

STUDY ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION NEEDS - MARAMUREȘ COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

After 1989 the North West part of the country has undergone a major restructuring process of the mining field with a huge impact on the situation of the human resource of the area and many economic and social problems. The legislation on the restoring and rehabilitating the mining perimeters and the one on social protection was oriented towards the destruction of mining. Thus, the restructuring of the majority of the staff in this sector has brought about the worsening of the economic and social situation of the population in the area. No account was taken of the fact that 70% of the products manufactured in the European Union and 30 million jobs in different industries depend on the raw mining material. The funds assigned for closing mines, for measures of regional development through creating new jobs were wasted. If they had been efficiently oriented towards re-technologizing the mining sector, its importance could have been highlighted as well as the essential role and importance of minerals in the increase of the quality of life. It was not meant to be; in 1998 the area was declared *disfavoured area*, with an unemployment rate above the national average.

Key words: Economic crisis, mining, restructuring, unemployment, retraining, survey.

Introduction

The economic and social development brought about by the economical - financial crisis started in 2007 and rapidly spread in the global economy led to the worst post war crisis and to a reshaping of the global economic order with significant effects on the labour market in Romania, similar to the last decades on a global scaleⁱ. Thus, in the last two decades, the Romanian economy has undergone profound changes that have had strong effects on the social plan through the restructuring actions, radically changing the economic pattern of the Romanian society. The competitive market economy led to the demise of some branches of the economy that had a great socio-economic importance for population in the past. For example, a part of the North-West region - Maramureș area- where mining and other complementary activities were the basic branches of the economy before 1989, after 2005 they practically don't exist anymore. The restructuring of the mining activities, between 1995-2005 have had as an indirect consequence, the disappearance of tens of thousands of jobs, which led to the development of

ⁱ Over 50% of the companies have chosen to implement restructuring measures in 2011, half also continued in 2012 and 14% plan to maintain this approach also for next year, according to a study issued by *Ensign Management Consulting*.

strategies by the European Community aimed at the increase of social inclusion (**Europe 2020 Strategy**), without, however, the expected effects.

The actions have been oriented towards the modernization and strengthening of policies on employment and also on education and professional training or social protection.

The aim of the herein study is to identify the causes and personal needs of integration on the labour market of the unemployed and laid off persons through increase of participation in professional reconversion courses and to ensure a greater inclusion of the active persons living in the rural area of Maramures County.

Europe 2020 Strategy

The target of *Europe 2020* strategy has been to achieve a level of labour employment of 75% by 2020 for the age group from 20 to 64 years.

The guidelines and instruments used in *Europe 2020* Strategy, annually adopted for Romania has had the following objectives¹:

- To balance the labour market and increase employment;
- To increasing labour market flexibility;
- To strengthen the social dialogue at all levels in order to increase its contribution to economic and social development.

The main action areas are:

- To increase the occupancy to at least 65% by 2017;
- To increase participation for professional training to at least 7% of the working age population between 25-64 years;
- To support the establishment and functioning of sectorial committees.

Thus, in a rapidly changing world, EU wants a smart, sustainable, inclusive and mutually reinforcing economy, priorities that mutually support themselves and should help the Member States to achieve a high level of productivity, labour employment and social cohesion.

Unfortunately, in Romania, these EU priorities have had no effect. The political and economic crisis, the lack of investment in capital and technology, especially after 2010, has led to the more emphasized decline of the sectors of the economy.

The political scandals becoming more and frequent, the government's anti-crisis measures have had negative effects on social inclusion and the income of the employees in all sectors, public or private, effects that have reduced the people's desire to improve the living standards and ensure a better future for the family / kids.

This has led to an increased emigration process; many active people in the urban areas have migrated abroad while others shifted to rural areas, significantly reducing the labour, especially the qualified one, able to integrate into the various economic sectors.

¹ http://www.librabank.ro/obiective_Europa_2020

Study on the Active Persons of the Rural Areas of Maramures County

As already mentioned the aim of this study is to identify the causes and the personal needs of labor market integration of the unemployed, laid off, inactive persons living in the rural areas.

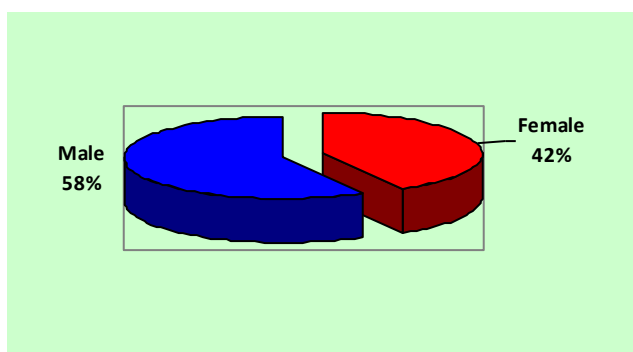
The research was conducted on a sample of 500 unemployed registered in the database of *A.J.O.F.M. MARAMURES (The County Employment Agency)*, and inactive people in the rural areas and it consisted of a set of 15 questions aimed to identify their willingness to attend professional reconversion courses in order to be able to find a job easier.

The most representative of the data gathered and the answers to 9 questions considered being of a higher importance have been centralized in statistical situations as follows:

1. *The structure of the sample by gender and age group, jobless*

500 persons were selected as research subjects, 208 women and 292 men who declared to be jobless and living in the rural areas. The chart below shows that the number of female respondents is much smaller than the male respondents.

Chart 1. The structure of the sample by gender



From the age group point of view persons were selected who declared to be able to work and the figures are as follows:

Table 1. The structure of the sample by age

	Age	Distribution of persons by age group	Total percentage
<i>Nr. crt.</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>100%</i>
1	18-30 years	127	25,4
2	31-40 years	186	37,2
3	41-50 years	145	29,0
4	51-60 years	40	8,0
5	Above 60 years	2	0,4

In terms of percentages, in descending order, the largest share of the unemployed in rural areas, is the following:

- 37.2 % of subjects (186 of the 500 rural unemployed who participated in the study) are aged between 31-40 years;
- 29 %, (145 unemployed) are aged between 41-50 years;
- 25.4 % (meaning 127 of the 500 unemployed) are aged between 18-30 years;
- 8.0 % (meaning 40 of the 500 unemployed) are aged between 51-60 years;
- 0.4 % (meaning 2 of the unemployed) is over 60 years.

Our results show a quite common situation: if you are over 40 years (as 37.4% of the subjects are) the chances of employability decrease considerably. Studies have shown that people who are over 45 years hardly find a job, even when the unemployment rate decreases.

2. The structure of the sample by education

The structure of the sample by education is presented in the herein below table. The question asked was: "What are your last graduated studies?"

In terms of percentage, the highest share in descending order is the following:

- 38.4% of the subjects graduated highschool studies;
- 31.2% graduated secondary school;
- 11.4% graduated elementary education, classes I – IV;
- 9.8% graduated university;
- 7.0 % graduated post secondary studies;
- 2.2% have no education.

Table 2. The structure of the subjects according to their education

	Level of training	Total	Total percentage	Males	Females
0	Total	500	100%	266	208
1	No education	11	2.2	8	3
2	Elementary School	57	11.4	39	18
3	Secondary School	156	31.2	101	55
4	Highschool	192	38.4	109	83
5	Post-secondary School	35	7.0	21	14
6	University	49	9.8	14	35

The figures above indicate that only 38.4% can attend qualification studies (highschool education), 31.2% can attend initiation courses (secondary school) while 11.4% respectively 2.2% of the subjects (primary school and with no education) cannot attend qualification or initiation studies according to the legislation in the field.

3. The structure of the sample by terms of current occupation

When asked "What was your occupation before you lost your job?" the subjects answered as per the data gathered in the herein below table.

Table 3. The structure of the sample by terms of current occupation

Profile of the current occupation	Number	Males	Females
Domestic activities	226	81	145
Farmer	99	77	21
Qualified worker	142	124	18
Public servant	3	0	3
Intellectual work (teacher, doctor, engineer, etc.)	21	9	12
Pupil/student	10	1	9
Total	500	292	208

The table above shows the large extents of the subjects who have never had a job (226 of the repondents) in a certain field of activity.

4. The active search for a job

The question "Have you tried to find a job?" was answered affirmatively by a very large number of repondents, 74.4% (397 persons of the 500 interviewed).

Table 4. Subjects interested to find a job

Have you looked for or are you looking for a job?	Frecquence	Percentage
Yes	348	77.33
No	52	11.56
I do not respond	50	11.11
Total	500	100%

They replied that they had sought and still seek employment, which indicates that these people are active and want to find a job. 22.67% are not interested to find a new working place as their current occupation provides them with satisfactory living standards.

5. Difficulties in finding a job

When answering the question „Why you could not find a job?“ most of the subjects complain about the decreased jobs offer or the requirement to prove working experience when they apply for the existing ones. As per the survey the situation is as follows:

Table 5. Difficulties in finding a working place

What are the difficulties faced when trying to find a job?			
1	Low job offer	164	32.8
2	I did not have the necessary qualifications to occupy the position offered	75	15.0
3	I do not have the necessary experience in the field offered	54	10.8
4	Large distance between home and workplace	58	11.6
5	Unsuitable salary, too small for my needs	39	7.8
6	I am too old	37	7.4
7	I do not respond	73	14.6
Total		500	100%

The table above indicates that:

- 32.8% of the unemployed (164 persons) encountered difficulties due to a low offer of jobs in rural areas;
- 15% of the unemployed (75 persons) encountered obstacles because their qualifications did not match the jobs found;
- 10.8 % o responded they do not have the necessary experience;
- 11.6 % of the unemployed (58 persons) refused a job because of the big distance to work;
- For others (in a percentage of 7.78 %) the difficulties were created by the wage offer, too small for their needs;
- 7.4 % of the unemployed (37 persons) were too old, reason why they could not find and occupy a job;
- The number of those who did not want to answer (73, respectively 15.11%) is high enough; the conclusion is that these individuals are not interested in a job.

6. Employment desire

The employment desire and period comes out from the question „For what period of time do you want to be employed?”. The answers are presented in the herein below table.

Table 6. The employment desire considering the employment period

Do you want to be employed?			
1	For an undetermined period of time	368	73.6
2	Only in the summer when the kids are in vacation	3	0.6
3	Only in the winter when the kids are at school	17	3.4
4	Only in the winter, when I finish the agricultural works	19	3.8
5	I don't know/I do not respond	93	18.6
Total 500			100.0%

73.6 % of the respondents want to be employed for an undetermined time, which shows that they want a long-term stability of the employment. In a small percentage some would like to work during winter or summer. What is interesting is that 18.6 % of the respondents are not interested to find a job.

7. What one should do in order to find a job

When asked „What should you do in order to have a job”, most of the subjects answered that they would want a job as per their qualifications.

Table 7. What one should do in order to find a job

In order to be employed, do you thing that you should:			
1	Find a job in your field of qualification?	196	39.2
2	Attend training / retraining course?	162	32.4
3	I don't know/I do not respond	142	32.0
Total 500			100%

A high percentage of the respondents do not know what they should do or did not want to answer to this question (142 persons).

8. „Are you interested in setting up your own, independent business?”

The surveys indicate that people have reservations about trying to set up a business by themselves or finding solutions to their domestic challenges because of the financial problems, the unstable economic climate, the high costs of utilities and the excessive taxation that they should bear as an economic agent.

Table 8 . Subjects who wish to set up an independent business

Type of activity	Women	Men
Interested to set up a business in agriculture	87	83
Interested to set up an economic activity - Non-agricultural	54	113
Not interested	67	96
Total	208	292

As one can see in the herein above table, 41.83% of the women are interested to set up a business in agriculture and only 28% would prefer an independent activity in agriculture. Most of them prefer a non-agricultural activity. 32.88% are satisfied with the individual work carried out in various occasional activities. Those interested in carrying out an independent business would prefer trading, tourism or constructions but they do not have the necessary skills and need qualification in the respective fields.

9. Courses they wish to attend hoping to find a job or to set up a business

When asked “What are the professional training courses that you would like to attend”, many of the subjects answered that they do not know or refused to answer.

Table 9. Courses that the subjects would like to attend

In order to find a job according to your interests and skills, you consider that you could use a course for?			
1	Constructions worker (Mason, plasterer etc.)	49	9,8
2	Qualified workers in agriculture	8	1,6
3	Business administration	12	2,4
4	Hairdresser, Barber	19	3,8
5	Manicure	5	1,0
6	Worker in touristic boarding house	28	5,6
7	Waiter	39	7,8
8	Touristic boarding house administrator	19	3,8
9	Maid	15	3,0
10	I don't know/I do not respond	306	61,2
Total 500		100%	

The table above shows that most of the subjects would like to attend training course in areas such as:

- Constructions – 9.8 % of the unemployed (49 persons);
- Business administration – 12 persons (2.4%);
- Skilled workers in agriculture – 8 persons (1.6%);
- Workers in touristic boarding houses (administrator, worker, waiter, maid) – 101 of the unemployed (20.2%);
- Hairdressing, barber, manicure – 24 persons, namely 4.8%.

Conclusions

After analysing the 500 questionnaires addressed to the inactive and unemployed people from rural areas in terms of **identifying the needs of professional integration** we have extracted several conclusions, the most important would be:

- Rural people are willing to be employed, to become active persons respectively, but do not allocate enough time to look for a job or to identify a business opportunity.

- Most of the respondents look for a job within the first 3 months and as the time passes, the interest in seeking for a job decreases, respectively, in over 12 months, their interest dramatically declines. This lack of interest is motivated by experiencing difficulties in finding a job in their localities due to the low offer of jobs, the ones that would have accepted are far away from home, being forced to allocate a substantial part of the salary for commuting.

- In terms of changing the profession that they have, most of them want to attend a retraining course in their field of activity or to get qualified in another field as long as they are offered a certain job. If they enrolled in a training course most would choose tourism or independent business such as hairdressing, barber or manicure.

From the discussions with the representatives of the National Agency for Employment, the local public administration, of the institutions financed from budgetary and extra-budgetary funds (European) it has been concluded that all of them should facilitate the social integration of the active people in accordance with their professional training and their aspirations. The problem to be solved is creating jobs and providing proper training in order to be able to handle the new jobs.

The institutions listed above must engage responsibly in evaluating the training providers, which must have the capability to update the knowledge of the interested persons, according to the requirements of the new jobs by improving or changing the qualification of the interested persons. This involves the assimilation of new knowledge, new skills, and more advanced methods of work that makes them more competitive, able to respond to the new occupations listed on the labour market. The knowledge and skills are acquired through training programs and responsible practical activities, not for the simple reason of having a certificate of qualification or retraining.

The completion of the training program must be respected; the practical activities must be conducted in the field, in organizations operating in the field with direct supervision of experienced mentors, both in initiating actions and in qualification or training, as required by the employers.

Thus, the vocational training providers must have regard to the requirements of the new occupations on the labour market and satisfying the demand through training programs to fully meet these requirements, both theoretically and practically. To meet these requirements, the training providers must have the facilities, equipment and materials necessary for training and also well trained trainers who provide theoretical and practical training through modern methods, specific for the occupation for which the professional training was organized. The assessment should be responsible, in accordance with the evaluation methodology and the specific objectives of the training program.

Training can also be made through apprenticeship at the working place where the secondary school graduates, either they have a graduation certificate or not, can obtain a professional qualification issued by the organization where the apprenticeship was performed.

Given this context, the planning and performing the training program should be carried out by organizations that have the necessary equipment and trained personnel. It is not enough to just issue a graduation certificate after a course of 8-10 hours at a hotel or a resort. The trainers should be selected following references, recommendations and previous results, not by the desire to obtain an additional income or to obtain the funds necessary for professional training.

During 1997 – 2013 the programs aimed at retraining the unemployed by organizing training and retraining courses that have already carried out and finalized but they did not have the desired effect over the laid off people.

The program of "Social Impact Mitigation" carried out by the National Agency for Development and Implementation of the Reconstruction Programs for the Mining Areas (ANDIPRZM) which regulated the granting of micro loans, business premises to entrepreneurs and financial incentives for professional retraining did not have positive effects.

The EU has granted about 10 million euros for economic and social reconstruction of the area, the results are expected to this day.

With the support of various projects, A.J.O.F.M. Maramureş (*The County Employment Agency*) organizes periodically, within mediation services, job fairs but unfortunately the job offer is disappointing, both as diversity and in the number of newly created jobs.

Unfortunately there are still many unemployed people looking for "easy", well-paid jobs, without any effort to retrain or improve from the professional point of view, preferring to work on the "black" or "grey" market.

In conclusion, the political-economic system does not consider creating long term jobs through solid investments in the economic or tourism sector. Business operators who used credit lines and employed personnel could not support the newly created jobs as per the initial commitments.

The culture of the civic spirit is as non-existent, the sense that the public space belongs to everybody, the ability of the citizens to associate in the pursuit of public lucrative activities is low. The entrepreneurs' limited access to information, to environmental or managerial culture is reduced more to vocation and empiricism.

All this has led to an uncertain economic climate with many persons who accept "under the counter" jobs and work without employment contract, with obscure entrepreneurs who offer modest salaries and fire them when they dare to formulate wage claims or asked to be hired based on an employment contract.

General recommendation: The seasonal jobs seem to be the only valid solution in the region because the cost of a permanent job is exaggerated while the social protection programs do not rely on setting up temporary jobs. In order for the individuals to be interested in these jobs, the wages should increase as they amount to a value comparable to that of the social allowance.

Setting up a credit guarantee fund would create more accessible conditions to credit the small business that cannot provide the excessive collateral guarantees required by banks, in order to create new jobs.

The business centres must be effective and to turn, as a first step, towards tourism development, since Maramureș County is an area with great touristic potential.

The need for professional training and retraining, the orientation towards lifelong learning must lead to achieving significant competitive advantages – a real necessity for active integration of the human resource into the socio-economic life. Training and retraining should be a constant goal in everyone's career, materialized in jobs.

Designing a training program for adults involves finding answers to a series of questions such as:

- What are the scientific grounds for the design of the training program?
- Who are the attendants of training program?
- What is the estimated number of persons interested in attending in the program?
- What is the openness of the training program towards other programs or forms of professional training (transfer possibilities)? Do the qualifications meet the requirements of the training program?
- What are the methods of teaching and learning expected to be used to achieve the objective of the training program?
- Is the assessment of the attendants throughout the program appropriate for the objectives of the professional training program?
- How is the training program enrolled in the regional and national politics and strategy for economic development? How about in education?
- What are the anticipated destinations for the jobs that graduates will occupy?
- What are the educational, economic, industrial, social and cultural objectives related to the training program?
- How do the above objectives relate with the local labour market requirements?
- What is the estimated impact of the training program?
- What are the expected results following the attending of professional training program (skills, knowledge, attitudes or other attributes)?
- What is the contribution of the program for the education development or for creating new jobs?
- How is the integration of courses performed, so that they contribute to the objectives of the training program?

- The learning results expressed through written statements on objectives centred on performance or behaviours of the attendants.

Given this context, the provider of professional training supplier must ensure a clear, concise and measurable particularization of the learning outcomes based on the identified needs. The attendants must be informed of the results expected to be achieved after the course or training program and how to actively engage in a positive inclusion and to contribute actively to the development of a smart, sustainable economy in the community they belong to.

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