these schools with different kinds of support referring to the situation of each school. The final goal of this initiative is not only to offer and initiate positive changes related to improvement of low achievement situation at the selected schools but also to present methodological and strategic recommendations with long-term measures plan (for the period of 3 years) adjusted to tackle the low achievement problems at national and municipal level.

The Lithuanian schools having good practice give the following proposals for improvement of educational support:

- To agree on the procedure and regulations of educational support and to observe them.
To appoint persons responsible for educational support organization and fulfillment,
to increase their responsibility and accountability to school community.



- To encourage teachers to use a learning paradigm at the lessons by granting the pupils an opportunity to take an active part in school activities, by differentiating and individualizing education, by applying active learning methods (e.g. cooperative learning, problem-based, project-based learning).
- To strive to entire educational support to be provided for pupils during lessons by paying particularly much attention to pupils of low socio-economic status, from families at social risk and having behavioural difficulties.
- In case of emerging of learning difficulties to provide educational support not only for low-achieving or average-achieving pupils but also for talented schoolchildren.
- Immediately to provide educational support for pupils of all levels of capabilities for eliminating the gaps in their knowledge if they are at risk of encountering learning difficulties (e.g. on return after illness, competitions, etc.).
- More often to discuss educational goals and support issues within the school community.
- To organize courses for pupils and to establish a support centre for coping with learning difficulties. To encourage talented pupils to get involved in provision of educational support.
- To involve parents in providing support for their child and in other school activities. If difficulties emerge, to render individual consultations and assistance to parents. To organize lectures and courses for them on different methods of educational support provided for the child.

3.2.2. Preventive Measures Used at Vilnius Tourism and Commerce School

It is pointed out in general education plans that the school must establish conditions for a pupil to learn according to his abilities and to attain as high achievements as possible. Organization of educational support at school embraces the following issues:

- If a pupil encounters learning difficulties, a teacher is the first person who provides support for him.
- He informs the class tutor, the pupils' parents (carers, guardians) as well as educational support specialists working at school about the difficulties and together with them makes arrangements for educational support.



- If the educational support provided by the teacher is not sufficient and the pupil's learning achievement is lower than that of his peers, the teacher and the parents of the pupil apply to the School Commission for Child Welfare for determining the cause of learning difficulties. The School Commission for Child Welfare gives the teacher recommendations on providing educational support for the pupil.
- If this measure does not help to improve the results, the School Commission for Child Welfare (by consent of the parents) makes primary evaluation of pupil's special educational needs and having decided that he should be provided with special education, again by consent of the parents applies to the Pedagogical and Psychological Service of the Municipality (hereinafter – PPS) and the Educational Support Service. The specialists of PPT, having evaluated the child's needs for special education in detail, discuss the results with the parents and the teacher, give recommendations to the teacher how to adapt the education contents to child education needs in a better way.

It is defined in the general education plans that the pupil requires educational support if the level of his achievement (in one or several subjects) is lower than provided for in General programmes; if the pupil does not make progress; if the pupil's test is evaluated insufficiently; if the pupil missed part of lessons due to illness or other reasons, etc. First of all, the educational support is provided

- at the lesson as feedback;
- by giving short-term or long-term consultations;
- by arranging the support by advanced pupils for other schoolchildren or in any other selected way;
- by establishing conditions for the pupil to do homework at school with the help of the teacher or other pupils.

Indirect learning support is provided for pupils at school in the following ways:

- by improving the procedure of evaluation of pupils' progress and achievement;
- by creating conditions that will allow the teachers to improve individualization methods and if necessary, to ask for help from educational support specialists for planning and correcting the educational contents;
- by providing the opportunity for teachers to improve their professional knowledge, subject-related competences and skills in particular, to organize the educational process which would suit the pupils of different abilities and needs;



- by involving the pupil's parents (carers, guardians) in the educational process in a more active way not only for the purpose of solving the problems arising in children's education but also in giving versatile learning support, implementing vocational information provision and orientation, familiarizing with the world of labour and professions.

Though Vilnius Tourism and Commerce School applies all learning support and prevention measures in order the pupils would remain at school, however, it encounters the problem of drop-out, too.

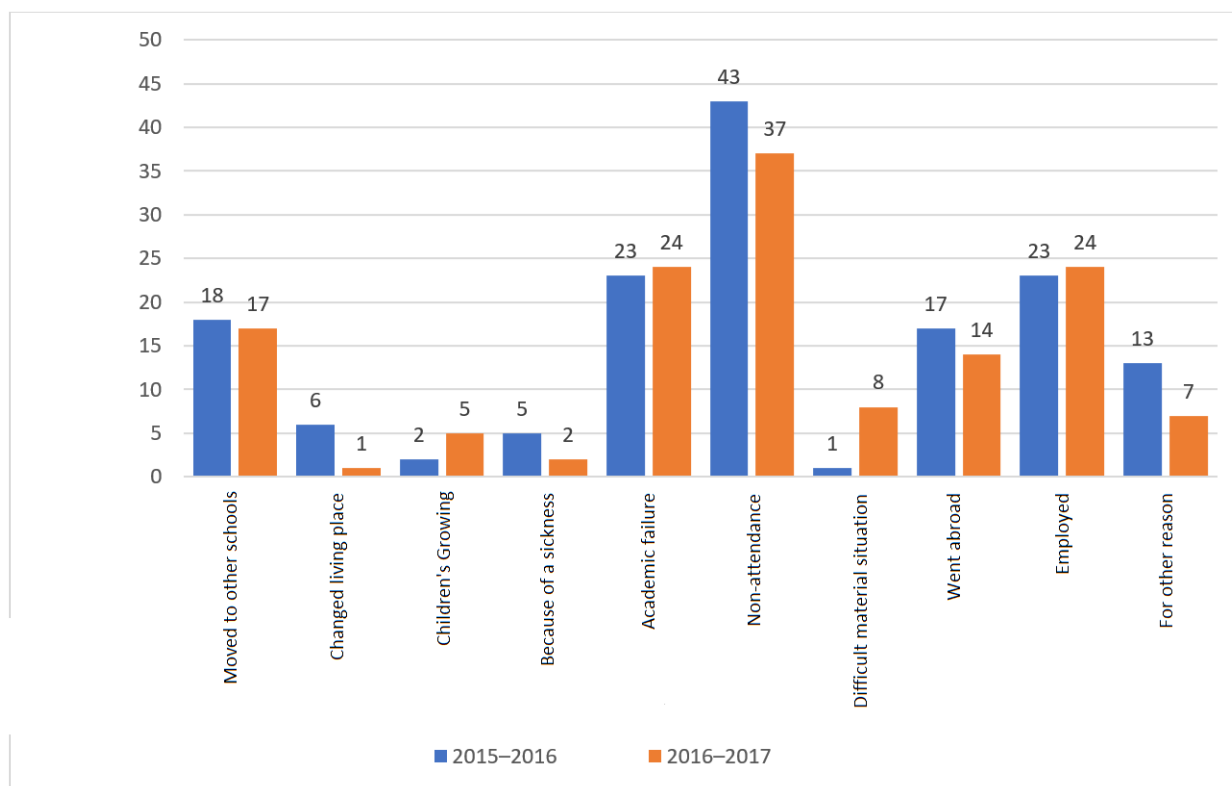


Figure 6. Causes of pupils' exclusion from Vilnius Tourism and Commerce School

Throughout the period from 2005 to 2016, 139 pupils left school (the total number of pupils at school was 753), i.e. 18.8 per cent of the total number of pupils. The causes are identical to those at other vocational schools of Lithuania. The data provided for in Figure 9 show that by comparing the indicators of drop-out during 2015-2016 with the years 2016-2017 the situation becomes worse. In recent years, 151 pupils, i.e. 20 % of the total number of pupils, left school. In 2016-2017, the number of pupils at school was 765. The causes remain the same but the most worrying



thing is that the largest number of pupils is excluded due to educational failure, truancy and employment.

Poor school attendance is one of the most painful problems at Vilnius Tourism and Commerce school. Therefore, the reasons for missing most lessons are analyzed and they are as follows:

- Lack of motivation;
- Immature to learn;
- No compensation for travel expenses to school;
- Too little parental attention to the child ;
- Measures for attendance improvement:
- Regular attendance control;
- Giving information to parents (guardians);
- Psychologist's support;
- Social educator's support;
- Attendance analysis in methodological groups;
- Support provided by the Commission for Child Welfare;
- Health care specialist's support.

The opportunities of integration of Vilnius Tourism and Commerce School graduates into the labour market are presented in Table 4.

Graduates	Graduate of program in 2016 (number)	Out of Graduates in 2015-2016 A.Y./2016-2017 A.Y.							
		Is working		Continues learning			Went abroad	Do not work and do not	Other
		Number of persons employed	According to the acquired qualification (out of	Total	In vocational training institutions	In high schools			
2015-2016 Academic Year	253	197	172	39	21	18	22	15	
2016-2017 Academic Year	237	185	152	23	15	8	22	17	5

Table 4. Employment of Vilnius Tourism and Commerce School graduates



3.2.3. Teachers' Competence and Skills

The Description of Requirements for Teacher Qualifications (hereinafter - the Description) defines qualifications necessary for working as a teacher according to general education, vocational training and non-formal education programmes, the cases, when persons are considered as having teacher qualification and competences assigned to teacher qualification.

The teachers working according to general education, vocational training and non-formal education programmes must know Lithuanian. The level of knowledge of the language is determined.

If teachers who work according to vocational training programmes and non-formal education (except for early childhood and pre-school education programmes) have no teacher qualification, they must complete a basic course in pedagogy and psychology in accordance with the procedure prescribed by Minister of Education and Science before starting to work as a teacher, except for the cases when teachers already have university education, college education, acquired before 2009 or special secondary education, acquired before 1995. In this event they shall complete such course within a year from starting to work as teachers.

The teachers working according to general education programmes must have a certificate confirming that they have completed a special pedagogy and special psychology course for teachers under the qualification improvement programme in special pedagogy and special psychology studies unless they completed such course the workload of which was not less than 60 hours or 2 credits earlier or during their major studies.

The teachers must have competences specified in the Requirements for Teacher Computer Literacy Programmes.

On 04 July 2017 the Teacher Qualification Improvement Programme for Productive Learning was approved by Order No V-553 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. The programme is intended for teachers striving to organize productive learning. The purpose of the programme is to provide teachers with knowledge of productive learning organization and to develop competences, necessary for enhancing pupils' opportunities of choosing education, efficiently to teach pupils who have learning difficulties and who have lost motivation for learning taking into account each pupil's educational interests, support and service needs, his and his parents (guardians, carers') expectations by motivating each pupil to acquire upper secondary education and to choose further education and professional career path.



Generalization

The impact of teachers, career specialists and the whole school community as well as of parents on changes in pupils' motivation and achievements is obvious. Therefore, creation of new learning environments, development of teachers, active participation of school community in national and international initiatives, active work of career consultants aimed at providing support to young people in shaping their future vision and further path of education as well as purposeful participation of parents in school life may contribute to reducing the rate of early leaving from education and training in problematic regions / schools.

The major preventive measures to help the pupils with solving difficulties emerging at school are as follows: provision of social, pedagogical and psychological support; non-formal education of children; special education. Preventive measures related to education organization shall be establishment of favorable learning environment; training load regulation; improvement of teacher competences. The following are the measures related to socio-economic causes of early school leaving: increase in engagement in afterschool activities, activity of day centres; social work with a family; involvement of parents in school community activity; support for children from families at social risk; alternative education opportunities that allow coordinating work and education.

For effective preventive policy it is not sufficient to apply measures which improve provision of education services. It is necessary to combine them with the measures of other policy areas, namely social, health, employment, delinquency prevention, etc. For the purpose of efficiency of intervention at national level, it is necessary to apply targeted public policy. Therefore, it is important to analyze the causes of early leaving from education and training in a more thorough way, to take permanent preventive measures, to watch the situation of early school leaving as well as to observe the signals of probable drop-out, to react to changes in an efficient way and to assess effectiveness of preventive measures.

Proper cooperation with parents means better school results. The parents are asked:

- To show more interest in child's achievements and life at school.
- Within the range of possibility to help the child to do homework.
- To cooperate with teachers, class tutor and education support specialists, to follow their recommendations if the child encounters more serious learning difficulties.
- To participate in school events and other activities arranged for learning support.



While analyzing the causes of unemployment it was found out that in each case the major causes of youth unemployment are different, i.e. lack of education, vocational training and work experience, non-conformity of acquired vocational knowledge to labour market needs, lack of persistence and job seeking skills, insufficient help with making first steps in the labour market. Therefore, by trying to reduce the youth unemployment attention should be paid not to elimination of consequences but to elimination of causes and the support should be provided for a young unemployed man referring to his individual needs.

Though different targeted programmes and measures help to reduce the level of unemployment among young people, however, the youth unemployment still remains one of the most urgent problems in Lithuania.

Insufficient vocational orientation and the fact that employers are not apt to give fair pay to young people or do not employ them because of insufficient work experience predetermine the problems of youth consolidation in the labour market.

By implementing the Employment Growth Programme 2014-2020 and having evaluated the fact that society is ageing, that there is a shortage of qualified workers and emigration reduces the national potential of human resources, it is necessary to rally all working age residents of Lithuania, encourage them to take an active part in economic activity, to integrate themselves into the labour market and to retain in it as long as possible.

It is noted that the most important causes which hinder young unemployed persons in successful competing in the labour market is lack of vocational qualification and work experience.



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