



YOU<sup>+</sup>

# OPEN TO WORK

YOUTH PATH TO SUCCESS:  
BRIDGING THE LABOR MARKET GAP

2024



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# INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides a comprehensive overview of the Youth One Stop Agency (YOSA) 2.0. project, its objectives, achievements, and alignment with EU policies to inspire and guide youth employability initiatives across Europe.

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**THE YOUTH ONE STOP AGENCY (YOSA) 2.0. PROJECT REPRESENTS AN INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION FUNDED BY ERASMUS+ UNDER THE "KA220-YOU - COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS IN YOUTH" PROGRAM.**

This initiative unites youth organizations, educational institutions, and local businesses from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Georgia, addressing the challenges young people face in entering the workforce—challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By leveraging the expertise and resources of its partners, YOSA 2.0. aims to create practical solutions that bridge the gap between education and employment.

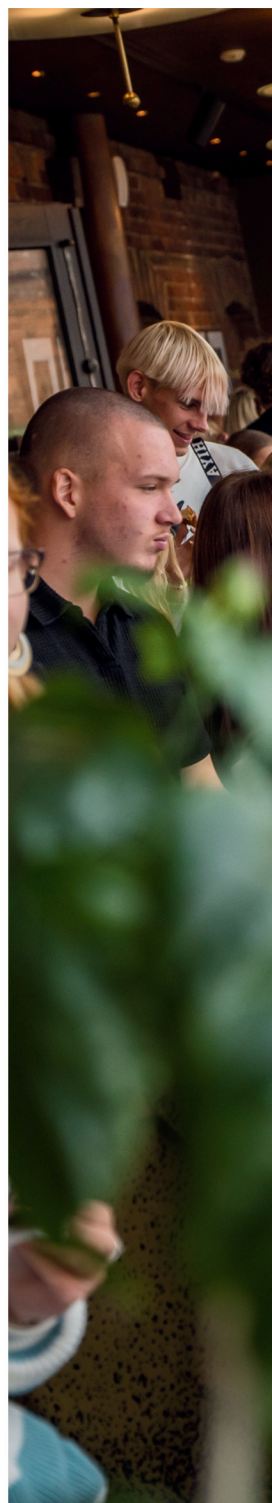
## OBJECTIVES OF YOSA 2.0.

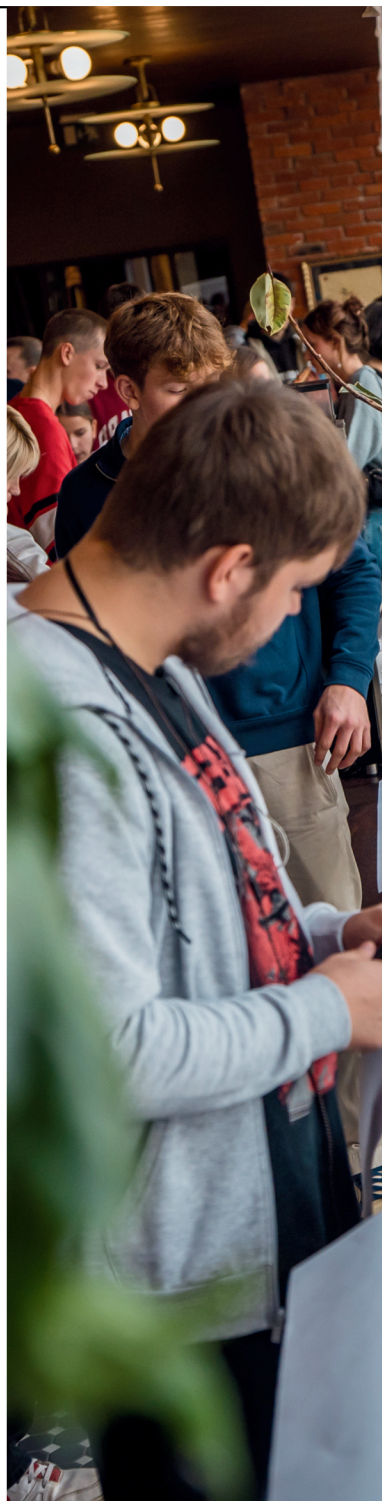
YOSA 2.0. is all about creating real opportunities for young people.

By training mentors who can guide youth on their career paths, building strong connections between businesses and young job seekers, and developing practical tools for

**YOSA 2.0. equips mentors, connects youth with opportunities, and creates a sustainable framework for navigating the path to meaningful employment**

employment support, the project aims to make the transition from education to work smoother and more accessible.





### **Empowering Youth Mentors:**

Through a structured training program, YOSA 2.0 equips youth workers, mentors, and volunteers with the skills to serve as employability mentors. These specialists guide young people in identifying and pursuing career opportunities aligned with their individual talents and aspirations.

### **Building Youth-Employer Networks:**

The project establishes local networks connecting youth with supportive businesses. These networks facilitate real-world career exploration and job-shadowing opportunities, bridging the gap between education and the workplace.

### **Developing the YOSA Methodology:**

Synthesizing project insights, YOSA 2.0 introduces a comprehensive methodology to support youth employment. This framework serves as a foundational tool for organizations across Europe, fostering adoption and adaptation of best practices.

## **PROJECT VISION**

**A SUSTAINABLE YOUTH  
EMPLOYABILITY MODEL THAT  
MERGES THEORETICAL INSIGHTS  
WITH PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS.**

By connecting young people with mentors, career resources, and supportive networks, the project empowers them to make informed career decisions, laying the groundwork for long-term planning and strategic policy development in the youth sector.

# EU POLICY FRAMEWORK

## for Youth Employment

The Youth One Stop Agency (YOSA) 2.0 project stands as a practical and innovative initiative to address youth employability challenges, aligning seamlessly with key European Union policies. Funded by Erasmus+, YOSA 2.0 focuses on equipping young people with the tools, skills, and opportunities needed to navigate the labor market effectively.

The EU's Youth Guarantee, introduced in 2013 and reinforced in 2020, serves as a cornerstone of these efforts. This policy ensures that every young individual under 25 receives a quality offer for employment, education, apprenticeship, or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education. YOSA 2.0 directly supports this vision by training youth mentors and creating networks that connect young people with employers, bridging the gap between education and the workforce.

Another essential framework is the EU Youth Strategy (2019–2027), which emphasizes fostering youth participation in democratic life, social engagement, and ensuring access to vital resources.

Through its collaborative structure across Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Georgia, YOSA 2.0 reflects these priorities, creating inclusive opportunities for youth to engage with businesses, mentors, and community leaders.

The Youth Employment Support Package (2020) further reinforces these initiatives, focusing on modernizing vocational training and enhancing employability. YOSA 2.0 embodies these goals by developing innovative methodologies for youth employment support, offering tools that can be adapted by organizations across Europe to meet the evolving needs of young job seekers.

**Together, YOSA 2.0 and the EU policy framework demonstrate a unified effort to reduce youth unemployment, empower young individuals, and build sustainable pathways to success in the labor market. By combining local actions with broader policy initiatives, these efforts provide a comprehensive approach to one of Europe's most pressing challenges.**



# PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

## Collaborative Strengths Driving YOSA 2.0.

The success of the Youth One Stop Agency (YOSA) 2.0. project is rooted in the collective expertise and dedication of its partner organizations. Representing four countries—Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Georgia—each partner brings unique strengths and perspectives to the initiative. Together, they form a dynamic network addressing the diverse challenges of youth employability, from mentorship and training to bridging the gap between education and the labor market.



### ATTĪSĪBAS PLATFORMA YOU+ (Latvia)

As the lead organization, YOU+ coordinates the project and spearheads the development of the YOSA methodology. With extensive experience in youth mentoring and employability, YOU+ ensures the project's success through leadership and innovation.

### POLITIKOS TYRIMU IR ANALIZES INSTITUTAS (Lithuania)

Specializing in policy research and non-formal education, this partner leads key training programs, contributing nearly two decades of expertise to build capacity among youth workers and mentors.



### FUNDACJA NA RZECZ WSPIERANIA INNOWACJI SPOŁECZNYCH IDEA LAB (Poland):

With a focus on social innovation and digital skills, IDEA LAB delivers training for youth in urban settings, equipping them with practical skills for employment.

### YOUTH FOR THE WORLD (Georgia)

This partner engages disadvantaged and rural youth, fostering social inclusion and empowerment. Their work deepens the project's reach, ensuring diverse groups benefit from its initiatives.



### IZGAISMO IDEJU (Latvia)

This organization coordinates youth policy and activities in Aizpute under a municipal delegation, offering non-formal education, media and music projects, volunteer opportunities, thematic events, and a space for youth initiatives.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## ADVANCING YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH INNOVATION



The YOSA 2.0. project has achieved impactful results, creating sustainable benefits for young people, organizations, and communities. Through cross-border collaboration, the initiative has introduced innovative tools, strengthened strategic partnerships, and actively engaged youth on a broad scale. These results not only showcase the progress made but also provide a foundation for replicable and scalable approaches to effectively address youth unemployment.

### PRESENTED BELOW ARE THE KEY MILESTONES THAT UNDERPIN THE SUCCESS OF YOSA 2.0.

#### 01 Establishing Youth One Stop Agencies:

Latvia and Lithuania have launched their first Youth One-Stop Agencies, inspired by Finnish expertise. These centers offer comprehensive career guidance, mentorship, and skill-building resources for young people. Meanwhile, Poland and Georgia are preparing to establish similar centers and are currently in the development phase.

#### 02 Developing a Global Training Program:

An internationally applicable training program equips specialists with the tools to support youth in Youth One Stop Agencies, setting a benchmark for employability training.

#### 03 Creating a Network of Entrepreneurs and Innovators:

Partner organizations have built a robust network of entrepreneurs committed to addressing youth unemployment through collaboration, innovation, and active mentorship.

#### 04 Engaging Over 1,000 Young People:

More than 1,000 youth have participated in employment workshops, dialogues, and conferences. The project's innovative approaches to employability education, outlined in this handbook, are designed for replication across Europe.



# FINNISH OHJAAMO CENTERS:

## **A Comprehensive Approach to Youth Empowerment**

This chapter outlines the Finnish Ohjaamo centers, centralized hubs providing integrated services for youth aged 15 to 29. By addressing career, education, and personal development needs, these centers have become a benchmark for reducing youth unemployment and fostering well-being through a collaborative and accessible approach. The Finnish Ohjaamo centers represent the best practice we have observed and we believe this model serves as a remarkable guide for similar initiatives elsewhere.



## THE FINNISH OHJAAMO CENTERS, OR ONE-STOP-SHOP GUIDANCE CENTERS

provide an innovative model for supporting young people aged 15 to 29. These centers streamline access to crucial resources and services, offering personalized guidance on education, employment, and personal development.

By addressing the diverse needs of youth in a single, accessible location, Ohjaamo centers help to reduce unemployment, promote educational advancement, and foster well-being, setting a benchmark for integrated youth services.

### COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES TAILORED TO YOUTH NEEDS

Each center can have various specialists, depending on the side of the centre and community that it is working in.

#### 01 Available specialists:

- Career consultants
- Psychologists
- Youth mentors
- Youth worker
- Recreational Coordinators

#### 02 Available services:

- Tutoring Programs
- Recreational Activities
- Mental health support
- Job Placement Services
- Drug addiction prevention
- Counseling and Support Groups

#### 03 Additional specialists

- Dentists
- Medical support
- Housing services
- Well-being coach
- Help with getting over the debt
- Court implementation specialist

These services are only possible through a well-coordinated approach, which brings together various stakeholders to create a seamless support network.



# COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:

THE FOUNDATION OF OHJAAMO'S SUCCESS

**The success of the Ohjaamo centers is rooted in their collaborative model involving municipalities, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Education and Culture, and local organizations.**



This approach not only enhances the quality and accessibility of services but also ensures a comprehensive response to the diverse challenges faced by youth.

## **OHJAAMO CENTERS: ACCESSIBLE, YOUTH-FOCUSED, AND FUTURE-READY**

The Ohjaamo centers are strategically located in easily accessible areas within communities across Finland, designed to be welcoming and non-intimidating spaces for young people. Central to their operation is a youth-centered approach, prioritizing flexibility and responsiveness to the evolving needs of individuals aged 15 to 29. Advisors and staff at these centers focus on building trusting relationships, offering guidance in an informal and approachable manner. This ensures that young people feel supported and valued, fostering engagement and empowering them to take charge of their futures.

**A SUSTAINABLE  
YOUTH  
EMPLOYABILITY  
MODEL THAT  
MERGES  
THEORETICAL  
INSIGHTS WITH  
PRACTICAL  
APPLICATIONS.**

Since their inception, Ohjaamo centers have had a profound impact on the lives of young people in Finland. By consolidating a wide range of services under one roof, the centers have significantly reduced youth unemployment, increased educational participation, and enhanced social inclusion.



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Building on their success, Ohjaamo centers are committed to continuous improvement and expansion. Plans are underway to enhance accessibility, particularly in remote and rural areas, ensuring that no young person is left behind.



Additionally, efforts to integrate digital services aim to broaden the reach and effectiveness of support, catering to the preferences and needs of tech-savvy youth. Feedback from young people is actively incorporated into service development, keeping the centers aligned with their target audience's evolving expectations.

# THE FINNISH OHJAAMO CENTERS EXEMPLIFY

HOW ACCESSIBLE,  
YOUTH-FOCUSED  
SUPPORT CAN  
DRIVE MEANINGFUL  
CHANGE.

By offering a comprehensive range of services in a welcoming and adaptable environment, these centers empower young people to build fulfilling lives both professionally and personally. Their commitment to accessibility, continuous innovation, and collaboration ensures that Ohjaamo remains a model for holistic youth support, inspiring similar initiatives worldwide.

Parallel to this project, we implemented a smaller initiative funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, allowing 8 specialists from Latvia and Lithuania to visit 6 Ohjaamo centers in Finland. This led to partnerships with Finnish experts and in an approved Erasmus+ strategic partnership. Together with Latvian, Lithuanian, and new Bulgarian partners, we aim to establish the first one-stop agencies in these countries by spring 2025.



# YOUTH ONE STOP AGENCY IN NATIONAL REALITIES:

## Opportunities and Challenges

The concept of Youth One Stop Agencies (YOSAs) represents a transformative approach to youth support, offering centralized services tailored to the unique needs of young people. However, its implementation varies significantly across countries, shaped by differing national contexts, policies, and challenges. This chapter explores the realities of YOSA development in Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, and Poland, highlighting both the progress made and the hurdles to overcome.





# OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO COLLABORATION AND MINDSET SHIFTS

In Latvia, Youth One Stop Agencies remain a relatively new concept, with limited awareness among professionals and stakeholders. However, initiatives like the establishment of the first YOSA in Liepāja by 2025 represent a promising step forward.

## KEY CHALLENGES

### 01 Lack of Cross-Sectoral Cooperation:

Effective YOSA implementation requires collaboration among state institutions, municipalities, and NGOs. However, many institutions in Latvia operate independently, posing a significant barrier to cohesive partnerships.

### 02 Insufficient Funding:

Individualized youth work demands considerable resources, but financial support from municipalities and the state is limited. NGOs rely heavily on project-based funding, making sustainability difficult.

### 03 Mindset Differences:

Cultural perceptions of youth as a "problem to be managed" rather than individuals with unique needs and potential hinder progress. Adopting Finland's more inclusive mindset could transform approaches to youth support in Latvia.

While Latvia faces structural and cultural challenges, Lithuania offers a different perspective through the implementation of the nationwide "JUNGTYS" project.





## LITHUANIA:

# A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Lithuania's "JUNGTYS" project exemplifies a strategic and collaborative effort to reduce youth unemployment and promote education. Running from 2024 to 2028, this initiative targets NEET youth, offering tailored services and long-term solutions.

The project targets 8,000 young people in Lithuania, with 30% expected to pursue education or employment upon completion. Funded by the EU's European Social Fund+ with a €13.37 million budget, it aims to promote sustainable youth development and reduce poverty. Key recommendations for YOSA development in Lithuania include improving accessibility, offering comprehensive career guidance, fostering international collaboration, strengthening local partnerships, and focusing on continuous improvement to empower youth for long-term success.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF "JUNGTYS"

### 01 Personalized Support

Programs focused on life skills, professional development, and social competencies.

### 02 Career and Educational Guidance

Services to assist youth in discovering career paths and accessing educational opportunities.

### 03 Specialized Assistance

Access to professionals like psychologists, legal advisors, and health experts.

### 04 Health Insurance

Providing NEET participants with essential healthcare coverage.

**To further enhance the impact of Youth One Stop Agencies (YOSAs) in Lithuania, a comprehensive approach must focus on expanding accessibility, integrating services, leveraging partnerships, and increasing outreach efforts.**

The establishment of additional YOSAs is critical, particularly by integrating career guidance and employment support into the existing network of Open Youth Centers across municipalities. Developing an integrated digital platform would further expand accessibility, offering online resources, job databases, and virtual counseling to reach youth in remote areas.

Comprehensive career guidance should be prioritized by employing qualified career counselors to provide one-on-one guidance, group workshops, and mentorship programs. Workshops on job-related skills, such as financial literacy, CV writing, and interview preparation, should align with labor market demands. Partnerships with local employers are essential to offer internships, job shadowing, and part-time opportunities, providing young people with hands-on experience and professional connections.

Lithuania can benefit from adopting best practices from Finland's Ohjaamo centers, particularly in youth counseling, digital accessibility, and collaborative models. Expanding Erasmus+ programs and fostering international partnerships can further enhance staff training and programming innovations.

Strengthening ties with the education and employment sectors is vital. Schools should integrate career guidance into their curriculum through regular workshops, youth center visits, and career days. Vocational schools and employers should collaborate to offer apprenticeships and skill development programs tailored to industry needs.

To ensure inclusivity, specialized programs must target vulnerable and rural youth, addressing the challenges faced by those in low-income communities or remote areas. Mobile YOSAs can provide on-the-ground support in regions with limited access to youth services.

Finally, awareness campaigns in schools, online platforms, and social media can highlight the benefits of YOSAs, while a youth ambassador program could engage young leaders to advocate for and promote these centers. These steps will ensure that YOSAs in Lithuania continue to empower youth and build pathways for long-term success.







## GEORGIA

# THE NEED FOR FOUNDATIONAL YOUTH SERVICES

Georgia lacks state-supported youth centers, underscoring the urgent need for a YOSA model. Young people in Georgia face barriers to accessing basic services, from healthcare to employment opportunities.



## KEY CHALLENGES

### 01 Lack of Centralized Youth Services:

Young people struggle to find accessible information on essential resources, such as free healthcare (mental and physical), non-formal education opportunities, sports clubs, and employment options. A YOSA system would simplify this process by consolidating services in one easily accessible space.

### 02 Insufficient Promotion and Awareness:

For a YOSA to succeed, it must be well-promoted in educational institutions, community development centers, and other strategic locations. Without widespread awareness, its impact would remain limited.

### 03 Design and Accessibility Barriers:

Youth centers must appeal to young people through modern, visually engaging designs while being portable and adaptable to various community needs. Strategic placement in high-traffic areas is essential for maximizing accessibility.

### 04 Sustainability and Resource Constraints:

A sustainable model requires innovative funding approaches, such as renting part of the space for commercial purposes while dedicating the other part to youth services. Without sustainable funding, long-term operations could be jeopardized.

While Georgia works to establish foundational services, Poland contends with a complex policy environment that limits youth-specific initiatives.



## POLAND

# ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC GAPS IN YOUTH POLICY

In Poland, the lack of targeted youth services complicates the implementation of a YOSA model. Youth are often grouped with children or adults in public policies, leaving their specific needs unaddressed.



## KEY CHALLENGES

### 01 Policy Limitations:

Services are not tailored to youth under 18, with employment support programs only accessible at age 18 or older.

### 02 Cultural Barriers:

Social pressure prioritizes education over work, creating a stigma around youth employment.

### 03 Sharp Transitions:

Youth face abrupt transitions from education to the labor market, often without adequate preparation or support.

### 04 Health Insurance

Providing NEET participants with essential healthcare coverage.

Raising awareness of the specific needs of young people among policymakers and entrepreneurs is essential to addressing the challenges they face during the transition from education to employment. Policymakers must recognize the importance of youth-focused policies and allocate resources to initiatives that empower young people, while entrepreneurs need to understand the value of investing in youth talent and creating opportunities that bridge the gap between education and the labor market.

To support this transition, targeted programs should be developed that provide practical tools and resources, such as career counseling, internships, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on training. These programs should be designed to equip young people with the skills and confidence necessary to navigate the competitive job market effectively and to adapt to its ever-changing demands.

Equally important is fostering strong partnerships between educational institutions, local governments, businesses, and non-governmental organizations. Such collaboration ensures that youth-focused initiatives are comprehensive, innovative, and impactful, creating a support network that aligns with the needs of young people and strengthens their pathway to meaningful employment.

# SUCCESS STORIES

**Real-Life Impact Across Countries**

Inspiring stories of youth empowerment and professional growth achieved through Youth One Stop Agency initiatives across Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and Georgia. From first job experiences and innovative employment programs to transformative workshops and collaborative community efforts, these accounts showcase the tangible impact of targeted youth support. These success stories illustrate how tailored guidance, strategic partnerships, and innovative approaches can create lasting opportunities, equipping young people with the skills and confidence to shape their futures.



# PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

## GAINING INSIGHT THROUGH SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

**Trying out a job helped me understand not only what I enjoy but also the skills I need to succeed in the workplace.**

The “Darbiņš jāmil” event provided young people with a unique opportunity to engage directly with professionals and explore various industries through company visits. For one participant, this event became a pivotal moment, offering valuable insights into workplace dynamics and helping them navigate their first professional experience. The following account captures their journey, highlighting the importance of hands-on exposure and real-world learning in shaping career paths.

“ I attended the event “Darbiņš jāmil”, which was very inspiring and interesting. At the event, there was an opportunity to meet professionals from various fields. I also participated in visits to several companies, where I could see how work processes happen in different industries and get to know the companies and work environment.

I was motivated to get involved and visit the companies because I thought it was a great opportunity to see how everything works from the inside, rather than just theoretically or from the outside. It allowed me to not only better understand a specific industry but also gain a deeper insight into daily work processes and challenges.

Moreover, this experience helped me better understand what skills are needed to work successfully in the relevant field and how I could develop myself in it.

One of the companies I visited was CTB, and shortly after the tour, a representative of the company contacted me because I showed interest in the company and the opportunity to work there during the tour. I accepted this opportunity and worked at the company all summer. I was quite surprised when they contacted me, and I didn't have to send my CV or call to apply. This made the whole process much easier and more unexpected. Of course, I was also very happy to have the chance to test myself in a specific field and see how companies operate from the inside.

It was a valuable experience that I definitely appreciated. I managed to adapt quite quickly to the working conditions and establish contact with colleagues, which was very pleasant. This experience showed me how important it is to build good relationships with the team. I am confident that if I wanted to, I could continue working at this company because I felt comfortable and motivated to do my job.



Before I started working, I had an imagination of how everything would happen, and I pictured it quite differently. However, when I started working, I felt very confused, as I had never been involved in such work before. It took time to get used to the new tasks and environment. Over time, I realized that it is normal, and the learning process is part of every new beginning.

This experience changed my thoughts about my future career. I realized that this field does not appeal to me as much as I had hoped, but I am glad I had the opportunity to try it out. It helped me gain valuable insights into what I like and what I do not, and provided the chance to develop new skills.

In my opinion, offering such projects provides greater assistance to young people because

**THEY GIVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN REAL EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES.**

However, everyone must individually decide how much they are willing to invest in the work and whether it is something they enjoy. This process helps you understand your interests and abilities, as well as what type of career might be most suitable."





# GOOD PRACTICE

## CONNECTING YOUTH WITH INDUSTRIES IN LIEPĀJA

The “Darbiņš jāmil” event series in Liepāja exemplifies how informal, youth-centered initiatives can bridge the gap between young people and industry professionals. By offering company visits and direct interactions, the program provided participants with practical insights into various industries and opened doors to potential career opportunities.

**This was an opportunity to see everything in action, not just learn about it theoretically.**

In Liepāja, the “Darbiņš jāmil” initiative created meaningful connections between young people and industry professionals through informal and interactive events. The program focused on fostering relationships with company representatives and offering young participants a closer look at the realities of various industries.

During the initial local activity, youth had the chance to engage with companies in a relaxed setting, asking questions and building rapport. To deepen their understanding, the initiative organized eight company visits to major technical industry firms. At these visits, companies showcased their work environments, allowing participants to explore daily operations and interact with professionals directly.

**PARTICIPANTS HAD THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE WHICH COMPANIES TO VISIT, TAILORING THE EXPERIENCE TO THEIR INTERESTS.**

This approach not only gave the youth a deeper insight into workplace dynamics but also provided an opportunity to demonstrate their enthusiasm and skills to potential employers.

One standout success involved a participant who secured a summer job simply by being active and engaged during one of the company visits. The event highlighted the value of hands-on exposure and how proactive involvement can lead to real employment opportunities.





## **GOOD PRACTICE**

### **JOB SPEED-DATING IN LIEPĀJA**

In collaboration with the platform “Visas iespējas,” the first-ever job speed dating event in Liepāja provided a unique opportunity for employers and young job seekers to connect. Designed to facilitate informal, 5-minute interviews, the event allowed both parties to quickly evaluate whether they were a good match.

The event featured eight employers with open positions and around 50 youth participants, all seeking employment. To ensure effective matches, both employers and candidates completed pre-event questionnaires developed by “Visas iespējas.” Each participant was paired with 3–5 companies for one-on-one interviews, creating a dynamic and efficient process.

The event featured eight employers with open positions and around 50 youth participants, all seeking employment. To ensure effective matches, both employers and candidates completed pre-event questionnaires developed by “Visas iespējas.” Each participant was paired with 3–5 companies for one-on-one interviews, creating a dynamic and efficient process.

The informal format helped reduce the stress typically associated with job interviews, providing a comfortable environment for both sides to interact. Participants and employers appreciated the chance to meet multiple prospects within a short timeframe, creating a productive networking experience.

**THE EVENT'S SUCCESS WAS EVIDENT, AS SEVERAL CANDIDATES RECEIVED INVITATIONS FOR SECOND INTERVIEWS, HIGHLIGHTING ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN FOSTERING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS AND OPENING DOORS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**





# PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

## DOMINYKAS' FIRST JOB – BUILDING INDEPENDENCE AND SKILLS AT 15

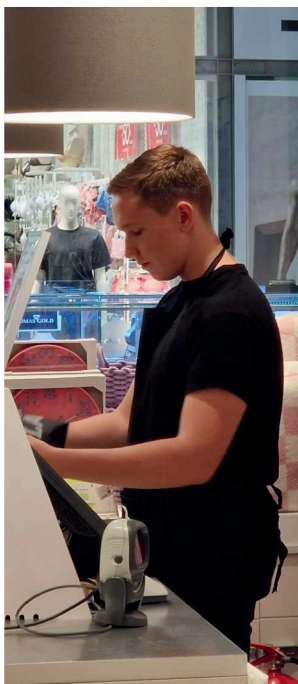
Trying different roles helps build skills and discover what truly motivates you

At just 15 years old, Dominykas stepped into the professional world, motivated by a desire for independence, hands-on experience, and the satisfaction of earning his own money. With support from a Youth One Stop Agency initiative, Dominykas secured his first paid job at the retail shop Tiger of Copenhagen. Unlike many of his classmates, who opted for volunteering, Dominykas chose to immerse himself in a formal work environment, seeking to challenge himself and grow.

The preparation process played a crucial role in helping Dominykas feel confident in his new role. Supervisors provided detailed explanations of his tasks and shared what he could expect, creating a welcoming and approachable atmosphere. Their supportive and open attitude encouraged Dominykas to ask questions and seek assistance whenever needed, enabling him to adapt quickly to his responsibilities.

Dominykas thrived in this environment, finding the workplace dynamic and engaging. His daily tasks, such as handling the cash register, required attentiveness and regular interaction with customers, keeping the job interesting. The manageable hours, in accordance with labor regulations for youth under 16, allowed him to balance work and personal life effectively.

Reflecting on his experience, Dominykas emphasized the importance of exploring various roles to build skills, gain insights into different career paths, and discover personal motivations beyond financial rewards, such as growth and satisfaction.



While he attended one career counseling session, most of his career insights came from his curiosity and hands-on experience, demonstrating the value of practical opportunities and open guidance for young people navigating the job market.



# GOOD PRACTICE

## "ŠVIEČIAM" - PROMOTING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER GUIDANCE

The annual "Šviečiam" event, organized in collaboration with Elektrėnai Vocational Training Center and Elektrėnai Youth Center, serves as a successful model for promoting youth employment and career guidance. Aimed at young people, the event focuses on education, career opportunities, personal growth, and community building,

inspiring participants to confidently take their first steps toward a future career.

**Opportunities like 'Šviečiam' inspire young people to reflect on their ambitions and confidently take their first steps toward a fulfilling career.**

To make it youth-friendly, the event is happening late in the evening ("youth night at school"), is done in a non-formal way, has a positive vibe (concentrating on opportunities rather than issues), and finishes with a grand disco at Open Youth Center.

This approach combines inspiring personal stories with hands-on learning and provides a supportive environment for young people to develop their career aspirations, making "Šviečiam" an exemplary practice for youth employment and career guidance.



# GOOD PRACTICE

## YOUTH SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM – A PATHWAY TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Youth Summer Employment and Integration Program in Elektrėnai Municipality provides young people aged 14–19 (up to 21 in social skills programs) with their first job opportunities. Initially a local initiative, it has expanded nationally to over half of Lithuania's municipalities.

### Program Highlights:

- **Boosting Employment:** Seasonal jobs offer practical experience and independence.
- **Building Skills:** Participants develop essential competencies like responsibility and social awareness.
- **Exploring Careers:** Work placements help youth discover career paths and form professional connections.
- **Strengthening Communities:** Wage subsidies and partnerships align municipal, employer, and youth interests.

### Impact of the Erasmus+ Project:

Additional funding from Erasmus+ enriched the program by providing pre-employment training, facilitating discussions with employers, and supporting research into the program's impact. A key finding revealed that multilaterally signed job contracts (involving the youth, employer, and municipality) effectively protected young workers, ensuring no cases of abuse, extra hours, or exploitation were reported.

Aligned with summer vacations, the program combines work experience with workshops and mentorship to build confidence and leadership.

Erasmus+ funding enhanced the program with pre-employment training, employer discussions, and impact research, revealing that multilaterally signed contracts effectively protected young workers from exploitation.

**This program not only provides young people with their first job experience but also fosters independence, confidence, and the skills needed for their future careers**



**POLAND**

# PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

## ADRIAN'S JOURNEY – GAINING CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS AT 18

"I was interested in the program because it was something different from what we usually get at the foster care institution (WCOW). We have many workshops, but going to the labor office and learning about what they offer was something new. Normally, young people don't go to places like that, and I probably wouldn't have gone either if not for this program. The Job Shadowing was also something new—a very cool initiative.

First, we had the Employability Workshop with IDEA LAB, where we tried to design our professional paths for the future. It felt strange because I felt like I was just at the beginning, and I didn't really know how it would all turn out. There are so many things that might determine my path. Still, it was an opportunity to think about it differently. I don't know if I'll reach the goals I planned—it felt a bit like science fiction—but as they say, you need to start somewhere.

During the visit to the Labor Office, we talked to career advisors and EURES officers. I found out that you can get a lot of support for free if you just ask, like face-to-face or even online meetings with a career consultant who can give individual advice. I also learned about the EURES program, which provides many opportunities to work abroad without taking risks, so it's completely safe. Maybe I'll try it one day.

The best part of the program was the Job Shadowing activities. I didn't even know something like that was possible. Normally, when you go for an internship, you have to stay there for a certain period, even if you realize it's not for you, because you need to complete it. But here, we could just visit companies and see if we liked what they do or not. I visited two companies—one was Madnetic Games, which produces video games. It was fascinating to see what they do, and it was inspiring to learn that you don't need a degree to have a good job. You can learn things online, start working, and do really creative and interesting stuff while earning good money.

**Job Shadowing was something new—a very cool initiative that let me explore careers without committing to an internship."**



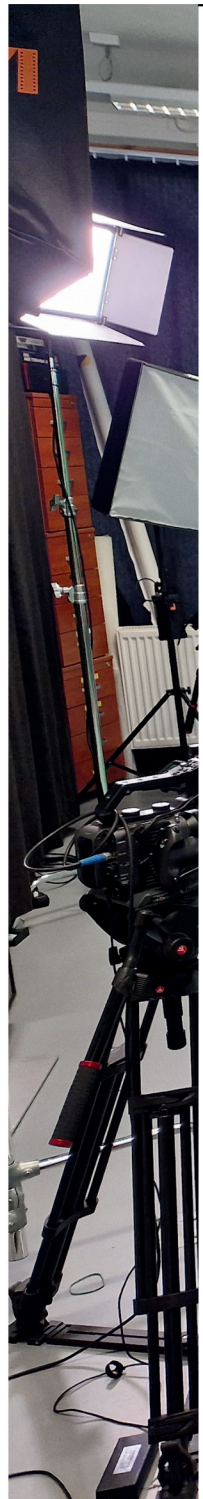
I also visited Roboklocki, where I saw all the robots they have, and a TV studio—it felt like a completely different world. We will have the opportunity to go there for a regular internship, and I'm really looking forward to it. We just need to wait for the summer holidays because now we have school.

We also visited business incubators at Wrocław Technology Park. I'm not sure yet if running my own business is for me or what kind of business it could be, but if I decide to pursue it, I'll definitely want to use what they offer.

I'm happy I participated in the program. It was a great idea to take part in all the activities because they connected in a meaningful way.

**TRANSITIONING FROM BEING A STUDENT TO BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL IS SCARY, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL PROFESSIONAL YET, BUT NOW I FEEL A BIT LESS CONFUSED.**

**I THINK I KNOW WHERE TO START, AND I BELIEVE I CAN MAKE IT.”**





## POLAND

# GOOD PRACTICE

## EMPOWERING FOSTER YOUTH IN POLAND THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The Polish YOSA initiative highlights the importance of addressing not just employability but also the self-belief and aspirations of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. By fostering ambition and creating opportunities for growth, the program empowered foster youth to see their potential and take steps toward a brighter future.



**YOUTH ONE STOP AGENCY (YOSA) PROJECT FOCUSED ON EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM INSTITUTIONAL FOSTER CARE, ADDRESSING THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES THEY FACE.**



While many participants were not yet ready to enter the labor market, the program prioritized developing their soft skills, self-esteem, and confidence, ensuring they could benefit from these improvements in the long term.

The Youth Employability Workshop served as a turning point for many participants. Initially, when asked about their career aspirations, most expressed modest goals, such as becoming a waiter, cashier, or cook. However, following job shadowing activities, the same individuals began to think bigger: aspiring to own a restaurant, start a business, or run a pastry shop. This shift reflected the program's success in helping participants reimagine their potential and see their place in the workforce differently.

Additionally, the program inspired actionable outcomes. A participating company, Roboklocki, was so impressed by the youth involved in the Job Shadowing Weeks that they offered internships to two participants. These internships, starting in 2025, will be facilitated through a contract with the foster care institution (WCOW), providing a tangible opportunity for the youth to apply their newfound confidence and skills.



## GEORGIA

# PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

## SALOME'S JOURNEY TOWARD A VETERINARY CAREER

**Working at the clinic strengthened my passion for veterinary care and gave me practical insights to build my career.**

Salome's story highlights how opportunities like the "Employment VS Unemployment" Forum can inspire young people to pursue their professional dreams while gaining valuable real-world experience. Her journey demonstrates the importance of connecting youth with local resources and creating pathways for career development.

" I am Salome, and I come from Zugdidi. My story begins in childhood when I loved playing the role of a doctor saving animals. Over time, this passion grew, and I decided to turn it into my profession. I am now in my second year at the veterinary faculty at Zugdidi State University, working toward becoming a qualified veterinary doctor—a much-needed profession in our region, which faces a shortage of specialists.

During an activity at my university, I came across an informational note about the "Employment VS Unemployment" Forum. This event gave me the chance to learn about a newly opened small veterinary clinic and meet its representatives. They invited me to visit their facility to observe their services and practices. After the visit, I was offered a summer job at the clinic, which turned out to be an unforgettable experience that contributed to my personal and professional growth.

Working at the clinic allowed me to improve my foundational skills in veterinary care and introduced me to a network of professionals in the field.



This experience not only reinforced my passion for the profession but also gave me practical insights and connections that will support my future career. I feel even more motivated now to contribute to my community by addressing the regional need for veterinary services



## GEORGIA

# PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

## ANI'S PATH TO SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ani's story highlights how participation in youth programs and local initiatives can open doors to unexpected opportunities. Her journey into social entrepreneurship demonstrates the importance of accessible events and proactive engagement in empowering youth to combine personal growth with community impact.

"My name is Ani, and I am from Gali, an occupied territory of Georgia.

I now live in Zugdidi, where I attend the local university. Last year, I had the opportunity to participate in an Erasmus+ youth exchange, where I first met representatives from 'Youth for the World' (YFW).

Later, I came across a poster on YFW's social media about the 'Employment VS Unemployment' Conference happening in Zugdidi. Seeing this as a great opportunity, I decided to attend. During the conference, I learned about a social enterprise called 'Megobari,' which was organizing a meeting with young people shortly afterward. I signed up and attended, where I learned about the concept of social entrepreneurship and how it benefits the local community by organizing meaningful events. I was fascinated and started attending their events regularly.

**This experience taught me how social entrepreneurship can foster local development while helping me grow personally and professionally.**



At one of these events, I received an offer for a part-time job with 'Megobari.' This was a fantastic opportunity for me as a student, especially since part-time jobs are scarce in our area.

The job allows me to balance my studies and work, giving me

valuable experience while contributing to the community through meaningful initiatives.

This opportunity has not only provided me with financial support but has also shown me the importance of social entrepreneurship in fostering local development. It has been a great way to grow both personally and professionally while making a positive impact in my community."





## GEORGIA

# GOOD PRACTICE

## COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN GEORGIA

**This Georgian initiative highlights the importance of uniting stakeholders from various sectors to address youth unemployment. By fostering collaboration and creating a shared space for innovation and dialogue, it provided young people with access to resources, networks, and opportunities critical for their development.**



In Georgia, a local initiative brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including state institutions, formal and non-formal educators, non-governmental organizations, freelancers, social entrepreneurs, successful business holdings, and startups. This collaborative effort aimed to tackle youth unemployment and empower young people by creating a unified working environment with a shared vision.

The initiative emphasized direct communication, needs assessments, and addressing market demands, resulting in a productive and cohesive strategy for increasing youth employment in the community. The event provided a platform for networking and information exchange, allowing participants to explore opportunities and gain valuable insights into employment pathways.

The response from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many

expressing gratitude for the breadth of information and opportunities presented. The initiative demonstrated the transformative power of collaboration, showcasing how partnerships across sectors can foster both personal and professional growth for youth.





# RECOMMENDATIONS

**for Advancing Youth Support Across Countries**

Actionable recommendations from Lithuania, Latvia, Georgia, and Poland to enhance youth services, address employment challenges, and promote personal and professional growth. Drawing on the unique contexts and experiences of each country, these recommendations offer insights into effective strategies and collaborative approaches to empower young people and strengthen youth networks. Designed to inspire innovation and adaptation, these suggestions aim to create sustainable, impactful systems tailored to the diverse needs of youth.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LITHUANIA

ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND DIGITAL INTEGRATION



## 01 Expand Career Services

Integrate career guidance and support into existing Open Youth Centers in collaboration with local employment stakeholders.

## Develop Digital Platforms

Create an integrated digital platform offering online access to career resources, job databases, counseling, and virtual workshops to make services accessible to youth in remote areas.

## 02



# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LATVIA

STANDARDIZING AND STRENGTHENING NETWORKS



## 01 Unified System

Adopt a universal approach across the country with one label, one methodology, and a systematic framework to ensure consistency across municipalities.

## Network Strengthening

Establish standardized processes to enhance cooperation and create a stronger, interconnected network of youth services.

## 02



# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GEORGIA

MODERNIZING ACCESS AND SERVICES



## 1 Simple and Modern Solutions

Provide youth with a smart, streamlined system to access a range of information and free services. This approach can be key to their personal and professional development.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POLAND

TAILORED SUPPORT FOR TRANSITIONING YOUTH



## 01 Youth-Specific Services

Introduce tailored programs at institutions like the Labour Office for young people aged 18–24, focusing on supporting their transition from education to employment.

## Expand Eligibility

Adapt services to include targeted support for youth under the standard eligibility age where possible, ensuring earlier intervention.

## 02



# CROSS-COUNTRY RECOMMENDATIONS

## COLLABORATIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS

### 01 **Build Employer Partnerships:**

Collaborate with local employers to offer internships, job shadowing, and part-time positions, providing real-world experience and networking opportunities for young people.

### 02 **Integrate Career Guidance in Schools:**

Partner with schools to incorporate career guidance into the curriculum, host career workshops, and organize visits to youth centers or career fairs, strengthening connections between education and employment sectors.

### 03 **Employ Career Counselors:**

Ensure every youth center has qualified career counselors providing one-on-one sessions, group workshops, and mentorship programs for career planning and goal setting.

**By implementing these tailored recommendations, youth support systems can be strengthened, creating opportunities for personal growth, skill development, and meaningful employment.**

**These strategies offer a roadmap for organizations and policymakers to address the evolving needs of young people and foster sustainable change across regions.**



The recommendations presented in this chapter are more than just strategies; they represent a commitment to empowering young people and building systems that adapt to their evolving needs. Each suggestion reflects the unique realities and challenges faced by different countries, yet they all share a common goal: to create accessible, effective, and inspiring support for youth. By taking action on these recommendations, stakeholders can not only address immediate employment and guidance gaps but also lay the groundwork for sustainable development, innovation, and opportunity for the next generation. These collective efforts will ensure that young people are equipped to navigate their futures with confidence and purpose.

# THE END

Closing Thoughts and Contact Information



# GRATITUDE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to express our gratitude to everyone who made the Youth One Stop Agency (YOSA) 2.0. project a success. This project implementation wouldn't have been possible without the incredible dedication, collaboration, and passion from so many individuals and organizations across all the countries involved. Together, we've taken big steps toward empowering young people and creating real opportunities for their futures.

A huge thank you to our partner organizations, whose hard work and commitment were the backbone of this project. Your efforts in mentoring, policy work, and training programs have left a lasting mark on the communities you serve. And to the Erasmus+ Programme, thank you for believing in this vision and providing the support we needed to make it a reality.

**We also want to recognize the over 1,000 young people who joined us on this journey. Your energy, creativity, and drive have inspired us all and made this work so meaningful. You've shown what's possible when young people are given the tools and opportunities to shine.**

To the mentors, professionals, and entrepreneurs who shared your knowledge and opened doors for these young people—thank you for your generosity and belief in their potential. You've not only made a difference today but helped lay the groundwork for their futures.




This project has shown us the incredible power of working together. It's a reminder of what can happen when we come together with a shared vision to create something bigger than ourselves.

## THANK YOU.





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