Youth Guarantee
What is Youth Guarantee?

The Youth Guarantee (YG) scheme is one of the most innovative labour market policies of recent years implemented in EU countries. Introduced in 2013, at a time when an urgent response to address the consequences of long-term unemployment was sought, the Youth Guarantee is a political commitment taken by EU Member States to give unemployed youth structured support for employment. In response to the growing number of unemployed youth and those not in employment, education or training (NEET), the EU Member States committed to ensure all those up to 25 years of age would receive a quality offer of employment, education, traineeship or apprenticeship within 4 months of becoming unemployed or leaving school.
Youth Guarantee in Macedonia

Youth unemployment in Macedonia had peaked at just over 50% of all youth, making Macedonia rank third highest in the world. One of the measures proposed by youth associations in Macedonia to address this compelling problem as part of the National Youth Strategy for Macedonia 2016-2025, was the innovative model of youth guarantee. The new government recognised the youth guarantee as a relevant model to test in addressing this burning issue. With SDC’s support, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy conceptualised and adapted the design of this labour policy measure and piloted the youth guarantee in three municipalities in Macedonia in the period April - August 2018. Further, SDC supported the implementation of the pilot both through provision of financial and advisory support to the umbrella association of youth organisations - the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM) - to actively reach out to youth and engage them into the youth guarantee as well as through technical assistance to the state Employment Service Agency (ESA) in the capacitation and sensitisation how to best engage with youth.

Policy development

The Youth Guarantee was first introduced in Macedonia by the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM) as concept outlined in the National Youth Strategy. SDC supported this process through its Increasing Market Employability (IME) project, implemented by Swissscontact, by capacitating NYCM in lobbying and in voicing their proposals for improved youth inclusion, inclusive education policies and increased youth employment. This resulted with the inclusion of the YG as one of the measures in the National Youth Strategy to reduce youth unemployment.

In 2017, the Macedonian Government decided to implement the YG foreseen in the National Youth Strategy. In Macedonia the YG was adapted to support youth aged 15 to 29, which are not employed nor included in training or education, in finding decent employment, self-employment, additional qualification or re-qualification. The YG scheme guaranteed to provide opportunities and increase their employability within 4 months of
being registered at the state Employment Service Agency (ESA). With many similarities between Slovenia and Macedonia, especially in terms of political, educational and social systems, and the size of territory and population, the experience of the Slovenian YG scheme was used as an example for the implementation phase. SDC supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with the provision of the Slovenian policy expertise.

Implementation of Pilot Activities

To support on-the-ground implementation of the YG, Switzerland supported both the field work of the youth associations of NYCM to reach out to unemployed youth and the strengthening of capacities of state employment agency to serve interested young people. In particular, the NYCM engaged young people who proactively spread the word to young people about the youth guarantee and tried to motivate hard-to-reach youth to apply to the programme. Through the IME Programme, the employees of the Employment Service Agency (ESA) were also capacitated to best match the skills and competences of the unemployed youth to the available support measures through a thorough career counselling processes.
Youth reaching out
to youth

Reaching out to those furthest away from the labour market is essential if the Youth Guarantee is to apply to all young people. The first key activity was to reach out to as many unemployed youth and those not in education, employment or training, explain the concept of the YG and support their inclusion in the system of the ESA. It was essential that this activity was implemented by a partner that can map and reach out to youth, knows how to speak their language, is credible and can guide youth and include them in the system. Recognizing the importance of the outreach activities and the role of the NYCM in the implementation of the YG, the Government of Macedonia decided to include the NYCM in the direct on-the-field implementation of the YG, making them responsible for the outreach of youth. This was the first time that a civil society organisation is being directly involved in the implementation of active labour measures in the country. The NYCM-nominated field workers were trained on how to improve their outreach activities, how to best explain the YG to youth and restore their faith in the employment opportunities offered when being included in the system. The experience from the Slovenian peer organizations was shared and directly discussed helping them to learn from experiences. They structured their outreach activities to best suit the availability of youth, they were working in teams and visited local youth ‘hangouts’ at different times of the day. They learned about the needs and aspirations of youth, gained their trusts and provided solutions and support through the YG for each person individually. This led to increased youth outreach and more than 2,000 youth being included in the YG scheme.
With the model of reaching out to youth and increasing their inclusion in the YG, once registered in the ESA system, the process of career counselling begins which is finalised by matching the needs and competences of the unemployed youth with the requirements of the private sector or by supporting them in establishing their own businesses. The employees of the ESA, as well as the field workers of the NYCM, received training in career guidance and techniques for screening of the competences and desires of the unemployed youth. This resulted in improved matching of the profiles of the unemployed with the needs of the companies, shortened the time for finding employment candidates with adequate skills, improved the guidance of the unemployed for available trainings and qualifications that best match their aspirations. The joint trainings of the NYCM and ESA also resulted with improved collaboration between the field workers and the designated ESA employees, ensuring smooth inclusion of the youth in the system.
Results in easing the Job Search

Within 6 months of the pilot phase implementation, the available measures through the YG were exhausted, proving the value and the demand for such support, which can be seen from the results presented below.

Due to the evident success of the pilot measure, the Government of Macedonia announced its intention to scale-up the implementation of the YG scheme in 2019, doubling its budget and allowing more youth to utilize the benefits of the scheme thus decreasing youth unemployment. Lessons learned from the pilot included 1) to widen the offer of types of jobs, internships and trainings to make the offer more diversified and attractive for youth, 2) to streamline and simplify the procedures for application, adjust them to the circumstances and needs of youth, 3) to increase the offer of measures of the state agency and ensure availability year round to match the increased interest of youth and 4) to continue working on capacitating the employment service agency to work with youth. SDC is currently looking into possibilities to continue its support to the Youth Guarantee through strengthening the offer of trainings available through the scheme and further strengthening the capacities and streamlining the procedures of the employment service agency to adapt them to the needs of the youth.

![Figure 3. Results in easing the Job Search](image)

- Youth registered at ESA: 2061
- Employments: 610
- Internships: 233
- Youth with capacity building: 202
- Self-employments: 82
Testimonials

What the people implementing the Youth Guarantee had to say about the process

“It is not the same when you are looking for a job by yourself, compared to when someone knocks on your door, guides you through the system and helps you throughout the way.”

Semija Demova
employed through the Youth Guarantee

“It was essential for the success of the Youth Guarantee that the approach was personalized. With intense discussions, we guided each candidate in finding what are the best options for their future. At the same time, we ensured that the businesses were matched with the right persons for the job”.

Josip Vasilev
employee in ESA.

“It was a team of six. Three from NYCM and three from ESA. It was a partnership that ensured youth were personally guided throughout the entire process. From registration to employment”.

Irina Georgieva
field worker from NYCM

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Visit the web pages of the implementers and supporters of the Youth Guarantee in Macedonia

National Youth Council www.mladi.mk
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy www.mtsp.gov.mk
Employment Service Agency www.avrm.gov.mk
Swisscontact www.swisscontact.org/macedonia
Swiss Embassy in Macedonia www.eda.admin.ch/macedonia