



PROMOTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)

The youth employment crisis presents a major challenge for the future of the CIS countries. At the same time, workers are experiencing a lack of decent work and face long-term social exclusion. Aggravated by the global economic and financial crisis in the labour markets of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the unemployment rate is projected to remain at just over 18 per cent until 2018.

The situation requires governments, employers and workers to promote, create and maintain decent and productive jobs. In the resolution “The youth employment crisis: A call for action”, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2012, representatives of the Governments, employers and workers of 185 countries, called for urgent and immediate action to reverse the youth employment crisis.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Partners:
PAO Lukoil

Beneficiary countries:
Azerbaijan,
Kazakhstan, Russian
Federation, and
others¹

Timeframe:
January 2013 –
December 2017

Budget:
US\$ 6 million

¹Armenia, Georgia,
Kyrgyzstan,
Tajikistan,
Turkmenistan,
Uzbekistan

THE RESPONSE

The technical cooperation project, financially supported by the PAO LUKOIL and implemented by the ILO, seeks to strengthen the impact of policies and programmes on youth employment in order to support the creation of more and better jobs for young people. The project focuses on effective responses to the escalating youth employment crisis through initiatives at regional, national and local levels.

Regional initiatives form the overall framework of the project, which focuses on joint approaches between CIS countries and Georgia, by establishing a mechanism for regional cooperation, partnerships, and knowledge sharing.

The national components target Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, where the project supports the development and implementation of time-bound national action plans, pilot programmes and other initiatives that take into account the specificities of the youth employment challenge.

The local components focus on youth employment initiatives, with a view to creating a framework for cooperation between local authorities, the social partners and other relevant institutions. Three pilot areas have been selected, representing diverse demographic, geographic and socio-economic features within the Russian Federation.

RESULTS

By the completion of the project in 2017, young people from the three target countries will have benefited from improved employment services and other youth employment initiatives. Significant achievements are visible at all levels during the implementation of the project.

At the regional level, a tripartite network comprising representatives of nine countries of the subregion (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) has been established to promote

cooperation and knowledge sharing on youth employment, and to develop and revise policies and strategies for decent work for youth.

Bi-annual meetings are organized for the members of the network, combining capacity building, knowledge sharing, learning sessions, and peer review. By the end of 2014, three meetings had been conducted with the participation of tripartite constituents from the nine countries, as well as representatives of other countries and international experts. Peer reviews of policies, institutions and programmes have enabled the ministries of



labour, social partners and other key stakeholders in the nine countries to formulate and implement employment policies and strategies more effectively. Through regional knowledge sharing and cooperation, the project is identifying and collecting good practices based on peer review toolkit development, country reports, and enterprise-based reviews.

At the country level, high-level consultations in the target countries have helped identify the main challenges, needs and priorities for each country.

In **Azerbaijan** the project is contributing to the implementation of the national employment strategy by piloting a wage subsidy programme and an entrepreneurship programme in cooperation with labour market institutions and social partners. The initiative addresses employment challenges among young people aged 15 to 24 in both urban and rural areas (currently estimated at above 14 per cent). Focused both on demand and supply, such measures can facilitate job creation and a smooth transition from school to work. Project activities will enable young people to benefit from new and improved employment services, as well as modernize and strengthen the capacities of the Public Employment Service in Azerbaijan.

In **Kazakhstan**, a country faced with a growing young population that needs to be absorbed into the labour market, the project is assisting in the development and implementation of national youth employment initiatives. With a view to creating new and decent jobs for these young people and ensuring their access to social security, the ILO project

conducted an in-depth review of national policies on youth employment, producing evidence-based policy recommendations for national youth employment strategies. These have served as a basis for the development of a National Action Plan for Youth Employment Promotion.

In the **Russian Federation**, the project takes into account aspects of the national context such as the demographic situation, regional disparities, skills mismatches and the youth unemployment rate, which is constantly well over twice that recorded for adults (more than 14 per cent compared to 5.5 per cent). It supports the development of national youth employment policy through a gender-sensitive and evidence-based roadmap for the promotion of decent work for youth, and guides national policy-makers and social partners in their efforts to develop effective initiatives, piloted at the local level, aimed at addressing the youth employment challenges.

At the local level, the project facilitates youth employment partnerships between local governmental authorities, workers' and employers' organizations, as well as private companies and civil society organizations in three regions of the Russian Federation. Through an open, flexible and voluntary mechanism that encourages discussion and joint action, the project facilitates consultation and discussion between a wide range of actors, who use their comparative advantages to promote the quantity and quality of youth employment in practical terms. It provides assistance in the pilot implementation of wage subsidies and youth guarantee schemes, and helps to evaluate, replicate and institutionalize these practices.



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BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

The project goes beyond merely training individuals, and goes directly to the root of the youth employment problem by means of policy interventions at the national level. It builds on the ILO's existing cooperation in the target countries and draws upon the ILO's international expertise, good practices, lessons learned, and the latest employment promotion tools, while ensuring commitment to decent work and building regional and national capacities for sustainable impact. Through the regional knowledge-sharing network, all partners increase their effectiveness in formulating employment policies and strategies for youth. The project also contributes towards developing and improving targeted services and tools for existing and potential young entrepreneurs. It also supports greater participation and representation of young people in employers' and workers' organizations.